or some reminiscence or variation of it, by way of conclusion, thus producing a compact form, answering to the natural requirements of the artistic sense. Thus the favourite scheme of the troubadours, which may be represented as AAB, had developed in the folk-song into the scheme AABA—and this scheme has served for thousands of popular melodies throughout Europe. In some rare cases the contrasting portion might be conceived as implying modulation into the key of the dominant, thus foreshadowing the form of the first movement in modern sonatas and symphonies.@@1 But the present writer is sceptical, from the evidence afforded by folk-song melodies recently collected, of an instinct for modulation among a peasantry unfamiliar with harmonic music. Be that as it may, the courtly minstrels both of France and Germany rendered a real service to music in following the popular verdict in favour of the major scale or Ionian mode, and in so doing prepared the way for modern harmony, which is based upon a particular relationship of contrast between the notes composing the chord of the tonic and those composing the chords of the dominant and the sub­dominant—a relationship inherent in no other scale of the Gregorian system but the Ionian. On it the secret of musical form in the modern sense depends, for it brings with it the power of modulation (unknown to medieval times), *i.e*. the power of treating the same note as belonging to different tone centres (G, for instance, as the dominant of the scale of C, and also as the tonic of the scale of G), and the further power, by means of the chord of the dominant seventh, of proceeding from one tone centre to another. As long then as musicians held the Ionian scale at arm’s length, progress in the modern direction was impossible. They did indeed arrive eventually at the goal, partly through the practice of using popular melodies as the foundation, or *canto fermo,* of masses and motets, and of arrang­ing the melodies themselves for choirs of voices, and also through the increasing need, as the art of part-writing became more elaborate and better understood, of modifying the strict char­acter of the modes by the introduction of accidentals, till, as Sir Hubert Parry remarks, “ after centuries of gradual and cautious progress they ultimately completed a scale which they had known all along, but bad rather looked down upon as an inferior specimen of its kind.” The melodic instinct, thus developing consciously in the minds of trained musicians, and unconsciously in the makers of folk-songs, arrived eventually at the same result. But the major scale once firmly estab­lished, the trained musician based upon it a new art of harmony; further, he modified existing minor scales for harmonic purposes, leaving the old traditional scales as the almost exclusive posses­sion of the folk-song (which has cherished and preserved them in their pristine integrity up to the present day) and working out the problem of musical composition, and of melody itself, on a new foundation.@@2

The fall of the Hohenstaufen dynasty, and the troublous times that ensued in Europe, involved the removal of the patronage to which the higher kinds of minstrelsy owed their position and their influence. Song passed with the close of the age of chivalry from the noble to the burgher class. The *Minnesingers* were succeeded by the *Meistersingers,* the first gild of whom is said to have been established in 1311 by Heinrich von Meissen (popularly known as Frauenlob) at Mainz. In their hands song was treated more in the spirit of a trade than an art, and subjected to many absurd and pedantic regulations. In Wagner’s famous opera is given a very accurate and faithful

picture of their methods and ideals. Their importance in the history of song consists not so much in actual work achieved as in the enthusiasm widely spread through their means in the class from which most of the great German composers were eventually to spring.

The real interest for the historian of song centres during this period not in the attempts of minstrels and burgher gilds to improve upon the folk-song, but in the folk-song itself. Those who have studied the large collection of medieval melodies contained in Böhme’s *Altdeutsches Liederbuch* for Germany, and in Duyse’s *Hel oude Nederlandshe Lied* for the Nether­lands, will on other grounds than those mentioned above be ready to confirm this judgment. It is not too much to say that they contain many of the noblest melodies which the world possesses, earnest and dignified in spirit, broad of outline, and knit together in all their parts with rare and unconscious art, on principles of structure which are carefully analysed in the chapter on folk-song in Sir Hubert Parry’s *The Art of Music.* To the examples there quoted may be added the wonderful *Tagelied* (“Der Dag wil nict verborghen sin”), *Ik sek adieu, Lieblich hab sich gesellet, Abschied von Innspruck* (of which both Bach and Mozart are reported to have said that they would rather have been the author than of any of their own composi­tions), and “ Entlaubet ist der Walde ” (which, like so many of the popular songs of the 14th and 15th centuries, was utilized by the Reformers for one of their finest hymns).

A characteristic feature of many of these songs, both German and Dutch, is the *melisma,* or vocal flourish, of the concluding phrase, derived, if German historians are to be trusted, from the vocalization on the last syllable of the word Alleluia, which in the early Church represented the congregational portion of its services and which afterwards developed into the sequences, so popular in the middle ages.

A similar feature is not uncommon in French melodies of the same period (see *L'Amour de moi, Vrai Dieu d'amour,* and *Réveillez-vous, Piccars,* in *Chansons du xve siècle,* by Gaston Paris and Gevaërt, Paris, 1875). If the charming English song “ The Nightingale ” (Medieval and Plainsong Society) is of popular origin, it may serve as an indication that these melismata were also common in England (cf. also “Ah! the sighs that come from my heart,” which belongs to the reign of Henry VIII.).

It is in the highest degree unfortunate that no collections were made of English popular songs of the middle ages: every­thing points to the fact that quantities of them existed. The importance of song in the social life of every class is attested by all the chroniclers and poets. An age that produced “ Sumer is a cumin in ” (1240) must have been prolific of melody. It is impossible to regard it as an isolated phenomenon. The beauty of songs by early composers, and of others, which are possibly of popular origin, met with in the reigns of Henry VII., Henry VIII., Edward VI. and Elizabeth (see Wooldridge’s edition of Chappell’s *Popular Music of the Olden Time)* argue a great and healthy activity in the preceding centuries. It is sufficient to mention Morley’s “ It was a lover and his lass ” and “ O Mistress mine,” or “ The Three Ravens,” which though it first appeared in print in 1611 is undoubtedly a folk-song belonging to a much earlier period (for versions still to be heard see Kidson’s *Traditional Times).* The same is probably true of “ A poor soul sat sighing ” and many others. It is to be remarked, however, that printed versions of popular songs can seldom be relied upon as faithfully representing their original form, or even the form in which they were sung at a particular epoch. Editors have seldom resisted the temptation of tamper­ing with popular airs, if by so doing they can render them more attractive to polite tastes. Within recent years, however, the collection and publication of folk-songs has been undertaken in a different spirit—and it is possible in most countries to study the folk-songs in versions which have been taken direct from the lips of the peasantry and are presented without editorial alterations. The question as to the propriety of such alterations, or the larger question of what is suitable in the way of

@@@1 For examples see Böhme, *Altdeutsches Liederbuch,* Nos. 131 and 195.

@@@5 Modal folk-song melodies are often tested by their conformity or otherwise to the modes as known from medieval composers. This is to limit our conception of natural forces by the use made of them by a few men at a particular epoch for special purposes. If a mode can be said to exist for a purpose, that purpose is melody: to apply to modal folk-melodies the canons laid down by composers with whom melody was a *quantité négligeable* is sheer perversity. Recent discoveries in the field of folk-song place us in a far better position for understanding the true nature of the modes than medieval composers : for in the folk-song their free development has not been hampered by restrictions, which were a necessary condition of polyphonic work.