

Selected for the S. E. C. A. Column

The Captive Squirrel's Petition.

There was a little village maid,
Of manners blithe and free,
A laughing, rosy, playful child
Though born of low degree;
One evening from the autumn woods
Her doting father brought,
For Janet, home a squirrel brown,
All fierce and newly caught.

Her ruby lips she gently pressed
Upon his velvet head,
And many a backward glance she cast,
As she slowly stole to bed;
Light to her pillow balmy sleep
On downy wing descends,
Her happy spirit to her cheek
Unwonted freshness lends.

And in the visions of the night
The little maiden stole
To gaze upon the living toy
Whose image filled her soul,
As softly she took down the cage,
A cry of wonder broke
From her red lips—in plaintive tones
The captive squirrel spoke—

"Oh, little maiden, pity me,
My home is far away
Where gaily mid the giant oaks,
My bright-eyed offspring play;
Their couch is lined with softest moss,
Within an aged tree,
The wind that sweeps the forest bough
Is not more blithe than we;

"And oft beneath our nimble feet
The old scar branches shake,
As lightly through the beechen groves
Our merry way we take;
The boundless forest was my home—
How hard my fate must be,
Confined within this narrow cage—
Oh! set your captive free!"

That melancholy, plaintive wail
The maiden's slumbers broke,
And with a sudden start and cry,
The little Janet woke,
The sinking moon a veil of light
O'er wood and valley spread,
When Janet, full of troubled thoughts,
Rose softly from her bed.

With trembling hands she raised the bolt
That held the casement low;
The tears were in her lifted eyes,
As she bade the stranger go,
'Twas but a momentary grief;
The joy that bless the good
Came o'er her heart—she saw him bound
Like wild bird to the wood.

For the REVIEW

Notes for Teaching Music by Tonic Sol-fa Notation.

Music may be enjoyed by all and the power of learning to sing is almost universal.

It is claimed for the Tonic Sol-fa notation of music, when taught according to its true principles, that in it we have a system which enables *any* teacher who gives instruction in the ordinary branches of education to teach his or her pupils to sing correctly, intelligently and tastefully *from note*. These principles and the notation associated with them present so few difficulties, that when this system is used the pupils may find intelligent pleasure in their earliest music lessons, and even get some grasp of that intricate department of music—Harmony, the elements of which are brought before the pupil in the first lessons. The notation is so simple that the time, at the disposal of the teacher, allows him more fully to attend to those points which increase the interest of the pupils, improve the quality of the singing and have a greater refining influence; and this branch, when so taught, has a much higher educational value.

That the music lessons may profit more *physically*, the teacher must attend particularly to the position and breathing of the pupils. Let me give a few hints on these points:

Position. The *best* posture for singing is standing, but the pupils should not be tired by standing too long, for one of the uses of music in the class room is to give rest after the fatigue of heavier work and to renew the energies for lessons to follow. Draw up the pupils in single lines, in stand-at-ease position, resting more of the weight of the body on the left foot to steady the beating of the heart (which is often disturbed by first efforts at singing), the head erect but not thrown back, the shoulders back (but not up) to allow free use of the lungs. The pupils should breathe with the whole of the lungs, the top, the sides, and the lower part. The lungs or bellows should be well filled, and all filled to work with the best results the little musical instrument in the throat called the larynx.

Frequently give the class breathing exercises, thus, let the class with closed mouth take in a full breath while the teacher counts 1, 2, 3 slowly, then let out the breath while he lowers his hand counting 1, 2, 3, 4, etc. slowly. Be satisfied with little in the first lesson, but look for progress at every lesson till all the pupils can keep breathing out for 20, 30, 40 seconds or even longer, according to age and the strength of the pupils' lungs. Let the teacher see that each pupil in taking in a breath swells out the body at the chest, the ribs and also the abdomen.