

school five, six, and seven years, and at the end of that time are far more backward than they would be if proper attention were paid to elementary instruction. Let analysis, algebra, and mathematics be banished from all but the higher schools, at all events till good readers and writers, correct spellers and speakers, are a much more frequent outcome than they are at present.

I would ask, To whom is the selecting of the school books entrusted? It will be admitted by all who have gone through it, that grammar is a difficult study for children, dry, hard, dull, and uninteresting at the best, for though it comes to them afterwards, they can scarcely understand it when very young, unlike spelling, history, and geography, which interest and often give pleasure; so that the simpler and easier the grammar the more thoroughly the pupils will learn it. The grammars of Lindley Murray and of Lennie are as easy as it is possible for such a hard study to be made; they have hitherto been thought good enough for the best schools in England and Scotland; by far the largest number of persons who speak English well have been taught by them; and yet instead of either of these, an American book, Swinton's, is used, the sole result of which is to disgust the pupils for ever with the study of grammar. It is badly written, tedious, intricate, and entirely incomprehensible to children. Let any one examine Swinton's Grammar, revised by the Principal of the Normal School in Nova Scotia (not a University man), and see for himself if I am not right. I do not think that Americans, in spite of their superior school system, can be said to be remarkable for the correctness of their speech, and surely if we are to keep the pure well of English undefiled, we ought to use an English grammar, not an American one. If we can get a better book than Murray's or Lennie's, by all means let us do so, but in the meantime it would be wiser to keep to those books by which the best educated people have been taught.

The attempt to learn in a few years what ought to be the work of many, is a profound mistake, and the fact that few people who can afford to send their children to private schools, send them to public ones, shews exactly in what estimation the teaching there is held. The truth is that a good education takes many years to get, and after all we must go back to the old idea, that to know a few things well and thoroughly is much more useful in after life, than to have learned of Latin, botany, geology, algebra, chemistry, mathematics, and analysis, a very, very little, and of reading, writing and spelling, a very, very little also.—MARY THORNCLIFF.
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THE TONIC SOL-FA METHOD OF TEACHING SINGING.

A VERY important step in connection with musical education in England was the reception, in July last by Earl Spencer and the Rt. Hon. A. J. Mundella, M.P., at the Education Department, Whitehall, of a deputation advocating the above method of teaching singing. This action was taken on account of a supposition that it was the intention of the Government to require the teaching of Hullah's System to the exclusion of the Tonic Sol-fa method. Of late years both systems have been employed, but it is claimed that the Tonic Sol-fa has been much more popular and successful, and its possible exclusion is regarded with alarm. That the deputation included such men as Dr. Stainer, organist of St. Paul's, and Mr. Brinley Richards, was a guarantee that its claims were worthy of consideration. The points of difference between the Tonic Sol-fa method and Hullah's system are two-fold. In the first place in Hullah's system the DO is immovable, in the Tonic Sol-fa it is movable: that is, in the former, DO corresponds to C of the staff notation, and LA to A; in the latter DO is always the tonic or key note of the major scale, and LA of the minor scale. In the second place, while in the former system the ordinary musical notation is used from the commencement, in the latter a new notation is used, which has the advantages that it can be printed from ordinary printing type, takes less space, is much cheaper, and easier to read. That it has been successful is shewn by the fact that there is hardly a town or village in England where classes have not been established, and in cities and large towns the works of the great masters are rendered, having been acquired by the Tonic Sol-fa system.

And what is our position in Ontario? For over twenty years the Hullah system has had a fair trial in the Normal and Model Schools, and with what results? Vocal music is laid down as one of the branches to be taught in our public schools, but we have no teachers competent to undertake the task of instruction, nor is there the least prospect, we fear, of our soon having any. A few of our Collegiate Institutes are giving some attention to Vocal Music. If one of them would import a teacher capable of imparting instruction under the Tonic Sol-fa method it might prove an era in the history of musical education in Ontario.

Lindsay.

J. H. K.

"THE TEACHER'S DREAM," a poem by Mr. W. H. Venable, will be issued shortly in an illustrated form by Putnam & Sons, as an illustrated gift-book.