

307. Exercises.

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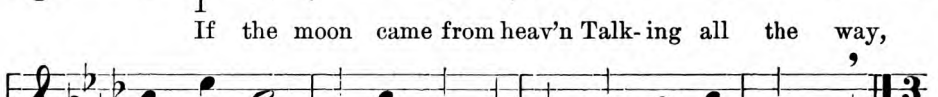
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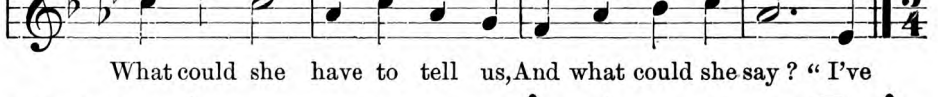
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308. If the Moon Came.

Christina G. Rossetti.


 1
 If the moon came from heav'n Talk-ing all the way,


 What could she have to tell us, And what could she say? "I've


 8
 seen a hun-dred pret-ty things, And seen a hun-dred gay,— But


 on - ly think—I peep by night, And do not peep by day."

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MUSIC INTRODUCTION.

Just as language is studied from examples of the best writers, so music should be studied from the works of the best composers. The song contains all the elements of instruction, and those elements should be studied for the sake of interpreting the song. Melody, rhythm, tone-production, enunciation, breathing, and interpretation are best studied from living and vital songs, and these should be the source and the basis as well as the object of instruction. The song is the goal. When the goal is reached the race is over. Hence, the constructive elements that enter into the song should first be studied, the difficult intervals, the uncommon or unexpected either in tune or rhythm, the pronunciation of difficult words and their musical setting; all these things which are proper for drill should be carefully gone over, and then the child may confidently and successfully attack the song as a whole, with the reasonable hope of singing it correctly. He thus gains confidence and enthusiasm for additional triumphs.

The first thing needed is for the child to obtain a certain amount of experience in music, and to gain the power to hear accurately, to exactly reproduce tones heard, and to use the singing voice correctly. This comes just as does the power to talk through imitation. Hence, the first lessons consist of rote songs and of practice in the reproduction of musical tones and of words applied to music.

Every music teacher understands that this is the proper procedure, but it has been taken so much as a matter of course that special teachers as well as grade teachers have been obliged to find and supply the needed exercises from every possible source. The first part of this book covers this work so completely that the practical teacher will find everything necessary for this stage of instruction.

After the child has learned to sing the little rote songs, to match tones with his own voice, and to have a sufficient power of concentration, the great study of the major scale should begin, again through imitation, the teacher singing little scale passages *with the names*, which the child imitates simply and unconsciously. But there is nothing in any exercise which requires any particular kind of names to be used. The tones may be sung *doh, ray, me; one, two, three; or loo, loo, loo.*

For dictation the numerals are universally used, and the response may be as the supervisor prefers, with numerals or syllables, or neither. It will seem easier to sol-fa the exercises, but if that is the constant practice sight reading will always be a long way off, for the real test of thinking in sounds is the ability to apply words directly.

Power to do is gained by practice upon new material. Have the courage, therefore, to go forward constantly into new work. A few repetitions suffice to make the work merely rote. The imitative power of children is so great that the teacher must guard against its insidious influence by constantly testing the ability of individuals. Begin this in the primary grades and keep it up. Check the leaders on whom the others unconsciously lean. See what the class and individuals can do while the leaders are silent.

It is the purpose of the New American Music System to eliminate the superfluous. As an instance, the quarter note has been selected (as is the general use in modern music) as the unit of measurement, and receives one beat. It stands therefore for something constant, and the child is not bothered with the useless practice of giving now a half note, now a quarter, or possibly a whole note one beat. The half note means two beats, the whole note four, and not until he has mastered the great facts of two-part, three-part, four-part and six-part rhythm is he obliged to learn that the eighth note may stand for a beat, and sometimes even a half note.

Again all the difficulties of key signatures are deferred through the use of the Key-chord until the young pupil has mastered the great and essential principle in staff notation, namely, to read by relative position on the staff degrees. The Key-chord aids in this, and is an effective substitute for the signature, since, practically with an empty staff, it locates the position of the tones of the scale. *This for the singer, is all that the Key signature accomplishes.* After sufficient practice in notation thus applied, with the key note in all the positions found on the staff, the pupil is prepared to study the common Keys as they occur with their proper signatures.

The work of the first part of this reader is imitative, and should be given by the instructor in connection with the charts. If the charts are not used the teacher will be obliged to make a thorough and liberal use of exercises transferred to the blackboard.

Blackboard work may be almost entirely omitted when the second half of the book is reached, by placing the book in the hands of every pupil. If the pupils do not have the books, the exercises must be copied upon the blackboard.

While this introduction does not attempt to analyze the book and elaborate all its points, a few of them are more definitely stated below : —

Breathing. Exercises in breathing are of vital importance, but should be of the simplest character, and such as will not arouse the child's self-consciousness by calling attention to the mechanical means employed. It is therefore advisable to cultivate the habit of deep and sustained breathing as an incident to some simple physical exercises. Such exercises are provided for in this book on pages 18 and 19. No child can sing well who cannot breathe deeply, freely and naturally.

Vocal Drill. The great importance of producing and developing the head tones in children's voices is acknowledged by every expert in voice production. The practice of this must begin at the first lesson, and thereafter constantly and faithfully continue. From the very first exercise and onward this has been constantly in view. Every exercise, every song, every isolated phrase has been designed or chosen with the intention of developing the natural and beautiful flute-like tone of the head register.

The Study of Rhythm. The child's earliest musical perceptions are manifested in forms of rhythm; hence the rhythmic element in music is recognized from the first, and exercises of various kinds of a purely rhythmic character are freely interspersed.

Training of the Ear. Ear training is the basis of all musical knowledge. Practically the first half of the primer is devoted to imitative work, taking the form of bright, merry little songs, phrases (with and without words), and accented examples, thus approaching the matter from all sides.

Training the Eye. By means of Practice Diagrams, constructed ladder-wise, or by a column of figures, the pupils after their general experience with the whole scale make their first analytical acquaintance with related tones commencing with the interval of a second, two tones, and adding, one by one, the remainder of the scale.

Practice-Staff. This is a staff without signature, intended to be used in conjunction with the Practice Diagrams for the purpose of transferring the numeral work to the staff proper.

The Key-Chord. The plan herein adopted of showing the constituents of the basic chord of music is a practical compromise, and a valuable introduction to the study of key signatures. The Key-Chord has this further great advantage: It shows clearly and distinctly at a glance the location of the four more prominent notes of each key, and compels attention to the *similarity* of location, either on lines or in spaces, of 1, 3, and 5, and the *dissimilarity* of 8. This in itself is a daily object-lesson of the very first rank.

Visible and Oral Dictation. Dictation has ever been one of the principal aids of the teacher. Much and varied material is herein furnished, and a feature is also made of dictation drawn from the songs, thus giving preliminary drill in the matter contained in them.

Enunciation. In singing this is such an important element that no excuse is needed for its constant use in this book. The study of vowels and vowel quantities, and of consonant enunciation, are of the utmost value in singing, and should receive the teacher's most careful attention.

Part Singing. An optional alto part has been added to many of the songs. This may serve as an effective aid to the harmony, if the songs are ever used with the piano, or may be sung occasionally by the teacher after the song has been thoroughly mastered by the pupils, thus familiarizing the pupil with music in parts, a more difficult form than the unisonic, teaching him to concentrate his attention, to tune his voice, and to blend his tones with those of another part.

Special Songs have been provided for every month of the school year, as well as for various occasions. An interesting melody correct in form, with words not beyond the child's comprehension, has been the standard set.

The author wishes especially to express his thanks to the many friends and co-laborers who have aided him with advice, suggestion and criticism in the making of this book. The essential principles of The American Music System are retained, and the changes are such as will render the system more elastic and fitted to meet the needs of all classes of schools, and the varied requirements of supervisors and directors of music instruction throughout the country.