

XXI.

THE FINGER PIANO.

One—two—three—four—five, you sing ;
Baby listens, as you swing
Back and forth with changing numbers,
Till at last the music slumbers
With a folded wing.

Five—four—three—two—as each tone
Marks the rhythm—three—two—one ;
Baby eyes your moving fingers
With an eager look that lingers
When the song is done.

For a something in his heart
Answers to your simple art ;
And, like silent bells set ringing,
Makes the little song you're singing
Seem of him a part.

All the music which we hear,
Listening with the outward ear,
Would be powerless to win us,
If there lived not deep within us
Its innate idea.

All the universe seems set
To a measure, when we get
Near enough to hear the beating
Of its heart, and, by repeating,
Learn its alphabet.

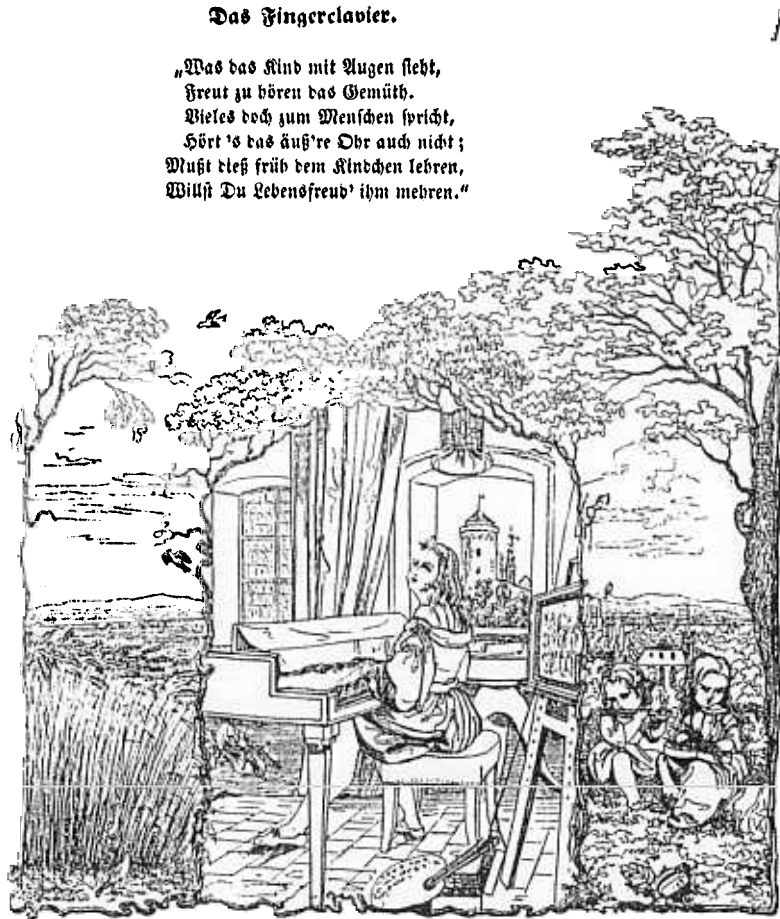
Then the soul is often stirred
With some harmony unheard
By the ear—all rhythmic motion,
Blended hues or fair proportion,
Justify this word.



In all Nature is no schism—
 When we have received this chrism,
 Flower bells chime for sunny weather,
 And the colours sing together
 In the trembling prism.

Das Fingerclavier.

„Was das Kind mit Augen sieht,
 Freut zu hören das Gemüth.
 Vieles doch zum Menschen spricht,
 Hört 's das äuß're Ohr auch nicht;
 Mußt klei früh dem Kindchen lehren,
 Willst Du Lebensfreud' ihm mehren.“



The fingers of the left hand represent the keys of a piano. They are slightly bent at the middle joint, and thus gain a certain elasticity. The fingers of the right hand press upon them as in the act of playing on the piano.

In the commentary to the preceding song I alluded to the relationship between number and music. Through playing the finger piano the child wins from his practical experience some remote idea of the relationship of number not only to melody and time, but also to that organisation of movement which we call measure.

Have you ever reflected upon the important bearings of measure, rhythm, and proportion upon man's daily life? He who in all things obeys the law of measure is a man of tact. Do you wish to develop this fine tact in your child? Do you desire that his life shall be a musical and harmonious one? If so, cultivate his love of song and his ability to sing.

A teacher of my acquaintance complains that, as compared with the Italians, we Germans lack musical ear and have untrained vocal organs. She attributes these defects to the fact that we give no adequate training in singing either to our children or our youth. Through this defect in our education we practically close the gates of the glad free world of song.