

PRIMARY TEACHERS' DEPARTMENT.

Primary Notes.

Did you hear that bluebird singing above the March snow? What strain of music could be more delicious than its sweet voice saying, "Spring! spring! Coming! coming!" Thanks, bluebird. We needed your song, your soft bugle note asserting in the presence of lingering snowdrifts and shivering winds at twilight, that winter's reign is hopelessly going. Did we stop to think where that bird came from? Can you track in thought its passage from its Southern home to that apple bough in the mossy old orchard? The story of a birdsong would not be a hopeless task. The very attempt would interest. If we cannot have the story, let us be grateful that we have the song, this cheerful heralding. Teacher, do you realize what a flock of bluebirds you have in your Sunday school class? What sweet songs they can sing! We don't know as angels nestling close down to our assemblings envy our singing unless they fold their wings above a big brood of children singing away to the praise of Jesus, and then there is a chance for the wish to sing as tellingly. Are you making much of the music of your bluebirds? Make that subject prominent. Develop these gifts all you can. Now and then tell them the story of a hymn of some song-flight over earth's chilliness, like Charles Wesley's "Jesus, let me to thy bosom fly." Then send them out, these song evangelists, these Sunday school bluebirds, to warble the message of God's love for souls astray in the winter of their sin. To some one it will come as a spring song of heavenly hope.

Making Clear the Meaning of Hymns.

OFTEN too little attention is paid to the explanation of the Sunday school hymns, especially with the youngest children. Many a teacher seems to take it for granted that children who can read or memorize must know the meaning of the words, and little care is taken to discover whether the singing is mechanical or not.

A child went home from an infant class one Sunday and told her mother that she had learned to sing a song about a little girl named "Bessie Jewett." "It is so pretty, mamma," she said. The mother, somewhat surprised, decided to attend school with her daughter the next Sunday, and when the beautiful old hymn, "Precious Jewels," was given out the mystery was solved.

The old story of the "consecrated cross-eyed bear" should forever stand as a warning to all careless or indifferent teaching of hymns.

It should be a part of every teacher's mission to make the scholar understand not only the meaning of the words, but the spirit of the hymn. The seed thus sown may bear fruit where least expected.

A little girl asked her teacher many questions about "the shining shore," and when, a few years later, she died, far from her home and Sunday school, she said to her mother "When you go home tell my dear teacher that I have always remembered about 'the shining shore,' and all that she said about it, and now I am going to see it first, and I am so happy."

Explain the hymns, and make them so plain and so precious to the Sunday school children that they will sing with the heart and the understanding also.—*Selected.*

How to Avoid the Dangers of Object Illustration.

BY A. M. D.

THERE is no branch of class work which requires so much judgment as does object illustration. Jesus excelled in this art, and his methods should be carefully studied by the teacher. When Jesus wished to draw the attention to some beautiful truth he chose an object which was pleasing to the senses, such as the birds of the air or lily of the field. Teachers should do the same. Few appreciate the beautiful as do children, and their lives should be surrounded by it.

Homemade objects used to represent different articles of Eastern life are of necessity manufactured from things with which the children are familiar. For this reason the material from which they are made should be concealed as much as possible, and the scholars should never know what they were originally. Otherwise the atmosphere of the lesson would be spoiled.

When object illustration is introduced for the sake of analogy—to draw the attention of the class to some great truth—it is very well to introduce familiar objects, as did Christ, who always drew his lesson from what was nearest at hand. But when objects are introduced to make the narrative of the lesson more realistic they should be as unfamiliar as it is possible to procure, that the minds of the children may be