

MR. W. J. FREELAND.



NO SKETCH of the history of the Union Choir gatherings would be complete without reference to the late W. J. Freeland of Stratford, whose enthusiastic co-operation and wise counsels have been so much appreciated in the past, and the want of which so keenly felt in arranging for the present gathering.

And knowing how popular he was, and what a warm place he had in the affections of the music-loving people who knew

him, it affords us pleasure to give his portrait with a short sketch of his life.

Mr. Freeland was born in Bedhampton, Hampshire, England, 55 years ago, and came to Canada in 1800, settling in London, Ontario. He at once became prominent in Y. M. C. A. work, and for six years was Secretary of the London Association. He was at the same time an enthusiastic apostle of Tonic-Sol-Fa, and soon became an active and successful propagandist of the system. For some years he carried on business and taught music, but about sixteen years ago gave up commerce and devoted his whole energies and time to musical work in connection with church and school.

In March, 1887, he moved to Stratford, and started an evening class, the success of which so pleased the School Board that they engaged him as Music Instructor in the Public Schools, a position which he held up to his lamented death.

For some years he was also the leader of the Choir of Knox Presbyterian Church in the city.

Mr. Freeland departed this life just as the bells of the city were ushering in the New Year of 1895, after a protracted and painful illness, and although the fatal character of his malady was well known, the news of his death came as a shock to the community.

It was felt as a public calamity in the city, and thousands of pupils and ex-pupils, to whom he had endeared himself, mourned his death as that of a beloved friend, as did the people at large.

Mr. Freeland was a man of singularly attractive personality, with a sunny temperament and courtly manner which nothing could ruffle. As one of the clergymen who conducted the funeral service truly said: "His 'good morning' was an influence which was felt for the whole day." His energy was indomitable, and courted rather than avoided difficulties. He was endowed with all the qualities necessary in a pioneer of the new notation, and where he failed to make musical converts he never failed to make personal friends.