Review

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can be overcome by legitimate practice. The subjects are extremely melodious; and there is infinite variety in the composition. The bold opening phrase for the second pianoforte, followed by the flowing theme in $\frac{3}{4}$ rhythm, is succeeded by an *Adagio*, which forms an excellent contrast; and in the *Allegro*, the light and playful triplets given to the first player are woven in with some impassioned phrases for the *Secondo* in a masterly manner. All who admire the refined pianoforte music of Ferdinand Hiller should possess themselves of this Duet, for they will here find the composer in one of his happiest moods.

Impromptu, pour le Piano.

Malvina. Romance, pour le Piano. Par E. Silas.

M. SILAS may be instanced as one of the few composers of the present day who, in spite of every temptation to the contrary, steadily refuses to write pieces which shall merely successfully hit the taste of the period. We are acquainted with many of his compositions which deserve to receive every attention both from masters and pupils, and especially two duets, one called "*Marche Turque*," and the other simply, we believe, "*Duet in A minor*," both of which are full of character, and excellent examples of what duets should be: "*drawing-room music*" it may be called indeed; but it is suited for drawing-rooms only, the inmates of which have educated themselves to believe that the pianoforte is something more than a pretty toy for grown children to play with. The two pieces before us are elegant trifles, but finished with the care of a real artist, and demanding the care of a real artist to interpret them. Those who are not frightened by the key (F sharp major) will derive much pleasure from the *Impromptu*, the subject of which is extremely fanciful. The passage marked "*Glissando*," at the conclusion of the piece, will surprise those who have never attempted the slide except upon the white keys. "*Malvina*" has a happy theme, to which the obstinate dominant, taken with the thumb of the right hand, gives much effect. This character is preserved throughout; and in many parts it gives a peculiar quaintness to the passages which cannot fail to be felt by every hearer. The modulations are always conducted with the skill of a practised musician; and the whole piece, unpretentious as it is, shows much artistic feeling and constructive power.

The Stars are with the Voyager. Song. Words by T. Hood. Music by Agnes Zimmermann.

IN the vocal compositions of pianists it too often happens that the singer is regarded as so secondary a personage that he or she is really made to accompany a pianoforte study; and the "*lied*" of Young Germany so thoroughly favours this idea that, unless some protest be made against it by composers who dare to think for themselves, the real "*song*"—written for a vocalist, with an instrumental accompaniment,—would gradually disappear. From so accomplished a performer as Miss Zimmermann we are glad, therefore, to receive songs in which the pianoforte is not forced into undue prominence; and amongst the many graceful vocal works of this composer which have lately come under our notice, the one now before us may claim high rank. The theme is pleasing, and it is accompanied throughout with appropriate simplicity. The words are extremely beautiful—as might be expected from the name of the author—and the song may be conscientiously recommended to the notice of a *mezzo-soprano* who desires to display her expressive, rather than her executive, powers.

Loyal Death. Song for a Bass or Baritone voice. Words by P. S. Worsley. Music by J. Stainer.

THIS is a very ambitious song, and will require an ambitious singer to do it justice; but the compass lies well within the range of a baritone voice; and we think, if well sung, it would be extremely effective. The martial opening leads to a bold subject, the left hand of the accompanist moving in unison with the voice, and *staccato* chords being given to the right hand. The change into B major from A flat is somewhat sudden; but the melody

is expressive; and it is carefully and judiciously harmonised. There are a few false accents, which will somewhat mar the effect in singing—for instance, in the phrases, "*My sword doth thy avenger prove*," and "*I kept my vow*," where the accent is placed upon the first word of each—but the poetry is generally well expressed. On the whole, the composition may be praised for its variety of colour, and the artistic feeling which pervades it, both melody and accompaniments, indeed, being far above the average of songs of this descriptive character.

TONIC SOL-FA AGENCY.

The Building of the Ship. A Cantata. The words selected from Longfellow's Poem. The Music composed by Henry Lahee.

THERE can be little doubt that the "*miscellaneous concert*," in which every singer and player contributed what he or she pleased, without the slightest regard for either fitness or arrangement, is fast disappearing; and that upon the ruins of these patchwork entertainments other and more solid performances will spring up more suited to the musical requirements of the day. Concerts devoted to the most intellectual interpretation of a few classical compositions in their entirety, or in which one grand work occupies the whole programme, are even now fast superseding those mornings and evenings of shreds and patches to which in our younger days we were "*taken*," but which we now, claiming the privilege of age, as much as possible avoid. To this change in musical feeling may be attributed the rapid growth of the Cantata, for in this form of composition, whilst every facility is given for the introduction of vocal and even instrumental variety, the interest which must ever be created by its being a continuous work, is an additional element in its favour. Amongst the many Cantatas which have lately come before us, Mr. Lahee's may fairly claim a large share of attention; for although not a work of the highest rank, it is melodious, carefully written, and extremely effective throughout. The accompaniments are excellently arranged for pianoforte and harmonium, a method which, now that the latter instrument is becoming so general, will no doubt be extensively used by composers who do not score their works for an orchestra. The Cantata opens with a gracefully written Introduction, in which the melody of a pleasing tenor song is effectively introduced. The passages in this prelude are refined and unpretentious; and there is much skill in the treatment of the two instruments throughout. After a chorus, highly dramatic in feeling, but deficient in originality, the pieces most calling for remark in the first part are a duet, for treble and contralto, "*Beautiful they were*"—based upon a very charming subject, and full of excellent points—the tenor song (the melody of which is used in the introduction)—pleasing enough to be made a leading feature in the Cantata—a capital quartett, unaccompanied, and a chorus, "*Happy, thrice happy*;" which, although perhaps more ambitious than any other piece in the work, is carefully and most artistically worked out. In the second part a recitative and chorus deserve especial praise. This piece, beginning with the words, "*On the deck another bride*," (a short recitative for the soprano) is extremely beautiful; and, in the chorus, the effect of the words sung *pianissimo*, without accompaniment, is most felicitous. An unaccompanied trio, for female voices, "*Sail forth*," may also be cited as a piece of much merit; and the final chorus, although perhaps not equal to "*Happy, thrice happy*," in the first part, is written with much boldness and fluency. The bass and baritone solos are the weakest in the work; but there is much effect in the recitative for baritone preceding the chorus, "*And lo! from the assembled crowd*." On the whole, we may pronounce Mr. Lahee's Cantata to be something more than a composition of promise: it is good and sound music throughout; and we trust that it may achieve the popularity to which its merits entitle it.