AN EAST SIDE MUSIC SCHOOL—HOW ART HELPS TO MAKE GOOD CITIZENS: BY KATHARINE M. ROOF.

The sociological problem with which America is confronted to-day might be defined as an oversupply of raw material. Exactly similar conditions do not exist in any other country in the world. Within the last twenty years a steadily increasing number of steerage emigrants from all parts of Europe has been arriving in the country. A few years ago the majority of these new residents were Irish. At present there is a preponderance of Jews and Italians. There are also—as we all know—a number of Germans, Russians, Hungarians, Swedes and Norwegians, Finlanders, Syrians,—indeed there is scarcely any nation that is not represented.

The problem of this Tower of Babel condition is more evident in New York city than in any other one spot in the country. Here the congestion and variety are greatest. The difficulty of dealing with the resulting situation is one not only obvious to the sociologist, political economist, settlement and church worker, but must be patent to every observer who travels in the street cars, walks in Central park on a Sunday, or crosses the city squares. The conclusion of all thinkers has been the same upon one point,—namely, that the work of assimilation and reorganization must be carried on through the children. The solution of the difficulty lies with the educationalists, whether working through schools, churches or settlements.

One of the most practical and successful of this sort of enterprise in New York is the East Side Music School Settlement. Although its work, according to literal classification, would come under the head of specialized education, yet its influence is infinitely more far reaching than such a characterization would seem to imply.

And with all the confused ideas and ideals that exist among us with regard to education, certainly one thing is clear: the country that can afford it owes to every man, woman and child the thing it earnestly and definitely reaches out for with the willingness to work. It must come to the mind of many thinkers on the subject, that general enforced education is a doubtful good, and that much in our training, through schools and missions, is productive of evil and tends to create a discontented class of individuals, unfit either for what
AN EAST SIDE MUSIC SCHOOL

they came from or what they crudely aspire toward. But the thing
that people will work for, deny themselves to obtain, as do the
majority of the East Side Jews for the education of their children, is
a thing that they should be helped to attain. When young children
are willing to work hard at what is called the drudgery of music, and
can even have an enthusiasm about it, then, unquestionably, those
children should be given that opportunity. It is just this oppor-
tunity that the Music School offers.

The history of the work is interesting. In the beginning it
was the idea of a woman,—Miss Emilie Wagner who is still
head of the violin department in the school. Twelve years
ago she began giving violin and piano lessons in a room in Chatham
Square to the children of the neighborhood. Her experiment soon
attracted the attention of the College and University Settlements,
and was, for the time, carried on in connection with these organiza-
tions, progressing all the time into a larger and more important
movement. David Mannes became interested in the school and has
for several years taught some of the advanced violin pupils; also
Frank Damrosch, although he does not teach in the school, keeps
a sympathetic eye upon its progress. The founders,—Mrs. Samuel
Untermeyer, Mrs. Frederick Van Beuren, Mr. Charles Ditson, Mr.
Joseph Pulitzer and Mr. James Loeb, and the other patrons who first
contributed to the endowment of the school, have interested their
friends, and so the work has grown into a little conservatory which
now occupies two houses, once substantial old New York homes, in
East Third Street. In the present management there are four resi-
dent workers who attend to the social administrative duties and over
forty teachers, including salaried, volunteer and pupil-teachers, who
do not live in the settlement. Mr. David Mannes is director of the
orchestra class and of the pupil-teachers’ violin class. The general
violin department is under Miss Emilie Wagner, and the piano
department under Mrs. James Herreshoff. The volunteer teachers
are examined as to their fitness by the heads of their departments
before they are accepted, so that the standard is maintained on an
absolutely professional basis whether the teacher’s services are sal-
aried or given.

The pupil-teachers, who constitute an important part of the
PROMISING YOUNG VIOLINIST AT THE MUSIC SETTLEMENT
PUPIL-TEACHER GIVING VIOLIN LESSON
AT THE MUSIC SCHOOL
AN EARNEST LITTLE PIANO PUPIL
A STRING QUARTETTE OF MUSIC SETTLEMENT BOYS
A TRIO DOING SERIOUS WORK
scheme, are older scholars who are preparing to become professional musicians and have advanced sufficiently to be capable of instructing younger pupils. The average age of these pupil-teachers is eighteen years; they are not, as has been mistakenly supposed by imaginative enthusiasts unacquainted with the exigencies of art education, precocious infants of six and seven. These pupil-teachers are regularly paid at the rate of fifty cents an hour, which is a very fair price compared with the average salaries paid to musicians and the relative cost of living in that part of the city; for the uptown pupil-teacher, with greater expense of living, often does not receive more than a dollar an hour. The pupils pay twenty cents a half hour for their lessons which, although less than the pupil-teacher is paid for the instruction, is yet, relatively again, a fair price, and saves both parents and children the discomfort of feeling themselves objects of charity. The pupils, however, seem to realize, appreciatively rather than sensitively, that they are receiving more than an equivalent for their money.

The pupil-teacher system has other advantages beside that of giving the pupils of ability and industry a paying occupation and experience in teaching; for it is often the case that the pupil to whom technical processes are still recent problems is better equipped to meet and overcome the difficulties of the beginner than the virtuoso teacher who has left first processes, both mental and mechanical, far behind.

INSTRUCTION is given in piano, violin, viola, 'cello, singing, harmony and history of music. There is also a senior and a junior orchestra class, and classes in sight-reading for the older pupils. This vocal work is necessarily undertaken in a more general and simple way than the instrumental music, as it is unwise to attempt specialized training of the voice at an early age.

The education of the pupils not only consists of study of the instrument with which the child expects to specialize, but usually of one or two others, beside lessons in theory and composition. Thus the child specializing as a violinist will probably play the piano and often the viola and 'cello. The value of this all-around musical education cannot be overestimated even as a means of musical culture, and if the child should develop any ability for composition, the im-
portance of an early knowledge of the possibilities and effects obtainable from various instruments is incalculable.

Every month there are musicals at the Settlement at which well-known artists often give their services. The children also play occasionally for entertainments at other Settlements. Some of the advanced pupils are permitted to accept engagements to play in drawing-rooms or at entertainments, on a professional basis.

The children who attend the school do not, as a rule, come from the very poorest of the East-Side families, as their ability to pay for their lessons testifies. Many of the older children are in the High School and the Normal College. A number of scholarships exist, however, and are given to those pupils who show marked talent and are absolutely unable to pay for their lessons. The whole scheme is such that pupils without obvious talent are dropped after a just period of probation, as the school has a waiting list of seventy in the piano department alone. Many of the pupils will undoubtedly be able to become self-supporting. They seem to take their work seriously and to believe in themselves, and, in spite of the outspoken flattery of the thoughtless visitor, to remain unself-conscious.

The attitude of the children toward themselves and the other pupils is both interesting and amusing. One little boy asked one day concerning another pupil if he was "a talent." Their critical attitude does not only include the other pupils, arguments about the "form" of some well-known artist that the children have heard are frequently to be overheard among them. In arranging for the quartette picture reproduced here, the small first violin was by mistake put into the seat next the 'cello, which he took, objecting, "The viola sits here." It is impossible to make the most superficial visit to the school without noticing some illustration of this serious professional attitude in the children. When a tiny girl at a reception musicale forgets the cake she is eating in listening to a fellow pupil's interpretation of a sonata, one realizes suddenly the quality of that childish interest. Almost all of the pupils play with intelligence, a good feeling for rhythm, and for the idea contained in the music.

The pupils are, for the most part, Russian and Roumanian Jews, although there are a few Germans and Americans. The Russian Jews, especially, seem to have a strong predisposition toward music, and no musician or music lover can fail to be interested in what the
school is accomplishing with them. Every art sympathizer must feel that the individual possessing musical talent is entitled to the opportunity for self-development,—which is all that any art education can do for the student,—and more than this, that by providing the means for this development we are promoting the advancement of musical culture in this country. But there is, as has been said, a significance in the work of the Music Settlement larger even than its artistic importance, and that is its sociological aspect.

THE Jews exist, at present, in our city in such numbers that it is impossible to ignore them as a force to be reckoned with. It is a fact recognized, I believe, by all Settlement workers, that they are more ready to avail themselves of opportunities for advancement than any of the other foreigners living and constantly coming in such appalling numbers to our country. As pupils, the Jewish children are ambitious; the parents are ambitious for their children. In many cases it must be admitted the ambition is commercial and selfish. In almost as many it is artistic and intellectual, with an aspiration toward the professions and the arts. The art impulse in itself contains many germs for the advancement of the individual, for the love of art brings with it a desire for the absorption and production of beauty rather than for accumulation and personal possession. It brings to the possessor a joy in the immaterial; a joy that is not of things, but of the perception of beauty in the world, whether of sound, form or color. This must, in many cases, prove an advantage to the individual and to the home to which he or she belongs.

There is, of course, the problem, which is often a tragedy, of the intermediate or transition stage,—the individual of unequal development, highly educated in the matter of art, an imperfectly evolved product of the tenements in other respects. Yet it seems only logical to suppose that in the next generation the inequalities will be largely smoothed out, and a type of individual be evolved which will be of advantage to the community.

The marked difference discernable between the shop-keeping American Jew and the continental Jew of the corresponding class is, unquestionably, the result of the rapid advancement possible through commerce and manual labor in this country, and its effect upon the individual possessed of an ambition that is not uplifting as a motive.
But the art ambition—even if it be nothing finer than the desire to excel along that line,—can not fail to be somewhat uplifting in its effect. For that reason, if for no other, the work of the Music Settlement has significance not only as an art movement, but as one tending toward the advancement of this nation which bids fair to be a country of many nations.

While the school is purely for musical education, and the children go only in the afternoon after school hours, yet a bathroom is provided for the girls and a shower bath for the boys. There is also a yard where the children can play before and between hours.

A word must be said as to the spirit of the teachers and the resident workers, which, while always kind and sympathetic, is delightfully free from the sentimentality that is too often a part of Settlement work. The children’s attention is centered upon their work and every effort is made to keep them from feeling themselves objects of interest to the visitor.

Another fact which the visitor cannot fail to notice is the good manners of the children. While some of this may be due to the influence of the school, Miss Crawford, the resident worker in charge, says that courtesy is an Oriental characteristic natural to the Jewish children. Throughout the entire school one never seems to meet that uncomfortable aggressive attitude toward class distinction which is as characteristic of many of our recently acquired citizens as of the uncultured American. As this resentful attitude is unpleasantly noticeable in so many missions, Girl’s Friendlies and King’s Daughters Associations, where the members are kindly and simply met by the workers, it seems logical to attribute the difference, to some extent, at least, to the fact that these serious little disciples of music live in the atmosphere of the democracy of art which is, perhaps, the only real and unqualified democracy that the world has ever known.

The demand for tuition in the music school is so much on the increase that it is the hope of the organization to be able to enlarge its scope.

The fees paid by the children do not, of course, contribute materially to the support of the school, and the present endowment, although sufficient for present purposes, will not admit of any greater expenditure.