

**AMERICA IS GETTING THE "SHAKING UP"  
SHE NEEDED FOR HER SOUL-AWAKENING**

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I dare hope, I dare believe, that out of this unspeakable war-hell, ultimate good will come. The end is not yet, and if we can but suffer the deprivation, biting sorrow and scorching anxiety of our allies, if we can go through the soul-searching process that the warring nations have experienced since 1914, then, and then only, can there be an American soul-awakening that shall lead the way to real achievement in the arts.

What America has needed for many years is a real shaking up. Our smugness, our middle class thought, should be rooted out; our soul-deadening prosperity should quake in the balance. Nothing of art importance can be achieved in an environment of public content and self-approval, for under such conditions there can be born no public spirit that sighs for artistic satisfaction, and without a public, the artist's pot cannot boil, nor can his artistic spirit soar in flights of creative ecstasy. I do not hold with the idea that burdens of trouble and actual want or starvation give rise to art genius. During dire trouble there is stagnation. Blind sorrow and devastating tragedy benumb the sensibilities—the creative powers are in abeyance. But nature has her own remedies. Hope steals in and offers solace. The tortured soul bursts its fetters, rises into finer ether, and straightway proceeds to create *new expression for its new estate*.

Let us hope that America will not be found wanting when the test comes, but will take her stand bravely with older nations, in the arts, as she has in invention, commerce and organizing ability. The time of trouble will help our pampered, restless women. Nobler outlets will be given their nervous energy. Where there are noble women, there are noble sons. When women's souls ache with a longing to express higher things—the infinite, the ineffable, the true—then will they give birth to sons of genius.

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