

MAUD POWELL'S MUSICAL EDUCATION

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In an article entitled "The Girl Who wants to be Great," contributed to *The Pictorial Review* some time ago, Maud Powell says that her mother, of German-Hungarian parentage, was adopted by a couple who had no sympathy with her love of music and her ambition for a musical career. She says further: —

"When my mother married she determined that her first son should be a violinist. The expected son turned out to be a girl, but my mother was not to be balked by such a trifle. As soon as I was old enough, a baby violin was put into my little hands.

"My father, William Bramwell Powell, for many years the head of the public schools in Washington, was one of the most advanced educators of his day, and he had no intention of permitting me to have a one-sided education. . . . He apportioned three, and, as I grew older, four hours a day as sufficient for my musical studies.

"At this point I want to lay stress on a fundamental essential of success. It is the determination to *excel*; a bull-dog instinct to stick grimly, ferociously to one's task, and not let go except with one's life."

Referring to her entry into professional life, she says: —

"At the time I finished my studies abroad and returned to this country . . . girl violinists were looked upon with suspicion, and I felt that I had a hard road to travel in my native land. I had sent a letter of introduction to Theodore Thomas, but I waited in vain for a summons to play with the Thomas Orchestra. I determined to take matters into my own hands. I walked into the hall one morning where the rehearsal was being held with my violin under my arm. When it was over, and before the musicians had dispersed, I walked up to the great leader. My heart was in my throat, but I managed to say pretty bravely, 'Mr. Thomas, I am Maud Powell, and I want you to give me a chance to play for you.' His big heart was touched, I suppose, for he nodded his head, reached out his hand for my score, and called the musicians together. I knew it was a crucial moment in my life—a girl only eighteen [seventeen] daring to be a violinist and demanding a hearing of the greatest orchestral leader in America! I had brought the score of the Bruch Concerto, and it is not difficult to do one's best when one knows every note of a concerto backward. When I had finished, Mr. Thomas engaged me on the spot for his next concert. At the close of that concert—my debut in America—Mr. Thomas came to me with his two hands full of green-backs. He handed them to me, saying, 'I want the honor of paying you the first fee you have earned as an artist.'"

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