

ORGANS OF HEARING.

Rev. Dr. Talmage Talks on the
Architecture of the Ear.

An Instructive Discourse on Man's Organ
of Hearing—God Does Not Endow
Us with a Faculty He Does
Not Himself Possess.

In the following discourse Rev. Dr. Talmage sets forth God's wisdom in the construction of the human ear. The text is:

He that planted the ear, shall he not hear?—
Psalms xciv., 9.

Architecture is one of the most fascinating arts, and the study of Egyptian, Grecian, Etruscan, Roman, Byzantine, Moorish, Renaissance styles of building has been to many a man a sublime life work. Lincoln and York cathedrals, St. Paul's and St. Peter's, and Arch of Titus, and Theban temple Alhambra and Parthenon are the monuments to the genius of those who built them. But more wonderful than any arch they ever lifted, or any transept window they ever illumined, or any Corinthian column they ever crowned, or any Gothic cloister they ever elaborated, is the human ear.

Among the most skillful and assiduous physiologists of our time have been those who given their time to an examination of the ear and the study of its arches, its walls, its floor, its canals, its aqueducts, its galleries, its intricacies, its convolutions, its Divine machinery, and yet, it will take another thousand years before the world comes to any adequate appreciation of what God did when He planned and executed the infinite and overmastering architecture of the human ear. The most of it is invisible and the microscope breaks down in the attempt at exploration. The cartilage which we call the ear is only the storm door of the great temple clear down out of sight, next door to the immortal soul.

Such scientists as Helmholtz and Conte and De Blainville and Rank and Buck have attempted to walk the Apian way of the human ear, but the mysterious pathway has never been fully trodden but by two feet—the foot of sound and the foot of God. Three ears on each side the head—the external ear, the middle ear, the internal ear, but all connected by most wonderful telegraphy.

The external ear in all ages adorned by precious stones or precious metals. The Temple of Jerusalem, partly built by the contribution of ear-rings, and Homer in the Iliad speaks of Hera, "the three bright drops, her glittering gems suspended from the ear;" and many of the adornments of modern times were only copies of her ear jewels found in Pompeian museum and Etruscan vase. But while the outer ear may be adorned by human art, the middle and internal ear are adorned and garnished only by the hand of the Lord Almighty. The stroke of a key of yonder organ sets the air vibrating, and the external ear catches the undulating sound and passes it on through the bonelets of the middle ear to the internal ear, and the 3,000 fibers of the human brain take up the vibration and roll the sound on into the soul. The hidden machinery of the ear by physiologists called by the names of things familiar to us, like the hammer, something to strike—like the anvil—something to be smitten—like the stirrup of the saddle with which we mount the steed—like the drum, beaten in the march—like the harp strings, to be swept with music. Coiled like a "snail shell," by which one of the innermost passages of the ear is actually called—like a stairway, the sound to ascend—like a bent tube of a heating apparatus, taking that which enters round and round—like a labyrinth with wonderful passages into which the thought enters

only to be lost in bewilderment. A muscle contracting when the noise is too loud, just as the pupil of the eye contracts when the light is too glaring. The external ear is defended by wax which with its bitterness discourages insectile invasion. The internal ear embedded in by what is far the hardest bone of the human system, a very rock of strength and defiance.

The ear is so strange a contrivance that by the estimate of one scientist it can catch the sound of 73,700 vibrations in a second. The outer ear taking in all kinds of sound, whether the crash of an avalanche or the hum of a bee. The sound passing to the inner door of the outside ear halts until another mechanism, Divine mechanism, passes it on by the bonelets of the middle ear, and coming to the inner door of that second ear the sound has no power to come further until another Divine mechanism passes it on through into the inner ear, and then the sound comes to the rail track of the brain branchlet, and rolls on and on until it comes to sensation, and there the curtain drops, and a hundred gates shut, and the voice of God seems to say to all human inspection: "Thus far and no farther."

In this vestibule of the palace of the soul, how many kings of thought, of medicine, of physiology, have done penance of life-long study and got no further than the vestibule. Mysterious home of reverberation and echo. Grand central depot of sound. Headquarters to which there come quick dispatches, part the way by cartillages, part the way by air, part the way by bone, part the way by nerve—the slowest dispatch plunging into the ear at the speed of 1,090 feet a second. Small instrument of music on which is played all the music you ever heard, from the grand deurs of an August thunder-storm to the softest breathings of a flute. Small instrument of music, only a quarter of an inch of surface and the thinness of one two hundred and fiftieth part of an inch and that thinness divided into three layers. In that ear musical staff, lines, spaces, bar and rest. A bridge leading from the outside natural world to the inside spiritual world; we see the abutment at this end of the bridge, but the fog of an unlifted mystery hiding the abutment on the other end of the bridge. Whispering gallery or the soul. The human voice is God's eulogy the ear. That voice capable of producing 17,592,186,044,415 sounds, and all that variety made, not for the regalement of beast or bird, but for the human ear.

About 15 years ago, in Venice, lay down in death one whom many considered the greatest musical composer of the century. Struggling on up from six years of age when he was left fatherless, Wagner rose through the obloquy of the world, and oftentimes all nations seemingly against him, until he gained the favor of a king, and won the enthusiasm of the opera houses of Europe and America. Struggling all the way on to 70 years of age, to conquer the world's ear. In that same attempt to master the human ear and gain supremacy over this gate of the immortal soul, great battles were fought by Mozart, Gluck and Weber, and by Beethoven and Meyerbeer, by Rossini and by all the roll of German and Italian and French composers, some of them in the battle leaving their blood on the keynotes and the musical scores. Great battle fought for the ear—fought with baton, with organ-pipe, with trumpet, with cornet-a-piston, with all ivory and brazen and silver and golden weapons of the orchestra; royal theater and cathedral and academy of music the fortresses for the contest for the ear. England and Egypt fought for the supremacy of the Suez canal, and the Spartans and the Persians fought for the defile of Thermopylae; but the musicians of all ages have fought for the mastery of the auditory canal and the defile of the immortal soul and the Thermopylae of struggling cadences.

For the conquest of the ear mayday struggled on up from the garret where he had neither fire nor food, on and on until under the too great nervous strain of hearing his own oration of the "Creation" performed, he was carried out to die, but leaving as his legacy to the world 118 symphonies, 163 pieces for the baritone, 15 masses, 5 oratorios, 42 German and Italian songs, 39 canons, 365 English and Scotch songs with accompaniment, and 1,536 pages of libretti. All that to capture the gate of the body that swings in from the tympanum to the "snail shell" lying on the beach of the ocean of the immortal soul.

To conquer the ear, Handel struggled on from the time when his father would not let him go to school lest he learn the gamut and become a musician, and from the time when he was allowed in the organ loft just to play after the audience had left, to the time when he left to all nations his unparalleled oratorios of "Esther," "Deborah," "Sampson," "Jephthah," "Judas Maccabeus," "Israel in Egypt," and the "Messiah," the soul of the great German composer still weeping in the Dead March of our great obsequies and triumphing in the raptures of every Easter morn.

To conquer the ear and take this gate of the immortal soul, Schubert composed his great "Serenade," writing the staves of the music on the bill of fare in a restaurant, and went on until he could leave as a legacy to the world over 1,000 magnificent compositions in music. To conquer the ear and take this gate of the soul's castle Mozart struggled on through poverty until he came to a pauper's grave, and one chilly, wet afternoon the body of him who gave to the world the "Requiem" and the "G-minor Symphony" was crunched in on top of two other paupers into a grave which to this day is epitaphless.

For the ear everything mellifluous, from the birth hour when our earth was wrapped in swaddling clothes of light and serenaded by other worlds, from the time when Jubal thrummed the first harp and pressed a key of the first organ, down to the music of this Sabbath day. Yea, for the ear the coming overtures of Heaven, for whatever other part of the body may be left in the dust, the ear, we know, is to come to celestial life; otherwise, why the "harpers harping with their harps?" For the ear, carol of lark, and whistle of quail, the chirp of cricket, and dash of cascade, and roar of tides oceanic, and doxology of worshipful assembly and minstrelsy, cherubic, seraphic and archangelic. For the ear all Pandean pipes, all flutes, all clarinets, all hautboys, all bassoons, all bells, and all organs—Luzerne and Westminster abbey, and Freyburg, and Berlin, and all the organ pipes set across Christendom, the great Giant's Causeway for the monarchs of music to pass over. For the ear, all chimes, all ticklings of chronometers, all anthems, all dirges, all glees, all choruses, all lullabies, all orchestration. Oh, the ear, God honored the ear, grooved with Divine sculpture and poised with Divine gracefulness and upholstered with curtains of Divine embroidery, and corrodred by Divine carpentry, and pillared with Divine architecture, and chiselled in bone of Divine masonry, and conquered by processions of Divine marshalling. The ear! A perpetual point of interrogation, asking how? a perpetual point of apostrophe appealing to God. None but God could plan it. None but God could build it. None but God could work it. None but God could keep it. None but God could understand it. None but God could explain it. Oh, the wonders of the human ear.

How surpassingly sacred the human ear. You had better be careful how you let the sound of blasphemy or uncleanness step into that holy of holies. The Bible says that in the ancient temple the priest was set apart by the putting of the blood of a ram on the tip of

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