

prepared to submit to a test of equal difficulty or thoroughness.

The teachers of the City schools have tested the Sol-Fa system, and many are of opinion that it is destined to accomplish a revolution in singing, equal to that of the Phonic method in reading. The same opposition is being shown to the former as was shown to the latter, but it will only lead to a keener investigation of the subject, and in the end, the power of the system to fulfil the end for which it was designed, will be acknowledged, as in England, by all impartial and liberal-minded musicians. I am,

Yours for the cause of music, A. CRINGAN.

MUSIC IN TORONTO PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

To the Editor of THE MUSICAL JOURNAL.

SIR.—I have read a number of replies by musical gentlemen to certain questions sent to them regarding the introduction of Tonic Sol-fa notation in the public schools of Toronto. I request your permission to make the following statements in reference to the subject:

1. Mr. Cringan was not appointed to teach music in our schools because he understands the Tonic Sol-fa notation. I recommended him solely because he is a most excellent teacher. Mr. Cringan understands music well, but his teaching genius is greater than his musical genius. I have had the honor of being visited by scores of Tonic Sol-fa teachers, who requested me to recommend them to our School Board, but I could not do so because I found none of them possessing teaching power in any marked degree. I had no difficulty in recognizing Mr. Cringan's ability as a teacher when I first met him, and as soon as I found that he had received a good musical training, I had no hesitation in strongly recommending him as teacher of music in our primary classes.

2. I have always held that it makes very little difference what notation is adopted in teaching music. The way in which thought is pictured cannot change the thought. The important work of the music teacher is to give clear ideas of music itself, instead of devoting his best energies to the way in which music is written. The descriptions of thoughts never give any trouble if the thoughts themselves have been made clear.

3. Some of the musicians condemn strongly the use of two notations by the same pupils. There is no philosophical foundation for this objection. Pupils learn to recognize thought both in script and print, and to recognize numbers in both Arabic and Roman numerals. Our experience already has proved that the transition from Tonic Sol-fa to the Staff notation can be made naturally and thoroughly in a very few lessons.

4. I am much pleased with the effects of Mr. Cringan's appointment so far. He has power to awaken enthusiasm on the part of both teachers and pupils. This is vastly more important than any question of musical notation can be. We do not, in Toronto, propose to devote our time to quarrelling about how music shall be written. We intend to train the voices of our children, to use music as a means of developing and purifying their emotional natures, and to qualify them for recognizing and interpreting not merely the marks that represent music, but the true spirit of the composers whose works may be placed in their hands.

5. We believe in practical tests more than theoretical discussions, and we would like the accomplished musicians whose letters you publish to wait for one year, or till the next meeting of the Musical Association, and then to visit our schools; when we will gladly have our pupils tested and compared with any pupils in Canada. We would like the test to be a thorough one, including the musical training of the voice, the mind and the ear, as well as power to read and sing music at sight. We would also like the test to be applied to all grades of pupils.

6. I was disappointed at not seeing the opinions of musical authorities, such as Dr. Strathy, Mr. Torrington and Mr. Haslam among those you printed. Yours truly,

JAMES L. HUGHES,
Inspector of Public Schools.

Toronto, May 20, 1887.

[Mr. Hughes evidently misinterprets the replies to our circular published in last number. These had no reference to Mr. Cringan's appointment, but simply expressed the views held by musicians on the introduction of the Tonic Sol-fa notation. We are yet without replies from Messrs. Torrington and Haslam.—Ed.]

THE STAFF NOTATION AND TONIC SOL-FA.

To the Editor of THE MUSICAL JOURNAL.

DEAR SIR.—I was very sorry to find (in your correspondents' letters in your last issue) that such an antagonistic feeling exists amongst my professional brethren in Toronto towards the "Tonic Sol-fa" notation; some treat it with contempt, and would have nothing to do with it; whilst others admit that it has advantages, yet would not countenance its adoption in schools and choirs. All this in face of the immense amount of good the method has wrought for the cause of music in the Old Country.

I have had considerable experience with boys in church choirs in England and Canada, and I am convinced that it is impossible to teach all children who sing, to read from the Staff notation, and very few indeed are ever able to read music at sight; where the Staff notation has failed, the Tonic Sol-fa has often proved successful.

Helmholtz, in his great work on sound, in remarking on the value of the Tonic Sol-fa notation, describes how he had been astonished by the "certainty with which a class of forty children between eight and twelve in a British and Foreign school read the notes, and by the accuracy of their intonation."

There can be no doubt that the Tonic Sol-fa aids the acquirement of the Staff notation. Dr. Stainer says (in advocating the use of the method in schools) "I find that those who have a talent for music soon master the Staff notation, after they have learned the Tonic Sol-fa, and become in time good musicians; it is therefore quite a mistake to suppose that by teaching the Tonic Sol-fa system you are discouraging the acquisition (the future acquisition) of Staff music, and so doing a damage to high art."

The London School Board find that "all the teachers prefer to teach by the Tonic Sol-fa method, and have accordingly adopted it throughout their schools."

"Some of the best choral singing now to be heard in England is that of Tonic Sol-fa choirs."

"Of a Tonic Sol-fa edition of the *Messiah* in vocal score, 39,000 copies have been sold!" I quote these several extracts from Grove's Dictionary of Music, to show what a firm hold the system has taken in England; in fact of such proofs of the efficiency of the system in England, we, in Canada, have no business to set our faces against it, but should, on the contrary, give it every encouragement, and let it have a fair chance; let it run side by side with the Staff system, or if necessary, let it be taught altogether in the schools, and we shall afterwards have more pupils for the Staff notation in connection with instrumental work, and we shall ultimately have more musicians in our midst.

The answer of one of your correspondents to your question No. 2 amused me greatly. I admit that Canadian school children are intelligent and well educated, but I do assure him that the English school children are not one whit behind; on the contrary they have superior advantages over the children here, in all branches of education; he should take the earliest opportunity of paying a visit to England and I think he would have great difficulty in finding the "illiterate classes" who have, he asserts, been the only people with whom the Tonic Sol-fa notation "has done good work!"

If the Tonic Sol-fa can achieve such good results here as it has done in England, by all means let it have a fair trial; musicians should not object to, but should welcome any means of removing difficulties from the learner's way; they should be liberal, and put aside individual prejudices in all matters of musical education.

Apologizing for taking up so much space, I am, dear Sir,

Yours faithfully, ARTHUR E. FISHER.

To the Editor of THE MUSICAL JOURNAL:

SIR.—The remarks of "Metronome" in your last number again demand a reply, which I shall make as short as possible. Allow me again to say that "Metronome's" assertions concerning my manner of conducting *St. Paul*, as also of *Israel in Egypt*, are emphatically and distinctly false. I decline to enter into any controversy about the matter, especially with one who lacks the manliness to write above his own signature. Yours, etc.,

Toronto, June 13th, 1887.

EDWARD FISHER.