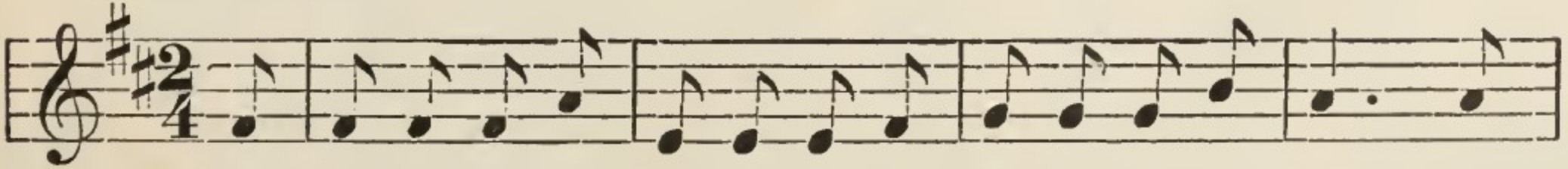
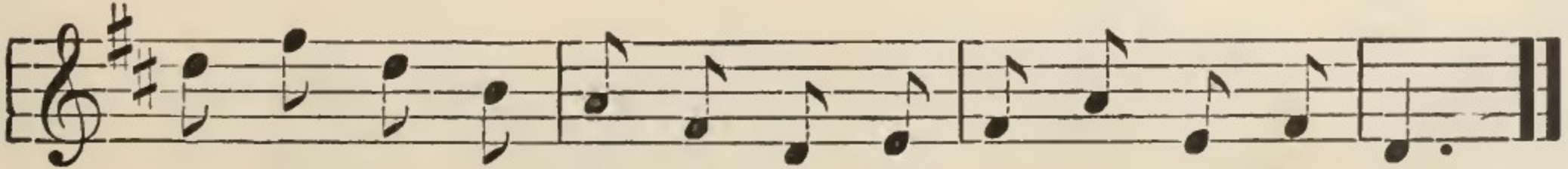
The Moon.

Christina Rossette.



I've seen a hundred pretty things, And seen a hundred gay, But

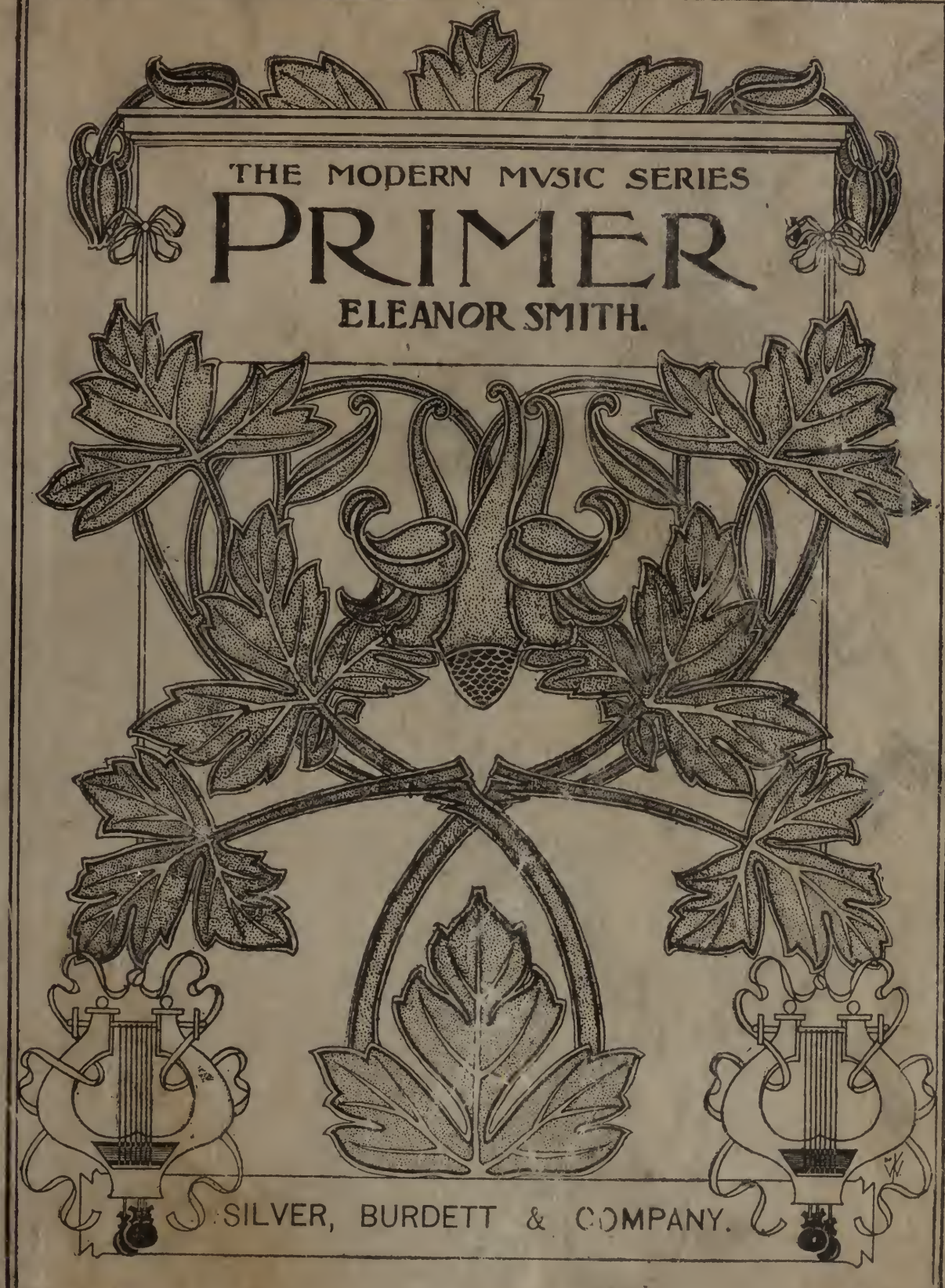


on - ly think: I peep by night And do not peep by day.

THE MODERN MUSIC SERIES

PRIMER

ELEANOR SMITH.



SILVER, BURDETT & COMPANY.

The Modern Music Series

A PRIMER OF VOCAL MUSIC

WHEREIN THE STUDY OF MUSICAL STRUCTURE IS PURSUED THROUGH THE CONSIDERATION OF COMPLETE MELODIC FORMS AND PRACTICE BASED ON EXERCISES RELATED TO THEM

BY

ELEANOR SMITH

AUTHOR OF "SONGS FOR LITTLE CHILDREN," TEACHER OF MUSIC IN THE CHICAGO KINDERGARTEN COLLEGE AND FROEBEL'S KINDERGARTEN SCHOOL. FORMERLY IN CHARGE OF DEPARTMENT OF VOCAL MUSIC IN THE COOK COUNTY NORMAL SCHOOL

SILVER, BURDETT AND COMPANY

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INTRODUCTION.

The degree of ability attained in any department of knowledge depends finally upon the amount of effort put forth; for whatever may be said of the value of "influence and culture," the only real training the individual receives, from the standpoint of educational results, is that acquired by independent effort.

The all-important principle in education, however, lies back of this question of effort, and concerns the means by which this effort is aroused, and the material upon which it is based. This principle, stated broadly, is that the content of all our knowledge is primarily derived from experience, and that the quality of our ideas corresponds with the quality of the things by which we have been influenced. It is not sufficient for those who are responsible for the education of children to say that their pupils can do this or that admirably, with precision and despatch, for these very qualities may mean the violation of some principle of natural healthful development; so that, when we say a child can read music correctly and rapidly, it is but proper that we should examine the processes by which he has learned, and should test carefully the quality of material on which his study has been based, that we may satisfy ourselves whether the work done will stand the test of art education for the child.

Some would test the child's progress in music by the mere ability to read at sight, and would consider it sufficient if to this mere power of utterance were added a semblance of proper expression. They forget that these qualities of correct expression and artistic ideals cannot be added to mere ability as decorations are added to wood or stone. They must be born through the spirit of the endeavor that brought power to the individual. This principle is not a new one in education, and it seems strange that in all the different branches this battle must be fought over. Nearly every branch of education has already been reformed by the force of these simple truths; and it is almost unaccountable that music, the most sensitive of the arts, the language of the emotions, should be the last to conform to them.

The first essential, then, is that the child should have a sufficient musical experience as the basis for his training; the second, that his interest, aroused through this experience, should be properly directed so that he may be developed in a knowledge of music and its elements.

The author of the Modern Music Series assumes that children possess musical instincts that demand recognition at the beginning, and that they are entitled to the best in music as well as the best in literature; that they can be taught to read music through the use of simple, beautiful melodies, instead of exercises and songs made for the occasion, and that practice makes a deeper impression on the child if it is secured through melodies that appeal to him, and awaken in him the true spirit of song. It is not necessary, in order to pave the way for future development, to weaken the character of the music used.

As the co-ordination of the study of art, history, geography, and literature reënforces the power of the mind through the reaction of each upon the other, so the use of interesting melodies stimulates the effort to grasp the elements of which they are composed.

The Modern Music Series, instead of requiring children to advance through exercises which confine their activities to purely mechanical processes, furnishes an opportunity for practice of the highest order, and at the same time gives the children pure melody at each step.

The conclusion is that technique in music, like all formal sides of vital art, to be rightly learned, must be gained from observation and study in the art itself, and consequently all knowledge and power must be derived from and related to actual experience in song. It is only when songs are presented improvidently, at the expense of the child's understanding, that the true pedagogical end is defeated. But if song is used according to a pedagogical plan, it may be made to reveal to the pupil all the elements of which it is composed.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

In this volume the children should learn, by imitation, to sing and enjoy the melodies to be found in Part I. They should then make observations upon the rhythm, by recognizing its pulses, with hand-beat or some other way, and of the tonal characteristics by comparing the simpler phrases with the scale itself. This may be presented orally, or indicated from a tone-ladder or similar device. In this way, through singing, the children will become familiar with different kinds of rhythm (double, triple, etc.), and with the simpler intervals of the scale. This training in the recognition of form should be carried on until the children have acquired a vocabulary of typical forms which can be sung with the same freedom and spontaneity with which they sing their songs. The attention of the children may be directed to the characters upon the staff, and they may learn to follow the simpler scale passages and intervals through the notes which represent them. The more definite study of the staff notation, however, should be reserved for Part II.

Having acquired familiarity with the elements of time and tune, so that through singing, observation, and finally, definite practice, they are known and recognized, the child may be expected in Part II. to use and test the knowledge and power thus gained. In fact, the experiences in Parts I. and II. may be quite closely related; and it will be found, perhaps, that the best progress can be made by furnishing opportunity for independent effort, as given in Part II., almost from the beginning of Part I.

In Part II. much of the very simplest song material has been provided. Each little melody presents its own problem — its scale fragment, intervals, and rhythmic contrasts. These occur again and again in different tunes and in various combinations, and each time they are identified they become more surely a part of the child's musical vocabulary. The fact of their forming a part of some interesting song-story serves to impress them more firmly upon the mind of the pupil.

In Part III. many of the songs are too difficult to be sung entirely by note, but may be learned partly by imitation and partly by note. Among these are songs of the seasons, and songs for special occasions.

The three parts in this volume admit of six essential modes of procedure, viz.:

1. *Rote singing.* Spontaneous rote singing should be an important feature of the daily music lesson in all the primary grades. It should be practiced frequently in any grade when it is necessary to put the children in a melodic frame of mind.

2. *Song-inspired interval drill.* The children should learn to sing short melodic phrases (intervals and scale fragments), the relation of such phrases to the song on the one hand and the scale on the other to be made plain to them at all times. A good many songs will have to be treated in this way, and the process followed up by careful drill, the teacher having clearly in mind at all times the object to be accomplished. All interval practice should be given with melodic progressions in view.

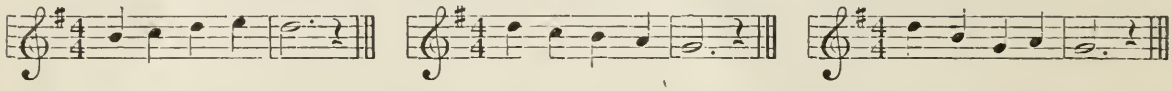
3. *Sight singing.* For this purpose Part II. furnishes an abundance of varied and simple melody. In order that the children may be trained to think melodically, they should at first receive frequent help from the teacher.

4. *Singing by note and by ear in combination.* During the early stages of sight-reading simple melodies should be taught, first by imitation and then sung with their syllables. The teacher thereupon shows the children the written expression of the melody, pointing to the notes in the meantime. While this process alone will not develop independence, it is necessary in order to encourage flexibility of thought, and to make a connecting link between spontaneous expression and intellectual effort. The children should be required frequently to imitate the teacher in singing familiar tunes with

syllables instead of words. By this means they will learn to associate scale names with scale passages and intervals.

5. *The study of songs by note and by rote.* There are many beautiful, easy songs that are valuable for sight-singing practice, although they contain a phrase, or possibly a line, too difficult for the children to read. While the mechanical teacher would discard such songs, because they do not conform to his ideas of gradation, they are most valuable, because they give the children glimpses of higher ideals as they go along. The easy lines, therefore, should be sung by note, and the teacher should come to the rescue when the more difficult passages are reached.

6. *Writing melodies from memory.* Written work is a valuable aid to the memory. Children will acquire a more definite knowledge of the staff notation by the practice of writing music. Intervals are thus visualized, and become more firmly fixed in the mind. After the children have acquired a fair vocabulary of type forms that can be sung at call, or from the staff, they should be required to write very simple melodies that they know by heart. Short phrases should be dictated at first, such as the following:



The teacher may also dictate melodies by calling the scale names. The latter process, of course, is not an ear test.

Attention is called to "Special Studies" to be found on pages 68 and 69.

Thus through the three parts of this book the child is led from step to step in such a way that he will understand and enjoy music, and acquire the power to read and render with expression the songs within his range of taste and ability. The methods here outlined are sure to benefit the most unmusical children, while they will greatly interest and profit those who have a keen appreciation of and love for music. In so far as the author has accomplished this high aim, and has thus contributed to the enjoyment and improvement of the children, will there come satisfaction for this effort.

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