

**A MANUAL OF VOCAL
MUSIC FOR USE IN
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS**

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JOHN TAYLOR

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BY
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NOTE.—Article 32 (d.) of the new Educational Code of 1872 provides that the annual grant made to elementary schools shall be reduced "by one shilling per scholar, according to the average number in attendance throughout the year, unless vocal music forms a part of the ordinary course of instruction."

PREFACE.

THE following Manual, prepared expressly to meet the requirements of the New Code of 1871, will, it is believed, thoroughly supply a pressing want, and one very generally felt by teachers.

In this work the attempt has been made, for the first time, to systematise and adapt, in a suitable and convenient form, the study and practice of Music with reference to the requirements of Elementary Schools, by a method of treatment similar to that employed in most other branches of knowledge taught therein.

The work consists of two main divisions—Part I. Theoretical; Part II. Practical—and is characterised by the following among other novel features:—

Part I. comprises a suitable selection of the cardinal facts and principles of Music, with a minimum of rules deduced therefrom. These are printed in large type, and are supplemented by the addition, in smaller type, of appropriate illustrative and explanatory matter.

Part II., which is wholly Practical, contains :—

1st. A copious and comprehensive collection of Exercises in Writing, to serve in connection with the Theoretical portion of the work, for purposes of testing, and

2d. A series of nearly 200 graduated Musical Exercises, calculated, by a careful use, to secure the power of singing at sight intelligently—of using notes “with the understanding”—and consisting, with few exceptions, of actual musical compositions, selected (suitably, with fitness) from the works of the great masters, and other legitimate sources—the *sol-fa* syllables, time marks, and other noteworthy points being carefully and fully marked in every instance where needed.

By this method the following advantages are secured :—

1. A conversancy with actual music (properly so-called) at an early stage, with the progressive acquirement of an increased musical *répertoire*.

2. The excitement of interest, and sustaining of the pupil's attention—a point of paramount importance in teaching to sing.

3. The cultivation of a pure and correct taste (*a*) by a familiarity with good models, and (*b*) by the absence of that incessant “labour” at bare technical forms, which generates so easily a fatal perversion of the artistic sense.

In conclusion, it may be added that, while the fundamental

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principle of the relation of notes one to another in a key has been fully recognised, and what may be called the Tonic system of singing uniformly upheld, this has been done by the exclusive employment of the ordinary musical notation, it being the opinion of the present writer that supplementary and auxiliary systems of notation are, to say the least, unnecessary, and in most cases positively detrimental as aids in acquiring a knowledge of vocal music. (See Part II., chap. ii.) And, further, that the success of any attempt seriously to interfere with the universal art language of music in its written form cannot but be regarded as in the highest degree chimerical, although experience has shown that the introduction of such an attempt at a certain stage of musical knowledge may do much to retard the progress of popular musical education in the true sense.

It is thought that, by the adoption of the medium above alluded to, the relative importance of the two great musical facts of pitch and scale relationship respectively (of which the latter is certainly the more weighty)—and which have severally been mistakenly selected as the prominent and distinctive feature of vocal methods, because inadequate alone for the intended purpose—has been clearly and justly set forth, and thus the perilous extremes avoided of exalting either, to the detriment and well nigh exclusion of the other.

Should the present attempt be found practically to conduce

in any degree to the removal of the distractions which have proved so detrimental to the advancement of popular musical education, mainly occasioned by attaching undue prominence to individual (and sometimes subordinate) musical principles, the author will deem himself amply rewarded.

METHOD OF USING THE WORK.

PART I., which forms a text-book for home and school use, is divided into separate lessons of a suitable length, the termination of each being indicated by a horizontal line.

The portions of each lesson printed in large type are intended to be committed to memory—preferably as home work.

This being done, each lesson, taken as a whole, should be read through in class, the portions printed in smaller type being dwelt upon, expanded, and further developed by the various means at the disposal of the teacher (*e.g.*, use of black board, oral questioning, vocal illustration, &c.)

Finally, the work should be tested at a convenient time by means of the exercises to be written out by the children, contained in Part II.

Part I. should be begun as early as possible—as soon, in fact, as the child is found to have reached a sufficient standard of general intelligence—and should be repeated continuously until the time of leaving school.