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EDITORIAL

The increasing appreciation of the value to society of the creative artist gives point to the inquiry regarding the fundamental characteristics of artistic endowment. It is popularly believed that the painter is predominantly eye-minded, and that the musician, especially the creative musician, the composer, is strongly ear-minded. Recently the director of music in a large state university complained of his class in harmony because, as he said, they were so lacking in the ability to hear mentally the melodies and harmonies they were trying to write. Yet this class was a highly selected group, in that the students had elected the course in spite of its reputation for difficulty, and admission to the course presupposed a considerable degree of musical ability. It would be interesting to know with some degree of certainty whether these students had any greater or less ability to hear mentally the melodies of which they thought than their fellow students of inferior musical ambitions. William James, who was a painter of no mean attainments as well as a psychologist, affirmed that he was a very poor visualizer, and quoted with approval Galton's statement that persons with

distinctly defective visual imagery may "become painters of the rank of Royal Academicians." It is not improbable that eminent composers have no more vivid auditory imagery than non-musical individuals.

The recent elaborate study of motor imagery by Dr. Richard Baerwald (see this JOURNAL, May 1916, p. 306) throws some interesting light on the relation between musical ability and motor activities. Many people of high musical attainments find it impossible to appreciate or do justice to a new musical production, no matter how simple, on first hearing. After a lapse of time, however, or on a second hearing, even very difficult music is found to have cleared up and become perfectly comprehensive. In all cases studied, this musical illumination was found in conjunction with a well-defined motor disposition, and the phenomenon was attributed to the development of motor attitudes which reinforce the satisfaction produced by the musical ideas. On the more fundamental question whether the development of skill in musical performance is in any way dependent on the degree of native motor endowment, the author's findings are negative. Musical people show a more decided tendency to react by involuntary movements (starting, crying out, etc.) to unexpected stimuli, as loud sounds, contacts on the skin, or the sudden appearance of objects, but in other respects there was as large a proportion of strongly motor individuals among the non-musical as among the musical.

What is urgently needed is a more extensive study of the artistic endowment of school children along the lines suggested for musical ability by Seashore in his book "*Psychology in Daily Life*," and a careful checking of the results of such tests on the basis of subsequent training. Society cannot afford to allow any potential artistic power to be wasted. One of the clearest lessons of the present war is the necessity of conserving and utilizing native resources, and there is no resource more significant for society as a whole than creative artistic talent. The day is not far distant when the public will demand much more from the schools than routine training in a few technical subjects. It calls even now for an intensive study of the pupil, and a development of his potentialities to the best interests of himself and of his fellows. To this end the discovery of artistic endowments will be an important contribution.

J. C. B.