

# **ART, MUSIC AND NATURE**

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Art, Music and Nature by David Swing

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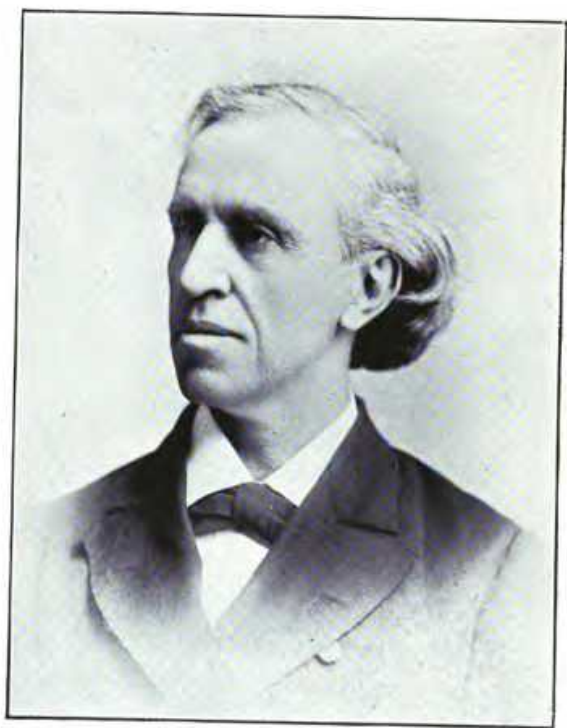
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SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS

— OF —

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## Art, Music and Nature.

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Each art is a golden stairway by which man climbs up to see his world.

Art is an effort to express what the mind most admires in the world of form. The mind is full of images. When the eye is closed, the mind is full of scenes the most beautiful, and when the silence is perfect, then is the heart full of sounds the richest.

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Art is an effort to coax the images out of the soul and make them material and lasting. Thus the canvas, the marbles, and the compositions of music are places where the mind sat for its picture.

The thoughts of some men take the form of words. The thoughts of other forms of genius take the form of canvas, or music, or marble, and leave us to wonder which was the greater, the talker or the painter, the Homer of a rich language, or the Beethoven and Mendelssohn who poured out their feelings in songs without words.



Art being an utterance of the mind, it stands related or indebted to religion for many a sacred and profound inspiration. Much of Wagner's music is sacred because no other department of thought offers themes as touching as those which come down from the depths of the sky. Wagner was a genius great enough to show what a power his sounds could extract from the land of immortality and virtue.

The soul feeds upon art until it becomes itself an artist. It need not produce creations for the public, but only for its own private market.

Men often weep when they hear pensive music, but this comes not because music uttered any words to them, but because it has made their own spirits become the creators of an eloquence all their own. The heart has become itself a forum, and its own Cicero, Pericles, or Massillon, is declaiming within.

What an artist is man when his own heart becomes for him an orator, able to turn the silence of a forest into eloquence, and the midnight stars into language.

All the arts are persuasive, not despotic. The woods in spring do not issue decrees for us to leave the begrimed city and appear in their presence. They silently invite. They grow eloquent without any rude language. For days and weeks their influence increases, until at last the