Review

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a danger therefore of modern composers—like modern dramatic writers, who take the Elizabethan plays for a model—producing works, the chief merit of which is that they reflect with extreme fidelity the ideas and fashions of an age which has passed away. If Bourrées, Gavottes, Passepieds, and other such graceful antiquities, however, are to be resuscitated, we think Mr. Watson's group of compositions entitled to much attention, both from teachers and performers; for they are all extremely melodious, well-written, and thoroughly characteristic. The Bourrée and Gavotte are good musician-like pieces; and the Passepiéd has a subject which cannot fail to recommend itself, from its excessive tunefulness: the theme in the relative minor contrasts well with the opening melody, and the entire composition is full of life. Of the Bolero, Tarantelle, and Polonaise, we can also speak in high terms. All these National dance-tunes have been so often, and so successfully treated by some of our best composers, that it is difficult of course to write anything new; but Mr. Watson deserves much credit for the clearness with which he has expressed his ideas, and we can conscientiously say that for tuition his pieces will be highly valuable.

LAMBORN COCK.

"O Deus! ego amo te" (O God! my spirit loves but Thee.) Motett for a Choir, composed by J. G. Callcott.

THIS piece is dedicated to Mr. Henry Leslie, of whose choir the composer is the highly efficient accompanist. It is matter for surprise that one who has such experience in vocal effects as Mr. Callcott must have in attending the constant practices of that well-trained company of singers, should have so little judgment in vocal distribution as his motett evinces: let us instance the writing for the basses, which is often far lower than the majority of singers can render audible, descending more than once to the lowest D. There is an air of dryness, of labour and of pretence about the whole. The adapter of the English version, Mr. F. Xavier, has made an unlucky choice of the word "ignominious" for vocal use: the vocabulary for which is more circumscribed than for ordinary speech, and cannot admit certain formal terms, and others that are common-place; his repetition also of "for me the cruel," before the word "nails," jeopardizes the sense, and has an inkling of the ludicrous in its effect.

THOMAS MURBY.

Lessons and Exercises in Singing at Sight. By E. W. Searle, Teacher of Singing at the Working Men's College, London.

So thoroughly has it now become the custom to ignore the necessity of teaching the absolute sounds of a scale to class-singers, that Instruction-books are constantly published with exercises, and even part-music, written in the present notation, without any sharps and flats at the signature, the key-note being secretly given to the teacher at the commencement of the piece. The little Treatise before us is moulded on this plan; and, strange indeed does it look to see the triads of E, B, and A (without sharps or flats) marked "Doh chord, Soh chord, and Fah chord." Such a cross between two systems as this can scarcely we think receive the approbation of musicians. We can quite understand the "fixed Do" method—where the absolute sound to be sung is written—and we can equally comprehend the "moveable Do" method—where the relative sound is written—but to see one sound and sing another is a compromise which can hardly be allowed, even if it offer a tempting facility to those who are content to sing as parrots speak. Mr. Searle is, however, evidently in earnest; for his instructions show the result of much thought, and he has no doubt had practical experience of the result of his method. His Exercises are well fitted for their purpose, and the Duets and Rounds are simple and tuneful. But what can he mean by calling 6-8, 6-4, and 12-8 rhythms *triple*? Surely a compound triple rhythm cannot be derived from a simple double one. But we are still more surprised when we find that in Example 102 the student is told (in 6-8 rhythm) to beat "two in a bar:" can two be beaten in "Triple rhythm?"

R. LIMPUS.

Childish Fancies. Twenty short Pieces, in various keys, for the Pianoforte. Composed by Charlton Templeman Speer, æt. 13.

WE have no hesitation in saying that, for a boy of 13, this is a very remarkable collection of Sketches. There is certainly nothing very startling in any one of the twenty Pieces; but they show a clearness of design, and an individuality of thought which promise well for the future; and not their least recommendation is that they evidently spring from a musical organization which is developing itself in a healthful and natural manner. The only little bit of affectation—if we may call it so—is that in the pieces written 4-8 and 2-4 there is no perceptible difference of rhythm, and therefore we cannot be made to see why 2-4 would not do for all of them. From the various numbers we may select for special commendation No. 3, "A Vintager's Chorus"—No. 5, "A Hunting Song"—No. 8, "Volkslied"—No. 9, "Alla Marcia" (a very original little Piece, in F sharp minor)—No. 11, "Rippling Water"—No. 16, "A Spring Song"—No. 18, "Gigue," and No. 20, "Caprice" (the last a composition of more than the average length) but we may say that there is really not a common-place thought throughout the book. We presume that at bar 16, page 39, a note is omitted in the Bass—probably B—for we can scarcely imagine that the single F is intended. As the composer of these "Childish Fancies" was recently elected to the "Sterndale Bennett Scholarship" at the Royal Academy of Music, he will have every chance of steadily progressing in an art of which—if he be not spoilt by indiscriminate praise—he is no doubt destined to become a bright ornament.

JOSEPH MASTERS.

The Canticles, set to short Chants. By Frederick Helmore.

A NEW form of Chant is here employed, of which we fail to perceive the musical beauty or the practical advantage. It consists of but two, instead of the ordinary three bars, in the first part; and of but three, instead of the ordinary four bars, in the second part. This increases the inevitable monotony that springs from the manifold repetition of any form of chant, and it prevents the possibility of melodic interest, which cannot be conveyed within so small limits. The author or editor has taken the liberty of compressing the favourite Chant in C by Humphrey, within the Venetian boot of his circumscribed limits, and has thus squeezed all the life out of it, and all the beauty; and he coolly prefaces the mangled remains with the words, "From the Grand Chant," which are vague and offer no excuse. The mutilation becomes less "grand," certainly, if not less Humphrey, by being transposed into B flat. In No. 2, the 7th from A remains to be the 8th from G with excellently bad effect. In No. 4, we dislike the sound of the bare 4th—a second inversion without the interval of the 6th. The descent of the leading-note in the final cadence is common if not universal in the series. Many such points as these might be cited, but that the nature of the publication would not warrant the cost of space. There is nothing ecclesiastical in the style of the harmony, which has all the freedom, but little of the beauty of the modern school. The work may gratify the fancies of a particular clique of churchmen, but it can be of no serious service.

WEEKES AND CO.

The Voice of the Waves. Words by Mrs. Hemans. Music by A. Godwin Fowles.

WE feel convinced that the author of this "descriptive song" imagines that he has written a really good composition, for there is so little timidity in the manner of approaching his subject, and so decisive a method of throwing off his harmonies that consciousness of power is apparent throughout. But "consciousness of power" does not always prove the possession of it; and in this case we cannot but believe that the song has been sung at the pianoforte and noted