

**GRAMMAR SCHOOL
SONGS: A
COLLECTION OF SONGS
FOR FUN AND FANCY**

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Grammar School Songs: A Collection of Songs for Fun and Fancy by Charles H. Farnsworth

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BY

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PREFACE

THE desire for self-improvement is a distinctive characteristic of the American. This seems to be especially true with reference to singing. School music is constantly recommended for developing the community spirit, the love of home and country, for refining taste, for disciplining the mind and even improving the health. And yet we cannot really say that these are the highest and best reasons for singing.

The real motive for singing is found in the joy of it. Unless this is present all other motives are lifeless. Music, in our modern life, is too educational—it should be more for fun and fancy if we are to have vigorous living music.

The aim of *GRAMMAR SCHOOL SONGS* is to offer, first, good music; second, a plan for its use that shall encourage the enjoyment of singing both in the school and the home.

The songs are short and extremely rhythmic in character. Such songs as Purcell's "Harvest Home," "Weel May the Keel Row," and the "Dance Song from Jutland" are admitted to the collection mainly for this reason.

The songs depend on their melodic character for effectiveness. Fifty-six of them are without vocal harmony, and thirty-seven do not need even instrumental accompaniment to give them interest. Simple part work is introduced in fourteen rounds. Six of the songs are harmonized, such as "Old Black Joe" and "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot," making it possible for the older members of the family to join in with the children at home.

A wide range of subjects is included.

Fourteen of the songs may be classified as humorous, about the same number as songs of sentiment. "Now is the Month of Maying" and "Maypole Dance" represent the jollity of out-door life. The love motive could hardly be left out of a collection in which there are so many folk-songs, yet in contrast to the sentimental, modern treatment, old songs like "Sally, My Dear," through a humorous approach, remove what objections there might be to their use.

There are some half dozen beautiful melodies introduced without words so that the pupils may make up appropriate local settings. The same could be done with a number of the songs which have words but the sentiment of which is not particularly applicable to our American life. "When the King Enjoys His Own Again," "Hunting the Hare," "A Hundred Years on the Eastern Shore," and even the "Cornish May Song," may with good effect have local words substituted for those given. "The Camper's Life" illustrates how a vigorous sea-song may be made effective for a land-lubber. The value of such practice will be alluded to again.

Not only do folk-songs abound, but such compositions as "Puahoku" from Hawaii, several Indian melodies, a Bulgarian and two Hindu airs introduce pleasing variety, not for geographical or archeological interest, but because of the charm of the melodies. These national melodies—in fact all the songs of the collection—have been practically tested with young people and included because of the interest they have awakened.

In order to arouse the desired motive

for the singing of these songs, they should be used under conditions not always found in ordinary school life. The opening exercises and the work in connection with the music reading lesson do not lend themselves easily for exuberant expression. The material in this book is best adapted to recreative singing and should be used freely in connection with the varying aspects of school life. Hence, a minute or two of song between classes and whenever a change of mood is desired would offer the best opportunity for the use of this collection and make the music of the school of much greater benefit to the pupil.

While the actual learning of these songs depends largely on their school use, their full effect will be best realized apart from study. If the pupil is well introduced to them they are bound to appear in his out-of-school life, in picnics, excursions, in the home, on the playground. This out-of-school use of music will go a long way towards making our children musical. Unfortunately, the little of such singing that is done is often utterly unassociated with what is learned in school.

We need not only more out-of-school singing, but such singing should further a distinctive musical enjoyment. Hence the suggestion for the home use of these songs, for arranging school and home programmes, for utilizing all the available musical resources of the home.

The most effective agency, however, in making the songs a part of the pupil's life is to have him make up words to these melodies that will be expressive of his own fun and interest. Recently, during one season, in a summer camp for girls words to over twenty-five songs were made up, many of them to melodies that are in this collection. There was a gusto and interest in the singing of these songs of the girls' own making that did not appear in songs whose words did not have this inti-

mate association. It is sometimes objected that such breaking apart of music and words is a practice that should not be encouraged. There are hymns and patriotic songs whose words and music it would be almost a crime to separate; but most of the material in this collection has no such association. In a great many cases the words and melodies must have had separate origins.

To make a fine melody effective for expressing local interest is next in value to originating a good melody itself, and we hardly need a more authoritative example than Robert Burns, who wrote original words for already existent melodies. The text of many a famous song is sufficient to show that great poetic and literary ability is not essential in the text to serve for focusing emotional interest awakened by the melody. Such changes of words may often be nothing more than adaptation of ideas to fit the local need. The introduction of such changes has been the important factor in making the folk-song as effective as it is. Because the art of printing makes it possible to fix a given form of melody and text, it does not follow that no further change shall take place. We do need collections where melodies and texts are scrupulously kept as near as possible to their original forms for the sake of their archeological interest, but a school song-book should have its material as closely related to the pulsing life of the pupils as possible, and the adaptation of text is often one of the most effective means for accomplishing this end.

It will need tact and enthusiasm on the part of the teacher, the superintendent, parents, and all interested in the pupils to see that the melodies to which original words are to be set are first thoroughly learned and their scansion felt. They must be well in mind if they are to dominate the rhythm of the words. Some tunes are caught as easily as limericks

and are generally of no more worth. It takes practice to retain "The Chambered Nautilus" in mind, but how eminently worth while is the effort compared with the ease of recollecting a limerick! In fact, the collection is not offered as something that will compete in itself with the light music of the day, but it has a character that with care will enable it to hold its own.

The fact that these tunes are short and pithy, that they are full of life, and that most of them do not depend on a harmonic setting or accompaniment for effectiveness makes them particularly applicable for singing under the varied conditions that the popular use here recommended requires. Music which demands accompaniment, chorus, or part singing for its effectiveness is too limited.

We know of no other book that at-

tempts to cover this specific field for students of the grammar grades. The future musical life of the individual depends very largely on the musical interests which are awakened in these and earlier grades. Music, like the other arts, must be loved to be studied effectively. The formal work of note reading will be of little use if singing for the joy of it, already alluded to, is not present. We shall never "hear America singing" unless, above all motives for improvement, whether of the self or the community, we frankly recognize that fun and fancy must be the prompting desire in song.

I take pleasure in expressing my gratitude for the aid received from editors and publishers of old songs and hope that what is here presented will in turn be helpful to others in making good music popular.

TO THE TEACHER

I

MANY schools are fortunate enough to possess either a piano-player, a phonograph, or both. In its particular field either instrument is indispensable in that it offers a unique means for setting before us a vast amount of the world's best music. Rolls and records have, in fact, been made by the greatest artists; and, while they sometimes leave much to be desired, they are, nevertheless, of paramount importance in the study, appreciation, and enjoyment of music.

In the following paragraphs reference is made to phonograph records only, for two reasons: (1) This instrument is becoming more and more common in schools and homes. (2) It is the only mechanism that, to any satisfactory degree, preserves and presents the individuality of voices and of many instruments. This selection (of the phonograph) does not imply any lack of utility or of artistic merit in the various makes of piano-players. They are, indeed, as we have said, indispensable. Some of them preserve with the most astonishing degree of fidelity all the characteristics of the individual player. Thus it is possible, literally, to witness a photographic reproduction of the playing of the world's greatest pianists, recorded in some instances so faithfully that even little devices of touch and of pedal use are instantly recognized. Furthermore, the piano-player serves better than the phonograph to acquaint us not only with piano music itself but with the great literature of orchestral music—sympho-

nies, symphonic poems, overtures, orchestral suites, and the like. While these forms reproduced by the phonograph present somewhat the orchestral coloring of the instruments, they are incapable of giving them in their entirety; this is due to the fact that the phonograph record is limited to approximately a five-minute run. With the piano-player mechanism no such limitation obtains (as to length), though, naturally, a reproduction of the orchestral coloring is impossible.

Science and invention have made it possible for us to participate, to a large degree, through these instruments, in the world's best music. Their records and rolls become, therefore, as necessary in the home and school as a collection of the world's best books. To a degree that is amazingly vital they permit us to listen to performances of music as they take place in the great art centres of the world. The famous soloist sings for us with all the artistic power and perception that she exhibits in the world's opera houses; and not alone this participation, but in addition we may enjoy a degree of intimate acquaintance with the individuality of the great artists that is truly marvellous. They live for us in the school-room as essentially as they do for the public in the concert hall. We have but to place the record upon the revolving table, adjust the tone-arm, and, as if by magic, the mechanism itself disappears and the artist emerges.

Thus there may come into every school and home the most distinguished visitors,