

"And will your friend, the children's Lord,
Be in the church this morning?"
She looked between the great green elms;
Her smile was like the dawning;

"Why, yes—it is his house, you know;
He wouldn't go away
When we are bringing flowers to him,
And it is Children's Day!"

I thought, as down the long church aisle
With Dorothy I trod,
"How blessed are the pure in heart,
Who always see their God!"

The Selection of Songs for a Primary Class.

BY JOSEPHINE L. BALDWIN.

Part II.—Music.

HAVING decided upon a standard by which to measure the words of songs, the primary superintendent realizes that she has an element of even greater importance to scrutinize before the hymn as a whole can be adopted. Music has a power over the mind more subtle, deeper, and stronger than that even of oratory, and intrenches itself so firmly and easily in the memory that it will retain there words which without the tune would soon be forgotten. Children are peculiarly susceptible to its influence, and by a hymn fitly chosen may be more easily brought into a proper mood for praise, prayer, contrition, or sympathy than in any other way. It is this great possibility which creates the teacher's responsibility to select wisely. If meaningless, lifeless music, or such as has a distinctly secular tone, is chosen, the children are not only affected adversely by it, but lose the lasting impressions for good which the right sort of reverent, sweet, or joyous tunes might have produced.

John Wesley, in a marvelous essay on "The Power of Music," takes up the question why modern music does not exert the power over the emotions that is predicated of ancient music, and says:

"The grand reason seems to be no other than this: the whole nature and design of music is altered. The ancient composers studied melody alone, the due arrangement of single notes; and it was by melody alone

that they wrought such wonderful effects. . . . It is true the modern music has been sometimes observed to have as powerful an effect as the ancient. . . . But when was this? Generally, if not always, when a fine solo was sung; when the 'sound has been an echo to the sense;' when the music has been extremely simple and inartificial, the composer having attended to melody, not harmony."

This undoubted superiority of melody over harmony as a means of swaying the emotions gives a great advantage to primary teachers who could not make much use of harmony if they desired to do so, but may command the sweetest and best of melodies.

Into the realm of individual taste this article does not, of course, attempt to enter. What seems a beautiful song to some will not be liked by others, and on general principles the one which a teacher likes best will do the children the most good, for the reason that they are quick to catch and reflect emotions. But in deciding for or against any composition certain broad principles may be given, and from the number of songs allowable under them there will still be room for the exercise of natural preference.

1. The music must be of a high grade; not necessarily "classic," but such as would be called good music.

2. It must be simple—that is, the intervals short rather than long, and the time easy.

3. It must always sing the sentiment that the words which are set to it say.

Under the first of these principles it may be said that children are quite as discriminating as their elders, and quickly tire of a characterless jingle, but will find keen enjoyment for years in frequent repetitions of a really good tune. There is one by Gounod set to the words, "Once in royal David's city" (*Sacred Songs for Little Singers*), which is of this sort. The melody is sweet and pronounced, while the harmony of the accompaniment moves with a grandeur of rhythm which suggests the majesty of the Christ-child's mission. One might think it almost too solemn to be attractive to little children, but they love it and sing it as they never do less worthy tunes.

Some really good music written for primary use is marred by the introduction of intervals too great for untrained and almost untried voices. Baby feet cannot take long strides, and baby voices should not be

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