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Review

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A word or two ought to be said before taking leave of the book as to the studies, in all 246 in number, the whole of which have been written by Mr. Archer expressly for the work. It would not be fair to criticise as compositions short pieces, many only a few bars in length, written with a special technical object. It is, however, no more than just to the author to give him credit for having succeeded in avoiding either dryness or monotony. The little pieces are in all styles, some after the strict manner of the older German, others in imitation of the lighter modern French school, but all are well adapted to the object they have in view, while some are really pleasing as music. We can cordially recommend Mr. Archer's treatise both to teachers and students of the "King of Instruments."

*The Benedicite, O all ye works of the Lord*, set to appropriate Chants. Three different settings. By Alexander S. Cooper.

ANY detailed notice of what may be described as a musical tract of two pages is, of course, superfluous; but we call attention to Mr. Cooper's very good and pleasing chant-settings of this Canticle, because really effective music for this particular part of the Church Service is, we believe, rarer than for any other. In each arrangement Mr. Cooper has judiciously changed the music at the eighteenth verse. All three versions will be found useful by choirs.

*Six Settings of the Kyrie Eleison*. By G. H. Gregory, Mus. Bac., Oxon.

THESE various settings of the "Kyrie" by Mr. Gregory are all excellently harmonized; and though some are, to our thinking, more interesting than others (our own favourites are Nos. 1, 3, and 4), none are absolutely dry. Of course in a series of eight-bar phrases much absolute originality is not to be looked for; but we must compliment Mr. Gregory on the melodiousness of his part-writing. In several of these numbers the tenor is quite as tuneful as the treble.

*Two Nocturnes for Pianoforte*. By Walter Macfarren.

SINCE the popularity of Field's Nocturnes—which, notwithstanding their excessive delicacy and refinement, sound to us now somewhat old-fashioned—many of our most esteemed pianoforte-writers have thrown what may be termed their holiday thoughts into this form, although it would puzzle the most composers to define what really constitutes a "Nocturne." Accepting, however, the conventional meaning of the word, we may rank Mr. Walter Macfarren's two contributions amongst the most charming specimens we have seen for some time. No. 1, in E minor, has a theme of much beauty, the ascent of the octave giving to it an originality of character which at once arrests the attention. The *legato* melody, in the relative major, afterwards unexpectedly recurring in C, is not only extremely tuneful, but contrasts effectively with the principal subject. No. 2, in E major, will be found a sympathetic companion for the first piece; and we recommend that the two should be played in the order of the numbers. The simple manner in which the opening theme is at first harmonized scarcely leads us to expect the ingenious harmony with which it is afterwards accompanied; but an interest is thus created which cannot fail to advance the composer in the estimation of all whose good opinion he is desirous of winning.

*A new method for the Piano*. After the "Klavier unterrichts briefe" of Aloys Hennes. Translated by H. Mannheimer.

WE may be excused for feeling somewhat diffident in criticising this work when we are told that it is translated from the 25th German edition, encounter a formidable list of opinions of the Press upon the edition published in France, and are informed that "Miss Theresa Hennes, now 13 years of age (daughter of the Author of this method), and since 1871 known as a distinguished pianist throughout the whole of Germany, has been instructed from her fifth year, according to this method, by her father." Had the book been presented to the English public with

less prefatory eulogium, we cannot but think that it would have been more warmly received, for there is certainly much in it to commend; and if a child can only be persuaded, or forced, into wading through the whole of the "five courses" into which the method is divided—the one before us, although containing 106 pages, being only the first of the series—the result will, we doubt not, be thoroughly satisfactory. We do not think that the lessons and directions are made particularly attractive to the young student; but from the teacher's point of view, they are in general well calculated to train both the mind and the finger. The plan of adapting some words to the measures of the various times is an admirable one for fixing the true accent in the memory; and we should be glad to see this method extensively adopted. Most of the exercises for strengthening and equalising the fingers will be found extremely useful, and the tunes are perhaps as interesting as we have a right to expect in an Instruction-book. We cannot however agree with the author in deriving 6-8 time from two bars of 3-8. In our opinion, no child will ever understand the subject who is not taught that times move in 4, 2 and 3; that if each division is in *doublings*, it is termed "simple," and if in *triplets*, "compound," and that the office of the dot in compound time is to make each division move in three instead of in two. To derive a double time from a triple one, must therefore be a manifest absurdity, and cannot but lead to a misapprehension of the whole matter. We are glad to find the necessity of counting audibly and firmly insisted upon; and much praise must also be given for the excellent remarks upon the position of the hands, the formation of the touch, and the advisability of always practising upon a good instrument. We presume that there is some error in the translation here and there, although as a rule Herr Mannheimer has acquitted himself of his task very creditably. In proof of our assertion, however, we may ask the meaning of the following sentence; "Pieces written in E, B, F#, A#, D# sharp and G# sharp must be introduced in the materials for instruction just as frequently as those in C, G, D, A, F, B# and E# sharp."

*Choral Songs for School and Home*. For one, two, or four voices. Composed by Robert Jackson.

IN the preface to this collection of choral pieces we are told, as usual, that it is published to "meet a want," but, considering the number of such works which we are constantly called upon to notice, we can scarcely imagine that such a want is very generally felt. We are by no means disposed to think it necessary for a composer to apologise for adding to an already extensive store; for should his pieces suit the public taste, they will be certain to find ready purchasers, and should they not do so, the author's opinion of their fitness for the special purpose for which they were intended will never force them into notice. Mr. Jackson's music, he tells us was mostly written at first for two voices; and that "in adopting the four-parts care has been taken to keep as much as possible the original arrangement intact, so that the songs may be adapted to those schools where only first and second trebles are available." This has been well done; and as the melodies throughout are sufficiently pleasing to catch the ear, we may commend these little compositions to teachers, with a conviction that they will become popular with a class. The harmonies are appropriately simple, the voice parts flow smoothly, and—what is a matter of the utmost importance—the words are selected with much care and judgment.

LAMBORN COCK.

*Allegretto Grazioso, for the Pianoforte*. By Charles Gardner.

UNDER the modest title of "Allegretto Grazioso," Mr. Gardner has given us one of the most refined and graceful sketches we have yet seen from his pen. Commencing with a melodious *legato* subject, in D minor, accompanied lightly with quavers, we have a second theme, in A major, with an *arpeggio* accompaniment, which forms an excellent