

Appleton's Magazine Vol. 8, No. 3, September 1906

THE MENACE OF MECHANICAL MUSIC

BY JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

ILLUSTRATED BY F. STROTHMANN



WEeping across the country with the speed of a transient fashion in slang or Panama hats, political war cries or popular novels, comes now the mechanical device to sing for us a song or play for us a piano, in substitute for human skill, intelligence, and soul. Only by harking back to the day of the roller skate or the bicycle craze, when sports of admitted utility ran to extravagance and virtual madness, can we find a parallel to the way in which these ingenious instruments have invaded every community in the land. And if we turn from this comparison in pure mechanics to another which may fairly claim a similar proportion of music in its soul, we may observe the English sparrow, which, introduced and welcomed in all innocence, lost no time in multiplying itself to the dignity of a pest, to the destruction of numberless native song birds, and the invariable regret of those who did not stop to think in time.

On a matter upon which I feel so deeply, and which I consider so far-reaching, I am quite willing to be reck-



"What might be called a fair reproduction of Jove's prerogative."

oned an alarmist, admittedly swayed in part by personal interest, as well as by the impending harm to American musical art. I foresee a marked deterioration in American music and musical taste, an interruption in the musical development of the country, and a host of other injuries to music in its artistic manifestations, by virtue—or rather by vice—of the multiplication of the various music-reproducing machines. When I add to this that I myself and every other popular composer are victims of a serious infringement on our clear moral rights in our own work, I but offer a second reason why the facts and conditions should be made clear to everyone, alike in the interest of musical art and of fair play.

It cannot be denied that the owners and inventors have shown wonderful aggressiveness and ingenuity in developing and exploiting these remarkable devices. Their mechanism has been steadily and marvelously improved, and they have come into very extensive use. And it must be admitted that where families lack time or inclination to acquire musical technique, and to hear public performances, the best of these machines supply a certain amount of satisfaction and pleasure.



"There is a man in there playing the piano with his hands!"

But heretofore, the whole course of music, from its first day to this, has been along the line of making it the expression of soul states; in other words, of pouring into it soul. Wagner, representing the climax of this movement, declared again and again, "I will not write even one measure of music that is not thoroughly sincere."

From the days when the mathematical and mechanical were paramount in music, the struggle has been bitter and incessant for the sway of the emotional and the soulful. And now, in this the twentieth century, come these talking and playing machines, and offer again to reduce the expression of music to a mathematical system of megaphones, wheels, cogs, disks, cylinders, and all manner of revolving things, which are as like real art as the marble statue of Eve is like her beautiful, living, breathing daughters.

Away back in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries rebellion had its start against musical automatics, Palestrina proving in his compositions, that music is life, not mathematics; and Luther showing, in his sublime hymns for congregational use and in his adaptations of secular melody for the church, that music could be made the pouring out of the souls of the many in one grand, eternal song. From the days of these pioneers, all great workers in the musical vineyard have given their best powers to the development of fruit, ever finer and more luscious, and in the doing have brought their

art near and nearer to the emotional life of man.

The nightingale's song is delightful because the nightingale herself gives it forth. The boy with a penny whistle and glass of water may give an excellent imitation, but let him persist, he is sent to bed as a nuisance. Thunder inspires awe in its connection with nature, but two lusty bass drummers can drive you mad by what might be called a fair reproduction of Jove's prerogative. I doubt if a dramatist could be inspired to write a tragedy by witnessing the mournful development and dénouement of "Punch and Judy"; or an actress improve her delineation of heroic character by hearing the sobs of a Parisian doll. Was Garner led to study language and manners of the orang-outang and his kin by watching the antics of a monkey-on-a-stick?

It is the living, breathing example alone that is valuable to the student and can set into motion his creative and performing abilities. The ingenuity of a phonograph's mechanism may incite the inventive genius to its improvement, but I could not imagine that a performance by it would ever inspire embryotic Mendelssohns, Beethovens, Mozarts, and Wagners to the acquirement of technical skill, or to the grasp of human possibilities in the art.

Elson, in his "History of American Music," says: "The true beginnings of American



"Incongruous as canned salmon by a trout brook."

music—seeds that finally grew into a harvest of native composition—must be sought in a field almost as unpromising as that of the Indian music itself—the rigid, narrow, and often commonplace psalm-singing of New England."

Step by step through the centuries, working in an atmosphere almost wholly monopolized by commercial pursuit, America has advanced art to such a degree that to-day she is the Mecca toward which journey the artists of all nations. Musical enterprises are given financial support here as nowhere else in the universe, while our appreciation of music is bounded only by our geographical limits.

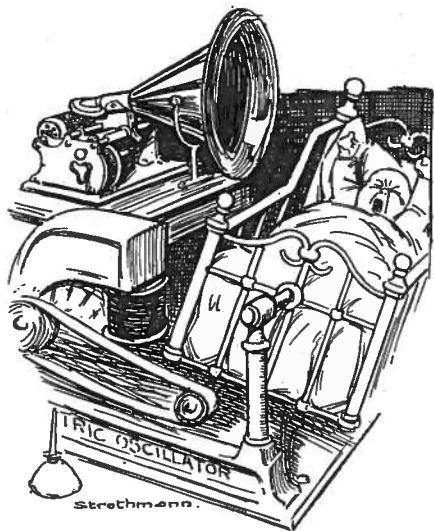
This wide love for the art springs from the singing school, secular or sacred; from the village band, and from the study of those instruments that are nearest the people. There are more pianos, violins, guitars, mandolins, and banjos among the working classes of America than in all the rest of the world, and the presence of these instruments in the homes has given employment to enormous numbers of teachers who have patiently taught the children and inculcated a love for music throughout the various communities.

Right here is the menace in machine-made music! The first rift in the lute has appeared. The cheaper of these instruments of the home are no longer being purchased as formerly, and all because the automatic music devices are usurping their places.

And what is the result? The child be-



"With a gramophone caroling love songs from amidstips."



"Will the infant be put to sleep by machinery?"

comes indifferent to practice, for when music can be heard in the homes without the labor of study and close application, and without the slow process of acquiring a technic, it will be simply a question of time when the amateur disappears entirely, and with him a host of vocal and instrumental teachers, who will be without field or calling.

Great Britain is experiencing this decline in domestic music and the English press is discussing it seriously in its editorials. A recent writer in the *London Spectator* dwells at considerable length upon the prevailing condition, and points to the novel as a sign of the times. The present-day fashionable writer of society fiction, he declares, does not find it necessary to reënforce his heroine with vocal accomplishment, "as in the good old days." He ascribes the passing of home performance, both vocal and instrumental, to the newborn love of athletics among the maids of Albion, together with the introduction of the phonograph as a mechanical substitute for amateur performances.

He believes that the exclamation of the little boy who rushed into his mother's room with the appeal: "O mamma, come into the drawing-room; there is a man in there playing the piano with his hands," is far less extravagant than many similar excursions into the domain of humorous and human

prophecy. He states from observation, that music has been steadily declining in Great Britain as a factor in domestic life, and that the introduction of machine-made music into the household is largely helping to assist in the change.

While a craze for athletics may have something to do with the indifference of the amateur performer in Great Britain, I do not believe it is much of a factor in this country. It is quite true that American girls have followed the athletic trend of the nation for a long while; at the same time they have made much headway in music, thanks to studious application. But let the mechanical music-maker be generally introduced into the homes; hour for hour these same girls will listen to the machine's performance, and, sure as can be, lose finally all interest in technical study.

Under such conditions the tide of amateurism cannot but recede, until there will be left only the mechanical device and the professional executant. Singing will no longer be a fine accomplishment; vocal exercises, so important a factor in the curriculum of physical culture, will be out of vogue!

Then what of the national throat? Will it not weaken? What of the national chest? Will it not shrink?

When a mother can turn on the phonograph with the same ease that she applies to the electric light, will she croon her baby to slumber with sweet lullabys, or will the infant be put to sleep by machinery?

Children are naturally imitative, and if, in their infancy, they hear only phonographs, will they not sing, if they sing at all, in imitation and finally become simply human phonographs—without soul or expression? Congregational singing will suffer also, which, though crude at times, at least improves the respiration of many a weary sinner and softens the voices of those who live amid tumult and noise.

The host of mechanical reproducing-ma-

chines, in their mad desire to supply music for all occasions, are offering to supplant the illustrator in the class room, the dance orchestra, the home and public singers and players, and so on. Evidently they believe no field too large for their incursions, no claim too extravagant. But the further they can justify these claims, the more noxious the whole system becomes.

Just so far as a spirit of emulation once inspired proud parent or aspiring daughter to send for the music teacher when the neighbor child across the way began to take lessons, the emulation is turning to the purchase of a rival piano player in each house, and the hope of developing the local musical personality is eliminated.

The country dance orchestra of violin, guitar, and melodeon had to rest at times, and the resultant interruption afforded the opportunity for general sociability and rest among the entire company. Now a tireless mechanism can keep everlastingly at it, and much of what made the dance a wholesome recreation is eliminated.

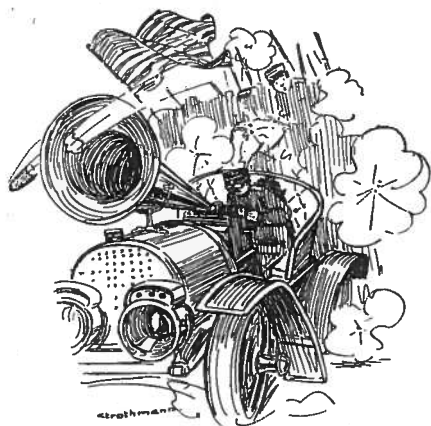
The country band, with its energetic renditions, its loyal support by local merchants, its benefit concerts, band wagon, gay uniforms, state tournaments, and the attendant pride and gayety, is apparently doomed to vanish in the general assault on personality in music.

There was a time when the pine woods of the north were sacred to summer simplicity, when around the camp fire at night the stories were told and the songs were sung with a charm all their own. But even now the invasion of the north has begun, and the ingenious purveyor of canned music is urging the sportsman, on his way to the silent places with gun and rod, tent and canoe, to take with him some disks, cranks, and cogs to sing to him as he sits by the firelight, a thought as unhappy and incongruous as canned salmon by a trout brook.

In the prospective scheme of mechanical music, we shall see man and maiden in a light canoe under the summer moon upon an



"Led to study language and manners of the orang-outang."



"Led into the strife by a machine."

Adirondack lake with a gramophone caroling love songs from amidships. The Spanish cavalier must abandon his guitar and serenade his beloved with a phonograph under his arm.

Shall we not expect that when the nation once more sounds its call to arms and the gallant regiment marches forth, there will be no majestic drum major, no serried ranks of sonorous trombones, no glittering array of brass, no rolling of drums? In their stead will be a huge phonograph, mounted on a 100 H. P. automobile, grinding out "The Girl I left Behind Me," "Dixie," and "The Stars and Stripes Forever."

How the soldiers' bosoms will swell at the thought that they are being led into the strife by a machine! And when in camp at night, they are gathered about the cheery fire, it will not be:

Give us a song, the soldier cried.

It will not be:

They sang of love, and not of fame,
Forgot was Britain's glory;
Each heart recalled a different name,
But all sang "Annie Laurie."

But it will be:

Whir—whir—whir—Song by the Bunting Quartet: "Your Name is Dennis."

Shades of Alexander, of Washington, of Napoleon, of Wellington, of Grant, and of the other immortal heroes! Never again will the soldier hear the defiant call of the bugle to battle, and the historic lines must be changed to:

"Gentlemen of the French guards, turn on your phonographs first."

And the future d'Auteroches will reply:

"Sir, we never turn on our phonographs first; please to turn yours first."

It is at the fireside that we look for virtue and patriotism; for songs that stir the blood and fire the zeal; for songs of home, of mother, and of love, that touch the heart and brighten the eye. Music teaches all that is beautiful in this world. Let us not hamper it with a machine that tells the story day by day, without variation, without soul, barren of the joy, the passion, the ardor that is the inheritance of man alone.

And now a word on a detail of personal interest which has a right to be heard because it voices a claim for fair play, far-reaching in its effects beyond the personal profit of one or many individuals. I venture to say that it will come as an entire surprise to almost every reader to learn that the composers of the music now produced so widely by the mechanical players of every sort draw no profit from it whatever. Composers are entirely unprotected by the copyright laws of the United States as at present written on the statute books and interpreted by the courts. The composer of the most popular waltz or march of the year must see it seized, reproduced at will on wax cylinder, brass disk, or strip of perforated paper, multiplied indefinitely, and sold at large profit all over the country, without a penny of remuneration to himself for the use of this original product of his brain.

It is this fact that is the immediate occasion of the present article, for the whole subject has become acute by reason of certain proposed legislation in Congress at Washington. The two phases of the subject—fair play to music and fair play to musicians—are so naturally connected that I have not hesitated to cover the legal and the artistic sides of the question in a single discussion.

A new copyright bill was introduced in Congress at the last session, a joint committee met on June 6th, to hear arguments on the bill as presented, and the following paragraph was cause for lively discussion on the part of the various talking-machine interests and composers represented:

Paragraph (G) of Section I, which provides "that the copyright secured by this Act shall include the sole and exclusive right to make, sell, distribute, or let for hire any device, contrivance, or appliance especially

adapted in any manner whatsoever to reproduce to the ear the whole or any material part of any work published and copyrighted after this Act shall have gone into effect, or by means of any such device or appliance publicly to reproduce to the ear the whole or any material part of such work."

I was among those present, and became particularly keen on the efforts of opposing interests to impress upon the committee by specious argument and fallacious interpretation that the composer of music had no rights under the Constitution that they were bound to respect; and that remedial legislation was wholly out of the question until the Constitution had first been amended.

One gentleman went the length of declaring that he would never have worked out his reproducing apparatus, had he not felt confident that the Constitution gave him the right to appropriate the brightest efforts of the American composer, and he voiced the belief that any act giving the composer ownership in his own property would be most unconstitutional.

Asked if he claimed the right to take one of my compositions and use it in connection with his mechanical device without compensation to myself, his unselfish reply was: "Under the Constitution and all the laws of the land, I say Yes, decidedly!"

Asked if he was not protected in his patents, his answer was promptly in the affirmative, but he seemed wholly unable to grasp the proposition that a composer should ask for similar protection on his creative work.

Asked finally if he desired the Constitution amended, he replied magnanimously: "No, sir, I want the Constitution to stand as it is."

Of course it must not be overlooked that in the United States Circuit Court of Appeals a case has just been decided adversely to the composer's rights in the profits accruing from the use of his compositions on the talking and playing machines, but this case awaits final adjudication, on appeal, in the United States Supreme Court. Judges Lacombe, Coxe, and Townsend rendered a decision as follows:

"We are of the opinion that a perforated paper roll, such as is manufactured by defendant, is not a copy of complainant's staff notation, for the following reasons:

"It is not a copy in fact; it is not designed to be read or actually used in reading music as the original staff notation is; and the claim that it may be read, which is practically disproved by the great preponderance of evi-

dence, even if true, would establish merely a theory or possibility of use, as distinguished from an actual use. The argument that because the roll is a notation or record of the music, it is, therefore, a copy, would apply to the disk of the phonograph or the barrel of the organ, which, it must be admitted, are not copies of the sheet music. The perforations in the rolls are not a varied form of symbols substituted for the symbols used by the author. They are mere adjuncts of a valve mechanism in a machine. In fact, the machine, or musical playing device, is the thing which appropriates the author's property and publishes it by producing the musical sounds, thus conveying the author's composition to the public."

May I ask, does this machine appropriate the author's composition without human assistance? Is the machine a free agent? Does it go about to seek whom it may devour? And if, as quoted above, the machine "publishes it," is not the owner of the machine responsible for its acts?

Is a copyright simply represented by a sheet of music? Is there no more to it than the silent notation? The little black spots on the five lines and spaces, the measured bars, are merely the record of birth and existence of a musical thought. These marks are something beyond the mere shape, the color, the length of the pages. They are only one form



"The Spanish cavalier must abandon his guitar."

of recording the coming into the world of a newly fashioned work, which, by the right of authorship, inherent and constitutional, belongs to him who conceived it. They are no more the living theme which they record than the description of a beautiful woman is the woman herself.

Should the day come that the courts will give me the absolute power of controlling my compositions, which I feel is now mine under the Constitution, then I am not so sure that my name will appear as often as at present in the catalogues of the talking and playing machines.

Evidently Judge Abinger, of the English bar, believes in the doctrine of substance, for he says:

"The most unlettered in music can distinguish one song from another; and the mere adaptation of the air, either by changing it to a dance, or by transferring it from one instrument to another, does not, even to common apprehension, alter the original subject. The ear tells you that it is the same. The original air requires the aid of genius for its construction; but a mere mechanic in music can make the adaptation or accompaniment. Substantially the piracy is where the appropriated music, though adapted to a different purpose from that of the original, may still be recognized by the ear."

Again the English court says:

"The composition of a new air or melody is entitled to protection; and the appropriation of the whole, or of any substantial part of it, without the license of the author, is a piracy, and the adaptation of it, either by changing it to a dance, or by transferring it from one instrument to another, if the ear detects the same air, in the same arrangement, will not relieve it from the penalty."



"Does it go about to seek whom it may devour?"

The section of the Constitution on which my whole legal contention is based provides:

"The Congress shall have power to secure for limited time to authors and inventors the exclusive right to their respective writings and discoveries."

And my claim is, that the words "exclusive" and "writings," particularly the latter, are so broad in their meaning that they cover every point raised by existing copyright laws, even to the unauthorized use of musical com-

positions by mechanical-reproducing apparatuses, and all this because these two words deal, not alone with the letter, but with the spirit as well.

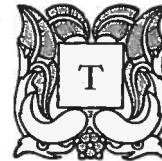
But let the ambiguities in the text of law be what they may; let there be of legal quips and quirks as many as you please, for the life of me I am puzzled to know why the powerful corporations controlling these playing and talking machines are so totally blind to the moral and ethical questions involved. Could anything be more blamable, as a matter of principle, than to take an artist's composition, reproduce it a thousandfold on their machines, and deny him all participation in the large financial returns, by hiding back of the diaphanous pretense that in the guise of a disk or roll, his composition is not his property?

Do they not realize that if the accredited composers, who have come into vogue by reason of merit and labor, are refused a just reward for their efforts, a condition is almost sure to arise where all incentive to further creative work is lacking, and compositions will no longer flow from their pens; or where they will be compelled to refrain from publishing their compositions at all, and control them in manuscript? What, then, of the playing and talking machines?

FOR THE GLORY OF THE SON OF HEAVEN

BY GRANT WALLACE*

ILLUSTRATED BY C. D. WELDON



HUD-CHIK, thud-chik, thud-chik!" droned the wooden voice of the great lever head of the rice mill, as Komatchi-san, like a patient treadmill dog, stepped alternately on and off the far end of the maullike lever. Three hours she had thumped the raw rice, and still the branlike husks clung fast to the alabaster grains. For the fourth time the girl stepped down from the lever platform into her waiting gita clogs, thrust the thongs between her brown toes, and scraped her way across the dirt floor to the hopper.

From her corner another figure, slim and bent, rose from turning her small tome fanning mill. Approaching the hopper she stood at the side of her apple-cheeked daughter and wearily ran a fistful of brown, deckled grains from hand to hand. The breath with which she blew away the chaff ended in a sigh. Komatchi-san adjusted the faded black shoulder straps to bring higher the shaven poll of the baby brother who, astride her waist, clung, sleeping, to her bent back. With a weary gesture she sat down on the end of the ancient rice maul and buried her olive cheeks in her knuckles. She looked out dully through the open front of the hut with its thatch of rice straw, across the dusty road to where the gold and red lacquered ancient temple of Kanzensha, "The Place for Urging

the Good," loomed behind the gatelike stone pillars of the torii, and wondered whether the shide prayer papers which festooned it would bring good fortune to the toilers of the rice mill. Then her gaze rested upon a heavy-muscled youth in a blue tunic and black mushroom hat, sitting on the shafts of his ricksha by the roadside, and she sighed again; but the boy, Hoko Sato, kept his unwinking gaze fixed on the ground.

"O Komatchi-san, my daughter," said the aged fanner, "the gemnai maul is not light, the child on your shoulders is heavy, and your heart is heavier still. The hillside rice is hard—hard, perhaps, as the heart of the foreign money lender in Kobe; and the husks cling, like misfortune to the poor. . . . Do you think you have it clean enough?"

"Fit for coolies only, Okka-san," said Komatchi-san, rising, "and maybe fit for the miserable widow and daughter of the honorable samurai who died gloriously at Wei-Hi-Wai, fighting the pigtail people, but not yet augustly clean enough for the soldiers of the Emperor who are now billeted in our unworthy hovel."

"Nor yet for Hoko-san, who yesterday was rejected from the army of the Emperor because his heart was weak?" queried the widow, peering narrowly into her face.

"For the soldiers who are worthy to go forward to death, I will make it as white as the crown of Fuji Yama," said the girl;

*The author, during the late Russo-Japanese war, was the only English-speaking correspondent with General Nodzu's army, and, so far as he is aware, the only white man who ever participated in the desperate charges of the Japanese. He witnessed every important incident related in this story. The attempt herein has been to picture to Western eyes the little-known mainsprings of the bravery of the Japanese Tommy Atkins, and to depict the underlying emotions of the private soldier under stress—the only occasions when the veneer is rubbed off and the Human Being emerges. The scenes on the battle-field are not fiction, but fact.—THE EDITOR.

IT REALLY IS MORE BLESSED to give than to receive, and analogously it is more blessed to give a fair equivalent for what you take. That accords better with the impulses of a sound heart than to take and give nothing. To get the best of a bargain is only less disgusting than to get the worst of it, and much of the time it is more disgusting. The man through whose fingers the ticker tape is running, has his whole attention concentrated on this sordid effort to get the better of a bargain. He is not even striving, as he may properly do, to get a just price for his own, for as a rule he owns not much more of what he buys or sells than the privilege of buying or selling it. The game at its best is dog eat dog, and at its ordinary worst it is dog eat rabbit. To play it as a game is more tolerable than to make serious work of it, but it is a game that is apt to run away with its players, and absorb more thought, if not more money, than they can spare.

THAT IS THE WORST of stock speculation—its devastating and unsettling effect upon the mind. It is the enemy of tranquillity, of concentration, of all lofty thought. It is engrossing, and incurably sordid. It is stimulating in an unhealthful way that induces restlessness and calls for exciting pleasures

as the alternative to anxious thoughts. It destroys thrift, and the rapidity of its gains, when there are gains, makes the slower profits of work seem derisory. And it undermines and coarsens character. The very foundation of character is honesty, and the pith of honesty is to give good value for what you get. But nearly all stock speculation is an effort to gain, without due labor or return, values that some one else has produced.

It may be that as much as that can be said of most of the processes by which folks get rich. If that is true, so much the worse for the other processes. Many of them are disenchanting enough. There is usually a considerable proportion of flint in the make-up of fortune-builders, and comparatively few of them get rich as the result of treatment taken for enlargement of the heart. Nevertheless great wealth that comes as the result of great services rendered has a different quality from the easy-come money that results from having the wit or the luck to hold out one's apron when the plum tree is shaken. Money ought to be, but is not, a measure of service. We ought to be, but are not, ashamed to take more than we are worth. But at least it helps our self-respect to go through some reasonable motions of making a return for what we get.

"THE MENACE OF MECHANICAL MUSIC"

SOME OF THE REPLIES EVOKED BY MR. SOUSA'S ARTICLE

Editor of Appleton's Magazine, Sir:

I HAVE read with much interest an article under this title, in the September APPLETON'S, written by my distinguished friend John Philip Sousa. Having been closely identified with the development of the talking machine, I was curious to learn how many and which of our cherished institutions were menaced by the great and growing use of these mechanical reproducers of music; and after having read the catalogue set forth in the above-entitled article, I confess to having breathed a sigh of relief.

But before taking up the details, I cannot refrain from calling to mind that the mechani-

cal reproducer of musical and other sounds has received, in the article referred to, precisely the same greeting that has been accorded to the other really great products of mechanical genius. There are not lacking, in such cases, those who see in the new device some peril to the community, and who seek to excite opposition to it; though usually, if the opposition be probed, a selfish motive may be found. One of the distinguished instances was the cotton gin, which was regarded as so serious a "menace" to those who earned a livelihood by separating cotton fiber from its seed that the inventor was stoned by the infuriated representatives of the "menaced"

industry. Now, the annual output of about ten million bales of cotton is the answer to that historic wail of unfounded apprehension.

There are those still living who can recall the outcry against the sewing machine, and the predictions that it would deprive the poor sewing girl of her scanty wage. But notwithstanding these predictions, plausible as they appeared to be, there are to-day a score of sewing women earning, and with comparative facility, good wages by the aid of the mechanical device, where there was then one securing a pittance by plying her needle.

But after all, what *are* the existing institutions which are menaced by the talking machines and automatic piano players?

First it is complained that the expression or rendition of music suffers, with a threat of deterioration of the public taste and appreciation in music.

To this assertion, a general denial can be confidently entered. No one who reflects upon the matter for a single moment will deny that the average rendition of music by the amateurs in the homes of our land is far, far below that of the mechanical music reproducer of to-day. It is just because these devices bring into our homes renditions of music of a superior quality, to which the vast majority of our people are total strangers, that they are meeting with such universal acceptance.

But there is much more than this. The average amateur is generally limited to *one* instrument, and his or her proficiency admits only of the indifferent rendition of a small number of compositions, usually of elementary character and mediocre quality. The graphophone, on the contrary, brings into the home the widest range of musical renditions, vocal and instrumental, solo and concerted, rendered, it may be, by the greatest living artists. So far, therefore, from the musical taste and appreciation of the public being menaced from this cause, it is safe to say that nothing has yet been devised by the wit of man so calculated to promote these qualities.

But let us hasten to the next of our menaced institutions. Our author assures us that the onward march of the mechanical music maker will cause the girls of our nation to desist from the effort to make mediocre piano players of themselves, and will also diminish the use of the banjo, mandolin, and guitar. Assuming for a moment the correctness of this statement, which of our readers, on hearing it, will not

cheer onward the march of the mechanical music maker, and wish that it may soon accomplish its wholesome mission? What a fearful waste of time and what needless suffering have been caused by the futile but persevering attempts to make all our Mary Janes "learn the piano." And to think that now a mighty reforming agency has appeared, which will abolish from our houses and flats the horrors of scales and exercises, and will confine these tedious performances to the musical colleges, or to those who really possess the gift of musical expression!

But I deny that the progress of the mechanical music maker will diminish individual application to the art of musical rendition. On the contrary, one important result of the present-day musical sound records is to excite an interest in music in millions of homes which otherwise have absolutely no access to really artistic musical renditions, or even access to renditions of any sort of great musical compositions. To those gifted by nature with a singing voice the opportunity of listening repeatedly to the phrasing and expression of great artists is of incalculable benefit. Already the high-class musical sound records have produced great educational results, affording to gifted persons in remote places and of slender means the extraordinary advantage of singing lessons from the greatest living artists, and a career of great utility is opened in this direction.

The idea that any person having the natural ability and desire to sing, will permit a mechanical device to do his singing for him is laughably absurd. On the contrary, the mechanical reproduction of songs by correct methods will only stimulate him to sing the more and enable him to sing the better.

Music and musical tone production has differed in the past from all other forms of art in that the pleasure which it afforded was but of a momentary and passing existence. We love the pictures and paintings in our homes and in the great galleries, and delight in feasting our eyes upon the masterpieces which noted sculptors have produced. There is a certain sense of possession and security in the knowledge that, if we care to, we may cross to Dresden and linger as long as we will in silent contemplation, not to say awe approaching adoration, before Raphael's Sistine Madonna. A few steps into another room, and once again Hoffmann's wondrous masterpiece, Christ in the Temple, is ours to remain with and to behold in sweet meditation.

But oh! the memory of that night when Jean de Reske sang at the Metropolitan. Beautiful and sweet and blessed memory, but only a thing of memory now; and the recollections of the nightingale tones of Jenny Lind's remarkable voice! Ah, but a recollection now; a thing of the dead, dead past, gone, gone forever.

But the talking machine will change all this, and future generations will rejoice and be able to enjoy forever the music of the great artists of to-day. Tamagno is gone, but the voice of the great Italian tenor remains and brings pleasure and instruction to thousands of homes. Our well-beloved Joe Jefferson is no longer with us, but we have a precious legacy in Rip's quaint and pathetic meeting with his daughter "Meenie," after twenty years' sleep. The matchless and incomparable triple-tongue cornet tones of Jules Levy remain to delight and please us, although all that was mortal of the great artist lies buried in a country churchyard.

Can we pay too great a tribute to the genius in the invention which makes it possible to bottle up this wine of music and song inexhaustible, and should we not offer up our thanks for "The Blessing of Mechanical Music"?

PAUL H. CROMELIN.

Editor of Appleton's Magazine, Sir:

WHILE it is not unexpected that an alarmist should have appeared in behalf of hand-played music, yet mechanical music has come to stay, and arguments in its favor are by no means lacking.

This letter is not intended to deal with the creative in music, but rather with the proper rendering of the music created. There is but one Mendelssohn, Chopin, Rubinstein, Schumann, or Wagner, and the combined efforts of the entire population of the United States could not create what these and other composers have created, but the proper rendering of their creations is another matter, and must be based either on technic or on mechanical devices properly manipulated. It is much easier to move slowly two or three levers in accordance with the markings on a perforated roll than it is to strike faultlessly several hundred keys per minute on the

piano and at the same time maintain the proper expression throughout.

Music, soulful music, is, has been, and forever will be based on mathematical and mechanical precision, so says the physicist; and when it comes right down to the expression of "soul states," human skill is totally lacking, and as a result we have a series of so-called musical instruments, such as the piano and pipe organ and all other instruments wherein the key is fixed, which we call soul-inspiring, but which in reality are capable of producing only a series of discords which differ from true harmony as sunlight differs from darkness, and such instruments prevail simply from lack of human skill.

To be brief with the illustration, sound is a wave motion of mathematical precision, for middle C, 256 vibrations per second or thereabout depending on the pitch adopted, and for high C or the octave, double that number, or 512. For the diatonic scale, which is the scale of true musical tone, the vibrations for all intervening notes bear a certain fixed ratio to each other and to the fundamental tone, and by this means the exact number of vibrations per second for each note can be determined. Change the key, and we not only have the introduction of all sharps and flats with which we are familiar, but also a host of other notes appear, differing from each other by but a few vibrations per second, just difference enough to make a wholesome discord. At least seventy-six notes per octave are required for all keys in the true diatonic scale. It is impossible to adhere to strict ratios for want of human skill, and we therefore select twelve notes per octave, called the tempered scale, all of which notes are modified and out of tune, but compromise is necessary and no key is favored; in fact, the difference between major and minor tones is ignored, and the limma or semitone is exactly half of either, and compromise means discord. The mechanical player suggests great possibilities for the future of music, in that automatic piano- and organ-playing devices may be so perfected as to enable an instrument with seventy-six keys to the octave to be constructed and operated with the ease of the present playing devices. Then we shall have "soulful music."

NELSON H. GENUNG.

APPLETON'S MAGAZINE

Published Monthly by
D. APPLETON & COMPANY
436 Fifth Avenue, New York

15 Cents a Copy

\$1.50 a Year

VOL. VIII

DECEMBER, 1906

No. 6

CONTENTS

Cover Design by S. de Ivanowski	
Illustration to Accompany "Mother".....	S. de Ivanowski <i>Frontispiece</i>
<small>Reproduced in color.</small>	
Our American Colony at Jerusalem.....	Alexander Hume Ford 643
<small>Illustrated with photographs printed in color.</small>	
My Friends of the Harem	Demetra Vaka Brown..... 655
The Sea Horse. A Fable.....	Edith Wyatt 659
<small>Decorations by Fred Richardson printed in color.</small>	
My Discovery of New England	Emerson Hough..... 665
<small>Illustrations by F. Strothmann reproduced in color.</small>	
The Wedding. A Story.....	Zona Gale..... 674
<small>Illustration by G. Patrick Nelson reproduced in color.</small>	
The Fire Dancer. A Poem.....	Lewis Worthington Smith..... 682
<small>Illustration by Arthur Becher reproduced in color.</small>	
Hyman the Sorrowful. A Story.....	M'Cready Sykes..... 684
<small>Illustrations by August Spaenkuch reproduced in color.</small>	
How Caldwell "Made Good." A Story	Hugh S. Johnson 693
<small>Illustrations by Harry Leonard.</small>	
Love's Alchemy. A Poem.....	Thomas Speed Mosby 699
Chantemerle. A Story.....	Edith Barnard 700
<small>Illustrations by Arthur Becher reproduced in color.</small>	
The Sculpture of Gutzon Borglum.....	Rupert Hughes..... 709
<small>Illustrated with photographs printed in color.</small>	
Thoughts of a Child. Verses.....	Josephine Welles Richardson.. 718
<small>Illustrations by Ruth Mary Hallock reproduced in color.</small>	
Mother. A Serial Story. Chapters I-IV.....	Maxim Gorky..... 720
<small>Illustrations by S. de Ivanowski reproduced in color.</small>	
Glory of Winter. A Poem.....	Curtis Hidden Page..... 736
Legislating in Parliament and Congress. I. The Autocratic Commons.	A. Maurice Low..... 737
<small>Illustrated with photographs.</small>	
MacPhairrson's Happy Family. A Story.....	Charles G. D. Roberts..... 749
<small>Illustrations by Frank VerBeck reproduced in color.</small>	
The Reformation of "Kicker." A Story	Edfrid Bingham 760
<small>Illustrations by Irma Dérèmeaux reproduced in color.</small>	
The Riddle of Personality. II. The Subliminal Self.....	H. Addington Bruce..... 771
Drudgery. A Poem	Nixon Waterman..... 776
Brazil To-day.....	Leão Velloso 777
<small>Illustrated with photographs.</small>	
A Little Comedy at Gordann's. A Story.....	Leo Crane 786
<small>Illustrations by Harry B. Lachman.</small>	
Concerning American Parents.....	Anna McClure Sholl 794
Current Reflections.....	Edward S. Martin 798