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TORONTO, SEPTEMBER 15th, 1887.

TONIC SOL-FA.

II.

ASSUMING that we have shown, in the former part of this article, that the Staff Notation more nearly complies with the theoretical requirements of a perfect notation than the system of Curwen, or any other system, we propose to consider briefly the other branch of our subject, viz: the *practical use of a notation*. That is, taking the staff notation as the system best adapted to meet the necessities of the musical world, we would endeavour in some measure to answer the question, How shall it be used? Here we are glad to come more into accord with the advocates of Tonic Sol-fa. It cannot be disputed that for purposes of vocal and mental intonation the knowledge of the two scales, the major and minor, should suffice. On all tonics the relative intervals are the same and a person who can correctly sing the major scale, from the tonic C, has no difficulty in singing the same scale on any other tonic. The same remarks apply to the minor; with the important addition that all singers should be taught to sing the *harmonic* minor scale with as much ease as they sing the major series; and it is here that we would impress upon all singing teachers the absolute necessity of awakening in the minds of their pupils a lively appreciation of the distinct individuality of the minor, as opposed to the major mode, and the futility of attempting to read music in a minor key by applying one's knowledge of the major intervals. This can only be done by dropping once for all the older forms of the minor scale, and adopting in their place the true, or harmonic minor. We hold, then, that the theory of the "moveable Doh," with the not less important "moveable Lah" (taken not as the major sixth of the tonic "Doh" but as *itself* the tonic of the minor series), is just as adaptable to the notation of the staff, as to the letters of Curwen, and if intelligently applied and taught cannot fail to enable pupils with any ear for music readily to acquire the power of

singing at sight. The fact is, the cause of much of the abuse to which the Staff Notation is subjected is to be sought, not in the notation itself, but in the manner in which it is applied and taught. We have always held that before a beginner is introduced to written music at all (other than the few words necessary to represent a complete major and minor scale, viz:—Do, ra, me, fa, so, la, te, do, and la, te, do, ra, me, fa, se, la) he should be made perfectly familiar with all the intervals represented in the two scales mentioned, including the "augmented" second between "fa" and "se." That is to say, before a pupil is required to learn the notation of intervals he should have firmly established in his mind a mental conception of those intervals and their inversions, and be able to sing any of them correctly and without hesitation or *portamento* on the words representing them, being pointed out on the black-board or chart. Knowing the *things*, it will be found comparatively easy to teach the pupil the signs used to represent these things, and with this advantage, that he will when he sees two different notes upon the staff think *first* of the interval, and then (if at all) of the signs employed to represent it. On the other hand, the pupil who is taught the signs first and the things signified subsequently, when he reads the same two notes, will reverse the natural process, and think first of the signs and then (if he can) of the interval. It is just here we find the explanation of the strange anomaly presented by nine out of every ten of our amateur painists. They may be fairley good—indeed in many cases first-class-executants, and even tolerable *sight-performers*, but show them a page of new music, even a duet, and they will not have the faintest conception of the musical effect, or "how it sounds," though they can readily tell you all about the key, the notes, the difficulty of the piece, the movement, everything indeed but the melody and harmony. It is a sad satire on our method of using the established notation that it should be possible to find so many people able to sit down at a piano and give a really good rendering of a new *morceau*, who, if left in a room with the music, but without the instrument, could probably not sing the melody of the first five bars, to save their lives. If these unfortunates had been taught *first* the intervals and *then* the signs (care being also taken that they were kept away from the instrument *altogether* until both intervals and signs were pretty familiar; for the last thing to be taught before going on to the technics should be the relation between the signs and the different *keys* of clavier, otherwise the pupils will think of the signs as representing different pieces of wood or ivory to be pressed down—all very well afterwards but most hurtful at the beginning when the signs should suggest the intervals only) they would read a new piece of music with as much ease as they would the morning paper. Let us *use* and not *abuse* our beautiful "old notation," which to the true musician is as the face of a familiar and dear friend, one who sings, laughs, sighs, laments, weeps or comforts as he may be in the humor, without need of instrument, voice, sound or word, and we shall soon hear the last of the grumblers and would-be iconoclasts!