

junior high school, and a three year senior high school. The second of these movements resulted in the recognition of the junior college as the upper level of the secondary school, that is, that the secondary school period is an eight year period divided into three parts—the junior high schools, the senior high school, and the junior college. This movement is known as the 6-3-3-2 plan. In recent years it has been suggested that this plan be changed into a 6-4-4 plan,—a plan that divides the eight years of secondary education into two divisions of four years each. Secondary education is now regarded as training for individuals from twelve to twenty. Such a program of secondary education, if generally adopted, would not admit youth into industry until after the "teen" age.

The chief problem of public secondary education is the curriculum. It must meet both adolescent needs and the needs of the increasing complexity of modern life, and it must provide the richest possible experience suited to young people between the ages of twelve and twenty years.

The high school is the product of American social life designed as an institution of society to meet the life needs of all normal adolescents between the approximate ages of twelve and twenty years. Beginning with the last decade of the last century, the high school entered upon an era of growth and progress unparalleled in the history of any social institution. It is now regarded as the "people's college" in which the sons and daughters of all the people, rich and poor, may have an equal opportunity for educational development. A high school education is the birthright of every American child, and the continued support of this institution during the greatest of depressions when "pruning knives grew into swords" bears testimony to the unchallenged faith of the American people in their system of public education. During the three hundred years of its existence the American high

school has kept pace with the development of this country, reflecting its ideals and endeavoring to anticipate its needs. It has won its way into popular favor by the sheer merit of its work and is now regarded as one of the most precious possessions of the American people. Its past achievements and its present programs for improvement are an earnest of what it will mean to the future life of America.

WILLIAM R. SMITHEY

### MUSIC IN THE PRIMARY GRADES

WHEN I first glanced at the program for this afternoon and saw that of the four school studies to be discussed, music came last, I was very forcibly reminded that this is the position that music has long held in the school curriculum. As compared with the subjects of reading, writing, and arithmetic, music is considered non-essential and *can* be done without. This accounts for the fact that music is usually one of the first subjects to be cut out of the curriculum in an economy program.

But things are improving. One of the most promising developments within the new curriculum is the opportunity for training in the field of the creative and recreative arts, the provision for individual differences and freedom of expression. And a new standard is being set up. We are asking not only "What is a study worth in the work of life?" but also "What is a study worth to the enjoyment of life?"

There is no doubt but that music is for life's enjoyment, and this end should be the aim of school music. There are two general avenues of approach: first, through a developing appreciation, and second, through skill in performance. And this brings us to the

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fundamental problem in teaching music. How can we cultivate a love for the subject and at the same time accomplish the drill necessary for skill? Two main lines of procedure are recommended: first, singing tending mainly toward knowledge and skill; and second, listening tending mainly toward taste and judgment.

Now as to methods and materials: experience has taught us that there are very few children who can really never learn to sing. Not more than one or two out of a hundred are *incurable* monotones. I know that some of them sound very incurable at first, and you can hardly tell what they are trying to sing. And it may be wise not to attempt to name the song, for you might make the mistake that the teacher made when the little boy in the art class brought his drawing up to her and said: "I don't think this is very good, do you?" The teacher looked at the drawing and replied, "Why, yes, Henry, I think that is a perfectly splendid brown dog." "Dog?" said Henry. "I meant it for a horse." Most monotones can be cured if the right teacher is found early in the child's music experience. The defect is more often of the ear than of the voice. Some helpful methods are to get the whole class to singing on a high tone; then sing *with* the monotone "sliding" his tone up to that of the others where he will usually stop. Or have the child try matching tones or imitating calls. Just recently I have been working with a monotone in one of my classes and I had him imitate the whistle of a train—first as it sounded very close at hand, and then as it gets fainter and fainter in the distance—and I have found it very effective. This curing of monotones is one of the principal aims to be accomplished in the primary grades, and the teacher should realize that the importance of tone-quality overshadows all other elements in the school music.

The next step that we shall consider deals with the selection of songs. The child's

power to sing by rote or imitation makes it possible to introduce to him some of the most beautiful melodies. Of course we shall give him childish rhythms and ditties, but we shall not limit him to these. We should include those songs the singing of which will be a pleasure all his life, and acquaintance with which will form the basis of his musical taste and experience. The argument that the child does not understand what he sings about has less meaning if the song is one that lives from generation to generation. Of course, it may be necessary to explain some of the words and meaning. A little child, for instance, in singing *Swanee River* was saying, "Still longing for the old temptation" instead of "plantation." But ludicrous mistakes also occur in the very simplest of children's stories. A little child in retelling the old favorite *Little Black Sambo* came to the point where the tiger says "Now I'm the grandest tiger in the jungle," and she very loudly exclaimed "Now I'm the grandest tiger in the *junk-pile*." Surely some explanation may be necessary; but do not ruin a song by over-explaining.

In teaching rote-songs there are several things to consider. First, the seating: a good plan is to place the best singers in the rear seats, the monotones in front, and the average singers in between the two groups. The teacher sings the song through several times, so that the class may get it as an entirety. She then tells the story, or discusses and explains anything necessary about the song or words. There has been wide difference of opinion as to whether the teacher should sing *with* the children from the first or whether she should sing the song phrase by phrase, then stanza by stanza, letting the children imitate her. Both methods have been successfully used, though the latter may be preferable. It is usually best to have a class working upon several partly-learned songs rather than learn a song by long, continuous practice. Learning con-

tinues to take place between practices and pupils learn best when they do not tire of any selection.

All singing in the primary grades should be done in soft, relaxed tones. The little child's voice is high and not strong. Only light, head tones should be used, the best range being from E-flat first line to F fifth line.

Every primary school also needs a good, well-tuned piano for accompaniments, and accompaniments should usually be played just as written without any added frills or notes. A primary child on hearing a teacher try to jazz the accompaniment exclaimed, "There, she's done messed it all up."

Of course a good victrola with from 20 to 25 records of good music is necessary for the "listening" lessons. To the question "How do you know that pupils are doing anything but *sitting* in a listening lesson?" it may be said that even sitting is preferable to the excessive number of stories told about some selections. There should be few remarks and no long explanations. Music is a language that begins where the spoken word ends. Also the general schoolroom situation must be right for appreciation. Walking about or closing windows disturbs. Neither can a teacher say "Now we have an appreciation lesson; sit still and appreciate, or you will stay after school."

If we were able to analyze appreciation, just what in addition to "sitting" should we find? The pupils may be enjoying the various shades of tones, they may be responding with visual images or associations, or they may exhibit motor reaction, such as tapping, swaying or beating time, for rhythm plays a large part in the music of primary grades. Pupils who are not rhythm-conscious often develop the rhythm sense rapidly in tapping exercises, dance steps, and strongly accented selections, which they hear and sing. Words often clear up rhythm better than counting. Marching also helps. Toy orchestras have their greatest value in

developing rhythm and regularity with the ability to keep together. I haven't time to go into the subject of the orchestra except to say that the children thoroughly enjoy it and I have found it very worth-while. The instruments are rather expensive. Fortunately we were able to buy ours, but very satisfactory ones can be made very cheaply.

It has been impossible to even attempt to cover this subject in such limited time. But in conclusion may I say that whatever the music of the future in our country will be lies largely in your hands. You will mold the next generation of music makers. Out of the past and the present you will shape the songs of your times.

A very apt illustration of this has happened in my own grade. Soon after the children entered for the new term I gave them the opportunity to sing their favorite songs. One little fellow on the front seat arose and sang very lustily, "If I had wings like an angel, To the cold prison bars would I fly, etc." Now, when called upon for his favorite, he responds with the lovely melody of Nevin's "Mighty Lak a Rose." Noting such a change, we can more fully understand what Fletcher meant when he said "Let me write the songs of a nation, and let who will make its laws."

ANNE BROWNE

What those of us who are born into this confused age of machines, advertising, new wants, and universal suffrage have to do is to try to bring some order out of the chaos of moral values, and in an irretrievably altered world to reassert the philosophy of the Old South and to bring the new democracies to see the values of the good life are other than material.

—JAMES TRUSLOW ADAMS.

You must have either intelligence or spiritual faith to stand up against life. When you have both, you can be a conqueror.

—HUGH WALFOLE.