

are in no sense musicians. The in-born musical talent is never developed by such people and the boy or girl struggles along murdering "show pieces" until the time comes when he feels that he ought to take a few "finishing lessons" from an acknowledged master. For these "finishing lessons" he is willing to pay, and having selected his master, he practices up his last "piece" and finally presents himself at the studio to play it over before his new teacher.

What disappointment awaits him! He is told that he has not learned the art of "fingering"; that his execution is clumsy; that he does not know how to play this piece at all. The real fact of the case is this, he has been attempting to run before he could creep, and must now come back to the first stage and be content for some time to creep very slowly. This only disgusts him, and in the long run he who would have been by this time a devoted student of music is a wreck and a failure.

I have met many such people. I am constantly meeting young boys and girls who are taking lessons in music, but who are practising in the dark. They have looked at me in blank astonishment when I have asked them what "key" their piece was written in, or why the scale of A major has three sharps. I have frequently received the reply, "My teacher only teaches pieces! The question of musical intervals, the construction of minor and major scales, the common key signatures, etc., are beneath consideration.

But what has all this to do with

school music? These are questions outside school work. Pupils in our public schools do not learn the piano, violin, cornet, etc., as a part of their course in school music!

No! they do not, it is true, but they do pretend to study that branch of music known as vocal music. Every pupil in school who has a voice possesses a musical instrument of the most delicate mechanism; an instrument which no amount of money can purchase. It is the free gift of God himself. How are we as teachers playing upon these delicate instruments? Are we training our pupils to express their sentiment in musical sounds? Are we so teaching that those who make music a special study will be able to develop more thoroughly the voices entrusted to them? I am afraid that in many cases vocal music as taught in our public schools to-day is worse than a farce.

Surely there is some aim and object in teaching singing, beyond an annual "show," or an occasional soiree. There is no subject which can be made to raise the moral tone of an institution more than the study of music—and of vocal music in particular—because the voice is a Divine gift.

But we must from the first treat music as a language. We must ourselves be able to interpret it for our pupils; though in many cases, in a dance, a march, a waltz, etc., they will be quite able to do this for themselves.

The matter to be considered next is the kind of music to be taught in our public schools. Here a great difficulty presents it-