

people who for some reason object to dancing and so give a "talking" party with a little music to cover the conversation. It does not matter by which of these classes the party is given; in the latter case much bad music is mercifully hidden by the conversation, in the former some really good music may be provided, but it shares the same fate; on the whole, this is of the two the most to be lamented.

At parties given by the unmusical class you always hear two young ladies with the weakest of voices essay some elaborate Italian Duett, probably written in the first instance for Tenor and Bass. One of them, probably the Alto, plays the accompaniment, and performs marvellous feats in the way of merging her own part in the piano part; they become weaker and shakier as the Duett progresses, and finally end with what the composer had the audacity to mark *ff con fuoco*, in the feeblest whisper, and some one (compelled through being near the piano to say something), remarks "how very pretty; who is it by?"

Next we have the young man who "has a fine ear for music." He does not know a note, but is unfortunately the possessor of a fine voice, with which he presents to his audience an imitation of some great singer he has lately heard. This young man's repertoire is limited. He sings "My Pretty Jane," if a Tenor, or "The Village Blacksmith," if a Bass. You may find "Across the Far Blue Hill" in his portfolio, or "Come into the Garden, Maud," and be sure he sings "M'appari" or "A che la morte." He is a young man of considerable coolness and self-possession, and shows by his singing that if he knew anything about it he would achieve something above the average, but unfortunately his "fine ear" is the be-all and end-all to him, and he will never do any more than he does at present.

Then there is the man who has no voice; he produces sounds somewhat similar to an active nutmeg grater; it is hard to see why he sings at all, except that he has admiring sisters who play his accompaniments, and always insist on his singing "that lovely thing Fessenden sung when he was here." The young lady who plays florid variations on—nothing, and a young man who plays the flute, with a few nondescript performers (we have seen a man sit down and whistle to his own accompaniment), make up this kind of "musical." The other is more pretentious, and in reality is often given in real love for music, but the result is much the same. You usually hear, or try to, some good singing, and a professional pianist may be there, but he fares no better than the rest, worse indeed, for whilst it is the fashion for the company to listen more or less attentively to a singer, the moment the piano is touched it acts as a signal for a perfect rush of conversation as though everyone had been wanting to say something all the evening and had suddenly remembered it all at the same time.

We would like to know why people think politeness necessitates their listening to a song, and yet do not conceive that it is any insult to a pianist to talk right through his piece, and say to him at the end, "What! have you done already? we were just beginning to listen." We have heard a person express an opinion that it improved instrumental music to talk whilst it was being performed, but this insane idea cannot be shared in by many, so that it is difficult to see how this distinction has arisen between singing and playing. Pianists themselves might check this nuisance by treating conversation during their performance