

# Handicaps Spur Ambition, Proves Theodore Upshure

## MUSICAL GENIUS



L. Theodore Upshure, whose crippled but nimble fingers have won him an enviable place in the musical world

### HIS BUST TO BE PLACED IN METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS—TAUGHT BY FRANK DAMROSCH

WHY a man should be endowed with a soaring spirit confined in a broken body, is not for us to say. Why the desire to be a pianist should be implanted in the breast of a man whose hands are crippled, is a question we cannot answer. But Luke Theodore Upshure does not stop to ponder these questions. His fierce resolution to succeed has never failed him. Today, after spending several years in the hospitals, after meeting many difficulties, he is on the threshold of final triumph. How he attained his success is the theme of our story.

**CRIPPLED FROM BIRTH**  
Mr. Upshure was born in New York City. He was a cripple from birth, and all the efforts of the physicians have been of little avail. After years in the hospitals his legs are still bent, his hands are still twisted. When he was fourteen years old Upshure's father died, leaving him as the sole support of his mother. Then followed a long period of struggle against sickening odds, but mis-

fortune could never subdue him. He went to school at night until he was ready to enter college. From high school this man went to Columbia University, City College of New York and the Rand School of Social Science. This in itself is noteworthy, but his ambition to play the piano seemed hopeless. Music teachers tried to discourage him—that is, with the exception of Mme. Houtz. This noted musician encouraged Upshure and taught him how to use his fingers. Dr. Frank Damrosch, Professor Ermloff and Dr. Bertrand de Bernyz gave him lessons in musical composition and vocal culture. Today the former pupil is now himself an instructor in pianoforte and voice training.

But the high light in the career of this remarkable man remains to be told. Upshure decided that he would go to Europe for further study in music. He would secure the money for such a trip by giving piano lessons in Greenwich village. At the

outset it seemed as if he were doomed to disappointment. It was impossible to secure rooms for a studio, but Upshure met this difficulty in the same way that he had met others. He became a janitor of one of the apartment houses there, thus securing his room rent free. The studio was established, and now the trip to Europe is almost realized. This summer Luke Theodore Upshure will leave the city of his hard struggles and study his beloved music at the home of the old masters.

### DESPITE HANDICAPS

One would naturally expect that discouragement and bitter disappointments would leave their mark on Mr. Upshure. If he were cold and taciturn it would only be the logical result of his experiences. On the contrary this has not been the case. His soul has not become warped; rather it has mellowed as he gains a deeper insight into the meaning of life. Forgetting the limitations of his body, he has devoted himself to the pleasures of the mind and the spirit. His studio is filled with books, paintings and sculpture. In one corner of the living room stands his piano, the most prized of his possessions. When he plays his entire being becomes lost in the music. With the appreciative touch of the true artist, he lets his fingers wander over the keys, varying the theme to suit his moods. Some of Upshure's own compositions are as-

tirical—for example, "The Folly of Creation," dedicated to the fools of (Continued on page 19)

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