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## LIKE HUMAN BEINGS

### Violins Have Decided Dispositions, Says Miss Powell.

### "TRUE ART IS ITS OWN REWARD"

### Is the Way She Voices Her Ideas in Regard to an Artistic Career--A Virtuoso Off the Stage.

Miss Maude [sic] Powell, the young woman who has so delighted St. Paul and Minneapolis musical people with her marvelous power over the violin, was seen Saturday at the Hotel Ryan, St. Paul, by a Journal reporter. She appears, at close range, not as the great artist, but as a most charming and intellectual woman, whose youth has as yet felt no blight from the wearing cares of travel and public life. She has had enough of praise and adulation to turn the head of a less sensible girl, but the true artist nature within her has caused this to fall from her unminded. She seemed very tired and, in answer to the question whether playing the violin was an exhaustive exercise, she said:

"Yes, more so than the piano, I think, for one works against gravitation and hasn't the force from the shoulder." She also spoke of the nervous exhaustion. "One wills to do certain things with the fingers and this tension is kept up all through the performance. At the close comes the relaxation, and this letting down is a good thing, too, for it rests the mind and makes it indifferent to the petty irritations going on constantly around one." She spoke of Paderewski's manner at the piano and away from it, believing his listlessness in company the secret of his success at the instrument.

"Art," she said, "is its own reward. It is the ability to get at the kernel of a truth and interpret it, which gives the artist the reward of his patient practising and toil. The applause of an audience is the assurance that he has been understood. One grows to almost feed upon it."

Miss Powell then told a story of her appearance in Vienna. It was the second night and the audience had grown acquainted with her. On her appearance it rose en masse and cheered, calling out "bravo" and other enthusiastic expressions. At the close of the number, dozens of persons came to the front of the stage and handkerchiefs were waved all over the house. Not satisfied with this, as she went to the green room many followed her kissing her hand and pouring adulation into her ears. She had felt the fire of genius as never before and played in her best mood. But it was the reaching of a new standard on this occasion which gave her the most

pleasure. American audiences seemed cold on her return home in contrast with the enthusiasm of these Austrians.

When asked what she regarded as the greatest art, she replied that there was a difference existing between music and the others which made it impossible to compare them. "Music expresses," she said, "the subjective emotions, while painting, sculpture, literary, are all reproductive of objective life. To me it is wrong to interpret music as the singing of birds, the howling of a tempest and so on; it is but the emotion which these things inspire which is poured forth in sound, the language of the soul."

"Do you think the violin the most fitting instrument to express this language?"

"I think it is, next to the human voice. The chords of the throat are more perfect than the violin. The perfect voice is a rare gift, however. Singers and violinists have many debates as to whether the violin or the throat is the easiest to care for. But the perfect voice touches the human nature in a finer and more powerful way than the music of the violin."

"Have you used the same instrument long?"

"The one I am using now I was lent by E.J. Delahanty, of New York, a collector of violins, about four years ago; it is an Amati. Yes, I think one acquires a strong attachment for an instrument, and it is true, to me at least, that they seem to have an individuality and a human nature. Strange, but this affection come through its faults. It gets cranky, you know, and has moods. If it is exposed to the cold it shrinks into itself and refuses to sing, to respond. Again, if it is taken into a room where there is warmth and brilliancy it expands and becomes as happy and tractable as possible. Sometimes I wear out its spirit by over practice, and sometimes by neglecting it, it becomes cold and sullen. I can't reason this out; I know it by a feeling and a sympathy."

"What do you think of women as violinists?"

"I see no reason why they should not make the grandest interpreters on this instrument. It requires a soul that is capable of the deepest and broadest sympathy, with the finest and purest instincts. Women have not as a rule the power of application and the patience which is required to gain a mastery of the violin. The study must begin in childhood, hours must be devoted to its practice when the child would prefer playing out of doors with its comrades. It demands a constant sacrifice of self."

"I do not approve of public life for women. I have my mother with me, but my home life is broken up. My father is sacrificing much for my art in giving my mother up to me, and yet, torn apart as we all are, I feel I must go on. I have a mission to the people through my talent."

Miss Powell makes New York her headquarters and fills engagements from that center. Her father is superintendent of the public schools of Washington. She will speak this summer in Chicago, before the congress of representative women, on "Women as Violinists." Miss Powell

is regarded by many musical critics as surpassing the great Camilla Urso in her genius with the bow. She is younger and has had less experience, but her instructors have been the finest in the world, and her fire and sympathy, linked with a broad musical culture, offers an almost limitless field of opportunity.

*From the Archive of The Maud Powell Society for Music and Education*