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Review

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Stabat Mater Dolorosa. Set to music by William H. Hunt, Mus. Doc., London. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

APART from all question of musical merit, this work is interesting as being the exercise of the first successful candidate for the degree of Mus. Doc. at the London University. It has been published by subscription, among the list of 250 names being those of the principal officials of the University. The general idea of a degree exercise is that of a work in which all individuality of expression is sacrificed to the stern necessity of observing established rules, and we can imagine the composer of this "Stabat Mater" being called upon by examiners of the old school to name his authorities for many of the striking progressions to be found in various parts of the score. Not that there is any lack of mere science; on the contrary, every one of the twelve movements shows the hand of the scholar, and the final eight-part fugue is all that can be desired as a proof of its composer's mastery of counterpoint. It is in the earlier movements, however, that we discover the most decisive traces of independent thought. This shows itself in certain very bold sequential transitions of key rather than in mere freshness of theme. It was almost inevitable that a setting of the "Stabat Mater" should betray the influence of Dvorák, whose sublime music has exercised so much fascination over musicians, and we find it in this instance in the strong rhythmical swing of the subjects. A salient example will be found in the duet for soprano and bass, "Fac me cruce," which recalls the Bohemian composer's "Eia Mater," though there is no actual plagiarism. It is difficult to judge of the true effect of a work from merely reading the vocal score, but it would be strange indeed if Dr. Hunt's "Stabat Mater" did not repay the attention of choral societies, and we hope to hear it performed in London.

The Arrow and the Song. Words by Longfellow. Music by Ch. Gounod. [Metzler and Co.]

LONGFELLOW'S well known verses have here received a most sympathetic setting, and one which, in spite of the many which have preceded it, will doubtless attract the attention of our best vocalists. The semiquaver accompaniment, which runs throughout the song, with a rarely interrupted succession of *legato* crotchets for the left hand, is highly effective, and the harmonies are in admirable keeping with the feeling of the words. Amongst the many salient points in the composition, we may especially mention the enharmonic modulation on the phrase "I breath'd a song," which is most happily suggestive of the poetry.

Three Idylls. For Violin, or Violoncello and Pianoforte. By Charles W. Pearce, Mus. Doc. [Weekes and Co.]

MUSIC for violin and pianoforte is now in great request, and Dr. Pearce's efforts to meet the demand are not likely to be received with chilling indifference. Nevertheless his characteristic pieces are not all equal in merit. The first is vague and discursive, with a sense of striving after an effect which never comes. The next, on the other hand, is bright and charmingly unsophisticated; and the third, though more ambitious, is very well written for both instruments. The descriptive titles might surely have been dispensed with. A first-rate musician need not borrow the stock-in-trade of the charlatan.

Novello, Ewer and Co.'s Pianoforte Albums. Nos. 17, 18, and 19. *Compositions by Fritz Spindler.* Edited by Berthold Tours. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THE publication of these Pianoforte Albums offers a tempting opportunity for amateurs to form an excellent library of music of varied character at a very small outlay. A glance at the contents of the numbers which have preceded those before us will show that the compositions selected, although of a nature appealing to the popular taste, have always been chosen with the view of elevating that taste; and there can be little doubt that the three Albums now issued, devoted exclusively to the works of Fritz Spindler, will be most cordially welcomed. Those who know the charming and graceful pieces of this composer will be glad to find all their old friends in these numbers; but strangers to them may be told that those named "Murmuring Rivulet," "Butterfly," "Verbène," "Mon Petit Ange," and "Columbine," in No. 17; "Prim-

rose," "The Forest Hermitage," "Heartsease," and "Valse Aérienne," in No. 18; and "Un Conte de Fées," "Dahlia," "Valse Mélodieuse," and "Autumn Leaves," in No. 19, can be selected as very fair specimens of the style of the composer—although when these have been played listeners will be certain to wish to hear all the rest. It should also be mentioned that each number contains an excellent Transcription from one of Wagner's Operas—No. 17, "The Pilgrim's Chorus" from "Tannhäuser"; No. 18, "The Evening Star" from the same Opera; and No. 19, "The Spinning Song" from "The Flying Dutchman."

Ora pro nobis (Pray for us). Song. Words by A. Horspool. Music by M. Piccolomini.

[Orsborn and Tuckwood.]

WE are glad that this composition is not included amongst the "Songs that captivate the Universe," a list of which is placed by the publishers on the title-page, because it might seem presumptuous to dissent from so widely expressed an opinion. An orphan child who, although "banned by the hoot of the churlish owl," steals into a church on a stormy night, and afterwards dies in the street, is too old-world a tale to inspire interest save by some freshness in the music, and this M. Piccolomini has failed to impart.

The Office of the Holy Eucharist in D, by John Storer, Mus. Doc.; *Communion Service in E flat,* by W. H. Higgins. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

DR. STORER'S Communion Service is obviously intended for churches in which full ritual prevails, and it may be commended in general terms, though it has no distinctive character. The best section is the Gloria in excelsis, which is very spirited and energetic. We think that the composer has not well considered his metronome marks. Sung at the pace indicated, some of the passages would be nothing more than an irreverent scramble. The setting of Mr. Higgins is, on the whole, more attractive, and more modern in melody and harmony. All the sections are brief, but the composer has managed to introduce many strikingly effective passages. His service has all the elements necessary to secure general approval.

So she went drifting. Song. Words by Walter C. Smith. Music by Ethel M. Boyce.

[Stanley Lucas, Weber and Co.]

THIS is really a charming song. The words tell a simple tale in simple words, and the music throughout is most sympathetic with the text. The several changes in the character of the accompaniment show that the composer has well thought out her task, and introduced nothing for mere effect; one good point amongst the many in this composition being the lazy pianoforte part to the phrase "So she went drifting," on each occasion of its frequent occurrence. We shall be glad again to meet with Miss Boyce.

The Cavalier. Song for Baritone. Written by Constance Lacy. Composed by Stephen Kemp.

[London Music Publishing Company.]

BARITONE singers (who are by no means well supplied with modern songs) will, we are certain, welcome this spirited and artistic composition, which is thoroughly vocal, and contains much dramatic feeling. Miss Lacy tells us an exciting little story in her excellent verses; and Mr. Kemp has coloured them in a kindred spirit. The accompaniments throughout are such as only an accomplished musician could write.

Songs for Little Singers. A collection of Sacred and Secular Songs for Little Folks. By George Fox.

[Edinburgh: Paterson and Sons.]

A QUOTATION from the Scriptures stands at the head of each song in this collection as a text upon which the verses are written. The original music supplied to all these by Mr. Fox is most appropriate, both in the voice part and accompaniment. From the twenty songs in the book we may especially mention "Little drops of water," "The Lord my pasture shall prepare," "Little bird, little bird," "Let dogs delight to bark and bite," and "From Greenland's icy mountains," as worthy of much praise.