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Alice Cunningham Fletcher Papers- Correspondence Box: 1, 1894-95

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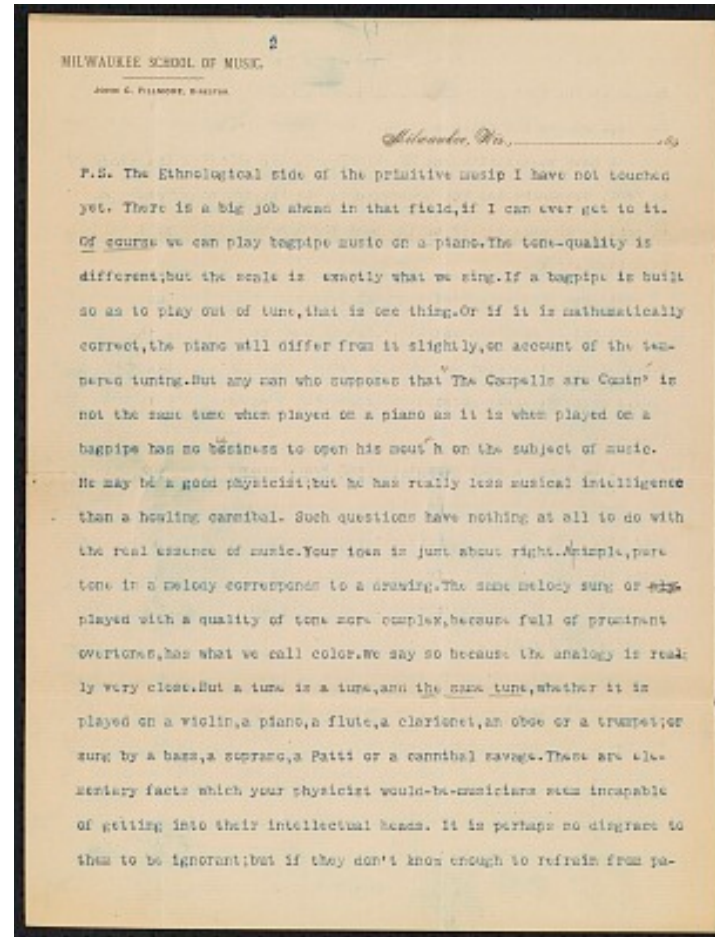
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MILWAUKEE SCHOOL OF MUSIC,
JOHN C. FILLMORE, DIRECTOR.

Milwaukee, Wis., [[blank line]] 189
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P.S. The Ethnological side of the primitive music I have not touched yet. There is a big job ahead in that field, if I can ever get to it. Of course we can play bagpipe music on a piano. The tone-quality is different; but the scale is exactly what we sing. If a bagpipe is built so as to play out of tune, that is one thing. Or if it is mathematically correct, the piano will differ from it slightly, on account of the tempered tuning. But any man who supposes that "The Campells are Coming" is not the same tune when played on a piano as it is when played on a bagpipe has no business to open his mouth on the subject of music. He may be a good physicist; but he has really less musical intelligence than a howling cannibal. Such questions have nothing at all to do with the real essence of music. Your idea is just about right. A simple, pure tone in a melody corresponds to a drawing. The same melody sung or played with a quality of tone more complex, because full of prominent overtones, has what we call color. We say so because the analogy is really very close. But a tune is a tune, and the same tune, whether it is played on a violin, a piano, a flute, a clarinet, an oboe or a trumpet; or sung by a bass, a soprano, a Patti or a cannibal savage. These are elementary facts which your physicist would-be-musicians seem incapable of getting into their intellectual heads. It is perhaps no disgrace to them to be ignorant; but if they don't know enough to refrain from parading



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