

refrain originates the term "Leisen," given to hymns of this kind. It was not till the twelfth century, when the Crusades gave a stimulus to religious enthusiasm, that poets wrote sacred songs in Germany and adapted them to the tunes of the before mentioned "Leisen." Thus the earliest popular sacred music had its origin among the Germans, and the people forbidden to take part in the the church service in their native language, could not be prevented from singing their simple national hymns on solemn and festive occasions like the annual pilgrimages to Rome, the Feast of Corpus Christi, during the annual memorial Feasts of Saints, or in time of general supplications for rain, for fine weather, &c. These national songs received great encouragement through the minstrels (minnesanger), in as far as the songs of these poets, although generally secular, were received with universal favor, and obtained more than a transitory influence. Thus we find flourishing at that time "Marienlieder," or songs in honor of the Holy Virgin, the songs of the *palmer*s or *pilgrims*, the songs of the *boatmen*, and the religious *war songs*. Among the latter we may mention the song sung by the German troops during the war of their Emperor, Rodolph of Hapsburg, and Ottakar of Bohemia, in 1273, it begins thus :

Holy Mary, mother and maid,
All our grief to thee be said.

Another well known hymn was that sung during the festival of Whitsuntide :

And now to the Holy Ghost we pray
To give us the right belief alway ;
That, as to our life's end guard may be,
And from all our woe may be set free.—*Kyrie Eleison.*

This hymn was adapted by Luther, under the name "And now we pray to the Holy Ghost." Apart from the above named instances of the use of religious songs in the "vulgar tongue" of the various worshippers, the *Waldenses* in France, and the *Heretics* of Germany, established the institution of secular Psalm singing, as a speciality of their creed. That a similar movement occurred at a later period in England, is shown by the epithet "psalm singers," contemptuously applied by the cavaliers in Charles 1st time, to their jealous though fanatical foes.

The members of another religious sect, that of the *Glagellants*, which had declared itself independent of the Roman hierarchy, sang German religious songs and contributed largely to popularize this custom. But it was not till the fifteenth century that regular German church songs were written, and generally accepted, and this most important fact we owe to Johann Huss, the Wickcliffe of Bohemia. Although the Council of Gonstanz forbade in 1415 the use of these songs, they had already taken too firm a hold in the people's hearts to be effectually prohibited, and after the time of Huss, the community of the *Bohemian* or *Moravian* brothers did everything in their power to improve these hymns and establish their use. Four hundred were collected by Bishop Lucas, and published in 1504. This is in reality the first book containing melodies set to native words. We come now to

the question, from what materials were these songs collected. We find that they may be classed in four categories :—

- 1st. German translations of Latin church hymns.
- 2nd. Half German and half Latin, or so called *mixed* songs, a strange assortment, written almost as a pastime by the monks, and whimsically made up of dog-Latin and modern languages.
- 3rd. Original German songs for religious festivals, &c.
- 4th. Paraphrases of German national and love songs.

Of this last class it may not be uninteresting to cite a few examples. Their boldness and their outspoken language would produce an almost repulsive impression of profanity, weighed by a modern standard ; but in matters of history we must be tolerant and bear in mind that in those days many things were uttered in mere simplicity of heart, while in later times the humble and low origin of these songs was forgotten. In one case the secular song runs thus :—

The dearest lover whom I have,
Lies in the host his cellar.

Of this very outspoken sentiment appeared the following astounding contra-factum or paraphrase :—

The dearest master that I have,
Is bound by love to me.

Another song runs thus :—

There was a man had lost his wife.

Contra-factum in a sacred style :—

There was a man had lost God's grace.

In the same manner is the well-known secular Journeyman's Song :—

Inns-bruck I must forsake thee,
And on my way betake me ;
Into the distant land.
O, world I must forsake thee
And on my way betake me,
To the eternal land.

Out of these vulgar, seemingly insignificant elements, the Protestant Choral arose. That such songs could not satisfy public feeling for any length of time, is evident, and we shall find that Luther's translation of the Bible did not only furnish the foundation for the High German Language, but also presented a model for the excellent church hymns, of which the Protestant Church of Germany can boast so great a number, and of which many have become popular in an English garb, Luther writes to his friend George Spalatin : "It is my intention to write German Psalms for the people, after the example of the Prophets and the old Fathers of the church.

.. Therefore we are seeking poets everywhere. I would pray, however, that the new words be kept away from the court, that they may all be according to the capacity of the common people, *quite simple and vulgar, and yet come out in a clean and telling way, and that the meaning be given full, plainly and according to the spirit of the psalm.*" The suggestion of Luther met with almost universal approval, and his ideas soon received an artistic development. "The people sang themselves into enthusiasm for the new religion, and many who were hostile to the name of Luther were converted to his tenets by the irresistible charm of the simple and touching Protestant Church psalmody.