

Review

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of these compositions; and, as they can be all had separately, our short sketch of the characteristics of each may be of service in selection.

Jilted. A Song for a Bass or Baritone. Words by W. A. Barrett. Music by J. Stainer.

In the present day, when love-sick sentimental ballads have so become the rule that it is often a real difficulty to distinguish one from the other, it is refreshing to find a poet bold enough to turn round upon the false object of his affection, and assert that "The finest fish yet caught in net, hath still his peer in sea." In character, the words remind us of the verses of Withers, "Shall I wastynge in despair," where the same theory is enunciated with a recklessness which must fairly astonish those faithless fair ones, who firmly believe that a jilted lover immediately betakes himself to lonely groves and woods, where he carves the name of his mistress upon the trees, and eventually dies of consumption, pressing the portrait of his loved one to his breast. But the song before us speaks with a double power, for both poet and composer have done their best. Dr. Stainer's melody is really excellent, the rising and falling sevenths at the commencement giving a quaint character to it, which is highly effective. Simple indeed it is in the extreme; but it is the simplicity which belongs by right to the words; and so artistically it is treated in the harmonies, that the voice part is enriched, without being embarrassed. We should perhaps have preferred that less motion should have been given to the accompaniments in some parts, as in a song of this description the more clearly the words are heard the better; but variety at least is obtained, and this we presume was the composer's principal object. The melody runs somewhat high for a bass; but a baritone singer will be glad to know of so characteristic and effective a song.

Late, late, so late! The Novice's Song, from the *Idylls of the King*.

Composed by Edwin Edwards.

A QUAIN song, in D minor, well expressive of Tennyson's beautiful words, but monotonous from the constant repetition, note for note, of a few short phrases. Composers should not mistake the mere reiteration of the same melody and harmony for *character*; for there is as much affectation in simplicity as in complication; and, with immature writers, the display of either is apt to degenerate into a trick. The two closes in F major, followed by the one in D minor, become tiresome, especially as the symphonies between (each upon a key-note pedal) as we have already said, are never altered. The change of the last chord into D major is felt somewhat as a relief.

ASHDOWN AND PARRY.

Hunting Song. Impromptu, for the Pianoforte.

Solitude. Romance, for the Pianoforte.

Composed by C. Swinnerton Heap.

As the first of these pieces is marked "Op. 1," and the second "Op. 2, No. 1," it is scarcely perhaps fair to criticise them too severely; but when we find that in presenting the works to our notice, the composer draws our attention to the fact of his having been a "Mendelssohn scholar," he cannot wonder if we express our disappointment at not finding traces of a power beyond that necessary for the manufacture of an ordinary drawing-room piece. The restlessness apparent in both the compositions before us detracts very much from their merit. In the "Hunting Song" we have the conventional subject appropriate to this well-worn theme, given out at first with tolerable clearness; but all the effects are got by changes of key, rather than by changes of character, a device which by no means covers the want of invention. Does Mr. Heap remember a "Hunting Song" in the "Lieder ohne worte," written by the man in whose honour his scholarship was founded, where variety and power are gained by the simplest possible means? The second piece, "Solitude," is by far a better composition, although here again it is shown that the author cannot

allow his subject to flow on quietly and naturally. The opening theme, in A minor, is graceful and in character with the title of his piece; but the second subject, in F major, wanders away into regions from which the composer himself finds it difficult to extricate it. In spite of these defects, however, Mr. Heap shows talent enough to make us wish to meet him again; and we need scarcely say that the meeting will be doubly welcome if, in the meantime, he has acquired the difficult art of being simple.

DUFF AND STEWART.

There was a Rose. Song.

Composed by Berthold Tours.

In all the vocal compositions of Mr. Tours, a definite meaning is observable, which effectually removes them from the common-place ballads of the day, where the melody, as a rule, could be transferred from one set of verses to another, without anybody discovering it. The simplicity of the opening theme of the song before us is most appropriate to the words; and the accompaniment is as quietly written as the subject demands. We are not quite sure whether a good singer would reconcile us to the sudden changes of key which occur after the interruption, on the chord of A major, in the symphony; there is certainly much poetical feeling in the treatment of the verse; but too much "word painting" in a simple song is always somewhat dangerous. The return to the original melody, is, however, extremely fresh, and the conclusion of the song is full of effect.

WEEKES AND CO.

Two Songs. Written by Christina Rossetti.

Composed by Sibyl.

1. *When I am dead, my dearest.*
2. *Uphill.*

SIBYL has no reason to hide her name; there is character and feeling in her music, which may some day be trained to good account. In both the songs before us, ample proof is given of the power to produce effect by simple means; and, although sufficient technical knowledge is shown in the treatment of the harmonies, we have no undue intrusion of chromatic chords to disturb the natural flow of the melody.

The Voyage. Song. Words by Tennyson.

The Bridge. Song. Words by Longfellow.

Composed by Childs Avison.

THE first of these songs has a peculiar melody, the commencement of which is harmonised somewhat harshly, on a key-note pedal. Afterwards, however, the voice part is allowed to flow freely enough, and contains some pleasing phrases, especially that in the relative minor, in which the words are exceedingly well expressed. "The Bridge," we like very much in many parts; but it is unequal as an entire composition. The short phrase of accompaniment with which it opens runs through the song with good effect; and the melody, in A minor, has a mournful character, in excellent keeping with the feeling of the poetry. The *Agitato* is scarcely so much to our mind; and the two hands are too close together in the accompaniment, sometimes even getting in each other's way, especially where the C and B clash unpleasantly, on the words, "And the burden laid upon me." This could be easily remedied; and as we are suggesting revision, we might also ask whether the composer would not agree with us that the final chord of the last bar but one on page 3, would be improved by being major, instead of minor, reserving the F natural until the modulation takes place into C, in the next chord. We are of course only expressing our own opinion upon these points; but our doing so is a proof that we consider the song worth attention.