

Evening Chat

My neighbor has bought a piano and now from morning till night I hear the regular, correct play of the instrument, again soft and again irresistibly quite entertaining. There has been much discussion of late years regarding this "soulless music" as it is called and there are still many who prefer no music at all rather than listen to the steady, too-regular music which plays mechanically. I think, however, that there are people who love music, who feel that as they have neither the time nor the talent for learning how to play themselves, they can be satisfied with the music as it comes from either a player or a victrola. Victrolas have come to mean any musical reproduction machine whether of that make or of other make. I hear people say: "I have a victrola." When you see it yourself you find it is a Brunswick or a Harpison or an Edison or some other make of which there are many.

It isn't half bad to sit quietly in the evening and hear the latest songs of the great singers, even if reproduced. Even Williams can sing the heartiest of songs to another world whether he sings any place for his voice. It seems to me that all talents must go with one into the next world, for they are surely God-given. I heard him personally sing at Clarksburg not so many years ago and when his full rich voice vibrated through the audience, where remained a quiet which was so beautiful that even the breathing of those near you could be heard. When he sang "I Remembering is Forgetting, When I Have Forgotten You come one near the front of the house to cry softly and it was not long until that sympathetic voice poured mysteriously up and down the chords of that woman's sensibilities played so intensely that the left the seat. There come times when we

are completely overcome by some such experience—something which brings back a memory very deep—very difficult to reach without hurt. If ever a singer accomplished that, Evan Williams did that night in his song "Forgotten."

And I wonder if touching the depths of people can rightfully be called emotionism. We hear so much of the unreliability of the emotion. Just how close our emotions are to our souls remains a mystery. Of course there will always be many who can cry and laugh in the same breath. I have known men who seldom gave way. And I have seen one or two in the grip of a mighty emotion which shook and swayed past any telling. Some people there are who use the emotions as an outlet for every sort of an intensity—much in the same manner that one turns on and off a water. There are others who stand guard over themselves to such an extent that they become as a mighty ocean dashing upon a stone wall. Sometimes only the spray goes over but again the wall becomes only a small obstruction and great deluges make a sea on the other side. I think we all admire the man or woman who has great self control. I have seen women clench their hands and suffer in perfect silence, unable to give way and this is always the greatest grief.

Do you know some one who seems to be utterly unable to express his true feelings? Have you watched in vain for a sign of the least emotion? Recently I became quite familiar with an odd personality and it was many a long day before I felt I at all comprehended any of the subtle make-up

of this character. I am especially impressed in characters which are distinctive and this particular one became as interesting as a puzzle. In the first place I soon discovered that all real feeling was hid beneath many layers of human flesh. Most people display some sort of emotion when opportunity offers—but not this person. If conversation ran on a subject in the affirmative, he invariably chose the negative side to discuss. No matter how you felt he did feel or should feel about a subject, he without exception announced that he felt the opposite. He was as contrary as a person could possibly be and never in the slightest incident would he agree with you on any subject whatever. After a while you began to believe that he had no real feelings but instead was made up of subterfuges. Then some day when he least suspected, you discovered him deep in the doing of some deed which argued that he felt about that matter just as you had believed he ought to feel. When questioned, he denied it vociferously. Just then you began to doubt his well

known scheme for ever revealing his true self and were ever afterwards on the outlook for the truth concerning him. In fact this sort of a personality is hardest of all to understand for the greater his emotions are, the less he has to say—until he becomes so much of a puzzle that unless you are especially interested, you give him up in despair. Character study is hugely entertaining.

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