CHAPTER VI.

ENGLISH FOLK-SCALES.

NGLISH folk-tunes are cast in the dorian, phrygian, mixolydian, æolian, and ionian (major) modes, and occasionally in the minor. Personally, I have never recovered an English folk-tune in the minor mode, and very few have been recorded by other collectors. Minor folk-airs are, no doubt, æolian airs that have been modernized by the addition of a leading-note. The minor mode is a very modern scale in art-music, and lends itself more readily to harmonic effects than to melodic.

This large preponderance of æolian over minor airs is very remarkable; it is, I believe, peculiar to English folk-song. The explanation may be that the influence of modern music has extended further and more thoroughly into the remote districts of European countries than has been the case in England. Or it may be that European collections of folk-songs have been more freely edited than ours. The cultivated musician cannot rid himself of the notion that a scale with a minor seventh is fundamentally false, and conflicts with natural law. When, therefore, he is confronted with folk-tunes containing flattened sevenths he hastily concludes, either that they have been wrongly recorded, or that they are the ignorant corruptions of rude singers. In either case, he feels himself justified in raising the sevenths in accordance with his modern ideas. It should be remembered that of the two melodic forms of the minor scale, the descending is identical with the æolian mode, while the ascending form does not coincide with any one of the modes, and is not, strictly speaking, a diatonic scale.

The phrygian mode occurs but rarely in English folk-song. I do not think that more than half-a-dozen English folk-airs in that mode have been recorded.

So far as I am aware, no English collector has yet found a folk-tune in the lydian mode. I have, however, occasionally noticed a tendency, more particularly amongst fiddlers, to sharpen the fourth note of the major scale, and it is possible that this may be due to lydian influence. The English folk-singer, to judge by his tunes, is very sensitive to the harsh effect of the tritone, which, of course, is the characteristic interval of the lydian mode. Lydian tunes are occasionally found in Irish and Scottish folk-music.

The majority of our English folk-tunes, say two thirds, are in the major or ionian mode. The remaining third is fairly evenly divided between the mixolydian, dorian and æolian modes, with, perhaps, a preponderance in favour of the mixolydian. These figures have been compiled from an examination of my own collection; but, I believe, they accord approximately with the experiences of other collectors.

It is not necessary to attribute this large proportion of ionian tunes to modern influence, for the folk have always shown a special predilection for that mode. It was, indeed, because of its popularity with the common people that the Church dubbed it the *modus lascivus*, and prohibited it from use in the Divine Office. It will be remembered, too, that one of the very earliest folk-tunes of this or of any other European country, "Sumer is icumen in", is cast in this mode.

With many folk-singers the proportion of modal songs is much larger than one third; indeed, some of them sing almost exclusively in the modes. Only last winter, for instance, I sat one day from noon till four o'clock in the parlour of a primitive way-side inn on the peat moors of Somerset. The company numbered on the average some twelve or fourteen men, and song followed song in quick succession, but not a single major or minor tune was sung throughout the whole of the four hours.

This partiality for the modes on the part of the English peasant-singer is a fact that is by no means generally known amongst English musicians, as the following quotation from a class-singing book, recently published, will prove :—

"English children may at first experience some difficulty in grasping the peculiar scales and intervals of Keltic tunes; but what Scotch, Welsh, and Irish children can sing naturally, English children can acquire, and the trouble will be amply repaid by the widening of their musical horizon, and by the more deeply poetical influence which Keltic music will exert upon the young mind."

As a fact, and one to which I can personally testify, English children sing in the mixolydian, æolian and dorian modes with the utmost ease. It is, after all, only natural that they should do so, seeing that their ancestors have always shown a marked preference for those modes. Mr. Perceval Graves has come to the same conclusion. In the very able address, which he delivered to the "Welsh Folk-Song Society," he remarked that "to suggest that England and Wales were distinguished from the Irish and Scots by not using modal tunes at an early period is preposterous."

It is often said, too, that the introduction of Plain Song into the services of the English Church should never be attempted, save only in those town and city churches where the congregations are of educated people. This is surely an error. Cultivated people, who have been brought up on modern music, will only acquire the art of modal singing with effort and difficulty; to many of them, the Gregorian tones,

with their flattened sevenths and unexpected intervals, will never sound natural or convincing. On the other hand, the congregations of village churches will take to Plain Song much more readily, and to the manner born. For the Gregorian tones are their own scales, in which for generations past their forbears have been accustomed to sing. The flattened seventh possesses no terrors for the country singer. The leading-note is much more likely to cause him difficulty. Who has not heard the village organist struggling to force the sharpened seventh, especially of tunes in the minor mode, upon the unwilling ears of a rustic congregation?

The identification of mode is simple enough if we take the final note of a melody to be its tonic. For then it is enough to examine the 2nd, 3rd, 6th, and 7th notes of the scale to arrive at the mode. If, for instance, all of these notes are minor, then the mode is phrygian. If, however, the 2nd is major and the others minor, the mode is æolian—and so forth (see p. 38). Whether or not we are justified in always assuming the concluding note of a tune to be its tonic is, perhaps, a moot point. Some will think that to do so is to beg the question.

Now, definiteness of tonality requires, as we have already seen, that the tonic shall be supreme throughout the melody. A conclusion on the tonic is the most effective way of accentuating this supremacy; but, of itself, it is not enough. For, unless the tonic is felt, throughout, to be the link connecting the several notes of the melody, the concluding note will come as a surprise and will lack the feeling of naturalness and inevitability. The performance of a well-designed melody should leave the hearer with a sense of complete repose, and this effect will be wanting unless the melody converges simply and naturally to its conclusion. In other words, the melody must not only end on the tonic; it must also be dominated throughout by that note.

This is especially necessary in the case of an unaccompanied melody. In harmonised music the tonality may be defined by the underlying chords, and there is then not the same need for a frequent reference, actual or implied, to the tonic in the melody itself. Such a melody may even conclude on the 3rd or 5th notes of the scale without disguising the tonality, so long as its final note is harmonised with the chord of the tonic.

But, it may be objected, there is no such thing as an intelligible melody that has no relation to harmony; that it is impossible to think a melody without thinking a harmony to it. This is true for us, no doubt, but it is certainly not true for the average folk-singer. We must remember that scales were in use centuries before harmony was thought of; and that history shows that the art of accompanying a tune with even the simplest chords was acquired very slowly and with, apparently, the utmost difficulty. Indeed, the first attempts of musicians at harmonization were so extraordinarily clumsy that we can but conclude that their predecessors had no feeling whatever for harmony. An analysis of ancient popular melodies, too, seems to show that they were composed without reference to harmony; indeed some of them will only admit of an accompaniment by the exercise of great ingenuity.

My own experience has taught me that with the folk-singers of to-day the sense of harmony is very rudimentary. It was only very few of them, for instance, who were able to recognise their own songs when I played harmonized versions of them on the piano; and still fewer who could sing them to the simplest instrumental accompaniment. The average folk-singer of to-day stands, I believe, with regard to harmony, just where his more cultivated predecessor stood in pre-harmonic days. Otherwise, he would long ago have exchanged his non-harmonic melodies for modern harmonic tunes, or have modified them in accordance with the modern feeling for harmony. I do not say that this has not to some extent taken place; nor, again, will I affirm that every folk-tune is non-harmonic. The harmonic sense, however, which those few tunes reflect that have not been corrupted by modern influence, is very elementary. Moreover, the fact, as we have already seen, that the peasantsinger still sings a large number of modal melodies indicates a preference for the non-harmonic tune; for the modes are essentially melodic and not harmonic scales. I have never heard old singing men attempt to sing in parts. The only concerted music the countryman ever hears is at the village church on Sundays. The old men, who used to play stringed or wood instruments in church, may, perhaps, have developed some sense of harmony. But then, they do not sing in the modes-at least, none of them that I have come across.

The fact, too, that a folk-tune so rarely modulates that one can almost say that it never modulates at all, provides further evidence pointing to the same direction. Change of mode, or rather the occasional inflection of a note which may or may not imply a change of mode, is occasionally met with in English folk-song; but this very rarely involves a change of tonic such as is implied by a change of key. The folk-singer has not even developed that elementary feeling for harmony, which demands a modulation to the dominant at the middle cadence of a major tune. He will, on the contrary, go out of his way to avoid it. The well-known tune of "Polly Oliver," which in the received version modulates to the dominant in the following way,—



POLLY OLIVER.

has always been sung to me in some such way as this,-



The disinclination of the folk-singer to modulate in such a case as this, is all the more remarkable because, what feeling for harmony he may have, would be shown in a major tune more readily than in one in any other mode.

HIGH GERMANY.

FIRST VERSION.



It will be seen that this tune begins on the chord of C, the seventh note of the scale, and that the tonic is not defined until the fourth bar. A large number of modal folk-tunes begin in this unusual way, *i.e.*, with a note that is not the tonic, and with a phrase which is not suggestive of the tonic harmony. Indeed, this unconventional beginning is highly characteristic of the folk-tune; and it is, I believe, the direct outcome of the peculiar conditions under which it has been evolved. We must remember that the folk-singer habitually sings without accompaniment, and that his mind is engrossed with the words of his song rather than with its tune, which to him is a matter of secondary importance. Now, a pause at the end of

every verse would, in the absence of an accompaniment, be peculiarly tiresome and senseless, and would materially interfere with the continuity of the narrative. Both considerations urge the folk-singer to sing his ballad straight through, without pause; and this, of course, is his invariable habit. In practice, therefore, the first phrase of a folk-tune follows immediately upon the conclusion of the last one. Now, if the key were to be defined with equal clearness both at the beginning and at the end of the melody, the first phrase would have the effect of a repetition of the last one, rather than a continuation of it; and this would obstruct the even flow of the melody. Accordingly, the opening phrase, especially of ballad-tunes, has come to be evolved in a form which will fit in naturally and continuously with the concluding strain of the air.

In an art-song, on the other hand, it is customary to separate the verses with a few bars of accompaniment, and to end each verse with a decided cadence. The cultivated singer, moreover, thinks more of his tune and less of his words than the folk-singer, and attaches but slight importance to maintaining the continuity of his narrative. There is nothing, therefore, to deter the composer from defining both key and mode in the opening bars of his melody. This may not be the invariable practice in very modern music, but, in the composed music of fifty years and more ago, it would be difficult to find a melody which could not be accompanied with the harmony of the tonic in its opening bar.

To return, however, to the tune under discussion. The whole of the first phrase of "High Germany" provides an excellent example of a non-harmonic melody. The first two bars, for instance, are not easy to harmonise, because of the non-harmonic way in which the passing notes C and G are used.

I have collected a variant of this air which begins in a more usual manner :---



and my friend, Mr. H. E. D. Hammond, has noted down yet another variant in Dorset.



In both these versions the tonic is clearly defined in the first bar, and again at the beginning of the fourth; indeed, in the Dorset variant, the first four bars could be harmonised with the tonic chord alone. I venture to think, however, that the tonality of the first version is quite as clearly defined as it is in either of the other two.

• In the next example, that of "Sweet Kitty",—a dorian tune—the tonality is less clear.



It must be confessed that the conclusion of this tune comes upon the ear as a surprise. G would seem to have been the natural note to end with; for the tune begins with that note, and all the cadences fall upon one or other of the notes of the chord of G minor. As the tune stands, it leaves behind it a sense of vagueness and lack of completion. Many folk-tunes are like "Sweet Kitty" in this respect, and I can only assume that either folk-singers like this effect or, at least, do not object to it. For my own part, I do not find that tunes of this kind repel me, although, when I first heard them, they struck me as very curious and unusual. In a variant of this air, in the same mode, which I noted down at Minehead, and which I now print, the tonality is quite clear.



Some critics may consider that the first tune is but a corrupt version of the second, which they will look upon as the original. I have already shown that we cannot regard any version of a folk-tune as the "original;" but, apart from this, I

believe that many folk singers would prefer the first tune to the second. After all, what right has the modern musician to condemn a tune simply because it fails to conform to certain rules and conventions which he has learned to regard as necessary? It may sound crude and unconvincing to him; but that is merely because he has cultivated a certain mental habit with which it conflicts. To those, on the other hand, whose musical development has proceeded on divergent lines, the same tune may sound perfectly satisfactory. Greek music, for instance, judging by the very few examples that have been preserved, seems but poor stuff to us; but that it did not do so to the Greeks themselves their writings abundantly prove. And no one would be so bold as to condemn Greek music on the ground that the Greeks were less developed, intellectually or emotionally, than ourselves.

All that the natural man requires of a tune is that it shall provide him with an efficient vehicle of self-expression, and that it shall be designed on a plan that is coherent and intelligible. The fact that the folk do sing such tunes as "Sweet Kitty", without hesitation or incorrect intonation, is of itself proof that they find in this type of tune a satisfactory medium of self-expression.

The earlier folk-tune may well have been of a simpler type, fashioned on a pattern more easy of comprehension than the one in question. For the history of folkmusic has been one of continuous progress. In art-music it is the genius only who can successfully violate rule. He is the pioneer, who shows the way for others to follow, each generation thus making rules to be broken by the next. Folk-music has developed in like manner, except for the fact that its growth has been spontaneous, unconscious, and unperceived. "Sweet Kitty" may, therefore, be the product of a late rather than an early stage of development. The tonality of Liszt's "Lorelei" is less obvious than that of Beethoven's "Adelaide".

There are some folk-tunes whose vagueness of conclusion admits of another and simpler explanation. These may be called "circular" tunes, in that they are intended to be played over and over again. The apparent end of a circular tune is not the real one, but is designed to lead back to the first phrase without break. The well known dance tune, "Dargason," may be cited as an example.



When a tune is played as an accompaniment to the dance, it is, of course, repeated as often as the dancers require it. If, therefore, a dance tune, beginning with a tonic phrase, were also to end with the usual full close on the tonic, the music would be a succession of full-stops; and this would be very tiresome, and disconcerting, to the dancers. In ballad-tunes, as we have already seen, a similar difficulty was obviated by a free treatment of the opening phrase. But in dance music the converse of this method was the more usual. That is to say, the concluding phrase was changed, the final cadence avoided, and an ending substituted that would dovetail naturally into the beginning of the air, and thus allow the repetition to be effected without break of continuity. The full close would then be postponed until the conclusion of the dance, and the player would, consequently, play the false cadence very many times, while the proper conclusion would occur but once. In this way, the latter would tend to fall into disuse and to be forgotten. Consequently, many dance-tunes have come down to us in an incomplete form, shorn of their proper endings. A certain number of song-tunes, too, if often used as dance airs, would be corrupted in like manner, and be perpetuated in an incomplete form. The following, I take it, is such an one (see F.S.7. ii, p. 97):—

THE TWO AFFECTIONATE LOVERS.



The cadence to this tune may have been either



"Queen Jean" (F.S.7. ii, p. 221) is another instance of a circular tune.

The Gregorian tones, to which the psalms are sometimes chanted in the English Church, are also incomplete tunes, like the circular dance airs which we have just been considering. In primitive days, it was customary for the people to sing a refrain or antiphon, consisting of a few words of scripture, between each verse of the psalm. The music, to verse and refrain together, made one continuous melody, the full close of which came at the conclusion of the antiphon. Later on, the practice of singing the antiphon between each verse of the psalm fell into disuse, and the refrain was only sung once, after the last verse of the psalm. This practice

still obtains in the Roman Church, but in the Anglican Communion the antiphon has disappeared altogether. Consequently the Gregorian psalm-tones, as they are sung in England, are, like circular dance-airs, incomplete tunes which have been deprived of their last phrases, and which never attain to a full close.

Besides "circular" tunes there are other folk-airs which, apparently, conclude on notes other than the tonic.

I have in my collection a few tunes in the zolian mode which end on the third of the scale. Here is one of them :--



' If the last note of this tune is the tonic, the melody is in the key of G major. But the character of the tune is definitely æolian rather than major, as any one would discover who tried to harmonize it, (see Songs of the West, No. 26). This cannot be a corrupt tune, because 1 have taken down numerous variants of it, and all of them end in the same way. It belongs to a class of tune, therefore, which conflicts with the usual rule that a folk-tune always concludes upon the tonic. "The Farmer's Daughter" (F.S.F.S., No. 50) is another instance of the same peculiarity. The German folk-song "All mein Gedanken," harmonized by Brahms, is yet another example.

Again, there are a few folk-tunes which, judging by their finals, are mixolydian, but which are, nevertheless, major rather than mixolydian in character. I have always suspected the cadences to these tunes to be corrupt and due to the imperfect recollection of the singers, and the other day a case occurred which confirmed my suspicions. I was noting down from a peasant woman the following tune to "The Unquiet Grave":—



The conclusion to this air seemed to me to be very peculiar and unexpected. Although, strictly speaking, it was mixolydian, yet I felt sure the tune was really a major one. I accordingly prevailed upon the singer to repeat the ballad several times. When she had sung the air ten or twenty times, she suddenly repeated the last line of one of the verses to the following phrase :—



I have no doubt but that this was the correct form of the tune, and that in her previous repetitions the singer had forgotten to "double" the last line. The tune was, after all, a major one in the key of G; not a mixolydian in D, as it at first appeared to be.

This is the only experience of the kind that I have as yet met with, and it is, perhaps, not safe to generalize on such slender evidence. Nevertheless, I have a strong suspicion that not a few folk-tunes, which appear to be mixolydian, are, in reality, incomplete major tunes. It is not difficult to detect them to one who is familiar with the modes.

There are, then, three classes of tunes, in which it is not always safe to regard the final note as tonic.

- (1). "Circular" tunes.
- (2). Æolian airs ending on the 3rd of the scale.
- (3). Major airs with false mixolydian endings.

The non-harmonic character of many folk-tunes is exemplified by the notes of the scale upon which the several divisions or cadences fall. In harmonic melodies, the note at the midway cadence is usually the dominant, or a note of the dominant harmony. In major folk-tunes this is very frequently the case, *e.g.*, the following example :—

HARES ON THE MOUNTAINS.



The mid-cadence will, however, often fall on the 3rd or 6th notes of the scale. We have already seen an example of the use of the sixth for this purpose in "Polly Oliver", (see p. 58). Of the seven notes of the major scale, the sixth, perhaps, suggests harmony the least of all. The seventh, when it is a leading note, brings to mind the dominant harmony; the fourth, that of the sub-dominant, and so on. But the sixth, if it suggests anything at all, suggests a modulation to the relative minor. For this reason, Sir Hubert Parry (*Art of Music*, p. 49), describes the submediant as "the most indefinite note in the system". The folk-singer does not find it indefinite, but this is because he is thinking in terms of melody not of harmony.

To dwell on the mediant at a pause or cadence is a very favourite device with the folk-singer, and one that he often uses with very happy effect, as in the following very beautiful tune :—



In modal tunes the 7th note often marks the cadence, especially in mixolydian tunes, as in the following examples :---



THE UNQUIET GRAVE.



In the modes, the 7th note plays a much more important part than it does in the modern scales, where it is a leading-note, and suggestive of the dominant harmony. In the second version of "High Germany" already quoted, (see p. 59), the cadences fall alternately on the tonic and the 7th note, and the latter note is constantly referred to throughout the tune. See also another example of the same thing in the following :—





Sir Hubert Parry, in the chapter on "Scales" in his *Art of Music*, points out that "in melodic systems the influence of vocal music is infinitely paramount; in modern European art the instrumental element is strongest." In illustration of this, he shows that modern melodies, in rising to the last note of the concluding cadence, do so for harmonic considerations only. The natural instinct is for the voice to fall to the cadence, as the word implies, and this is almost invariably the case in modal melodies. If the reader will examine the examples of modal tunes quoted in this book he will find that this is so—but with this further qualification. The downward phrase will often descend below the tonic, to the 7th note of the scale, and then return to the key-note, *e.g.*,



This use of the flattened seventh, as though it were a leading-note, is often to be found in folk-airs, especially in those of England. The modern musician finds, in this practice, that which is so directly at variance with all that he believes to be natural, that

I have known him to question the fact that folk-singers really do sing such phrases. They do, however, and the effect is often very beautiful. Musicians forget that what they call a "natural" desire for a leading-note is no more than a desire for what they have been accustomed to hear. The sharpened seventh is no more and no less "natural" than the flattened seventh. Nature has nothing whatever to do with the matter, one way or the other; it is purely a question of habit or convention.

MODULATION.

Modulation may be effected in three ways;-

- (1). By change of key without change of mode, e.g., C-major to F-major, or G-minor to D-minor.
- (2). By change of key together with change of mode, e.g., C-major to A-minor, or G-mixolydian to D-dorian.
- (3). By change of mode without change of key, e.g., C-major to C-minor, or A-dorian to A-phrygian.

When we remember that there was, generally speaking, no modulation in artmusic until after the close of the polyphonic period, *i.e.*, c. 1625, it is not surprising that, as already mentioned, folk-airs modulate with extreme rarity.

The first of the above forms of modulation may be said to be almost unknown in genuine folk-music. Dr. Vaughan Williams has, however, pointed out $(F.S.\mathcal{J}. ii, p. 198)$ that there are a few folk-airs, which convey to modern ears a faint suggestion of a change of tonic, and he cites the following as a case in point :—

SALISBURY PLAIN.



This air would be an æolian tune throughout, were it not for the B-natural in the 6th bar. The inflected note may be interpreted in two ways. It may be regarded as effecting a modulation of the third species, that is a change of mode, æolian to dorian, without a change of tonic. Or, on the other hand, it may be taken to imply a change of tonal centre, from D to A, without change of mode, in which case it

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would come under the heading of the first species of modulation. Dr. Vaughan Williams is probably right in favouring the latter interpretation, but the matter is by no means free from doubt.

We must remember that progress in the technique of an art takes place very slowly and by very minute steps. We may presume, therefore, that the sense of modulation was manifested vaguely, and in isolated instances, for a long period before it became established and recognized as a principle. The above tune may, therefore, represent an early and, of course, an entirely unconscious effort at modulation, the first foreshadowings of a new departure.

In any case, those tunes which suggest, however faintly, a change of tonal centre are exceedingly rare in folk-music. For all practical purposes we may, therefore, eliminate the first two of the above-mentioned species and confine our attention to the third, *i.e.*, change of mode without change of key.

Even modulations of this nature are very unusual in folk-music, if we except those doubtful cases of modulation from mixolydian to dorian, and *vice-versâ*, which will presently be discussed. With regard to English folk-airs in particular, it may be taken, as a general statement, that they never change their key or their mode. This, however, is not to say that accidentals never occur in English modal folkmelodies.

They do, of course; but they are, as a rule, auxiliary or passing notes, which induce neither change of key nor change of mode. In the following example, for instance, the B-flat in the penultimate bar is clearly a chromatic auxiliary note; the singer has instinctively preferred the smooth B-flat to the B-natural, which in this place would be very harsh.



Some singers are so possessed by the mode that even in such a case as this they would prefer the modal note. This is exemplified in the next illustration where, except for the B-natural, the passage is almost identical with the corresponding one in the last example :—

I'M SEVENTEEN COME SUNDAY.

THE HUSBANDMAN AND THE SERVING MAN.



In like manner, the seventh in æolian airs is occasionally raised a semitone, *i.e.*, as a chromatic auxiliary note; just as the sixth in dorian melodies is sometimes lowered a semitone.

Theorists will, no doubt, differ in their interpretation of the accidentals which occur in modal folk-melodies; and they will not all agree with the explanation above suggested. M. Bourgault-Ducoudray, for instance, in his *Trente Mélodies de Basse-Bretagne*, propounds a modulation whenever a note of a modal tune is inflected. In the following air, for example,



he points out that the first part of the tune is dorian, and the second half æolian. I cannot agree with this analysis. The tune appears to me to be dorian throughout, and the B-flat an auxiliary note, which induces no modulation. Of course, if M. Ducoudray's method of analysis be accepted, then the statement that English folkairs rarely modulate will need material modification. That is a matter for theorists to decide.

There are, however, several English folk-airs in which accidentals occur, that cannot be explained in this way. These are mixolydian tunes in which the third of the scale is occasionally flattened, thus, technically at any rate, changing the mode from mixolydian to dorian. There is no question here of change of key or tonal centre, although it may, possibly, be a case of change of mode. English mixolydian folk-tunes will often begin with a dorian phrase, as in the following air,

BARBARA ELLEN.



afterwards continuing strictly in the mode. A very remarkable instance of this is exhibited in the following air :---

DOWN IN THE GROVES.



This is in the mixolydian mode, in the key of C, although the distinctive seventh in this case B-flat—only occurs in the last bar but one. The flattened third, E-flat, in the last bar, produces a very curious and unexpected effect, and, technically, changes the mode from mixolydian to dorian.

Here is another example very similar to the last one :--

AS I WALKED THROUGH THE MEADOWS.



The last phrase of this air recalls the corresponding phrase in the previous example. The B-natural in the third bar is an inflection obviously introduced for vocal reasons. It is a chromatic auxiliary note and does not induce change of mode.

It would be difficult, I think, to argue that the flattening of the third note of the scale has brought about a modulation from mixolydian to dorian in any one of the three examples just given. They all strike me as mixolydian tunes not dorian.

This inflection of the third in mixolydian and dorian airs is the only constant and systematic instance of an apparent change of mode to be found in English folk-tunes. How it has come about, and why it is not found in other modes, as well as in the dorian and mixolydian, we will now consider.

It is possible to attribute it to Church influence. For in Church music, as in that of ancient Greece, the B might, on occasion, be changed to B-flat—the only note in either system where this was allowed. Now, in the open scale of the mixolydian mode, with tonic G, the third note of the scale is this same B. So that folksingers in making this inflection are, at any rate, conforming to the practice of the Church, as well as to that of ancient Greece. But it was the people's music which supplied the Greek theorists with their material; so that this exceptional use of this particular note may have been a common practice with the folk of those days. Possibly, therefore, it may be but an inversion of reasoning to ascribe this habit of lowering the third of the mixolydian mode to the influence of Plain Song.

But this, I am satisfied, is not the true explanation. In the first place, although the Church musician dipped freely enough into the people's music, there is very little evidence of any traffic in the reverse direction. The Church musicians were the importers, not the exporters. It is, therefore, extremely unlikely that the people derived this melodic irregularity from ecclesiastical sources. The real explanation must be sought elsewhere.

It must be understood that the third is not a fixed note in the folk-scale, as it is in both of the modern scales. The English folk-singer varies the intonation of this particular note very considerably. His major third is never as sharp as the corresponding interval in the tempered scale, to which modern ears are attuned. On the other hand, it is often so flat that it is hardly to be distinguished from the minor third. Frequently, too, it is a "neutral" third, *i.e.*, neither major nor minor, like the interval between the two notes of the Cuckoo's song, when the Spring is waning. Apparently, the folk-singer, not having any settled notions with regard to the pitch of the third note of the scale, varies it according to the character of the phrase in which it happens to occur. The third of the scale may, therefore, be sung with two or even three different shades of intonation in the same tune, not arbitrarily but systematically, *i.e.*, consistently in every verse.

Now the third of the scale is the only note by which the dorian mode may be distinguished from the mixolydian. In the latter it is major; in the former, minor. The folk-singer, in either of these two modes, can, therefore, alter his third from major to minor and still keep to one of the recognized diatonic modes, and one, moreover, with which he is familiar. But this he could not do in any other mode. If, for instance, he were to flatten the third in the major mode, or sharpen it in the æolian, the new scale in each case would have four consecutive tones, and would not be diatonic. Similarly, if he were to sharpen the third of the phrygian mode, or flatten the third note of the lydian, he would in each case obtain the un-

melodic interval of the augmented second between two consecutive degrees of the new scale, which, again, would not be diatonic. Consequently, the only modes in which he could change his third from major to minor, or *vice versâ*, would be the mixolydian and dorian. And these are the very modes in which, in practice, he does so. I have but little doubt but that this is the true explanation of this exceptional inflection of the third in the mixolydian and dorian tunes.

The English country singer usually sings the *natural* seventh, especially in mixolydian airs, instead of the minor seventh of the tempered scale. This, however, does not lead to a change of mode, although it makes it impossible faithfully to reproduce a mixolydian folk-tune on a modern keyed instrument.

I have also noticed a tendency on the part of some folk-singers to flatten the second of the scale. If this were done as systematically as we have seen is sometimes the case with the third, the only modes, in which it could be effected within the limits of the diatonic genus, would be the phrygian and æolian. For to flatten the second in major, lydian, or mixolydian modes, would produce, in each scale, an unmelodic interval; while flattening it in the dorian mode would effect a transition to a scale having four consecutive tones. I do not know of an instance of either a phrygian or æolian folk-air in which the second of the scale is thus inflected, but I should not be surprised if, some day, one were to be recovered.

This question of intonation is a very interesting one, and a very important one, too, and one which will, I hope, engage the serious attention of the collector. Subtleties of intonation can best be noted and studied on the phonograph. The attention of the collector is ordinarily occupied with other matters, many of which are at the moment of greater importance, and it is, therefore, very difficult to record with scientific accuracy delicate shades of pitch variation. Now, however, that English collectors are using the phonograph, material for the study of this particular branch of the subject is being rapidly accumulated. English folk-singers have, no doubt, a racial scale of their own, but how this may compare with the folk-scales of other nations it is impossible in the present state of knowledge of the subject to say. The few remarks on the question contained in this chapter are the results of personal observation; they will, very probably, have to be modified when more evidence is forthcoming.