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To Elisabeth Sutherland

Dec. 1919



SOME REMINISCENCES  
AND  
THE BAGPIPE.











THE AUTHOR'S FAVOURITE PIPE.

Photographed by the Three-Colour Process.

Blocks presented by Dr. MAITLAND RAMSAY, of Glasgow.

The drones are made on the model of those attached to the Edinburgh Museum Pipe, *i.e.*, without combing and with pear-shaped terminals.

SOME REMINISCENCES  
AND  
THE BAGPIPE

BY

ALEXANDER DUNCAN FRASER  
M.D., D.P.H., EDIN.

---

*ILLUSTRATED.*

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*Cha nigh na tha dh'uisge 's a'mhuir ar cairdeas.*

THIS BOOK  
IS  
DEDICATED BY PERMISSION  
TO  
MY CHIEF  
SIMON JOSEPH FRASER, SIXTEENTH LORD LOVAT  
WHOSE WHOLE LIFE  
BOTH  
IN PRIVATE AND IN PUBLIC  
HAS BEEN  
ONE CONTINUOUS ILLUSTRATION  
OF  
THE GAELIC PROVERB :  
"BIDH AN T-UBHAL AS FHEARR  
AIR  
A'MHEANGAN A'S AIRDE."



## PREFACE.

---

THIS little work is the outcome of a series of lectures given by me at intervals during the last twelve years to different Highland Societies. It is also an expression of the indignation which so much false criticism of the Great War Pipe of the Highlands, repeated in my hearing year after year, has aroused within me.

I take this opportunity of apologising for the style and diction of the book—it is difficult for one so unused to the pen as I am, to change the *spoken* into the *written* word.

The few sentences in Gaelic are spelt for the most part phonetically.

My best thanks are due to all who have helped me in any way, and especially to those kind friends who have put themselves to much trouble and expense in their endeavour to add to my collection of Bagpipes.

In two or three instances, I have spoken in depreciation of other peoples' writings, but the reputation of these writers stands too high to be affected by the criticisms of a single and unknown individual like myself.

The motives which have impelled me to write have nothing personal in them.

My whole life has been devoted to the relief of suffering, nor would I hurt for the sake of hurting, but

if anything I have said here in defence of the “dear old Bagpipe” should happen to give offence to any man,—“even unto the least of these,”—I here and now heartily apologise.

In conclusion, allow me to state that no one can be more alive to the many imperfections of this work—to its many inaccuracies—than I am; therefore gentle reader, however severe your criticism otherwise may be,

“ . . . Accuse me not  
Of arrogance . . . ”

A. D. F.



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# SOME REMINISCENCES AND THE BAGPIPE.

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## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTORY.

THIS little book is the first serious attempt made to put the Story of the Bagpipe upon a proper footing, to trace its origin from ancient history, and to examine the claims of Greek and of Latin to its invention.

The task has been to me a fascinating one, and although still far from completion, I sigh farewell to it, with keen regrets.

Some one of more scholarly attainments may one day—nay, will—I hope utilize my labours as a stepping-stone to better things.

I have dallied with the subject for years, for very love of it ; not caring much whether I ever finished the book or not.

My Highland instinct discovered the importance of the task before it was well begun ; kept me at it—in a fitful manner it is true!—when its magnitude dawned upon me and all but dispirited me ; and has

guided me in my treatment of it right through the book.

But if not a complete treatise on the Bagpipe, still as a small contribution to the subject it should appeal to the true Highlander, be he situated where you will amidst the busy haunts of men in some great city, or on the confines of the mighty empire, in some secluded spot, the solitary sentinel of civilization.

There are Highlanders, it is true, who have proved themselves false to the old ideals. Such, when they become citizens of the world, deem the two citizenships incompatible, and deliberately sink their national characteristics in the great maelstrom of life, assimilating themselves to their new surroundings like the chameleon, and nervously afraid lest something in dress, manner, speech, or bearing, should betray them, and make known the truth, that they are not quite "like unto these."

These are the men who, believing a sacrifice necessary, have sacrificed the past to the present; have forbidden Gaelic in the house; made the name of the '45 anathema, maranatha; suppressed all references to the brave deeds of their forefathers; and tabooed "the tales of old."

These are the Highlanders who have, in short, turned their backs for ever on the old life, with the pinch and the toil in it, the little pleasures, and the poor monetary rewards; who have preferred for themselves and for their children the stuffy atmosphere of a dingy, ill-ventilated office in some crowded city to the sweet airs, with healing on

their wings and fresh from heaven's hand, which blew round the old homestead ; and who see more beauty in the piles of yellow gold upon the dusty counter, gathered often so wearily and at such a price, than in the glorious purple mountains, girdled by the sea.

There are others who go further than this, and scoff at the land which gave them birth.

Some little time ago I was dining along with a number of other Highlanders in the Grand Hotel, Glasgow. The man on my left roused my curiosity. He seemed out of place in such a gathering although he wore the kilt. I noticed that the kilt was of—we will call it—MacWhamle tartan. He was a tall, stout, rather handsome-looking fellow, with refined—I had almost said over-refined—manners. His speech was very Englified in tone, with here and there a dash of the Cockney in it, and he dropped, or tried to drop, I verily believe, his h's occasionally, but not with much success. There was not the slightest flavour of peat-reek about him anywhere. Who are you, and what are you doing here? Why are you making yourself uncomfortable in a kilt?—were some of the questions which I put to myself, but without evoking a reply ; for I could see that he fidgetted about in the strange dress a good deal during dinner. At the interval between the second and third courses I was introduced to the stranger as Mr MacWhamle from London.

MacWhamle then was his name, and MacWhamle was his tartan.

"You are from London," I said.

He bowed largely.

"But I suppose," I said, looking at his dress, "you came from the Highlands first?"

"I left the Highlands when I was but a boy," he replied.

"Do you visit the old home occasionally?"

"Never been there since I left."

"I am glad at all events," I remarked, "to see you still wear the kilt."

"Yes," he answered ; but, turning to me as if for sympathy, added quickly, "a d——d uncomfortable dress though !"

And I could see that he spoke feelingly. A kilt never sits well on a "corporation" ; and his kilt kept creeping higher and higher, and growing tighter and tighter, in a way that a kilt alone can do, as dinner proceeded, until goaded to desperation, he stood up and unfastened the waist straps and took the chance of a catastrophe.

One other remark I ventured on to Mr MacWhamle : "Do you like the Bagpipe?"

"Yaas ! oh yaas ! at a distance"—pause on the word distance—"and *the greater the distance the better.*"

This was cheery for a Highland Gathering, wasn't it? It made me feel as if there were something wrong, something out of joint : the Highland Gathering had no right to be there, or friend MacWhamle had got, so to speak, into the wrong shop.



In the King's Arms Hotel, Kyle Akin, I met another Mr MacWhamle in the following autumn.

He amused himself at dinner-time by running down the Highlands, or perhaps I should say, the Highlander, with a self-assurance in his own wisdom, and with an air of infallibility, that ought to have made—but didn't—any doubter of this “Daniel come to judgment” blush for shame at his own temerity.

He had one doubter in my daughter, who sat on pins and needles, while this slanderer of the people she loved, rambled along in his pompous way. It was only by constant pressure of the foot under the table that I could restrain her impetuosity. She was boiling over with indignation at each fresh insult, and yet this Solomon blundered along, quite unconscious of how near he was to a living volcano.

And so it came about, that when he appealed to her for confirmation of some heresy, worse than another, not knowing that she was a Skye lassie,—born on the island—he got a look from her that would have annihilated a less sensitive person, and a contradiction along with it as flat as words could make it.

He appeared highly astonished at being pulled up so sharply, and more than a little indignant that any one should venture to question the wisdom, not to say the truthfulness, of his remarks, and dare to tell him plainly that all his fine talk was little better than so much ignorant twaddle. A little colour mounted to his brow,—a small sign of grace I took it to be—as he realized that he had been snubbed, and that he had

himself invited the snub ; and for a time the smooth flow of his words became broken—his speech halted and limped along painfully.

After a time, however, he seemed to recover his equanimity, and “went” for the poor Skyeman as viciously as before. He would “clear every mother’s son of them out of the island.” He would make Skye a desert, except—oh ! notable exception—for three months in the summer. “To suit the convenience of tourists like yourself?” I put in. He paid no heed to my interruption, but rattled on, heaping abuse upon the islanders. Idle, lazy, ill-fed, ill-clad, content. Oh, the scorn in this rich man’s voice as he said content !

That these people whom he affected to despise, because they preferred the fresh air and the quiet, and the contentment of the country, to the smoky atmosphere, and the noisy streets, and the seething discontent of the town—a people in whose life his unseeing eye could detect no colour but a dull grey ; uniform, constant, unvarying—should dare to be content, pained the good man exceedingly.

“Contentment is better than riches,” I ventured to remark ; but again he took no notice : he turned a deaf ear to me, and refused to be drawn into a discussion.

He had but one rule, by which he measured everything, the rule of the almighty dollar ; the rule of the golden thumb. “Why,” he said, “I had a man rowing me on the loch all day, and he was content with the two shillings which I paid him. If that man went south, sir, he could make thirty shillings a week

in the mills, and here he is content to take two shillings for a day's work."

The table listened in silence to the well-fed, well-dressed, sleek-looking man as he preached his money gospel.

I did not ask Mr MacWhamle, as perhaps I should have done, why he, a rich mill owner, had refused a millhand's wage to the old Highlander who rowed him about the loch so patiently all day.

Such are not true Highlanders, and it is not for such that this book is written. The true Highlander, methinks, is one who forgets not the good blood which flows through his veins in spite it may be of a lowly upbringing ; who forgets not to visit the friends of his boyhood's days, because they have preferred the old and simpler life ; who forgets not that his ancestors followed Prince Charlie, not blindly, but with eyes wide open and with ultimate failure staring them in the face, preferring a lost cause with honour to success without it. The true Highlander is one, methinks, for whom not distance from home, nor length of years, can destroy the constant yearning for the old life among the hills ; whose ear detects and loves the soft sweetness of the old tongue ; whose heart warms at the sight of the tartan ; and who knows no music, with the story in it, and the charm in it, like the rude wild Pibroch.

And of all Highland things, what is more Highland and what more worthy of being preserved than the Bagpipe ?

It grows handsomer as it grows older, and it is as

useful to-day as when it led the Roman legions of old. It is as Highland in the streets of London, or in the suburbs of Melbourne, as in the wilds of Stratheric, or in the backwoods of Canada ; and will be with us when the tartan is faded and the Gaelic tongue is silent, a signpost to an unbelieving world, reminding it that there once lived north of the Grampians an old and a gallant race—a race of warriors as brave as the world has ever seen.

GERMAN BAND OF 1739 :

With Piper in the Foreground.

From an old Engraving presented to the Author by Mr W. K. GAIR,  
The Kilns, Falkirk.









## CHAPTER II.

### INTRODUCTORY.

I HAVE no wish to pose as an authority on the Bagpipe, nor is this book meant to be authoritative in any way.

It is but a beginning; a groping for the light in dark places. If I correct some very palpable errors, which through constant repetition have gained currency among a certain section of the public, I also lay myself open to correction, and will welcome such. I have avoided conjecture as much as possible, but it is impossible to avoid it altogether when writing of a subject whose history reaches back to the remote and misty past—to “an axe age, a spear age, a wolf age, a war age.”

I have lectured on this subject for many years, but always as a student; always with the hope of improving my own knowledge.

And to-day, in the light of such knowledge as I have been able to pick up, I proclaim myself to be one of the “unwary,” as Mr MacBain of Inverness calls them, “who postulate for the Bagpipe a hoary antiquity” in the Highlands and elsewhere.

This book is the result of accident rather than of design.

When President of the Falkirk Highland Society, I was one night impressing upon the members the necessity of each doing something for the Society and not leaving the burden of the work on two or three shoulders, as had been done in the past, if it were to be a permanent success. Among other subjects suitable for short papers I named the Bagpipe, and at the mention of the word an audible smile rippled along the benches. I was somewhat annoyed at this, and although I did not myself know anything of its history at the time, I promptly accepted the challenge to write a paper on it. This was the beginning of my book.

One month later I gave my first lecture on the Bagpipe to a crowded house, the largest gathering ever held under the auspices of the Society, and one of the most successful.

The great enthusiasm displayed during the evening by the Highlanders present was the highest compliment which could be paid to the choice of a subject which, as I have said, was in a manner forced upon me, and also shewed that the dear old "Pipes" could still delight and enthuse as in days of old. Pipe-Major Bulloch and Pipe-Major Simpson gave selections on the Bagpipe illustrative of the lecture; both shewed themselves masters of the instrument, and their delightful playing added largely to the success of this, the first lecture, I believe, ever delivered on the Bagpipe.

During the month of preparation not a saleroom or bric-a-brac shop in Glasgow or Edinburgh but was visited in search of old "Pipes," and the joy in each new find still remains for me a sunny memory.

I need hardly remind my readers that it was in Falkirk that the revival of the Bagpipe took place after its suppression by the Government in 1747 : here was held the first competition promoted by the Highland Society of London in 1779 ; and here too it seems only fitting that the first lecture on the Bagpipe, one hundred and odd years later, should have been delivered.

For this reason, too, if any "kudos" should happen to follow upon this venture, I would like the good old town of Falkirk to share in it.

My book has been thought out while walking through its streets, or cycling in the country round about, or wandering over its old battlefields, or seated in the cosy corner waiting upon some case or other while the rest of the world slumbered.

A chapter has been written, now here, on a plain deal table, almost the only piece of furniture in a one-roomed house ; now there, on a table of beautiful ormolu design, one of half-a-dozen decorating the drawing-room of some wealthy citizen ; and in this way the book has become "part and parcel" of my every-day life and work in Falkirk during the past few years.

I am therefore having it published in Falkirk, and printed by a Falkirk "Bairn," so that everything

about it may be redolent of the town which has been for so many years my abiding place.

I know that my qualifications for the task of writing a History of the Bagpipe are few, and it was therefore rather tantalizing some years ago to have the one qualification, my Celtic blood, on which I prided myself the most, ruthlessly trampled upon by Dr MacPherson, now one of His Majesty's Commissioners in Lunacy. The Doctor lectured one evening to the Falkirk Highlanders on "The Celt in History," and his conclusion of the whole matter, which was received in grim silence by his hearers, each of whom had hitherto considered himself as The Celt—I had almost said the salt—of the earth, was that there is no such thing as a *pure Celt* in the Highlands to-day.

My Celtic qualification was thus discredited. "But," added the lecturer, and the fine words that night did not butter the parsnips for his audience, "you who have been born in the Highlands, and are of Highland parentage, can call yourselves instead, and with greater truth, *pure Highlanders*."

There was a searching of hearts and of genealogies after the meeting broke up, and I felt some consolation in dropping the Celt to know that I could lay claim to the title of Highlander with some credit. I was born in Argyleshire; my father was a Fraser, which goes without saying! My mother was a MacLachlan, my grandmother a Gunn; my cousins in order of merit were Frasers, MacIntoshes, Grants, Shaws, MacLachlans, and MacNicol.

My father was born in the Parish of Avoch, in the

Black Isle, opposite to Inverness, in the beginning of last century, at a time when the name of the "bloody" Cumberland was used as a bogey to frighten the children with.

He learned the story of the '45 at first hand from his grandfather, who was out in the "Rebellion," and many a time and oft his heart burned with indignation at the recital of the many cruelties perpetrated by "The Butcher's" orders.

The story of the murder of Charles Fraser, jun., of Inverallochy, in cold blood after the battle of Culloden was often repeated in his hearing. He was a distant kinsman of ours, and the horror of the tale would lose nothing through this to the listening boy. The tale, which is a true one, and which was recorded at the time by more observers of the incident than one, will bear repetition here.

The Duke, while riding over the battle-field after the short but sharp tussle was over, saw a young Highland officer lying wounded on the ground. He was resting on his elbow, and looked up at the Duke as he was riding by. "To what party do you belong?" said the 'Butcher.' The answer came back proudly, "To the Prince." "Shoot me that Highland scoundrel who thus dares to look on us with so insolent a stare," shouted Cumberland. This command was addressed to Wolfe, then an ensign, the General who afterwards died so gloriously on the Heights of Abraham. He refused to obey, as did the other officers one by one, and placed their commissions at His Grace's disposal, rather than

carry out so degrading an order. His Royal Highness, who, it was said, never forgave the brave Wolfe for this, commanded one of the common soldiers to shoot this lad, not yet turned twenty years of age, and the cowardly deed was at length done.

Is it to be wondered at that the nicknames of "The Bloody Duke" and "The Butcher" were given to him by the old Highlanders and are still recalled by us their children?

This story, along with others of the same kind, made so strong an impression on my father that he found it impossible to take up arms after the manner of his forefathers, more especially in defence of a Government which he believed encouraged such cruelties. He accordingly turned his attention to ways of peace, and became a trader.

He soon owned a fleet of small sloops, with which he traded among the Western Islands, but ultimately, tempted by the beauty of the country, settled in business at Lochgilphead. Here he lived the best part of his life; was elected and re-elected more than once chief magistrate; and here he died and was buried at the ripe age of eighty-one. He was a good Gaelic scholar, and was said to be a very eloquent speaker both in Gaelic and in English.

He was successful in business, and made a fortune, as fortunes went in the days before the advent of the millionaire.

He was a very muscular man, with never an ounce of fat about him; he stood 5 ft. 11 $\frac{3}{4}$  ins. in his

stockings, and girthed round the bare chest some 48 inches.

He was of great strength, but seldom if ever used it ; peace with honour was his motto ; and when called in to settle a quarrel he always tried peaceful methods first.

For two years or so, after the bursting of the Crinan Canal, an event which I shall never forget, nor the fearful night of wind and rain which preceded the disastrous flood, an army of several hundred navvies was engaged in mending it.

When pay day came round, the village of Lochgilphead, in which the pay office was situated, became a veritable battlefield ; a succession of fights, in which we boys took an unholy delight, went on from morn to night. Old Dugald, the policeman, wisely shut himself into his house on these occasions, and there was none to say the fighters nay.

One pay Saturday a little Highlander was getting the worst of it in a boxing-match with a big Irish navy. Our sympathies were with the little Highlander, who, although he took his punishment like a man, was getting fairly mauled, and I remember well how I shivered with terror each time he went down before the powerful blows of his antagonist. The crowd, feeling quite sure that there would be murder before the fight was over, asked me to run for my father.

He came at once, not even waiting to put his hat on, and taking in the situation at a glance, he suddenly seized the Highlander from behind with one

hand and carried him off the field, the small man struggling in the air the while like a little child ; shoved him into a house near at hand, and shut out the Irishman, whom he faced up to and was prepared to tackle, but who, I must say, for reasons best known to himself, did not make any very serious objections to the Chief Magistrate's original method of stopping an unfair fight. This was done without any seeming exertion on my father's part. Twice, however, I did see him exert himself, and the two feats of strength—both also shewing great bravery—were the talk of the town for many a long day after.

Once a mad Highland bullock—mad because it had been struck badly by an incapable butcher at the killing stone in Menzies' yard—broke away and charged wildly at a group of people, including my brother and myself, who were looking on. The men and all who could run away bolted from the infuriated animal, but my brother and I, holding each other's hands tightly, stood rooted to the spot in terror.

As the huge beast charged down upon us my father appeared on the scene, and, quick as thought, threw himself in the way of the angry bullock, drawing its attention away from us to himself. The ruse was successful, and after a moment's indecision the enraged animal, with the red foam flying from mouth and nostrils, and madness in its eye, charged away from us to the spot where father stood expectant. By a quick movement, more like legerdemain than anything else, he stepped to one side on its approach, thus avoiding the charging horns, which in the



twinkling of an eye he seized from behind, and standing close up to the neck of the animal, and planting his foot firmly against a projecting stone in the yard, which was known as the small killing stone, he held the struggling brute as in a vice until the frightened men returned with new ropes and secured it once more, when he himself, by request, and to avoid any further mistake, gave it the death-dealing blow, and all was over.

On another occasion, the partition wall between two houses in a large three-storied building was being removed from the basement floor. The methods then in vogue were very primitive, and incurred much more danger to the masons engaged in the operation than in these days. The great wooden beam, which was already fixed into a niche in the wall by one end, and which was to take the place of the removed wall, was being supported on the backs of a dozen or more strong men, ready to be slipped into its place the moment the centre prop, which was really a piece of the wall itself, was knocked away.

But the moment this last support was removed, the wall was heard and seen to crack in an ugly manner, and it was evident that the partition was coming down before the beam could be got into place. The unusual operation had drawn a great crowd of villagers to the spot, and these began to clear out in a hurry when it was believed that the house was falling about their ears ; but my father, who was also looking on, shouting encouragement to those above, swarmed up on to the platform beside the men whose

lives were now in serious danger, and, putting his back under the end of the beam, he cried out cheerily, "Now, men, heave ! ho !"—and all putting forth their best strength, the great beam slowly rose against the descending wall, and was shoved into place, but not a moment too soon.

A sigh of relief, which was almost a sob, rose from the crowd below when it saw that the danger was past, and the tension of feeling found vent in a spontaneous outburst of cheering, renewed again and again. My father, his assistance no longer required, stepped down from the platform and went quietly home to breakfast, himself the only one of the crowd who saw nothing heroic in a deed which won for him, on that still summer's morning, the hearts of the people.

His quiet courage and his manliness on all occasions made us feel that he was a grand soldier lost to his country, and that the sword, not the ell wand, would have best graced his side.

My grandfather was a soldier, and served for many years with the first regiment of the Sutherland Highlanders. His father and grandfather before him were soldiers ; and soldiers my people were as far back as tradition goes. And before that ? Well ! as the Book of Books says, "In those days Noah made unto himself an ark of Gopher wood."

I should like here to pay a passing tribute to the memory of an old aunt who lived with us for the best part of her life, not because I loved her, but on account of the great love which she bore to the

Highlands. She was my father's sister, and each was the antithesis of the other. They may have been one at heart, but father was not the sort of man who wears his affections on his sleeve, and if he had any predilections for the old life, he was remarkably successful in concealing them from us. Aunt, on the other hand, was wholly and frankly Highland. Inverness was the county of counties; and its people were the brave ones, the true and loyal and hospitable ones. There you would always find the open hand and the open heart; the spirit of hospitality was as rampant in the poorest crofter's hut as in the chief's castle. When a visitor arrived—a stranger it might be, and utterly unexpected—the fatted calf, or the fatted kid, or the fatted hen, was killed in his honour, and not unfrequently the family starved that he should have plenty. The best chair in the cosy corner was his during the day, and when he retired at night it was to the “best” bed covered with the finest linen.

For gentle and simple, it was the land of unfailing welcome, the land of “the open door.” Aunt always maintained that the door was never locked in her old home; seldom even did it stand on the sneck; but, open all day long, it smiled a kindly welcome upon every passer-by.

And, I remember well, that she carried out this welcome of “the open door” to a certain extent at least in the old home at Lochgilphead, where the kitchen door, with my father's consent, was never locked; and in the winter months she always saw to it that a good fire was left banked up, so that no

poor waif or stray passing by should want for warmth or shelter when the weather was inclement. Father, however, always took good care to see that the door between the kitchen and the house was fastened : his trust in the stranger was not so implicit and child-like.

My aunt was a capital teller of stories, of which she had a great store, and nothing was more delightful than to sit round the fire at night and in its cheery red glow listen to her ever-fresh tales. Her tales of wolves were many and weird, and were founded on stories handed down from the days when wolves infested the Highlands : of wolves driven desperate by hunger in the hard winter months, coming down from their dens in the mountains, and attacking men in the open : of wolves making a sudden dash in at the door, in the dusk of the evening, and carrying off the sleeping child before its mother's eyes : of wolves—and how creepy this used to make us feel—climbing on to the roofs at night and eating their silent way through the soft thatch while the unsuspecting household slumbered.

Or, again, she would tell of the perils of the chase : of the wild boar at bay turning upon the hunter and gashing his body with its terrible tusks ; or of the deer-stalker, in the excitement of the chase, missing his foothold and slipping over the edge of the treacherous precipice, and falling “down, down, down,” into empty black space. The grey hag of the single tooth and grisly paw, was a favourite story of hers ; and many of her tales of fairies and witches were worthy to rank beside Hans Andersen's

best. In talking of the dead, which she always did with reverence, she had an eerie trick of looking over her shoulder, as if the spirits of the departed hovered near. At such times I often fancied that a breath of ice-cold wind—cold as the grave from which it came—swept down my back: an eerie sensation to have. But in one way or another, when in the humour, she used to thrill us with a delightful sense of fear and terror, so that we could not go to bed alone. Aunt was also great in folk-lore, and believed firmly in the potency of healing crystals, and other Highland charms. She dabbled in medicine continually, and her advice was valued, and much sought after by the sick poor.

All the old medicinal herbs were known to her by their Gaelic names, with their several virtues; and from these she occasionally made most horrible decoctions, which, however, I must admit, she mostly drank herself, when B—'s pills, her favourite remedy, failed to rise to the occasion, and through this, or in spite of this—it will always be a debatable point!—she lived to be well over the allotted span of three-score years and ten.

But aunt's strong point was genealogy. She could trace the history of every family of distinction in the North, including our own, from its remotest branches back to the fountain head.

I remember once coming home from school somewhat crestfallen and depressed, because some of the boys had shouted after me in chorus "*Frishelach* Fraser, Fresh Herring! *Frishelach* Fraser, Fresh

Herring !” to which I could but feebly reply, “ Better fresh herring (*Scattan Ur*) than rotten herring” (*Scattan gorst*). Now, my knowledge of Gaelic at that time was so poor that I believed the word *Frishelach*, which really means Fraser, meant fresh herring. But when I told my aunt of my troubles, she explained the word to me, and said “ You shouldn’t listen to what these ill-bred boys say ; it is just because you are a *Frishelach* that they are jealous of you ; you have got better blood in your veins than any of them.”

Whether the boys who shouted after me understood the words used by them any better than I did is uncertain, but this I know, that they tapped the nose of a *Frishelach* with the same unconcern as they tapped the nose of a common Smith, and saw no difference in the “ claret ” drawn. This trifling incident gave aunt an opportunity when evening came on, to lecture to us on the genealogy of our branch of the Fraser family, which lecture was interrupted at the most interesting point by the advent of father, who, I believe must have been listening at the door for some time, and said:—the while looking very sternly at aunt,—“ How often have I told you to give up stuffing the children’s heads with all that nonsense : much your fine relations will do for you. As for you,” turning to us, “ I’ll have you holding on to no one’s coat-tails, remember that. You have got your own way to make in the world, so off to bed with you and forget your aunt’s stories.” Aunt, however, stuck to her grand relations, in spite of my father’s ridicule ; and although damped down for a time by one of his attacks, she was sure sooner

or later to break out again on the forbidden subject, which was not altogether good for us. She always maintained, and we were sharp enough to notice that father never actually denied the truthfulness of her statement, that we were descended from one of the most distinguished branches of the family, and that but for the loss of some papers, which had mysteriously disappeared, we should have been landed proprietors in the North to-day, and the stigma of trade, as she called it, would never have fallen upon us. She never indeed forgave my father for becoming a tradesman, and, I am sorry to say, made us at times ashamed of his calling. A "parvenu" she could not stand, and the small "gentry," of one or two generations only, she sniffed at. When one of these latter put some real or fancied slight upon her, she would come home furious. "This is what I have to stand from these people whose grandfathers were nobodies, because I am your father's sister."

It was on these occasions that, taking out her geneological tree, she would climb to the topmost branches, and, perching us around her, she would, from this coign of vantage, pour out the viols of her wrath upon the head of the unsuspecting offender below. But if father appeared by any chance on such occasions, which he had a trick of doing, aunt climbed down the tree much more quickly than she had climbed up. She certainly stood in awe of the head of the house—but she was not peculiar in this. Once, however, when death, for the first time, visited our hitherto unbroken circle, she asserted

herself in strangest fashion, much to our astonishment, and forcibly seizing hold of the reins of government, she ordered the household about—including father and mother—in regal fashion. She would have her mother buried in the old Highland way; and would herself arrange everything: she dared interference. All the invitations—and they were very numerous—were issued by her. To the principal relations, she wrote herself, in a cramped hand, and with many a painful effort: the ordinary invitation was printed. Whether any of our “fine” relations came to the funeral I do not know: if they did, so far as I can remember, we small boys were overlooked by them in the bustle and excitement of the day.

Now, my father was an abstainer all his life, and no strong drink of any kind was allowed in the house; but on this occasion, aunt brushing aside his scruples with slightly veiled contempt, ordered in quantities of wine and whisky, to which he made no demur. Huge kebbocks of cheese also, and delicacies of all sorts were provided for the coming guests, and the maids were busy night and day baking cakes and scones; while the country side was scoured for hens with which to make a dish, much in demand on state occasions, a kind of Highland soup,—the most delicious dish in the world—a single whiff of which would have made hungry Esau sell his birthright ten times over.

The body of the little lady upstairs, who was in her 79th year when she died, and was only 4 ft. 11½ inches in height, lay in state for ten days. This was to allow the friends from far off Inverness and Ross-shire to



get to the funeral ; and as some of the arrivals were earlier than others, the house became, during the last few days of waiting, like a hotel ; and with each new arrival aunt's importance grew.

In this way, for several days before the funeral, feasting, such as we had never seen before, and mourning, which we did not quite comprehend, walked the house arm in arm from morn till night.

It is somewhat amusing to look back on the old life of fifty years ago. Everything was so different then from now. On the Greenock and Glasgow line I have travelled on an open truck to and from college. Habits of thrift were inculcated, week in week out, with a wearisome monotony, and, worse still, were put into practice, with the result that we seldom or ever had pocket money given us. A single toy or book would last the year, and holidays, which were looked upon by our parents as a nuisance, were spent at home. Children were taught to respect their elders more, which was a good thing, and the fear of the parent was greater than the "fear of the Lord," which was not perhaps so good.

While my father was plain Donald Fraser to the public—a big, burly, smiling, good-natured man—he was the Grand Seigneur in his own house, whose slightest word was law. We always addressed him hat in hand, and prefaced all requests with "Sir." He kept up a dignity and a state before us that never slacked, although for politic reasons these were laid aside during business hours. His bedroom was a *terra incognita* to the last. We were never allowed to take

our meals with him ; he always dined alone, while we passed the time outside,—on the landing opposite the dining-room—with marbles, teetotum, and such like games, until the command to enter the sacred presence was given, when we invariably marched in according to seniority. The pleasure of the game outside, however, more than compensated for the cold meal inside. The drawing-room was always kept locked, and opened only when guests of quality arrived. When, by special invitation, we did enter its sacred precincts—which was but seldom—it was with bated breath and whispered humbleness. Now, being a professing Christian, my father had some difficulty in squaring this exclusiveness with the lesson in the Book which teaches us that “All men are equal in the sight of God.” And so he tried to get out of the difficulty in this way. Every Sunday morning we were allowed to breakfast along with him : but in order to keep our pride within bounds, which otherwise might o’erleap itself at such graciousness, he had the maid-servants in to table also : this latter being a survival possibly of some old and kindly custom.

This he did regularly, year in year out, and so eased his conscience, and at the same time squared his dignity with his religion ; but the *equality* disappeared with the meal until the next Sunday morning, and if in the interval any of us dared to presume upon it, woe betide him.

He had some curious methods of dealing with children. One, I can never forget. He always insisted on our going to bed in the dark. This was

CHANTER AND DRONE REEDS  
FROM THE  
BAGPIPES OF DIFFERENT NATIONS.





*Indian (Druze Reeds)*



*Chinese Reeds*



*Japanese*



*French*



*Stopboard's type - Indian*



*Japanese Type Reed*



*Spanish*

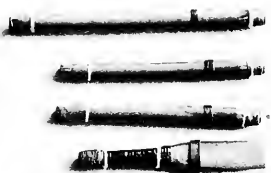


HIGHLAND PIPE REEDS :  
SHEWING THEIR CONSTRUCTION.

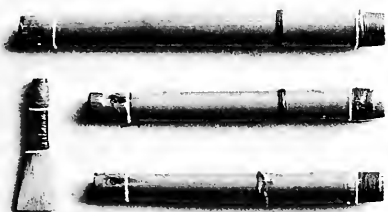




# HIGHLAND PIPE DRUMS



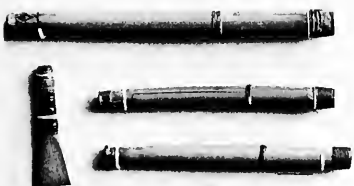
*Chamber Set*



*Pipe Major*



*Chamber Pipes (how made)*



*Lead Set*



*Construction  
of  
Pipes Pipes*



to harden us, he said, and to strengthen our nerves. It nearly broke mine altogether. For a child of five or six years old to go up two long stairs in the dark all alone, and along a narrow dark passage to the sleeping room, which was situated at the furthest end of the lobby from the stairs, especially after some wild beast story with the blood-curdling details in which she revelled had been told by aunt, was a mighty severe strain on that child's nerves. My mode of progression along the passage in question, off which several doors opened, was as follows:—I knew or believed that the unseen danger was greatest when passing one or other of the open doors. I also felt that I was within the danger zone when I reached the top of the last stair, and kept a sharp lookout, as I tried to pierce the gloom for what it contained. I then opened the nightly campaign with a sudden dash for the opposite wall, in which were the doors, and putting my back to it, and clinging to it with all my might, I began to sidle along cautiously to the first door. Instinct, I suppose, taught me that with my back to the wall I could only be attacked from the front, and should be able to make a better fight with my unseen foe. But when crossing the open doors I was exposed to attack from all sides, and it was always in one dark room or another I imagined the hidden monster—the creature of my own imagination, it is true, but all too real notwithstanding—lay in wait. I swear even now, that I often heard in the black darkness of these rooms, the cruel crunching jaws at work, and often saw the baneful light of

the fierce green eyes, as the brute crouched low, making ready for the spring. And so for moments, which seemed hours, I stood close to the first door, listening and shivering with terror. Then would I, in desperation, make one wild spring past it : when again working cautiously up to the next door, there was the same hesitation before crossing it, the same straining of ears, the same holding of the breath. And now, between two doors, I had to watch on both sides, and my fears thus grew as I neared the goal; the chances of an attack I calculated increased with each door safely passed, until the strain on my nerves became all but intolerable, and reason itself tottered on its throne. Sometimes in my anxiety to get into the nursery when reached, I missed the door handle in the dark ; and oh ! the dread of those miserable moments, when open to attack from behind, and not daring to look back, I fumbled and fumbled with nerveless fingers, feeling the while the hot breath of the evil thing on my neck ! The dread of those trying moments visits me still in my dreams.

I well remember the night of the day on which grandmother died, although I was too young to know what death meant. My brothers and I were sitting up much later than usual, there being no one seemingly to order us off to bed ; but the liberty thus secured, and which was at first delightful, soon palled upon us, and I was the first to set off upstairs upon that nightly lonesome journey. I had just reached the first landing, when I noticed a light coming from under the drawing-room door. This was in itself

such an unusual thing that my curiosity was aroused. Surely some guests had arrived, and we knew it not! I crept forward on tiptoe and listened for voices; there were none. The stillness of the house was oppressive. The fresh odour of pine wood assailed my nostrils.

As the door stood slightly ajar, after again listening, I gently pushed it open and looked in. The sight which I saw fairly took away my breath. The room was a blaze of glorious light; but where were the guests? I noticed that both windows, with blinds drawn up, were open, as well as the door. From two paintings on the wall, father and mother looked down upon the gay scene in silence, smiling. Nobody else was there, not even aunt. In the centre of the room was a large table which I had never seen before, dressed in spotless white, and covered with flowers, and upon it a long black box surrounded by numerous tall white wax candles, all burning, and flooding the room with a brilliant glow. Little puffs of wind coming in at the open windows, made the lights flicker and toss their heads: and with every movement, the tall shapely candles threw long, black, dancing shadows upon floor and wall. Immediately overhead was a large and very handsome crystal chandelier, which flashed back, reflected in a thousand hues, the light below. The old-fashioned wall paper of glistening pearly white, covered with a thick dark crimson fluff, and the black "papier maché" furniture, each piece inlaid with iridescent mother-of-pearl, formed fitting surroundings to the crowning glory of the

white flower-laden table in the middle of the room, with its black burden. What could it all mean? It was to my childish mind like a beautiful bit out of Fairyland.

I knew well that I had no right to be where I was : I knew well what the consequences would be were I discovered ; but the strange sight fascinated me : it held me spellbound. What was in that black box? Why was it there? Unsatiated childish curiosity prompting me, I drew a chair—one of the chairs forbidden us even to sit upon—close to the table, and stepped lightly up on to it, and, looking down into the box, who should I see lying there quietly sleeping but “little grandmother.” She was dressed all in white : her little face looked no bigger than a child’s. She smiled in her sleep, and all the wrinkles, which I had often tried to count, but in vain, were gone. Between her little hands, which were clasped in front, a little flower was pressed : on her breast was a saucer full of salt, and lower down another of the red-brown earth. The mystery was solved. Here lay the honoured guest of the drawing-room, and all the lighted candles, and beautiful flowers, and sweet fresh airs from outside, were for ‘little grandmother’ : and she must have fallen asleep in the midst of all this grandeur, like a tired child in the midst of its toys. And at the thought I could have clapped my hands and cried aloud for joy, but I might waken “little grandmother,” so, slipping softly off the precious chair, which I carefully replaced, I crept quietly out of the room, leaving the door ajar as I found it. For me that night the

lonely journey to bed had no fears : the light of the tall wax candles dispelled the gloom : the peace and calm of the sleeper down stairs filled my heart, leaving there no room for terrors : no fierce eyes glared at me out of the doorways : no hot breath lapped my cheek that night ; and if they had, what did it matter so long as “ little grandmother,” whom we all loved, was honoured and happy.

I do not know that I yet understand all that aunt meant by these arrangements. The open window and open door, the lighted candles, the saucer of salt, every Highlander understands. But what of the dish of red brown earth?

The funeral, when it came off, was, I need hardly say, under aunt’s skilful management, a Highland success. This is not the correct expression to use of a funeral, I know, but it is a true one ; for more than one old Highlander that day, whose napless hat and threadbare clothes proclaimed him an experienced judge in such matters, was heard to say that “ It was a ferry finefuneral whateffer.”

## CHAPTER III.

### INTRODUCTORY.

‘ As life wanes, all its cares and strife and toil  
Seem strangely valueless, while the old trees  
Which grew by our youth’s home, the waving mass  
Of climbing plants heavy with bloom and dew,  
The morning swallows with their songs like words,  
All these seem clear, and only worth our thoughts.  
So, aught connected with my early life,  
My rude songs or my wild imaginings,  
How I look on them—most distinct amid  
The fever and the stir of after years!’—

ROBERT BROWNING in *Pauline*.

MY earliest recollections are of War and the Bagpipe. I was born a few years before the outbreak of the Crimean War.

During that great war there was but one subject of discussion in the village among our elders—the war itself—and but one ambition among the boys at school—the ambition to be a soldier. Mimic warfare occupied all our spare time. In winter we built our forts of snow, and in summer of stone, and these we defended often at no small risk, with a certain degree of skill, I believe, and certainly with an overflowing zeal and energy and determina-



THE GHEFYITA OF SPAIN : A ONE-DRONE BAGPIPE.

The gift of the late Mr HENRY AITKEN, of Falkirk.







tion, which in real warfare should go far towards securing victory.

One half of the village was dubbed "Cossackees," and many a battle royal—often with road metal for want of better—took place after school hours, between it and the other half of the village, which was called "Portuguese," for what reason, unless it were a mere childish rhythmic one, I know not. Saturday afternoons were devoted to the game of war by the two rivals. Wounds got in such fights were looked upon as honourable, and we prided ourselves upon them, and shewed a fine indifference to all bruises and cut heads. Among the bigger boys duels by challenge were quite common, and as there was a spice of danger in them, they often aroused tremendous enthusiasm among the privileged spectators, who of course took "sides."

These duels, fashioned on traditional lines, were carried through with every punctilio: seconds were gravely appointed, time and place of meeting fixed, and weapons chosen—generally broadsword or bow-and-arrow. The broadsword, I need hardly explain, was a supple ash plant, and the bow was a primitive weapon, of rude home-make, but could throw an arrow straight and true twenty-five to thirty yards.

My eldest brother was shot in the eye one day in one of these duels with the bow, and the tin barb with which the arrow was tipped got fixed in the bones at the inner angle of the eye, and had to be extracted by the village doctor, to whose house we took him.

He was the hero of the township for many a long day after.

On another occasion cousin McIntosh got blown up by a mine, which exploded unexpectedly during some siege operations.

The attack on the "Redan," which was defended by the "Cossackees," had failed. A series of assaults, extending over a long Saturday afternoon, left the Russian flag still flying and the garrison defiant. It was determined as night drew near to blow up the fortress. With the connivance of the brave defenders, who even assisted us in the preparatory sapping and mining work, some four pounds of coarse blasting powder were placed in position under the south wall of the fort, which looked on to the river, and a long train from the mine was successfully laid. When all was ready we lit the fuse, and besiegers and besieged retired hurriedly to a place of safety, and watched eagerly for what was to be the glorious finale to a great day's fighting.

But something had gone wrong! No explosion took place. As minute after minute passed, and still there was no explosion, the excitement grew intense. Perhaps the powder was damp, or the train had gone out before reaching the mine. To go forward and examine was a risky job, as we all knew from previous experience. Volunteers were called for, and cousin McIntosh at once stepped to the front. "I'll go," he said simply, and he went, there being no competition.

What happened to him, and how, has been told in various ways by the different boys present. I can only recount here what I saw for myself and remember.

My cousin had just reached the fort, and was stooping over to examine the mine, when a huge sheet of flame shot out and enveloped him from head to foot. The force of the explosion threw him heavily to the ground, at the same time bringing the defences about his ears.

His comrades rushed to his assistance, and found him lying all huddled up—a singed heap—his body half covered with fallen masonry.

His own mother would not have known him at that moment. He was unconscious, and at first we thought him dead, but after a time he began to moan piteously, which relieved us mightily. The hair on head and face was gone, and the latter was begrimed with blood and mud and gunpowder. His front teeth were blown in, or blown out—they were never seen again—and his hands and face were dreadfully scorched.

Tenderly the boys lifted the fallen stones off his bruised body ; tenderly they wiped the poor bleeding face with handkerchiefs—not over-clean I am afraid—dipped in the river which ran at their feet ; tenderly they carried the brave one home.

The doctor, who had been sent for, was in waiting when we arrived at the house ; and during the two hours which he spent picking pebbles and powder out of my cousin's face and dressing his burns, and

patching him up generally, we waited anxiously outside to hear the verdict, and while we waited we discussed in low tones, but also with a fearful joy, the events of the day which had ended in so tragic a manner, but which were so like real war.

When at last the doctor appeared, and announced that recovery was more than probable, we all but mobbed him in our excitement, and a great cheer was raised, after which we quickly dispersed and hurried home, feeling more than happy.

For many weary days cousin McIntosh lay unconscious—the doctor pronounced him to be suffering from concussion of the brain ; his eyesight was for a time despaired of, and his face was scarred and pitted as if he had had a bad attack of small-pox.

Many were the anxious inquiries made daily by the boys during his slow recovery, and many and touching were the little acts of kindness shown by them to their wounded comrade, but nothing did more to help his return to health than nicknaming him “Sebastopol,” in honour of his bravery : a name which he still bears among his few remaining friends.

In those now all but forgotten days of wars and rumours of war the recruiting sergeant, with a gay cock of ribbons fixed jauntily on his cap, and a piper or drummer by his side, was a frequent sight. Morning, noon, and night he perambulated the district, eloquent on the many advantages of an army career ; standing treat generously to all young



men likely to take the Queen's shilling; now appealing to their love of a red coat, now to their cupidity, always to their loyalty. Urging them to respond to their comrades' cry for help from far Crimea, by joining the troops which were being hurriedly got together to reinforce the depleted ranks of that gallant army which was then lying out in the snow before Sebastopol: nor did the Highlanders require much urging, as the martial spirit of the nation was never more fully aroused than it was during the Crimean War. And when the campaign was over it was a familiar sight to see the war-worn, medal-bedecked pensioners sunning themselves against the gable of Uncle M'Intosh's house: a sheltered spot and warm, which looked to the south and away over the sea—the glorious sea which never loses its charm for those born within sound of its waves. And here on sunny afternoons, when freed from school, we boys used to assemble and listen in wonder to those brave old warriors as they fought their battles over again, drawing maps on the sand with the points of their sticks for our better understanding. The many courageous deeds of their comrades were told so simply; the outwitting of the stolid, lumbering, heavy-coated Russians seemed so easy, as we listened open-mouthed to their tales, that we silently wondered how the enemy withstood, even for a single day, the assault of those brave men who knew the art of war so well.

A little later and the Indian Mutiny was upon us, enveloping the entire nation in a cloud of gloom

and sorrow. These were the dark days before the dawn. I remember my father one day reading aloud in the gloaming, with an unsteady voice and dim eye, the awful story of the massacre of Cawnpore, while my mother, at whose feet I lay, and nestled in the firelight, cried and sobbed as if her heart would break ; and I, too — not understanding altogether — cried aloud out of sympathy with her who was always the dearest woman in the world to me.

One more of my early recollections, also associated with piping and redcoats, I should like to give here, and it will be my last.

One day, in the autumn of '53, I was taken by my father to see Queen Victoria as she passed through the Crinan Canal on one of her early trips to the Highlands. Miller's Bridge, as it was called, was the point of vantage aimed at, as at that spot the track boat called the *Sunbeam* slowed down to allow of the track-rope being unhitched to clear the bridge, and also because from there we commanded a good view of a long stretch of canal, and, at the same time, of the low or main road along which the soldiers who formed the bodyguard of the Queen—picked men of the Ninety-Third—were to march on their way to Crinan.

It was thus an ideal spot from which to watch the whole proceedings. The weather was "Queen's weather." The sun shone out of a cloudless sky, flooding the country-side with a glorious mellow light. Such a day on the West Coast is something

to be experienced ; something to be remembered ; something to be enjoyed ; but cannot be described.

It is as superior to an autumn day elsewhere as is a Lochfyne herring to every other herring in the sea, and leaves happy memories behind. On this day of which I speak the warm wind came off the sea in short puffs, and wandered and lost itself languorously in the tree-tops by the canal bank, as if, too, awaiting the coming of the greatest lady in the land. The woods of Auchindarroch, which dipped down to and kissed the water on the opposite bank, were decked out in all their autumn finery of brown and gold. The silken stirring of the leaves, and the hum of myriad insects whispered of eternal summer. The waters of Lochgilp, lying at our feet, glistened in the bright sunshine like polished silver, and the calm surface of the loch, disturbed only by the late swell of the paddle steamer *Iona*, rose and fell with a gentle heaving like the breast of some young girl in love's first dream.

The last bell of the *Iona* had scarcely done ringing when the distant sound of Bagpipes announced to us that the Queen had started on her journey through the canal, and ere long the music, growing clearer and louder, heralded the near approach of the soldiers as they marched gaily along the low road, to the tune of "The Campbells are Coming, Hurrah ! Hurrah !" To my great disappointment, however, the pipers ceased playing as they drew near to Miller's Bridge ; a short disappointment it was, as almost immediately the music had ceased a soldier

stepped out of the front rank, and facing round so that he marched backwards, sang that beautiful Jacobite marching song, "Ho, ro, March Together; Ho, ro, Mhorag." At the end of each verse, the soldiers took up the chorus, and in this way they marched and sang, and sang and marched, until the company was lost to sight, and the singing had died softly away. To us children, the passing of the Highlanders in their gay uniforms, the swing of the kilts, the piping, and the singing, were simply entrancing, and together gave a real touch of holiday feeling to the afternoon.

Hardly, however, had silence fallen upon the air when it was once more broken by sounds of distant cheering, and a thrill of excitement passed through the waiting crowd as it eagerly watched for the coming of the Queen. As the six grey horses, with their little boy riders, came in sight, sweeping round the bend at "Taura-vinyan-vhor" like a tornado, the great gathering which lined the canal bank, far as eye could see, raised a mighty cheer. It was a beautiful spectacle which met the eye and an impressive one. Each rider wore a black or crimson, gold-braided jockey cap, scarlet coat, white corduroy breeches, and patent leather boots with yellow tops. Drawn by six splendid greys, on this most favoured of days, the *Sunbeam* seemed to fly, and sitting on the top deck, smiling and bowing to all, we at length beheld Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen. "The Queen! The Queen!" shouted the people, "God bless the Queen!" cried old and young.





Perched on my father's shoulder, I had a splendid view of everything, and shall never forget the scene.

The crowd around us cheered again and again with wild enthusiasm as the boat slowed down going through the narrow bridgeway, and feasted their eyes upon the "little lady" who ruled so lightly over so mighty a kingdom ; but as for me, though carried away by the prevailing enthusiasm for a moment, being yet but a child, my eyes soon wandered away from the main attraction of the day to the six grey horses with their little rider-boys, who in their smart gay-coloured trappings looked as if fresh out of Fairyland.

## CHAPTER IV.

### A WELL-ABUSED INSTRUMENT—THE BAGPIPE.

**N**O musical instrument has been subjected to so much hostile criticism as the Great Highland Bagpipe.

No musical instrument has been so often made the butt of the heavy after-dinner wits !

Men, in whom the sense of humour seems entirely wanting, waken up on the first mention of the word Bagpipe, feeling that their reproach is about to be taken from them—now they will show that they too are possessed of a nice wit—and nine out of ten such answer the simple question “Do you like the Bagpipe?” with, “Oh, yes ! I like the Bagpipe—at a distance.” The long pause after Bagpipe punctuates the wit, and prepares for the laughter that always follows.

Is this sort of thing not becoming a little stale ?

It may be clever ! I really do not know ; but even the best joke loses force from over-repetition.

Demades, the Athenian Orator, a man “of no character or principle,” who lived in the beginning of the fourth century, B.C., was among the first to set



the fashion of laughing at the Pipe, and there has been a host of imitators since his day.

Falstaff, that unprincipled braggart, says that he is "as melancholy as the drone of a Lincolnshire Bagpipe."

Shylock's reference to it is unfit for gentle ears.

Otway, of whom his biographer writes "little is known, nor is there any part of that little which his biographer can take pleasure in relating," said once, "A Scotch song! I hate it worse than a Scotch Bagpipe."

While William Black, the novelist, not to be outdone in originality by these old writers, harps upon the same string thus—"Sermons, like the Scotch Bagpipes (*sic*), sound very well,—when one does not hear them."

Only the other day an English critic, who was present at a large gathering of Highlanders in one of the Midland towns, wrote to his paper as follows:—"The Highlanders cheered loud and long as the pipers marched into the hall to the strain of the Bagpipes. The Englishmen also cheered heartily *when the pipers marched out.*"

The italics mark the humour, and prevent the careless reader from missing a joke, all time-worn and thread-bare as it is.

"Now, by two-headed Janus,  
Nature hath framed strange fellows in her time:  
Some that will evermore peep through their eyes,  
And laugh like parrots at a Bagpiper."

## CHAPTER V.

### THE CRITICS AND THE BAGPIPE.

THE Humourist does not always shine as a wit when poking fun at the Bagpipe, but he is as a rule good-natured.

There is nothing spiteful ; nothing giving “just cause for offence,” in the allusions to the Bagpipe just quoted.

The modern critic, however, stands on a different platform in this respect from the wit. The *κριτής* or judge is lost in the carper or faultfinder. The critic in short becomes the finic, and in his findings there is none of that “Mercy that boasteth over judgment.”

He seems to me always to approach his subject in an atrabilious frame of mind. He is at once, and strongly antagonistic. The Bagpipe acts on him like the proverbial red rag on the bull. Anger sits at his nostrils. He lays about him like a man with a sledge-hammer ; caring for nothing, not even for truth, so long as he can strike and wound and bruise.

And, as might be suspected, in his criticisms

good-nature and humour are both conspicuous by their absence.

Here are a few choice specimens, culled at random, from these flowers of speech ! "An instrument of torture," writes one ; "As vile an instrument as it is possible to conceive," writes another ; "A sorry instrument, capable only of making an intolerable noise," says a third ; "A barbarous instrument, harsh and untunable," writes a fourth ; "A squeeling pig in a poke," and "A portable screech owl." These last two make up a wandering Jew's genial contribution to the criticism of the carpers.

This is mud-throwing quite worthy of Mr T. W. Crossland at his best, but it is not fair criticism. It is Billingsgate pure and simple.

It is the voice of unreason and querulous discontent. This is the sort of criticism that suggested once to Disraeli the famous saying : "You know who the critics are. The men who have failed in literature and art." And the failures are as a rule a discontented and a supercilious lot.

Let us now take and examine for curiosity's sake one of those typical magazine articles on the Bagpipe, from the pen of the musical expert, which crop up periodically.

The critic on this occasion is one Mr John Storer (Mus. Doc.). He it is who called the Pipe in his own elegant way "An instrument of torture." Surely, "A Daniel come to judgment !" Can we expect fair play for the Bagpipe from a judge who condemns before the case is well begun ? It is a little difficult to

imagine so: but let us see. Mr Storer, having given his readers a taste of his pretty wit in these words, the Bagpipe is an "instrument of torture," proceeds gravely to his task of *critic*,—Heaven save the mark!

I waded through what turned out to be a dry and barren rigmarole—I do not wish to be disrespectful, but no other word is so truthfully expressive of the article—hoping, alas in vain, to pick up some crumbs of knowledge from this expert's lore.

He is powerful in "gibes and flouts and jeers," but in nothing else. His knowledge of the subject is surely of the flimsiest! His facts are travesties of truth.

"Although to most cultivated ears," he says, "The Bagpipe is not a thing of pleasure or joy, it is nevertheless a curious fact that it has a fascination for those who have *little or no ear for the music of any other instrument*, and no less a man that Dr Johnson, whose musical knowledge was in his own words limited to being able to distinguish the sound of a drum from that of a trumpet, and a Bagpipe from that of a guitar, seemed nevertheless to take pleasure in the tones of a Bagpipe. He loved to stand with his ear close to the big drone. The picture thus conjured up of the great lexicographer is, to say the least of it, most diverting; *certainly there is no accounting for taste.*"

This is the sort of rubbish which a certain type of musical critic palms off as criticism upon an unsuspecting public.

Now, bad taste, which is the taste Mr Storer refers

to here, and which he illustrates by his article, is easily accounted for. It is generally due to ignorance. Mr Storer also says it is *a curious fact* that the Bagpipe has a fascination for *those who have no ear for music*.

Where and when did Mr Storer learn this fact? Did he first prove it for himself before he gave it to the world?

Did he take a census of the many thousands who love the Bagpipe? And then, did he test their ears?

If not, what of his *curious fact*? He must have taken it on trust from some Highland humourist, who was perhaps "coaching" him on the subject before he wrote his article, or it is but the figment of his own brain. The latter is, in my opinion, the more likely hypothesis of the two.

Mr Storer's reasoning, however, is no sounder than his "fact," when we come to examine it, and summed up in a nutshell it amounts to this:—

Dr Johnson had no ear for music.

Dr Johnson loved the Bagpipe.

Therefore

All who love the Bagpipe have no ear for music.

Or, again—

The Bagpipe is an "instrument of torture ;"

Therefore

No one with an ear for music loves it ;

But

A great many people love it ;

Therefore

A great many people have no ear for music.

Now, as a matter of fact, within most people's knowledge the Bagpipe is not an "instrument of torture" when well played any more than is the fife, or flute, or fiddle, or organ! And it is simply not true to say that only "persons with little or no ear" enjoy its music.

We have a good example in the "Unspeakable Scot," of how a whole nation may be traduced by a writer who snaps his fingers at truth, and makes facts to suit himself.

In the same way to ridicule any musical instrument is an easy matter.

Take for example that prince of instruments, the fiddle. We all know what a delight it is in the hands of a Sarasate playing on a peerless Stradivarius. But Sarasates are as rare as great pipers, and a "Strad" is not in every fiddler's hand: so if we are to judge the violin fairly, some allowance must be made for the indifferent player, and the cheap badly-made instrument.

The caterwaulings of the budding violinist, or the unmusical scrapings on the catgut of the drunken street fiddler are no doubt disagreeable, and lend themselves to the ridiculous.

The fiddle in such hands may be even more painful to the "cultivated ear" than Mr Storer's London Bagpipes; but no fair-minded critic would on this account call the fiddle "an instrument of torture."

It seems, however, impossible for a certain class of critics to review the Bagpipe in an impartial spirit.

TUNING UP THE NORTHUMBRIAN SMALL PIPE OF SIX REEDS.









Even Mr W. Chappell in that otherwise delightful book of his, "Popular Music of the Olden Times," cannot resist having a quiet fling at it in passing.

"Formerly," he says, "the Bagpipe was in use among all the *lower* classes in England, although *now happily confined to the North.*" From which remark we may infer that Mr Chappell, the Englishman, would willingly see it consigned not only to the North, but to the back of the North Pole as well, or, in fact, kicked over the edge of the world into everlasting perdition, if that were possible.

"Take heed of critics," said Dekker, "they bite, like fish, at anything." And so it is with musical critics, when they get on this subject; they both bark and bite at the Bagpipe. The above statement by Mr Chappell might well lead the incautious reader to think that the Bagpipe was confined to the lower orders in England.

This is not the case, however. It was patronised by Royalty from remotest times. The early kings of England kept Pipers, and on one occasion at least, the King—as the exchequer rolls show—paid for his Piper's musical training, and sent him, at his own expense, to visit the famous Continental schools. It was also a general favourite at one time with the upper classes, as well as with the common people.

But it has been so long silent in the South that there is some excuse for the Englishman who, after listening to and enjoying a Highland pibroch, asked the piper to play it over again *in English*. There

is no excuse, however, for the learned ignorance which some musicians display when writing on this subject.

Dr. Storer and Mr Chappell are both Englishmen, I presume, and are probably, on this account, unacquainted with the peculiar and old-fashioned scale of the chanter which the piper has to contend with.

They cannot surely have heard any of the great masters play.

At all events they seem to have taken their ideas of pipe music from the incoherent ramblings of the  
▶ London street piper, the Whitechapel Highlander? a creature with nothing Highland in him, unless it be the whisky that is oozing out of every pore of his dirty body?—a huge sham of a Highlander who takes the ill-tuned, ill-made affair, called by courtesy a Bagpipe, out of the pawnshop, along with his kilt, every Monday morning, and with hideous noises, kills the quiet places, which are already all too few in our great cities. I readily acknowledge that this class of piper is beyond the pale, and is a fit subject for ridicule, if any critic care to stoop so low.

## CHAPTER VI.

### A ROYAL INSTRUMENT.

THE Bagpipe is an instrument of great antiquity. All authorities are agreed upon this.

The great Highland Bagpipe, which is the perfected pipe, is also a handsome instrument when decorated with silk tassel and fluttering ribbon, and bright tartan cover. And the piper, with shoulders well back and head erect, is a pleasing sight as he marches backwards and forwards to the rhythm of the music.

There is an old proverb that says, "Handsome is as handsome does," and here the Bagpipe takes precedence of such puny competitors as harp or fiddle ; for of all Scotland's instruments, what other can compare with it for usefulness? For centuries it has done the nation's turn handsomely.

It has always been where war's alarms were thickest, from the day when it led the clansmen at the bloody battle of Harlaw, or piped *reveille* in Prince Charles Edward Stuart's camp, or carried a message of hope to the beleaguered garrison of Lucknow ; to but yesterday, when it cheered on the

sons of the empire at Elandslaaghte, and stayed the rout on that disastrous day at Maagersfontein.

But again! What other instrument in times of peace has entered so closely into the daily life of the old Scottish Celt? Sweetening the toils of his labours with its old-world songs; enlivening his hours of recreation with its merry strathspeys and reels; soothing the burden of his sorrows with its plaintive laments.

At once the saddest and the liveliest of instruments, this "antique" appeals from a past that is gone for ever, and—clad in all its old-world panoply of neuter-third scale with droning bass—challenges attention, and claims a hearing, and will not be denied.

At one time the welcome inmate of the palace, the companion of kings and princes; at another time a dweller in the slums, the associate of wandering minstrels and beggars.

At one moment the darling of the upper classes, made of costly woods inlaid with precious stones, or fashioned with beautiful ivory, with silver keys attached, and clothed in purple velvet rich with the embroidery of fair hands. Anon! The herdboy's plaything, made of "ane reid and ane bleddir," deposed from its high position, and driven out of society as "a rude and barbarous instrument."

When fallen upon evil days, the piper of yore, shouldering his "pipes," and shaking the dust of the city from off his feet, retired to the old home among the mountains, where he was sure of a wel-

come from the lonely goatherd, whose favourite instrument it was from the earliest of ages ; whose invention it was ; and where he could bide his time waiting for better days. The Bagpipe has in this way survived the royal displeasure, the neglect of the great and wealthy, the denunciation of bard and minstrel, and the criticism of hostile musicians ; and it is still a living force in the world.

A Jew, who once visited Strathglass in the Highlands, nearly a hundred years ago, was much struck with the power which this rude instrument wielded over the Highlander.

Now this Jew hated Bagpipe music as he hated the Evil One. When his Highland host, profuse in hospitality to the last, sent a piper to play him some miles on his way at leaving, he returned his hospitality by saying ungraciously—only after he left the Highlands well behind him, you may be sure—"My young Highlander played me on the road five miles, and I would gladly have sunk the portable screech-owl appendage."

He hated the very name of Bagpipe. To him in his ignorance this love of the Highlander for the Pipe was incomprehensible. He felt himself completely out of touch with a people who could appreciate such music. It annoyed him ; and in his wrath he cried aloud, "To think that this squeeling pig in a poke should be the great lever of a people's passion."

We want no better testimony than this of the Jew—prejudiced as he was—to the influence and power

of the Bagpipe in olden times. "The great lever of a people's passion" it was in all verity.

And should this not be so?

Its history is one of which every Scotsman should be proud.

Its power over the Highlanders in Strathglass and elsewhere was not a mere flash in the pan. More than once, as history tells us, the soldier refused to advance in battle except to its music; and under its influence the dying man has often cut his moorings, and drifted out into the unknown sea with a smile on his face.

Its influence over men's passions goes back to early times as well.

Nor has this power been exerted upon only one race, nor confined to only one age. Centuries ago civilised Europe adopted it as the instrument of instruments. All sorts and conditions of men: Greek, Latin, Roumanian, Bulgarian, Austrian, Hungarian, German, Frenchman, Spaniard, fell under the influence of its sway, and sang or danced to its pipings.

And centuries before this, while history still "lisp'd in numbers," the Bagpipe was held in high repute. For are we not told of kingly feet dancing to its music as early as the second century before Christ, and of royal hands fingering the chanter in the first century of the present era? It is of this instrument then that I would speak.

A handsome instrument withal.

One of the oldest musical instruments in the world,



but to all seeming blessed with perpetual youth. It is fresh and vigorous to-day as when it sounded in the ears of Rome's Imperial master, or when, still earlier, Antiochus, the proud Syrian monarch, danced to its measures. Nor would our late noble Queen, Victoria the Great, have kept a piper if she did not delight in its strange quaint music, so different indeed in character, and in its effect upon the listener, from the cultivated melodies of to-day.

The Highland Bagpipe is as old as the Highlander himself, in spite of what the modern critic says, and notwithstanding the silence of the historian.

The Celt took it with him to the Highlands when he migrated there, along with his household gods, and many another thing not mentioned in history, and not yet labelled in the collections of the antiquary.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE WHY AND THE WHEREFORE.

“To mind the inside of a book is to entertain one's self with the forced products of another man's brain. Now, I think a man of quality and breeding may be much amused with the natural sprouts of his own.”

LORD FOPPINGTON in *The Relapse*.

GENTLE READER, if you wish to know the why and the wherefore of this little book, written in our so-enlightened twentieth century, upon so archaic a subject as the Bagpipe, these are to be found—if I have made myself at all intelligible—in the introductory chapters.

As, however, you may not care to wade through what are, after all, little better than half-forgotten reminiscences, loosely strung together, and probably interesting only to the writer of them, I will here state shortly the reasons which have induced me to take up the pen—an instrument which I most thoroughly detest!—and appear before the world as an author at a time of life when most men seek seclusion and ease.

The first reason then is this. In my youth everything Highland was discouraged and held up

#### AN AFRICAN BAGPIPE :

The bag made from the whole skin of a small doe or gazelle. The blow-pipe, which is carved, is the leg-bone of a flamingo or other bird. The horns are used as terminals to the double reed of the chanter.







to ridicule. The old language, the old dress, and the old music shared a common fate. The Highland sentiments which found untrammelled expression in private when we boys were alone of an evening, telling stories round the garret fire, and which should have been treasured and guarded as a something "better than rubies," were ruthlessly stamped out. The Highland instincts with which I was born, and which should have been zealously fostered and nursed into full growth by my parents, were severely repressed.

And this book is the outcome of the reaction which set in after mature years.

It is my protest against a treatment which might have destroyed—but which, luckily for me, did not do so—all those Highland tendencies and aspirations of my youth, to which I still cling as to something that is dearer than life, and which makes it possible for me to-day—for me, who, perforce, have lived the better part of my life among the cities of the plain—to "turn mine eyes to the hills," when in travail, as did of old the sweet Singer of Israel, and to say in all sincerity and love, "My heart's in the Highlands."

My next reason is this!

Scotsmen—not to say Highlanders—have shewn themselves, by their writings and otherwise, wondrously ignorant of the main subject of this book—the Bagpipe and Bagpipe music.

Take for example these common words—slogan, coronach, and pibroch.

Slogan, I need hardly say, is the war-cry or gathering word of the clan. And yet in the latest and only book on the Bagpipe, Mr Manson (p. 133) gravely tells us that the piper "began to play the *slogan* of the clan."

I hold in my hand at this moment a piece of music sent to me from Aberdeen, and set to the "pipes," entitled "General Hector MacDonald's Coronach."

Coronach, or cronach, is a crying or shouting together; from *comh* (together) and *ranach* (an outcry). It is the wailing and clapping of hands by the old women gathered round the bier. It is the *kreen* or *keen* of the Irish, and is still practised in Ireland. It has nothing to do with pipe music and never had; and yet a gentleman who, if not a Highlander, appears constantly in the Highland dress, and is looked upon by many as one of the leading exponents of Highland music, writes a piece of Bagpipe music, and calls it "General Hector MacDonald's Coronach." How this mistake in the meaning of the word coronach arose, or when, I do not know, but it was some time after the '45. The earliest example known to me occurs in a book written in 1783 by one W. F. Martyn, where he says "The Highland funerals were generally preceded by Bagpipes, which played certain dirges called coronachs."

Now the dirge on the Bagpipe is a lament (Gaelic, *cumha*) and not a coronach.

But even Logan in "The Scottish Gael," 1831,



mixes up the *cumha* or lament of the "pipes" with the coronach or lament of the old women. In vol. ii., pp. 284-5, he says, "The *piobrachd*, as its name implies, is properly a pipe tune, and is usually the *crunneachadh* or gathering, but also includes a *cumha*, coronach or lament, and a *failte*, salute or welcome.

And to make sure that his meaning shall not be mistaken, he adds, "Their characters are much alike, with the exception of the *coronach*, which is of course particularly slow, plaintive, and expressive."

John Hill Burton, the historian, makes a double blunder in the use of this word. He talks of a war coronach. In his "Life of Simon, Lord Lovat," published in 1847, we read, "Before these outrages"—perpetrated by Simon—"the Frasers seem to have been enjoying a degree of repose and tranquility, which in their hot mountain blood must have been felt as an unwholesome stagnation. It would be to the delight of their fierce natures that one morning the *war coronach* was heard along Stratheric and Strathglass, and the *crosssterie* or fiery cross passed on. It may be said that the "war coronach" here means war pipe, and not a pipe tune at all; the word, of course, has no such meaning.

Fifty years later, Dr. Walter C. Smith, writing in "Kildrostan," says "Eachain Macrimmon is playing a *coronach*, as it were for a chief."

No wonder that with such authorities before them,

smaller writers are busy to-day perpetuating a blunder, that an acquaintance with the great writers of the past should have prevented them from ever making.

Simon, Lord Lovat, in a letter to President Forbes, date 1745, writes, "If I am killed here it is not far from my burial place; and I will have, after I am dead, what I always wished, the *cronach* of all the women in my country to convey my body to the grave; and that has been my ambition when I was in my happiest situation in the world." This wonderful man, whose whole career was full of strange happenings, and of whom it might be said with truth, that "Men's bad deeds are writ in brass, their good deeds writ in water," had the unique experience of hearing his own coronach. Knowing that their captured Chief was already as good as dead; knowing full well that they would never see his face again, now that a cruel government had got hold of him, the wail of the old women, singing his coronach, followed the litter on which lay Morar Shime—long a helpless cripple from gout—as he was being carried through his own beloved country of Stratheric on his way to London and the scaffold.

In "Humphrey Clinker," published about 1771, Smollet says: "attended by the *coronach* of a multitude of old hags who tore their hair."

And, again, Pennant, who published his book in 1774, mentions "the coronach or singing at funerals." While Sir Walter Scott, in 1814, writes, "Their wives and daughters came clapping their hands, and crying

their coronach, and shreiking." These three things together—the shreiking, and crying, and clapping of hands—constituted the coronach.

The third word, pibroch (Gaelic, *piobrachd* or *piobaireachd*), is also being constantly misapplied for Bagpipe and march.

I am often asked, "How is the piobrach getting on?" meaning how is the Bagpipe getting on; and a few weeks ago I took the following quotation from a daily newspaper:—

"Ichabod is the watchword for the Highlands and Islands, and the *piobrach* may skirl the lament," etc.

Writers constantly talk of marching to piobrachs, which is a little absurd, when we remember that the piobrach is a piece of classical music, in which the time is constantly varying from the *largo* or *andante* of the air (Gaelic, *urlar*) to the *allegro* of the closing movement, the *crunluadh*, and cannot therefore be marched to.

In poetry this use of the word piobrach is perhaps permissible.

"Sound the piobrach loud and high,  
Frae John-o-Groats to Isle of Skye!"

As this old song has it, it is at least poetical, although it is really the Pipe which is sounded.

In Lord Byron we read, "For when the piobrach bids the battle rage;" an expression that offends neither eye nor ear, although not correct, strictly speaking.

And Miss Mary Campbell, in "The March of the

Cameron Men," that proudest and most patriotic of Highland songs, makes the chorus repeat again and again:—

“ I hear the *piobrach* sounding, sounding,  
Deep o'er the mountain and glen,  
While light-springing footsteps are trampling the heath,  
'Tis the march of the Cameron men.”

One poet, in that well-known song, “The Hundred Pipers, and a', and a',” even goes the length of making the soldiers, after they had crossed a swollen river, dance themselves dry to the *piobrach*'s sound. Now *piob* is the pipe, *piobair* the piper, and *piobaireachd* the piper's special music, and the one should never be substituted for the other.

A third reason for taking up the pen is this.

I have got together a collection of Bagpipes belonging to various peoples and countries, which will, in all probability, one day get scattered. It is the fate of most collections of curios; and I wish to perpetuate by means of photo-illustrations in this book not only the pipes, which are interesting in themselves, but the many lessons to be learned from a study of them.

And my last reason for venturing upon the troublous sea of authorship, at this time, must also be my justification.

I have got a message to deliver to my brother Highlander!

When Mr Carnegie of Skibo Castle was addressing the students of St. Andrews University as their

recently appointed Lord Rector, he spoke with the light of the flaring torches reflected from a hundred opposing windows, bringing into relief, out of the darkness, the faces of the great crowd that surged in the street below. And he finished up a happy speech with words to this effect—"Let your motto be, 'I will carry the torch of truth into the dark places of the world.'" These words, spoken under such circumstances, had an added significance that must have impressed itself upon the receptive youths around. Now the history of the Bagpipe needs illuminating badly. It is one of the dark places of the world, so to speak. I believe that I can throw some light upon it. My torch may be only a rush-light, but if it brings into view a single hidden truth, however small, I have no right to hide it under a bushel. "Let your light so shine, that it may be seen of all men," is the command of the Master.

It is enough for me then, that I think I have some truth to unfold, something new to say, or something to say in a new way, and this must be, after all, my sole justification for troubling an already book-ridden world with one more volume.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### WANTED—A BOOK ON THE BAGPIPE.

"To travel hopefully is better than to arrive, and the true success is in labour."

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

SOME time in 1901 there was issued from the well-known publishing firm of Alexander Gardner, Paisley, a rather voluminous work, entitled "The Highland Bagpipe," by W. L. Manson.

This volume, containing so much interesting and varied information, must have cost Mr Manson an infinite amount of trouble, and every true Highlander will readily acknowledge his indebtedness to him for the interest he has displayed in, and the learning he has expended upon, the unravelling of the tangled skein of Bagpipe history.

It is so far the only work wholly devoted—as its title indicates—to the "History and Literature and Music of the Pipe."

It is indeed the only work of the kind in this or in any other language, so far as I know, if we are to except a small French book written by Mersenne in 1631.

PHOTOGRAPH

of a small wooden piper playing on a one-drone Pipe. Found at Dinon, in France.  
Supposed to be taken from an old church when it was being dismantled.

Presented by Miss ELLA RISK of Bankier.









With Mr Manson's goodly-sized volume before us, then, is there any need for another book on a subject interesting only to the few, and about which so little is known?

I think there is.

Is there a demand for a new work?

I believe so. And having the courage of my opinion, I mean at any rate to put it to the test, and if the world proves me in the wrong, by leaving my book to dissolve itself away in the butter shop—Well! better books have gone there ere now, and “to travel hopefully is better than to arrive, and the true success is in labour.” My reason, however, for so thinking is this: Mr Manson's book has itself created the demand for further information.

His praise like his blame is ill-balanced and somewhat erratic.

He blows hot and cold by turns, and never seems long in the same mood. And it is the unexpected that you meet with more frequently than not on turning over the page.

He says too much or too little. He leaves many interesting questions unanswered, after just whetting our curiosity; and our hopes of arriving at some safe conclusion are raised at one moment, only to be dashed to the ground at the next.

In short, his opinions, to which one looks for guidance, are too often only half formed, and, like all things in the process of formation, are nebulous and want crystalising.

On this account the reader generally rises from a

perusal of Mr Manson's book unsatisfied, and with a feeling of irritation that is quite intelligible.

He wants something more definite than is there ; he asks for bread, and refuses to be content with a stone.

He wants more definite praise : more definite blame, if you will !

He does not like to be told in one chapter, *e.g.*, that "Some have invented contrivances and modifications for bringing the instrument nearer to all-round music, *and are not likely to succeed*" ; and in the next chapter, to learn that in Mr Manson's opinion "The Bagpipe is the result of an evolution process, and we may yet see it further improved."

Nor can one wonder if the intelligent Highlander doubts whether a writer knows anything about the "Pipes," who asserts that the instrument can be modulated during playing, as the following quotation from this book seems to indicate : "The more hot and deadly the fire became, the more highly strung became the pipers' feelings, and the louder squeeled the Pipes."

I don't want to quarrel with the word "squeeled," applied to the Pipe, although it is not a very complimentary one, but I may point out, without, I hope, giving offence, that the loudness of the Bagpipe is the same throughout the tune, and does not vary, and is quite irrespective of the feeling of the piper or of the number of bullets knocking about.

We are also informed by Mr Manson that "The old pipers could indeed *so regulate their instrument*

as to make their music almost as sweet as that of the violin, but," he adds, "sweetness is not the outstanding feature of the Bagpipe."

I do not know that the old piper could regulate his instrument more than the modern piper. The only regulation is the difference in tone between a soft and a hard set of reeds.

In the tail of the last sentence, you will notice, there is a sting only half veiled.

Such pin pricks meet one at every turn in this work, and are thrown in, I suppose, as a sop to those who dislike the Pipe ; but as these are the very people who will never open the book, it is "love's labour lost" in appealing to their understandings.

But, again, no one has ever attributed sweetness as "its outstanding feature" to the great War Pipe of the Highlands. Kid gloves and sweetness are not always desirable on the battlefield, as we learned to our cost in South Africa, and the Bagpipe is first and above all things a war instrument.

Still many people are pleasurably affected by the Bagpipe even in times of peace ; and to such this "rude and barbarous instrument," while not in itself sweetness, can discourse sweet music pleasantly.

What air, for example, is sweeter than the old Pipe tune "Bonny Strathmore," or softer and more melodious than "Bonny Ellen Owen," or more filled with pathos than is that delightful little air called "After the Battle?"

Chevalier Newkonn, the friend and companion of Mendelssohn in his tour through Scotland in 1829,

strikes the right key-note in his criticism of the Bagpipe when, in answer to some carping critic, he wrote, "When you traverse a Highland glen you must not expect the breath of roses, but must be content with the smell of heather. In like manner Highland music has its rude wild charms."

One other and last example well illustrates the difficulty of getting at Mr Manson's real opinion on any subject connected with the Bagpipe. To say that it has an "actual language," he calls a "wild fanciful notion." "Of the speaking power of the Pipes about 75 per cent. exists in the vivid imagination of the Highlander . . . the Bagpipe cannot speak any more than it can fly."

As it stands this opinion is definite enough ; but what are we to think of the writer when a few pages further on we read the following :—"The Piobrach of '*Daorach Robbi*' contains the keenest satire ever levelled at the vice of drunkenness. The ludicrous imitation of the coarse and clumsy movements, the maudlin and staring pauses, the helpless imbecility of the drunkard as he is pilloried, in the satire with the ever-recurring notes, '*Seall a nis air*' (look at him now) are enough to annihilate any person possessing the least sensibility." Is this not speaking ! and plain speaking too ? If the Bagpipe can express half of the above, if it possess notes that can sneer, and notes that scathe with their keen satire, it has surely an "actual language." I do not know this marvellous tune by the name of "*Daorach Robbi*," but if it is the same as the pibroch called

"*An Daorach Mhor*" or "The Big Spree," it is one of my favourites, and trips out of the chanter with uncertain steps, like a merry Bacchanal. No tune gives my little ones greater pleasure, after they have retired for the night, than this one, the piper playing and acting the tune backwards and forwards along the nursery floor, previously cleared of all impedimenta.

Staggering along to the irregular measure of the pibroch, one can give a very good imitation of a man who is being gradually overcome in his cups. The effect is entirely due to the halting measure of the tune ; the satire, if it can be called satire, is eminently good-natured. Tennyson gets a similar effect in his "Northern Farmer"—a rhythmic effect—where he imitates the jog-trot of the farmer's old mare by the idle refrain "Proputty, proputty, proputty."

## CHAPTER IX.

### OLD NEW YEAR—A REMINISCENCE.

**T**O-DAY is New-Year's Day, the first of January, 1904.

In my young days, the Twelfth, a date now all but forgotten, was the day, and a great day too! The whole village, dressed in its Sunday best, turned out early to football and shinty.

There were no restrictions in numbers or in age : old and young met on the same field, and all were made welcome. Twenty! Fifty! One hundred a side! And the more the merrier.

How well I remember the old days!

My heart still beats faster at the thoughts conjured up by them.

We are told somewhere that "A thousand years is to the Lord as one day;" and what is the longest of lifetimes when looked back upon, to man made in His image—to man the Godlike?

It is but as yesterday.

The memory of events that happened on a certain New Year's Day some forty years ago, rises up before me while I write, clear and distinct as crag and scaur on summer hill before rain.



My dearest school friend and myself—we were as David and Jonathan in the closeness of our friendship!—were to take part in the game of football for the first time. How proud we felt, as we marched alongside of our seniors to the bank field, which was granted free for the occasion by Campbell of Auchindarroch,—the Pipers leading the way to the tune of “Bhanais, a bhanais, a bhanais a Raora.”

There was a cool crisp feeling in the air that intoxicated, and many an iron-shod boot struck out anvil-notes from the hard ground as we made our way to the scene of action, making music in hearts already brimming over with the joy of gladness.

Every sound had a special significance to us on that morning of mornings, and seemed laden with a message of “Peace and goodwill to man.”

The twittering of the sparrows under the eaves of the house; the chirp of the robin in the holly bush hard by; the whimpering of the sea-birds on the ice-bound shore,—I seem to hear them still.

From the frozen river below, where some children were sliding, and one solitary skater, too “delicate” to take part in the great game, was wheeling about in graceful curves, the song of the ice floated up on the calm morning air, a delight to the ear.

While we waited for the settling of the all-important preliminaries, such as the choosing of captains and sides and the fixing of goals, the suspense was delicious, and it was with a thrill of excitement that we heard our own names at length called.

And now—having won the toss—as our captain, a

tall, strapping young fisherman, in huge jack boots, stepped proudly out and in front of the field kicked off the ball, a mighty shout went up from a hundred throats strained to cracking point, that rent the air in twain, and hurtled north, disturbing the rooks as they sat warming their toes in the Bishopton trees, and sped west, past the canal and Auchindarroch House to the dark Tomb Wood, where the jackdaws, cowering among the ivy on the ruined walls, heard it and wondered ; and swept south over the frozen waters of Lochgilp, crackling through the solitary street which formed the fishing village of Ardrishaig like a salvo of artillery, and bringing the old women to their doors.

These latter, with many a wise shake of the head and sapient nod, breathed forth in one breath a hope and a prophecy. "Sure it's the boys at the ba'," said the one to the other. "I hope there'll no be bloodshed before they're done."

It was not a very venturesome prophecy this to make ; not a very bold suggestion on the part of the old wives of Ardrishaig, who spoke from an intimate knowledge of their mankind and his behaviour in the past ; for wherever men from different townships were gathered together in those days, whether at games or sports, at fairs or markets, at weddings or funerals, the most trivial discussion, once started, generally ended in a free fight.

But on this particular day of which I write the sun shone out of a clear sky all morning, flooding the land and the hearts of the players with brightness

This is a Photograph of

**TWO INSTRUMENTS ALLIED TO THE BAGPIPE.**

On the left is the Chinese Cheng, a wind instrument as old as the days of Confucius. On the right is the Indian snake-charmer's pipe. The wind bag in both these instances is represented by a hollowed-out gourd.







and gladness, and leaving no dark corner anywhere for fierce or angry thoughts to breed in.

The only accident indeed that happened during the forenoon, and a pretty frequent one too, was the bursting of the bladder with which the old-fashioned football was blown up. When this occurred, came our opportunity.

At the game itself we boys were not of much use. Playing on the outskirts of the crowd, for safety's sake, we occasionally got the chance of picking up the ball and of running off with it; but how could we run far, with a huge Jack in seven-league boots close on our tracks, and rapidly overtaking us with mighty stride?

Now, however, when it came to the buying of a bladder we could be useful. We knew right well the difference between the three kinds which generally adorned the flesher's shop, as they hung in rows from strong iron hooks fixed into the wooden rafters overhead. It would take a very clever man to palm off upon us—young and all as we were—the inferior sheep's or cow's for the more substantial pig's. Threepence, fourpence, and fivepence were the usual prices, but on New Year's Day the demand was great and prices ruled high, the unconscionable butcher making extortionate demands—even to the extent of eightpence or ninepence—from the players, who were of course in his power, the demand being greater than the supply.

On this occasion I was one of the two who were chosen for the special mission of bladder-buying,

and it was with a feeling of great importance that we ran down the crowded field in view of all on our way to the village square, where stood the butcher's shop.

"*Be sure* you bring a pig's," cried one greybeard; "Get it *as cheap* as you can," said another; while a score of voices sped us on our way with the shout of "Hurry back; hurry back."

And hurry back we did, I can assure you, breathless and panting, but full of pride and joy at having knocked a whole penny off the butcher's price. To-day the smallest boy or girl scoffs at so insignificant a sum as a penny, and holidays are of weekly occurrence. In those days a penny was a penny, and the Queen's Birthday and Old New Year were the only holidays in the year.

At noon a much-needed halt was called, when a few of the players went home for dinner, but the majority remained on the field, and partook of a modest meal of bread and cheese and whisky galore—"lashins and lavins iv whisky"—which had been provided for by a subscription raised earlier in the day from the players on the ground.

After a short rest, during which the "sneeshan mull" was handed round freely, and quiet jokes recounted by the elders, while the young men indulged in the game of brag, the game was once more started, but with renewed vigour, each side, with an equal number of goals to its credit at the interval, determined to win.

From the very outset the game was seen to be



rougher, and tempers were curbed with difficulty, so that over and over again the forebodings of the old wives of Ardrishaig all but came true. At length the word was spoken, with the insult in it that nothing but blood would wipe out. A challenge was given and accepted, umpires were appointed, and while the combatants stripped for the fray, the players, glad of the rest, seated themselves round in a circle on the grass to watch the fight and discuss probabilities.

I have said that the football of those days was not so scientific as is the modern game ; there was not at least so much *head* play in it, but boxing, while not perhaps quite like the modern science either, was on a much higher level of excellence.

Every boy at school had learned to use his fists, and I need hardly add that gloves were unknown, and that the fight was generally a fight to the finish.

Now, with stout hearts behind strong arms, and clothed in the "quarrel just," I have seen many a contest in the old days, that for pluck and endurance, and the courage that can take a "licking like a man," would take a great deal of beating even to-day.

One fight which I saw between little Ian Fraser and big Neil M'Geoghan lives fresh in my memory yet. It was "a great effort entirely" for Fraser to beat the bully M'Geoghan, who was a giant compared to him, and had a tremendous reach of arm, and was looked upon as the most scientific boxer

in the district. The battle of the gods, when Pelion was heaped upon Ossa, was not a more glorious encounter than this, and if I had the pen of an Ovid I might try and describe here, although it is in nowise connected with the Bagpipe, a fight that was the talk of the village for many a long day after. But if Neil is still alive I would fain be the last to open up old sores ; besides, his broken nose speaks more eloquently of that rude encounter than any pen of mine can ; and if he is dead, which I very much suspect, then peace be to his ashes.

Three different fights on that afternoon formed pleasant interludes in a game that might otherwise have flagged.

And when descending darkness brought play to a close, the opposing sides, now that the contest was over, marched back to the village, more friends than ever, with the pipers leading the way.

The evening was spent in merry-making, in strathspey and reel dancing, interspersed with riddle guessing, and the singing of old Gaelic songs, and in this way in olden times the New Year was well begun.

## CHAPTER X.

### AN INTERESTING BYWAY.

“Every science has its byways as well as its highways. It is along an interesting byway that this book invites the student to walk.”

THE Rev. James B. Johnston, B.D., minister of St. Andrew's Church, Falkirk, opens up a charming introduction to his “Place Names of Scotland” with the above words.

The science of music, like the science of language of which Mr Johnston speaks, has also its little-frequented paths.

The History of the Bagpipe is one of those interesting byways, if only a short one and a narrow. So little trod now-a-days, there is small wonder that the track has become moss-grown, or that it is for the greater part of the way scarcely discernible.

And if a rare traveller like myself, along this narrow and little explored pathway, often stumbles and at times wanders off the track altogether it is not to be wondered at.

With no library at hand for reference when in a difficulty ; without time to refer to books, even if the

library were within reach, I write under some disadvantage. However, as but little notice of the Bagpipe has been taken by writers of any note in the past, and as modern writers have stuck to the well-trodden highway, where facts are few and fallacies numerous, and missed, or at anyrate neglected the little used byways, where hidden lies an occasional golden grain of truth, this disadvantage is not so great as it would otherwise have been.

Is the Bagpipe a Scottish instrument?

Is it a Highland instrument?

Is it a Celtic instrument?

In answering these and such like questions most recent writers are but echoes, the one of the other. They have been content to take their opinions at second hand; to copy one another slavishly, asking not for proof; shutting their eyes indeed to facts which lay patent under their very noses, but which, perhaps, contradicted some pet theory, borrowed at some time by some one, from some other one whose reputation as a scholar in Celtic, or in other paths of learning, gave the worthless dictum an undue weight.

If, then, some well-known facts, and many better known fallacies, are conspicuous by their absence, and, like familiar faces that are gone, are missed by the reader in this book, I hope the deficiencies, if such, will be more than compensated for, by a display of greater originality, in my treatment of this very interesting subject: originality being hitherto the one element most wanting in lectures or writings on the Bagpipe.

I cannot remember the time when I did not love the Bagpipe and take great "delight in its noises," and I offer no apologies to-day for saying a word or two in its defence.

It has been my good fortune to have heard only good piping in my youth.

When I think over the old days—days that now, ah kindly, tricky memory! seem all play and sunshine, and piping—two names leap to my pen, the names of Colin M'Lauchlin and Dugald M'Farlane.

Colin M'Lauchlin among the amateurs stood head and shoulders above his fellows. He was "clever at the Pipe" from his earliest years, and while still only a schoolboy could hold his own with most professionals. He and one or two others, scarcely inferior, kept the spirit of piping alive in my native village. His brother—this by the way—could make the most marvellous imitations of Bagpipe tunes with his voice, so absolutely real did they sound, and often have I marched home from school to his piping. Now what Colin was among amateurs in the village, Dugald M'Farlane was among his brother professionals in the county.

He was a giant among big men. Not only was he a player unmatched in reels and strathspeys, but he was learned in all things concerning the piobaireachd; and in short Dugald was one of the best exponents of Pipe music, not forgetting the Leachs of Glendaruel, that Argyleshire has ever produced.

Dugald attended all the social functions in the district. His services were in large request wherever there was merry-making, whether at feast or funeral, so that the Lochgilphead people had many opportunities of hearing him pipe.

It was from the playing of these two masters that I learned what a wonderful old instrument the Bagpipe in capable hands becomes.

Of course, we occasionally heard piping of a different order.

I remember well, when a boy of only some six summers, playing the truant from school for the first and *almost* the last time, having allowed myself to be charmed away from the delights of sing-song spelling by the witchery of an old wheezy Bagpiper, whose career came to a somewhat inglorious termination at a public-house near the end of the village—the eighth or ninth “pub.” visited on that memorable morning—but not, alas! in time to let me get back to school, for morning lessons.

If the piper had kept sober, and had gone on playing, I do not know where we—for I had companions in evil-doing—would have stopped.

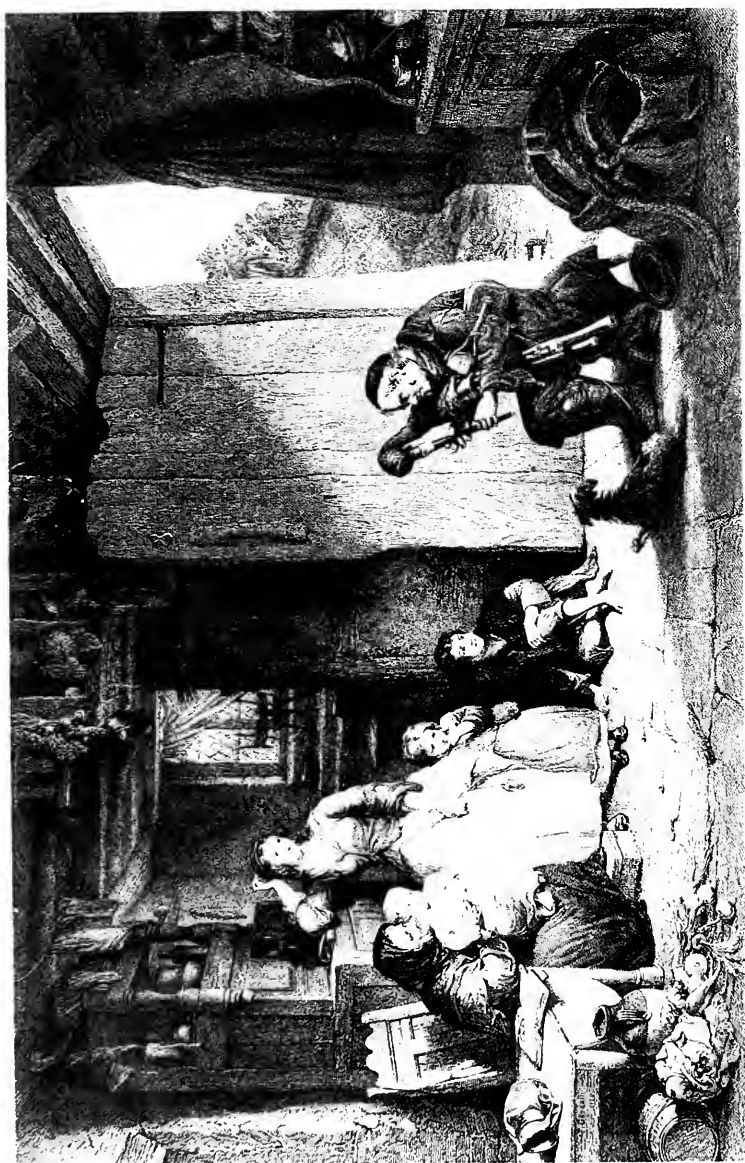
Like the children in the “Pied Piper of Hamel,” we might still be marching along to the fairy music of that most unfairy-like, red-nosed, blear-eyed anatomy of a musician.

AN OLD PRINT :

Published by the Art Union of Scotland in 1857, shewing a blind piper  
performing upon the Irish Bagpipe.









## CHAPTER XI.

### THE DELICATELY-ATTUNED EAR AND THE BAGPIPE.

“I have no ear for music.”—ELIA.

THE delight which I took in Bagpipe music is one of my earliest recollections; a delight which has lasted until now, and which fades not with the years, but, like the eagle renewing its youth, rejuvenates with each fresh Spring,—an ever-growing delight, which has stood well the test of half a century.

The first sound to fall upon my ear, I fain would have it also the last. I have never tired of it, I never shall tire of it, and I must confess to having a difficulty in understanding the antipathy which some musicians express towards it. When I read the adverse criticisms of certain writers who should know something of musical matters, I cannot help asking myself this question: “Is the love of music confined in the scholar to that of one instrument only?” Or this other question: “Can a ‘Doctor of Music’ not speak favourably of the Bagpipe without hurting his reputation? Can he not enjoy its old-world melodies, because the scale to which they are written is one of neuter thirds?”

I am not a musician by profession certainly, and assume no right to speak as one, but I will yield to no professional in my passionate love of music of all kinds when it is good. But I am not ashamed to own that the Bagpipe is my favourite instrument. This "foolish fondness," according to the Storer gospel, is of course due to my "want of ear" for music. But I maintain, in spite of the learned gentleman's judgment, that I have an ear for music; and who is a better judge? My partiality for the Pipe, however, does not prevent me, as I have said, from enjoying the music of other and more modern instruments. I appreciate the Bagpipe the more I hear of its old-world strains, but I am also a Cosmopolitan in taste where music is concerned. The solemn organ and the lively fiddle equally affect me when I am in the mood.

I can even extract pleasure from the tinkling notes of the common hurdy-gurdy that goes grinding its slow way along the street. Nor are "the pleasings of the lascivious lute" entirely thrown away upon me. But in spite of this, the warm corner in my affections is dedicated to the Bagpipe. It is just because I have an ear for other music that I am so pleasurably affected by Pipe music.

And if I can judge other lovers of the Bagpipe by myself, I do not think that it is in the least true to say that it is appreciated only by people "who have no ear for music."

Men of refinement and letters, artists, actors, soldiers, have professed to find a charm in Pipe

music that is quite peculiar to it, and shared by no other instrument. Many of the most accomplished musicians of the day have listened to it with pleasure, and have spoken warmly in its praise. A great musician in London, who died quite recently, was lecturing some years ago to a mixed audience which included more than a sprinkling of Highlanders. It may have been to please the latter—although I hardly think so—that he told them, among other things, of the fascination the Scotch Bagpipe had for him. No matter what his business might be—no matter how pressing—if he heard the sound of the Pipe down some alley or side street he immediately turned aside from the business in hand and set off in quest of the piper, and having found him had one or two quiet tunes all to himself.

It was not to the fiddle nor to the harp, but to the Highland Pipe that Mendelssohn went for his inspiration when he was composing his Scotch symphony.

Mr Murray, the modern critic, can find no inspiration, Scottish or otherwise, in the Pipes. I would like very much to see a new Scotch symphony written by him, or any one else however competent, with Bagpipe music and all that it stands for left out.

I give here one or two examples out of many, shewing the fascination which the Bagpipe exerts upon people of different tastes, and in different walks of life.

One day, when far from home, Gordon Cumming,

the lion hunter, lay tossing uneasily upon a bed of sickness, which ultimately proved to be his death-bed. Sleepless and exhausted, his thoughts turned to the old home in the Highlands, and to the old music that he loved as a boy, and he cried aloud in his anguish—"Oh! for a tune on the Pipes." His wish was granted almost as soon as spoken, in quite a miraculous manner, but with that we have nothing to do here.\* It was the distinguished traveller's yearning for the Bagpipe at the greatest crisis in a man's life,—this instrument, so despised of some—that claims our attention.

Again, when Cameron of Fassifern, who fought and fell at Quartre Bras, was told by the surgeon that he was dying, and that there was no hope for him, he called to his piper, "Come here, M'Vurich. Play me the 'Death Song of the Skymen.' My forefathers have heard it before me without shrinking."

"Orain an Aoig," said the piper, shouldering his Pipes; and as the mournful notes of the lament rose above the din of battle, and floated along on the soft morning breeze, the spirit of the hero—one of Scotland's truest sons and best!—passed away on the wings of the music he so loved.

Some years ago there was a gathering of Highlanders in a Glasgow hotel. Old men who had grown grey in the service of the great city were there, and young men fresh from their native glens.

It was a night of conviviality.

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\* The story is told near the end of this book.

Highland song and sentiment ruled with undisputed sway, and of these the Gaelic song and the Gaelic word held first place in the esteem and affections of the listeners.

Over and over again the applause which greeted speaker and singer was hearty and prolonged ; and between song and speech there was the constant buzz of animated conversation, which proclaims a meeting in harmony with itself, while a cloud of tobacco smoke mingling kindly with the aroma of the water that "comes over twenty faals," rose heavenwards with a sweet incense that assailed grateful nostrils.

When the piper at length marched up the room playing the Pibroch of the evening, a Lament in whose notes there throbbed the sorrow and the sadness of the broken heart, a hush fell upon the room.

On the face of more than one that evening, as the Pibroch shook itself down into the full steady rhythm of the melody, there came a far-away dreamy look—the look of the *taibhseadair* or seer.

The spell of the music was upon these children of the mist, stirring up the old Celtic imagination, and tenderness, and love of nature.

And the dreamer, forgetful of companions, forgetful of the palatial hall in which he sat, forgetful of the wakeful city outside, forgetful of the pipe which had gone cold between his fingers, was back once more in the little thatched cottage at the head of the glen, taking a boy's delight in stoning the ducks

in the pool at the bottom of the garden, or in harrying over again the field bees' nest for the sweet morsel of honey that was hidden there. Or it might be that the dreamer was thinking of the warm autumn days when he trudged barelegged and bonnetless through the growing corn, hot on the heels of the thieving cattle, or when tired and drowsy at the end of the day, he sat in the firelight and listened to his mother singing the old songs timed to the soft whirr of the busy spinning-wheel.

When the last note of the Pibroch had died away, these dreamers awoke from their dreams, and joined in the well-deserved applause to the piper that thundered forth from every part of the room, shaking the window frames like so many giant rattles; making the wine glasses jingle joyously on the table, and the lamplights dance in their sockets.

On the same evening that this gathering of Highlanders took place, and almost within earshot of the "sounds of revelry," which continued far into the night—under the very same roof indeed—quite a different "part" in life's drama was being played.

In a little room upstairs, as far away as possible from the noise and din of the city, there lay a sick man who for days had been so near to death's door that, as Tom Hood once said, "he could hear the creaking of it's hinges." Now this sick man was tired of everything around; I had almost said, tired of life itself; he was tired at anyrate of his own company; tired most of all of the necessary quiet enjoined upon him by his medical attendant.



To his listening ears there stole up from the room below the sound of the great Highland Bagpipe. The cheery buzz of the drone carried with it into the sick room a message of hope and life. It swept through the chamber like a breath of clear mountain air, heather-scented. It revived like a deep draught of clear cold water on a hot day. For many days the whole world had stood on tiptoe, expectant, at that chamber door, hoping—ay! and praying—that the shadow which now darkened it would quickly flee away; that the man who lay there would appear once more with renewed health and vigour to delight it with his art as he had so often done before.

Ringling the bell for the manager, the invalid asked him, when he appeared, if he could tell him where the music was coming from.

And when he learned that there was a gathering of Highlanders downstairs, he said, “I am very fond of the Pipes. Do you think the piper would come up, if I requested him, and play me a tune?”

When the Highlanders heard that Sir Henry Irving—for it was the great actor, and none other, who lay ill upstairs—craved for a tune, they at once sent the piper to him. The invalid had his heart’s desire gratified, as that proud functionary, marching up and down the passage opposite the sick room, and putting his whole soul into the playing, threw off in quick succession march, strathspey, and reel.

When the music ceased, Irving called the piper into his room, and shook hands with him kindly,

and thanked him warmly for the treat which he had given him.

“Sit down beside me,” he said, “and I will tell you a story of the Bagpipe. It was during one of my first visits to Glasgow that I first heard it. I was acting in a piece called ‘The Siege of Lucknow,’ which was staged on the boards of the old Theatre Royal in Dunlop Street. The scene was the interior of the Residency, the outer walls of which had been battered down almost to the ground. A group of listless, pale-faced, starving women—some with little children in their arms—could be seen listening to Jessie Brown, as she recounted her dream of the morning to them, and prophesied assistance at hand; while outside, keeping the rebels at bay and waiting calmly for the last assault, stood a band of soldiers—few in numbers, and wasted with disease, but still determined.

“At this moment I had to march on to the stage, and my advance was the signal for the Pipes to strike up. The piper began to play outside of the theatre, I think, and advanced slowly into the house, marching round the back of the stage. The effect was magical. I shall never forget the wave of enthusiasm which swept over that great audience, as the first notes of the Pipe fell upon their ears—the Highlanders were coming; Jessie’s dream was answered; and Lucknow was relieved. I have loved the Bagpipe ever since.”

I do not pretend to give the exact words of the story which Sir Henry Irving told to the piper, nor

TWO SPECIMENS OF IRISH STOCKS WITH REGULATORS  
AND DRONES.

The one on the left hand of the picture presented by Mr DAVID GLEN,  
of Edinburgh.

By this ingenious arrangement the drones and regulators are brought within  
easy reach of the bellows arm.







could I expect to rival his eloquent manner of telling it, but I have given the gist of it correctly as told me by the piper.

Having finished his story, Sir Henry once more complimented the piper on his playing, and well he might, for the player was one of the best in Scotland, and a champion of champions. But not content with this—ah! kind heart now at rest!—he pressed upon his acceptance at parting a handsome golden souvenir in remembrance of the occasion.

Here was a man most delicately attuned to harmonies of all sorts, to harmonies in colour as well as in sound, asking of his own free will for a tune on the great Highland Bagpipe at a time too, when mere noise would be intolerable.

In 1901 I happened to be in Camp at Barry with the Stirlingshire Volunteers. I there had the pleasure of meeting with Dr Anderson of Arbroath, who was acting as Brigade Surgeon. We soon became very great friends, and one day he told me that he was very fond of music of all sorts, but that the violin was—if I remember aright?—his favourite instrument. Nothing, however, moved him so strongly, he said, as a Highland lament on the Bagpipe. I had many opportunities during the pleasant month I spent in camp of verifying his statement; because when he found out that I was a little bit of a piper myself, it was a rare day that did not find the Colonel at my tent in quest of a tune at midday when the camp was quiet.

There, reclining upon the little bed which served

during the day for a couch, he called at his ease for his favourite *piobaireachd*, and listened, as he sipped slowly of the cool deep draught of "Fashoda," that lay ready to his elbow.

I at first played bright, cheery pieces to him, such as "*Huair mi pòg o laimh an Rìgh*" ("I got a kiss of the King's hand") and "*Maol Donn*" ("MacCrimmon's Sweetheart"), or war pieces in keeping with the camp life around, with the ring of battle in them, like "The Piobroch of Donald Dhu" and "*Cath fuathasac, Peairt*" ("The Desperate Battle"). But one day he asked me for a Lament, and I gave him that masterpiece of Patrick Mor MacCrimmon, "*Cumha Na Cloinne*" ("The Lament for the Children"). When I had got the piece well under way, I looked round at my companion to see how he was enjoying the melody. Big tears were coursing each other down his cheeks. Afraid that I had recalled some unhappy memories to the old man, who had hitherto been so bright and cheery, I ventured to stop playing, when he cried out, "Go on, go on, never mind my tears, I am enjoying myself entirely; I am perfectly happy." After this I always played my laments to a finish in spite of tears.

I could give many instances of the attraction the Bagpipe possesses for the better classes—men and women, highly-trained in the fine arts, well educated, and with delicately attuned ears, but space forbids.

It has—I need hardly say—always had an attraction for the "masses," a fact which no one denies,



but on the contrary some writers have used this fact to its disparagement, as if only the wealthy classes could enjoy good music.

One little story showing that the masses still love it will therefore suffice. Early one summer's morning I was practising in the garden at the back of the house. A poor widow—a washerwoman—who was hurrying along to her work heard me, and stopped for a moment to listen. Just for one little moment.

The moment lengthened itself out into minutes ; so, concealing herself behind one of the gate pillars, where she could hear and not be seen, she remained rooted to the spot, oblivious altogether of time, and of the clothes that were waiting to be washed, and of the angry lady behind the clothes ; and in this way she lost her engagement for the day rather than miss one note of the music. "But I didn't mind that," she said to a neighbour, who told me of the circumstance long after ; "the music was worth it." Similar testimony, only multiplied a hundred-fold, might be produced here, but space forbids, and it seems to me absurd, with such testimony before us, to say that the Bagpipe is only for those who are incapable of appreciating music.

"I have no ear. Mistake me not, reader," writes Charles Lamb, "nor imagine that I am by nature destitute of those exterior twin appendages, hanging ornaments, and (architecturally speaking) handsome volutes to the human capital. . . . I was never, I thank my stars, in the pillory. . . .

When therefore I say that I have no ear, you will understand me to mean—for music.”

We are not all so honest to-day as Charles Lamb was when he wrote the above confession. And I have more than a suspicion that it is the people without an ear for music who oftenest sneer at the Bagpipe, in the vain hope of thus hiding their own defect.

These people, in short, knowing nothing of music themselves, have been content to take their opinions from the scorner, and having no discrimination or judgment of their own, hug the delusion that the Bagpipe is a safe “Aunt Sally” for every earless person to shy at; or think because they have heard it called by one who should know better “a barbarous instrument, capable only of making an intolerable noise,” that they, too, may safely pose as hostile critics of this fine old instrument.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE MUSICIAN AND THE BAGPIPE.

“Sympathy is the key to truth—we must love in order to appreciate.”

WE may safely assert that lovers of the Bagpipe during last century, to go no further back, were to be found among all classes in this country, from that of the little woman who presided over the wash-tub to that of the Great Lady who presided over the Empire’s destinies.

Is the Bagpipe then a musical instrument deserving of the esteem in which it has been held by many from time immemorial? Or is it only “a squeeling pig in a poke,” owing its popularity to the caprices of fashion, and to a corrupt and depraved taste? As I take up this subject in another part of the book, it will be as well to confine ourselves here to one aspect of the question, which will also be in exemplification of what was suggested in the last chapter.

To make my meaning perfectly clear, I will put this matter in the form of a question, and answer it from my own experience.

Is the Bagpipe intolerable to the trained ear?

Now if we answer this in the affirmative, then we must add on to it as a rider, that the Bagpipe is *always intolerable to the trained ear.*

A further corollary of necessity follows upon this, viz., *The Bagpipe is tolerable only to the untrained ear*; and if this be the case, then is the Storer type of critic right, and the rest of the world, including myself, who differ from him, wrong.

To some ears Bagpipe music is indeed intolerable. The owners of these too sensitive drums are out of sympathy with the Bagpipe, and honestly hostile to it.

For such there is no discoverable tune in the music: no time, no melody, no rhythm, nothing but noise.

They cannot love, therefore they do not appreciate.

Other senses are in like manner at times abnormally developed. The touch of velvet is abhorrent to certain men and women, and makes them shiver. The colour yellow acts upon an occasional unfortunate as an emetic.

I know of one medical man who cannot sleep on a pillow made of a certain kind of duck's feathers without having an attack of asthma.

And it is a matter of common knowledge to most of us that a certain number of people cannot tolerate cats. If one of these keen-scented persons enter a room where a cat has been he immediately starts to sneeze, whereupon some superstitious Pagan present cries out on him, "God bless you."

Many other good things, and useful things, and beautiful things, are intolerable to certain people, because they were born with a kink in their insides. And it would be as unjust to condemn Bagpipe music on account of one or two hyper-sensitives, as to condemn all fur and feather and bright colour because of a handful of cranks.

I wish, however, to speak here only of the normal ear, whether trained or untrained.

'Tis now some twelve years or more since I had the honour of entertaining Mons. Guillmon, the great Paris organist, at my house. He had come to open a new organ in the Falkirk Parish Church, and he put up with me for the night.

During dinner, Pipe-Major Simpson, an old friend of mine, played to us in the hall. It was Monsieur's introduction to the Bagpipe, and he evidently enjoyed the new sensation, but to the neglect of his dinner, which grew cold in front of him, as he sat in an attitude of wrapt attention, while his busy fingers beat time on the cloth to the different measures. When dinner was over, he must go out and see the "Pipes" for himself, and compliment the piper. He was veritably lost in wonder as he examined the instrument. It was astonishing! marvellous! miraculous! how such "*tres bien*" music could be got out of so simple-looking an instrument. And the fingering! What a time—hundreds of years—it must have taken to evolve the system of notes known as warblers! Then he turned to the piper and paid him many pretty compliments, and Simpson

went home that night proud and happy, with the words of praise from a brother musician ringing in his ears.

While I was writing the above, and thinking kindly of my old friend who had disappeared out of our ken for many years, and of his many good parts, I was all unconscious of what was taking place not many miles away.

In a quiet Glasgow churchyard, a firing squad from the Maryhill Barracks was standing with reversed arms by the side of a newly-made grave, and the bugler was sounding the last post, for the very man who then filled my thoughts. This was the sad news that reached me on the following morning from MacDougal Gillies, of Glasgow, the famous pibroch player.

Poor Simpson was a great favourite with all of us, and more especially with my wife. He disappeared from Falkirk many years ago, under a cloud. It was nothing very serious. He got drinking one evening when entertaining, with his usual generosity, some sailors from Grangemouth, and afterwards accompanied them to their ship, which was on the point of sailing. When on board he got into a state of profound stupor, and when he came to himself he was astonished to learn that he was in Rouen, deserted and alone.

He was proud, and refused to come back to Falkirk, and to his friends who would have helped him ; and after a time he was forgotten, but never by me nor by my wife. He was a modest man for

A FRENCH PIPER :

Life size, done in stucco, to be seen at the door of a curiosity shop in Dinon.  
Photographed by Miss Risk.









a piper: honest, upright, honourable, generous, obliging, possessed of a big heart: a soldier every inch of him, and as handsome a man in the kilt as ever donned one. "*Requiescat in Pace.*"

But now to return to my subject! After dinner, we went to the church, where Mons. Guilmant, unaided, kept a large audience spellbound for over two hours with a marvellous performance on the organ.

He was an old man, and naturally tired with the effort, so, after supper, I suggested bed. "Bed!" said he, "but I want to hear the piper again."

Now Mons. Guilmant knew no English, and I was sadly deficient in French. I had therefore some difficulty in explaining to him that, owing largely to accident of birth, or, perhaps, to the mislaying of an important paper, I was not a Highland chief, with the piper one of my tail,—although my tale is one of the piper—that Piper Simpson was an independent gentleman, as independent as myself, and a good deal more so, who had come down of his own freewill to do honour to a brother in the craft; and that he was by this time most probably sound asleep in bed.

To lessen the visible disappointment with which my guest received this news, I offered to play a pibroch to him myself. I was but a poor substitute for the Pipe-Major, it is true, and proposed judiciously to perform as far away as possible from him. He would not have me play anywhere but in the room beside him.

The room was small, being only about fifteen feet square.

And in this way, it came to pass, that I got an opportunity—no better possible!—of testing the effect of the Bagpipe on the trained ear.

Mons. Guilmant did not find it intolerable. On the contrary, I had great difficulty in satisfying his newly acquired taste.

With a book of piobaireachd in his hand, he called for tune after tune, scanning the score of each closely as he went along, and so kept me playing on into the small hours of the morning.

The variety given to the music by the introduction of grace notes enchanted him, and he announced his determination to write a piece of music for the organ, in imitation of the Bagpipe, whenever he got back to Paris.

This must, however, have proved an impossible task for him—as indeed it is for any musician, however skilful—for it is well known that the variation known as Crunluath cannot be put upon any other instrument than the Bagpipe. At all events, if the attempt were ever made, the result was not communicated to me.

Let us now listen to the opinion of one who is not a musician by profession, but who recounts a somewhat similar experience of the Bagpipe played in a small room.

Mr Manson will not object, I hope, to being placed outside of the musical profession, for the time being at least. He is a journalist, I believe, but his opinion

is none the less valuable to my argument on this account. Now, Mr Manson tells the reader, in his book on the Bagpipe, of how he was once shut up in a small room, during a Highland gathering in Glasgow, with a piper, and of the *excruciating half hour* he spent there listening perforce to the Bagpipe. "In five minutes the big drone seemed," so he writes, "to be vibrating all through my anatomy, while the melody danced to its own time among the crevices of my brain. . . It was impossible for me to take my fingers out of my ears." And all the while—much-to-be-pitied man—"copy" was waiting to be done. "Anything more indescribably disagreeable than that half-hour it is difficult to imagine."

What a contrast in opinion we have here! Mons. Guilmant, the great organist—music his life-long mistress—who could not have the "Pipes" too near, nor the room too small.

Mr Manson, the literateur, who under similar circumstances of nearness and loudness, suffers the "tortures of the damned," as he sits with fingers glued to his ears, trying in vain to shut out the tune.

And so when the question is put, "Is the Bagpipe a musical instrument?" who are we to believe?

Mr Manson, the historian of the Bagpipe, whose appreciation of it is at times somewhat doubtful? Or the charming Frenchman—one of the first musicians of the day—who listens and admires and has nothing but praise for this old-world instrument, semi-barbarous though it be?

Do not, however, reader, imagine for a moment that we are recommending the Bagpipe as a fitting companion in a small room. I say in this book, and I have said the same thing over and over again in my lectures, that the Bagpipe, whether engaged in leading sheep to the green pastures, or men to the battle-field, was originally an open-air instrument, and in the form of the *piob mhor* at least, is unfitted for indoors.

But this is a very different thing to saying that it is not a musical instrument. We listen and admire, or profess to admire, the great organ with all its stops out, or the brass band of full complement roaring its loudest, in a hall that is no larger in proportion for it than is the small room for the "Pipes."

But in such a detestable climate as ours, if you will not have piping indoors, then must you do without it for a greater part of the year.

Now, curiously enough, and this fact that I am about to mention partly explains and is partly corroborated by Mons. Guilmant's pleasurable sensations from the "Pipes" at close quarters, if the Bagpipe must be listened to indoors, then it is best heard in a small room and not in a large hall.

In the former, one's sense of hearing very quickly accommodates itself to the loudness which just at first is excessive, and very soon the air comes out of the hurly-burly full, clear, and steady, while not a grace note fails to reach the listener's ear.

In the latter, the echo coming back from roof

and wall, confuses the issue, and the notes trip each other up as they hurry to and fro, until all semblance of a tune is lost in the buzzing sound that reminds one for all the world of the struggles of an enormous bee in a bandbox.

I am perhaps prejudiced in favour of the Bagpipe: I confess indeed that I am. "I love, therefore I appreciate," and in this way sentiment at odd times takes the place of argument.

As I have said before, I like modern instruments, with their improved scale and niceties of expression; but no modern instrument can recall to me the old home and the old folk, like the dear old Highland Bagpipe.

It is always associated in my mind with the kilt, and the tartan, and the heather; and the cheery summery buzz of its drones wakens up within me sunny memories of the days "When we were boys, merry, merry boys, when we were boys together." Of the days when the world was young, and care was unknown.

When at a wave of the wand Youth, fairy castles reared their tall heads to the moonlight in the twinkling of an eye, and brave knights and fair ladies gaily dressed, sprang to full life and stature like daffodils at the first breath of spring. When hope whispered in the murmur of the sea, and in the sigh of the summer air, and in the silence that lurks in the deeps of the forest.

When the "Pipes" spoke to us boys with no uncertain voice, of the great world that lay beyond

our ken : of its mighty cities and gorgeous palaces, full of life and of the heart's desire ; where fame and fortune, ripe for the plucking, waited upon the masterful heart and hand at every street corner ; and love lurked behind every window curtain.

When every tune was like the "Lost Pibroch" in Neil Munroe's beautiful story, and indeed urged us to the road,—the long road,—the straight road,—the smooth white road, that stretched itself out through the mountains, to the world's end and beyond. "It's story was the story that's ill to tell—something of the heart's longing and the curious chances of life." "Folks," said the reeds coaxing, "wide's the world and merry the road. Here's but the old story and the women we kissed before. Come, come to the flat lands, rich and full, where the wonderful new things happen, and the women's lips are still to try."



THE MAGIC OF THE PHOTOGRAPH :  
" Fairy castles reared their tall heads to the moonlight."







## CHAPTER XIII.

### A HIGHLAND INSTRUMENT.

**T**O-DAY is the day of trial for the poor Bagpipe. Its ancient claims are being challenged one by one. We have already had one example of the professional critic, who would fain have us believe that the Bagpipe is not a musical instrument at all. We are now told that it is not a Highland instrument: the harp is the Highland instrument. It is not even a Scottish instrument: it is an English instrument, and never was a favourite with the Lowlander, and cannot therefore be the national instrument of Scotland. We are further told,—and this by a Celt, and quite recently, too,—that it is not even of Celtic origin; that we Highlanders took it from the Lowlander, who in turn borrowed it from the Anglo-Saxon: all of which is, to put it mildly, so much ignorant twaddle and tommy-rot. There is an old and well-known proverb which says “Jack is as good as his master,” and it would be strange indeed if the critics of the Bagpipe were limited to those who have a knowledge of music.

A facile pen, and an unscrupulous wit, and a

large ignorance of the subject, give a right to the owner of these somewhat doubtful qualities to pronounce off-hand an expert opinion on any matter relating to the Bagpipe or to Bagpipe music. Only yesterday\* there was a letter in the *Glasgow Herald* giving an extract from a late number of the *Saturday Review*, which illustrates this well. The date of the article in the *Review* is October 24, 1903. The article is from the pen of its musical critic, and continues as follows:—"Of all the faculties known to me the most wondrous I have observed is that which enables a person to appreciate Scottish music,"—poor man, and we are supposed to be living in the twentieth century!—"and to tell the difference between one tune and another. To be more exact, until lately I recognised only two Scotch tunes—one quick, lively, jerky, undignified; the other mournful and slow. In dances it is the negation of any dignity of movement, and in songs it becomes a mere squeal. The instruments on which Scotch music is performed are three—viz., the human voice, fiddle, and the Bagpipes. Of these the Bagpipes is by far the most horrible. There is no music in its empty belly."

All the three Scotch (?) instruments are evidently horrible to this cheap penny-a-liner: the Scotch voice, the Scotch fiddle, and the "Scotch" Bagpipe, but of the three "the Bagpipes (*sic*) is by far the most horrible." In its *empty* belly there is indeed

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\* This chapter was written on the 9th January, 1904.

no music, but I forbear to press the point : it is too patent.

Could we have a better example of the facile pen, and the unscrupulous wit, and the vast ignorance? Only a month or two since, a Scots lassie, a real Falkirk Bairn—with a “Scotch” voice, I presume—was sent for by Royalty to come and sing to it “The auld Scotch sangs.” But an hundred such incidents would make no difference to this scribbler, who mixes up “Scotch” and Highland matters in delightful fashion, and finds nothing good in either. “Write me down an ass,” said Dogberry : and the breed is evidently not yet extinct.

In the same number of the *Glasgow Herald* there is a second letter, in which the writer, Mr W. H. Murray, asserts that the Bagpipe is not our national instrument. “It is time,” he says, “that the notion that the Bagpipe is the national instrument of Scotland were exploded. It has never held that place in the Lowlands, and the *clarsach* (harp) is much older in the Highlands. True the *clarsach* was supplanted by the Pipe,” etc.

Now it is not true that the harp is older than the Pipe in the Highlands, or at least we have no proof that such is the case ; nor was the harp ever supplanted by the Bagpipe. The Bagpipe was the shepherd’s instrument, the instrument of the poor and illiterate, and it therefore remained for centuries unnoticed in the Highlands ; the harp was the bard’s instrument, the instrument of the cultured and the powerful, and it was taken notice of from its first

appearance : and if the bard and the harp disappeared the Bagpipe was not to blame : but I will take Mr Murray's assertions and answer them in inverse order. He says, " the *clarsach* was supplanted by the Pipe." What authority has he for this statement ? It would be truer to say that the *clarsach* for a time usurped the place of the Pipe. The harp was an innovation in the Highlands at a time when the Bagpipe although of native growth was still only a pastoral instrument, rude, and feeble, and not worthy of mention by the historian, ill suited to the cultivated ear, and all unfit for war as it then was. The bards were the travelled people in those days, and to them the introduction of the harp is due. They picked it up in the South during their travels and retained it, because they found it of great service as an accompaniment to the voice in their incantations or recitations. Its use spread down to the people from the bards, not up from the people to the bards, and I suppose—at least George Buchanan says so—it became popular for a time with the common people, and then declined, not through its usurpation by the Pipe, but because it was quite unfitted to the genius of a warlike race. The old Highlander looked upon it with contempt ; he called it a *Nionag's* or maiden's weapon, and considered its strings fit only for the sweep of feeble fingers. It is an Anglo-Saxon weapon with an Anglo-Saxon name, and it is not at all likely that the proud Celt would adopt his hated enemies' instrument, and make it into the national instrument of the Highlands, preferring it to his own native



*Piob.* The name harp is the old English or Anglo-Saxon *hearpe* and *hearpa*. In Gaelic there are two words that denote the harp: *Cruit*, which is just the British crowd or cruth, and the Welsh *crwth*, a kind of fiddle that was played upon with a bow, but without the neck of the modern fiddle; and *clarsach*, a name evidently given to it from the appearance of the sounding board, *clar* in Gaelic meaning a plank, a lid, a trough.

If the Highlander had invented the harp he would have given it an original or root-word name, and would not have gone to Saxondom for a title. But this he has not done. The harp also was in universal use among the Anglo-Saxons from the earliest times. It was the minstrel's weapon *par excellence*. Early in the 9th century, Alfred the Great, with harp in hand, penetrated the camp of the Danes and learned their secrets, which he turned to good account in the battle which followed. And later on the compliment was returned by the Danes, when one of their leaders entered the British camp disguised as a harper, and picked up much valuable information from the unsuspecting Britons. But nearly four hundred years before this incident in the life of Alfred the Great, the very same method was adopted by the enemy during the siege of York to get news to the besieged, who were on the point of surrendering, as the British had cut off the water supply, and the food supply was all but run done. The leader's brother, disguising himself as a harper—we are told that he shaved his head, and

put on the minstrel's cloak on this occasion—passed unsuspected through the besiegers' lines, beguiling the simple soldiers with many songs to the accompaniment of the harp. All day long he sang his way nearer and nearer to the fosse surrounding the doomed city. When night fell he changed his tune; was recognised by his friends inside the beleaguered town; by means of ropes he was drawn up over the walls, and the news which he brought of reinforcements at hand saved the city.

The fiddle also, like the harp, is an Anglo-Saxon instrument, invented by an English Churchman, and called by him a *fiðele*. It was from England that the fiddle spread to other countries. The Norman tongue could not get round this word, and so they called it *fiel* or *viel*, which is just the modern viol, with its diminutive violin.

The Bagpipe, on the other hand, is a Celtic instrument, with a Celtic name—*Piob-Mhalaidh* (*Piob* and *Mala*); and it seems strange, to say the least of it, that the Highlanders, a Celtic people should be denied having any art or part in the invention of this, their favourite instrument; one, too, which they alone have brought to perfection, and which they alone can play artistically by means of a system of fingering as original as it is effective, and so subtle that it must have taken hundreds and hundreds of years to evolve out of the rude fingering of the past, and make into the fine art which it now is. And, further, is it not passing strange that these same Celts should be accused of borrowing this

“military weapon” with the *Celtic name* from the Sassenach. It is difficult to carry the absurd any further, but it has been done! We are bravely told by one learned Highlander—alas, that I should have to write it down!—who is seated high up in the temple of music, and who speaks as one having authority, that the Celt’s Bagpipe is not only an English instrument, but that the English fiddle is the Lowland Celt’s national instrument. Such reckless statements carry their own refutation writ large on the face of them.

Further proofs of their incorrectness will be given from time to time, and the claim of the Bagpipe to be looked upon as a Celtic instrument made good, which latter will be equivalent to proving that it is also a Highland instrument, and not one merely borrowed by the Highlander.

While the Bagpipe of to-day then is thoroughly Highland in character, it is also—as I hold—the only distinctive musical instrument which Scotland possesses, or which Scotsmen all over the world—be they of Highland or of Lowland origin—can justly and proudly claim as their own.

Now, what constitutes a national instrument?

Firstly. It must be distinctive of the nation using it.

Secondly. It must be recognised by other nations as the national instrument.

Thirdly. It must be, and must have been for a long time, a general favourite with the people, and be in general use. I use the word people here

advisedly, because it is from the people : from the shepherd and the plough-boy, and not from the lordlings who rule it over us for a day, that all national musics have sprung.

Fourthly. It must be the invention of the race using it, and not merely borrowed from some other nation.

Fifthly. In order to attain this position of national instrument, it must be in consonance with the character and the aspirations of the race.

Sixthly. It must have assisted largely in shaping out the national music by impressing upon it its own peculiarities. I could name other characteristics, but these will suffice for my purpose here. Let us test by means of the above the three musical instruments which have been put forward for national honours.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE BAGPIPE, THE NATIONAL INSTRUMENT.

“That the Englishmen had their supporters was shown by the cheer that went up when the men, all in white, emerged from the pavilion to the strains of ‘The British Grenadiers,’ but it was nothing to the mighty shout which greeted the Scots, *who, led by pipers*, looked in the pink of condition in their Royal blue jerseys.”—*Glasgow Evening Times*.

“In Scotland the Bagpipe must be considered as the national instrument.”—DR. MACCULLOCH.

NOW, if we apply the tests in the preceding chapter, or any other tests which you may devise, to each of the three musical instruments which have been put forward at one time or another as Scotland’s national instrument, we will find that the *Piob-Mhor*, or great War Pipe of the Highlands, is the only one of the three which at all satisfies the conditions laid down.

It seems to me hardly worth while to go beyond the first and most important test of all, that “the national instrument of a country must be distinctive of the nation using it.” Neither the harp nor the fiddle is in any way distinctive of Scotland. The harp is distinctive of the Welsh people and of the Irish flag, but not of the Scottish nation. The

fiddle, an Anglo-Saxon invention originally, is now the property of the whole civilised world, and is characteristic of no one people. The Bagpipe, however, stands on a very different footing. It is in the first place pre-eminently distinctive of the Highlander, and this is half the argument and more. The Lowlander is apt to forget that the Highlander is as much a Scotsman as himself.

What would dear old Scotland be without her Highlanders? If the glorious records of our Highland regiments were erased to-morrow from the book of history, would not the tale of the years that have fled be shorn of much of its glory so far as we Scotsmen are concerned? But to most Lowland Scotsmen also, the Bagpipe is the national instrument. This is "the generally accepted" notion, according to Mr Murray, and, if due to ignorance, as he asserts, then, indeed, is the ignorance very widespread throughout the British Empire, and shared in by every European nation. When I put the question to people in the South, "What is our national instrument?" the almost invariable answer is, "Why, of course, the Bagpipe!" Occasionally, the fiddle is put forward in hesitating fashion: the harp never.

Take the heading at the beginning of this chapter. It is an ordinary cutting taken from one of the evening papers, and begins a plain matter-of-fact account of the 1904 International Rugby Football match, played at Inverleith, when the champions of the Rose and the Thistle met in friendly rivalry.

To the old football player the words, though simple, conjure up the scene as real as when it spread itself out before his delighted eyes on that most glorious of days. The scene is an animated one. The grey metropolis of the Forth is looking its brightest. Twenty to thirty thousand people, gathered from all parts of Scotland, are there to watch the game. The peer rubs shoulders with the peasant: the lady of high degree with the shop girl. Every class in the community has its representatives in evidence at this great gathering. Doctors of Divinity, Doctors of Law, Doctors of Medicine, are here mixing freely with the humble city clerk, and the tidy apprentice and the rough labourer; while the blacksmith fresh from his forge, and the pitman, still grimy from his underground labours, help to swell the throng. Here, too, you see the medical student, not always "sicklied o'er with the pale hue of thought," giving the tip to his Professor: that dreaded examiner! who to-morrow, perhaps, will send the poor devil down for another term, to do a little and much-needed further study on the bones. Presiding over all, is the Goddess of Youth and Beauty in the shape of crowds of gaily-dressed, sweet-faced, bright, healthy-looking, chattering girls, whose presence lends a fresh charm and a delightful picturesqueness to an already charming scene. Scotland's pride of nationality runs high on such an occasion, and she rightly puts all distinctive traits in the foreground.

As the time of the contest draws near, a feeling

of suppressed excitement spreads through the crowd, interfering with the smooth flow of speech. Questions are put and answered in monosyllabic jerks. Every head is turned instinctively towards the pavilion, and watches are anxiously scanned. And when on the stroke of the hour the Englishmen appear in spotless white, headed by a brass band, playing "The British Grenadiers," a great cheer rises from the mighty throng. But this cheer, although hearty, is as nothing to the roar of welcome which greets the lads in blue—the lads who are destined, ere the day is over, to carry the Scottish colours once more to victory!—as they march on to the field, *headed by Pipers*. The team is entirely composed of Scotsmen, I presume—Highland and Lowland—and contains the pink of Scotland's players. The occasion is international and historic. The assembly of on-lookers is representative of Scotland at its best. Why, then, if the Bagpipe is not the national instrument, should it be chosen to lead the Scottish team on to the field on this great day? Why should its stirring notes rouse the enthusiasm of the multitude? Try and imagine the effect a fiddler or a harper at the head of the dark blues would have upon the crowd? It would then set them jeering, not cheering. The manly, the heroic, the picturesque, associated as these are with the kilt and the Bagpipe, would disappear with the disappearance of the Piper. The harper, of course, could not even march with the team; he would have to hurry off in advance, to the middle of the



field, and, sitting down upon his three-legged stool, draw the players to him, as if by hypnotism, or magnetism, or other necromantic ism; a spectacle fit only to excite gods and men to laughter!

It is the "generally accepted" opinion—Mr Murray concedes this much—that the Bagpipe is Scotland's national instrument.

To shew how true this is, allow me to quote shortly from the public speeches of two Scotsmen—Lowlanders, not bigoted, prejudiced Highlanders—and delivered before two very different audiences on two very different occasions.

Colonel R. Easton Aitken, a well-known Scotsman, who puts in no claim to be called a Highlander, and is so far at least unprejudiced in his opinions on the Bagpipe, was presiding this year at the distribution of prizes in connection with the Glasgow School of Music. In opening the proceedings he said, "Most of you probably know more about music than I do, but as a Scotsman I claim to be a member of a musical nation which has given to the world songs which have become more than national. We also possess *a very distinctive form of music*, regarding which a certain difference of opinion is held. *I refer to the Bagpipe*, but granted that those who differ as to its being the national instrument are right! still it has proved itself a very stimulating military influence, and I have no doubt that the Scottish nation at large is proud of the Bagpipe and all the memories it conjures up."

Now it is easy to read between the lines, and to

know which side of the controversy—if it can be called a controversy—the gallant Colonel takes. His heart is with the Bagpipe. He has listened to it in camp and on the battlefield, and to him, as to so many other Scotsmen, it is the one *very distinctive* form of Scottish music.

The “certain difference of opinion” here mentioned probably refers to Mr Murray’s letters, which appeared in the *Glasgow Herald* shortly before the Colonel made his speech.

Now the Colonel, being evidently a modest man, and not wishing to express himself too strongly upon a musical point before a gathering of musicians, gave too much weight to the *certain difference of opinion*, which was then being aired in the Press. “That those who differ as to its being the national instrument are right,” I would not grant for one moment. But then I am a Highlander, and probably biased, and also on this particular subject I have found the best informed musicians to be as ignorant as the man in the street, for the very simple reason that the Bagpipe is never mentioned in lectures. It has been systematically ignored by the learned as a rude and barbarous instrument, unworthy of their notice, and its history has yet to be written. The opinion of the expert, therefore, on the Bagpipe is of no special value, because it is without knowledge. The Pipe itself is, however, in evidence wherever a band of Scotsmen foregather; and this is to me one of the best proofs of its national character, and of the estimation in

which it is held, notwithstanding any amount of learned—or unlearned—dissertation to the contrary. In illustration of what I mean, take the St. Andrew's Day Celebrations in London this year as reported in the *Scotsman* newspaper. Lord Rosebery was in the chair, and made one of those delightfully racy speeches which become the social function so well, but which I refer to later on. "The assemblage"—I quote from the report,—“which numbered between three hundred and four hundred, might be described as a sort of miniature ‘Scotland in London.’ A considerable proportion of those present were in Highland costume. Around the walls were hung numerous clan banners, and the skirl of the Bagpipes (*sic*) was heard at frequent intervals in the course of the evening.” Now, what gave this great and representative gathering, in the eyes of the newspaper correspondent, its distinctively Scottish character? Why, we have it in his description of the meeting. It was the Highland leaven that leavened the whole lump. Without the Bagpipe, and the kilt, and the clan banners on the wall, and the haggis—we must not leave out the haggis, “Great Chieftain o’ the Puddin-race”—the meeting would be as any other meeting of Britishers.

And as at home, so abroad, only more so. To a Scotsman landing on a foreign shore the sound of the Bagpipe is at once cheering and inspiriting. As its first strains fall upon his ears, the cry of “Scotland for ever!” rises to his lips. He feels that he is among friends, and not so far from

home after all; this is irrespective of the tune altogether.

The fiddle, unless playing some well-known melody, can convey no such sensation. Nor can the harp.

Speaking at Rockhampton on June 3, 1896, where he was the guest of the *Scotsmen* of that town,—no distinction here between Highland Scot and Lowland Scot, although there was a Mac in the chair!—men grow wider in their views by travel,—Lord Lamington, the newly-appointed Governor of Queensland, and a man who cannot be accused of being either a Highlander or prejudiced, said, “I rejoiced on landing here to see well-known Scottish dresses, and also to hear the sound of the Pipes. (Applause.) Yesterday morning, I think it was, or the day before, I had occasion to thank those who gave *that pleasantest of music* to my ears from the balcony of this hotel. Some rather irreverent person in the street made a jeering remark. I do not know what it is to most people, but I know this—*I would rather hear the Pipes than any other instrument*. Many a time, when in London, have I dashed down one street and up another to cut off perhaps some regiment marching to the sound of the Pipes. . . . Whilst others may prefer such airs as those to be heard at the opera, I can only say, in my opinion, that in everything the beautiful is strictly allied with the useful. And I maintain that the Pipes have done more strictly useful work in this world than any other instrument. (Applause.)

Where the Highland bonnets have gone forward—whether at Alma, whether in India,—if there has been a pause in the rush, it has been the piobrach which has rallied these Highland regiments, and enabled them to distinguish themselves in the fierce onslaught on the enemy. (Applause.) Why, there is hardly a war, however small, in which you will not see the name of some well-known Highland or Scottish regiment. The Bagpipe is always to the front. Therefore I maintain—as we all of us do, I believe—that we should cherish our *national instrument*, which has played a great part in the history of our country.” (Applause.)

Those who differ from us on this point have their work cut out for them, and should lose no time in taking their coats off if they are in earnest, and mean to try and explode “the generally accepted notion that the Bagpipe is the National Instrument of Scotland.”

It is assuredly the only distinctive musical instrument which we possess, and at the present time, it deposed from its proud position, there is none other to take its place.

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE SCOTTISH BAGPIPE.

WE have tried to prove in the preceding chapter—not unsuccessfully, we hope—that the Bagpipe is the only distinctive musical instrument which Scotland possesses.

Do other nations recognise the *Piob Mhor* as distinctively Scottish, and not as merely Highland?

This is the second test, and is also a very important one.

At a time when England and Scotland were still separate nationalities, although under one crown, Otway, the English poet, who wrote his first play in 1674, said on one occasion, “A Scotch song! I hate it worse than a Scotch Bagpipe.”

The Bagpipe was at the zenith of its fame in the Highlands, and—with the exception of the bellows pipe—had largely died out in the Lowlands, when Otway made this spiteful remark. It was the golden age of the Piper in Skye. Many of our best *Piobaireachd* first saw the light there, while everywhere in the Highlands at this time similar music was being written. We can compose no such fine









The Author looks upon this Pipe as the most valuable in his collection. It was bought for him by Mr W. S. Macdonald, of Glasgow, and has a very sweet tone.

“ A RELIC OF WATERLOO ”

Inscribed upon the silver plate is the following :—

“ Prize given by the Highland Society of London to John Buchanan, Pipe-Major to the 42nd or RI. Highland Regt.—Adjudged to him by the Highland Society of Scotland at Edinburgh, 20th July, 1802.

music for the Bagpipe to-day as the old pipers composed in those days, without any seeming effort. The name of MacCrimmon was familiar as a household word wherever the soft Gaelic tongue was spoken, when of Lowland Pipers of fame there were none, and yet Otway writes of the Bagpipe in his day as Scotch.

At the battle of Quatre Bras, when the Seventy-Ninth Highlanders had formed up to receive a charge of French cavalry, Piper McKay stepped proudly out of the newly-formed square, and, planting himself on a hillock, where he could be seen and heard of all, played that well-known pibroch—grandest of war pieces—“*Cogadh Na Shie*,” as unconcernedly as if on parade, with shot and shell flying all around him. A similar example of piper’s bravery was given at Waterloo, under the eye of Napoleon himself, who might in all truth have said, “Ah! brave Highlanders!” instead of “Ah! brave Scots!” when he heard the war-pipe sound, and saw the tartan wave, and witnessed with amazement his best troops dash themselves in vain against those thin walls of Highland steel; but there was none of that hair-splitting, pettifogging spirit about this greatest of great soldiers, which some modern critics display; those critics who would divide us into Highland Scot and Lowland Scot, and who unblushingly assert—or at least insinuate—that the Lowlander is unwilling to accept any gift which comes to him with the Highland taint upon it.

To the French Emperor the Bagpipe and the kilt

—characteristically Highland both—represented Scotland and Scotland alone.

Once again, when Mendelssohn, the great composer, came over to Scotland that he might study on the spot the native music, he spent three whole days passing out and in of the old Theatre Royal in Edinburgh, during a competition that happened to be going on there, *listening to the Bagpipe*, because to him it was the instrument *par excellence* of Scotland ; it was here first, and afterwards in a visit to the Highlands where he again studied the Bagpipe amidst its proper surroundings, that he caught the inspiration for his “*Hebrides*” overture and for his “*Scotch Symphony*.”

Now as with the English, and the French, and the German, so with other nations. I have myself visited many foreign countries, and met with many different peoples, and the invariable exclamation of the intelligent foreigner, on seeing or hearing the Highland Pipe, was “Ah ! Scotch !”

To the educated foreigner, indeed, who often takes a broader view of our country than we ourselves do, Highland and Lowland are unknown. There is but one nation, Scotland; and but one people, the Scottish; and but one national instrument, the Bagpipe.

We will now glance shortly at the other conditions laid down before proceeding to the subject proper. The Bagpipe is the only one of the three instruments mentioned which was not borrowed from Roman, Teuton, Angle or Dane, but which has sprung from the people, and grown with the growth of the nation.

The fiddle, as we have said before,—a statement which we cannot reiterate too often,—was the invention of an Englishman, a Churchman, who, after a time, made his home in France, where he ultimately died, and it is an Anglo-Saxon instrument. It is only of comparatively recent introduction in the Highlands, and it never attained any great popularity there.

The harp, also an Anglo-Saxon weapon, was the one favourite instrument of the minstrel class: a class far removed from the common crowd. At one time, indeed, a most exclusive class, proud, haughty, and reserved: holding itself always in touch with royalty and aloof from the commonality. It never was in universal use in Scotland, although for a short time it may have been fairly common among the upper classes, especially in the West Highlands.

On the other hand, the Bagpipe is Celtic, like the people who in Cæsar's day inhabited the island from Land's End to John o' Groats. The little pastoral pipe of the Celt, made of "ane reid and ane bleddir," was in universal use *in the Lowlands* as well as in the Highlands at the beginning of the fifteenth century, as history informs us. The fiddle was only coming into use at this time in the Lowlands, and was not much thought of, and in the Highlands it was practically unknown.

Now, this fact that the Bagpipe was in early use in the Lowlands, and a favourite with the common people, is fatal to Mr Murray's argument. "In the Lowlands," he says, "*it never had a footing*"—he has evidently not read "The Complaynt of Scotland," or

studied the old exchequer rolls. He agrees with Mr McBain of Inverness, who blindly follows Sir A. C. McKenzie, in the opinion that it came from England into the Highlands, but evidently thinks—in opposition to McBain—that *it skipped the Lowlands* on its way thither. Mr McBain tells us, indeed, that it came into the Highlands *directly from the Lowlands*, where it had been in use for a hundred years and more, before the Highlanders knew anything about it. Who are we to believe? The simplest way to get over the difficulty is to believe neither party, as both are hopelessly at sea on this question. The Pipe did not come from England into Scotland; it was the common property of the Celt in England, and in Ireland, and in Scotland, in the early centuries, and did not require to be borrowed by the one from the other.

In “The Complaynt of Scotland,” a book written in the southern Lowland dialect in 1548 or early in 1549, the names of the musical instruments and of the dances then in vogue are given, and the two first instruments on the list are two Bagpipes of different species. This alone, without any further proof, marks its popularity in the Lowlands. The fiddle, which Sir A. C. McKenzie would force upon us as a national instrument, is mentioned only seventh on the list, and the poor harp, which Mr Murray gives precedence to over the Bagpipe, is not recognised at all.

We have historical proof that the Bagpipe was well known in Scotland while the twelfth century was still young, and if we cannot give written proof

of a still earlier use, it is because there is no earlier history of Scotland written. Where history fails common-sense steps in, and tells us that it must have taken centuries to evolve out of the simple Pipe of "ane reid and ane bleddir" the rich full-toned Pipe that played at the Court of King David, and delighted the ear of many an old warrior, grim and stern, who had won his spurs on the field of Bannockburn, and that it was also first known in its simpler form to the humble shepherd—the only solace, indeed, of his lonely vigils—centuries before the first Scottish historian was born.

This little pastoral Pipe, however; this little Pipe of one reed, had become as early as the reign of King David—and probably much earlier—the Great Pipe, worthy of the historian's notice: the now famous War-Pipe of the Highlander, and was then—and then only—able to voice the feelings of a warlike race. It is in truth the greatest war instrument which the world has ever seen. To-day it stands pre-eminent on the battlefield, where it first became famous, and there such feeble-voiced instruments as the fiddle and the harp—its two great rivals—cannot be compared with it for one moment.

But, lastly, the Bagpipe has assisted largely in forming the distinctive music of the country—Scotland's national music. Without the Bagpipe what would Highland music be? As other music. And without Highland music what would there be to distinguish Scottish music from English, or French, or German? The "characteristic Lowland

Scotch music" would still be Lowland Scotch no doubt, but without the characteristic.

Mr Murray says, "My principal object in writing was to protest against the generally accepted view that the Bagpipe is the national instrument. Whilst the Highlander adopted it and made much of it, *in the Lowlands it never had a footing.*" We have already shown that the Highlander did not adopt it, and that it had more than a footing in the Lowlands—where it was, indeed, the principal or favourite musical instrument with the peasantry for hundreds of years—even as early as the fourteenth century.

"Our wealth of Scottish folk-music," he continues, "has no affinity with the Bagpipes (*sic*), and very many of these old airs were sung in our Scottish homes, *long before the Bagpipe found its way from England to the Highland hills and glens.*"

Again the same false assumption, for which there is not one jot or tittle of proof, that the Bagpipe came from England. The Bagpipe did not come from England; and Scotch folk-music has many affinities with Pipe music. Will Mr Murray give to the world the name of a single tune from his "Wealth of Scottish Folk-Song" that can be traced as far back as, say 1365, when the Pipe was already fashionable at the Scottish Court, and the Piper ranked high among the members of the king's household? "Hey Tutti Tuiti," said by tradition to have been Bruce's march at the Battle of Bannockburn, is undoubtedly an ancient tune, and I believe it to be as old as tradition says,



but then *it is a Bagpipe tune*. The oldest part-song in the world also is formed on the same model, and *has a drone bass in imitation of the Bagpipe*. It is an English song, and is called "Sumer is icumen in," and dates from about 1250. What Scottish folk-song can be traced as far back as 1250?

That the oldest songs in both countries should be so largely influenced by the Bagpipe is not to be wondered at, when we remember that the Pipe was a general favourite in England as well as in Scotland at a time when song-making was in its infancy. It is well to remember here that musical instruments have always led the human voice, not *vice versa*, but while leading they have also from inherent imperfections and peculiarities of scale, etc., imposed limits, thus giving a distinctive character to the songs of the people. This is most marked in countries like Scotland, where in the early days but one instrument predominated. Its influence can be traced most clearly in Highland song, where the singer, like the piper, skips or slurs certain notes in the scale, irrespective of the character of the theme. It is the same,

"In solemn dirge, or dance tune gay,  
In sad lament, or joyous roundelay,"

and it is difficult to understand on what grounds Mr Murray denies its influence in Scottish music. "In point of fact," he says with an air of authority, "but very few of the airs of even the Gaelic songs can be played on the Pipes. . . . The timbre of the Pipe makes the instrument impossible as an

accompaniment to the voice, and its use all through has been unconnected with vocal music." Now, while the Great Highland Bagpipe is the proper accompaniment on the battlefield to the noise and din of warfare, it was never intended to be an accompaniment of song, and no sane writer has ever said so; but it is only one of many Pipes, and of these others several go well to the human voice. At a lecture given by me this winter I had a choir boy—with a rare gift of voice—who sang that beautiful Christmas hymn, "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing," to the accompaniment of the Northumbrian Bagpipe, and the timbre of the Pipe and the timbre of the little singer's voice were in perfect unison. The French Mussette is another Bagpipe which goes well with the human voice; so that it is not correct to say that "its use all through has been unconnected with vocal music." Hundreds, nay! thousands of French Bagpipe songs were in existence once, and may be yet for all I know. And as to the bold statement that "but very few of the airs of even the *Gaelic* songs can be played on the Pipes," the exact opposite is the truth. Very many of the old Gaelic songs go excellently well upon the Pipes in the disguise of march, reel, and strathspey, while practically all *Piobaireachd*—the real music of the Pipe—is vocal.

But as this subject—the influence of the Bagpipe on Highland music—is a large and an interesting one, it will require a chapter to itself.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### BAGPIPE INFLUENCES AT WORK.

IN 1819, Dr. MacCulloch published his book called "A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland." That he was prejudiced against the Highlands and things Highland, is to be seen on many a page of his book. When therefore he speaks favourably—which he seldom does—of such matters as Highland music and the Bagpipe, his opinions can be accepted unreservedly.

At one time, he tells us, that according to report St. Kilda was famous for its music. The learned doctor found nothing to justify this reputation when he paid a visit to the island, there being neither Bagpipe nor violin in the place. His search here and elsewhere, however, led him into a learned dissertation on Scottish music, which is becoming to our argument at this stage.

"The airs which are recorded as originating in this place," he says, "are of a plaintive character; but they differ in no respect from the innumerable ancient compositions of this class which abound in the Highlands." These are interesting, "*as they*

*appear to be the true origin of that peculiar style of melody for which Scotland is celebrated.*" The "Highland airs of acknowledged antiquity" he divides into two classes. "Pibroch, a distinctive class by itself, similar to nothing in any other country; and airs of a plaintive nature often in a minor key. The more ancient appear to have consisted of one strain only: the second strain so often found attached to them at present is generally a recent addition; wandering commonly through a greater extent of the scale, and not often a very felicitous extension of the same idea. In some cases these airs appear to be purely instrumental; in others they are attached to poetry and song by the milkmaid at her summer sheiling, or the cowherd on the green bank. One peculiar circumstance attends nearly the whole, namely, that they equally admit of being played in quick time. Thus they are often also the dancing tunes of the country." In another place he says, "*In Scotland the Bagpipe must be considered as the national instrument.* By this instrument the characters of these melodies seem to have been regulated, as they appear to have been composed on it. In examining all the most ancient and most simple they will be found limited to its powers, and rigidly confined to its scale. The pathetic and the lively, the pastoral airs of the Tweed, and even the melodies of the Border, thus equally appear to have been founded upon the Bagpipe."

"It will often, indeed, be found that the same

air which is now known as a Lowland pathetic composition is also a Highland dancing tune."

"To the peculiar limited powers of the Bagpipe therefore must probably be referred the singularities which characterise the national melodies of the Highlands. On that instrument they appear to have been first composed, and by that has been formed the peculiar style which the voice has imitated. In no instance, indeed, has the human voice appeared to lead the way in uttering a melody or the ear in conceiving one. They follow at a distance that which was originally dictated by the mechanical powers and construction of the instruments which have been successively invented."

These are the opinions of an acute and accurate observer, formed on the spot, and at a time when the materials out of which to form a correct judgment were more plentiful.

I have not yet ventured to quote any expert's opinion on the Bagpipe as a musical instrument, which may seem strange. But, as a matter of fact, the average trained musician knows as much or as little about the "Pipes" as the man in the street. This is not his fault, indeed, as I mentioned before, but is due to the fact that the Pipe is seldom, if ever, mentioned in lectures on music, and is almost entirely ignored in musical text-books.

When, however, it comes to the question of what influences were at work in the formation of our national music, then is an expert's opinion of the greatest of value.

Now, Mr Hamish M'Cunn, than who no better judge of Scottish music exists at the present day, working along the same lines as Dr. MacCulloch—who you will see I am not putting forward as an expert—comes to much the same conclusion as the learned doctor. He acknowledges the large influence which the Bagpipe wielded over Highland music, and the preponderating influence which the latter exerted in the formation of our national music: with which conclusions I also am in agreement, but would substitute “Bagpipe music” for “Highland music,” as it is surely unwise to ignore the influence of the Bagpipe on the Lowlander during the long centuries when it was with him too, the favourite musical instrument. Years of piping in the Lowlands must at least have prepared the soil for the Highland seed that was one day to fall there, and root, and flourish, and blossom into the glorious harvest of national song.

The influence of the Bagpipe in the Highlands in days of old is undoubted: pibroch is its real business, as MacCulloch says, and all ancient pibroch is vocal as well as instrumental. “Pibroch of Donald Dhu,” “MacIntosh’s Lament,” “Macleod of Macleod’s Lament,” “I got a kiss of the King’s hand,” “My King has landed in Moidart,” “Bodach Nam Brigais,” “Patrick Og M’Crimmon’s Lament,” “Cha till MacCruimein,” “The Piper’s Warning to his Master,” are all well-known songs, and the very flower of pibroch. The influence of the pibroch was so great indeed in early times that

the poet wrote his sonnet to its changing measures. "Ben Dorain," a Gaelic poem written by Duncan Ban M'Intyre in the eighteenth century, is one of the last and one of the best examples of this style of Highland composition. One of the earliest is the "Lay of Arran" by Cailte, the Ossianic bard. The ancient Erse composition known as "Chredhe's Lament," is, I believe, another, from which I take the liberty of quoting a few lines.

The haven roars, and O !

The haven roars,

Over the rushing race of Rinn-da-bharc !

Drowned is the warrior of Loch-da-chonn.

His death the wave mourns on the strand.

Melodious is the crane, and O !

Melodious is the crane,

In the marshlands of Druin-da-thren ! 'tis she

That may not save her brood alive: the gaunt wolf grey,

Upon her nestlings, is intent.

A woeful note, and O !

A note of woe,

Is that with which the thrush fills Drumqueens vale !

But not more cheerful is the piping wail !

The blackbird makes in Letterlee.

A woeful sound, and O !

A sound of woe,

Rises from Drumdaleish, where deer stand moaning low !

In Druim Silenn, dead lies the soft-eyed doe :

The mighty stag bells after her.

This lament, which I have arranged in metre form, as it falls naturally into it, is to be found in the "Book of Lismore."

It is a lament for Cael, Crimthan's son, who was overtaken one day by the quick-rising storm, and sucked under by the swirling seas.

To the writer's Celtic imagination, the mournful booming of the surf on the shore is but the wave's solemn requiem over the white body which lies entangled in the wrack beneath, tossing idly to-and-fro, with the swing of the restless waters.

This is the whole story: a lover overtaken by the fate that ever follows closely on the heels of all such as "go down to the sea in ships," and the tumultuous sea—the instrument of a cruel fate—mourning over its own handiwork.

And this story or theme, told in a few simple words, is repeated, like the "*urlar*" or groundwork of a pibroch, at least twice in the middle of the poem, and once again before the lament comes to a close.

And here, too, as in pibroch, there are no preliminary trivialities: the teller puts his whole story into a nutshell, so to speak. True, there are embellishments—the variations of the pibroch—but these follow after and are rounded up, once and again with the one essential: the sea mourning over its dead. There also runs through this tale of woe, like a golden thread, the sympathy of nature for man in distress. The story opens abruptly to the accompaniment of the noisy sea, calling aloud in anguished voice at the catastrophe which has overtaken Cael.

"The haven roars, and O! the haven roars,"



and it is with the sound of angry waters in our ears, as the foaming waves plunge along the weather-beaten shore, that we reach the end of the tale, and rising, close the book, with a sigh for Credhe the Desolate.

A woeful melody, and O!

A melody of woe

Is that the surges make on Tullacleish's shore

For me, hard-hit, prosperity exists no more,

Now Crimthan's son is drowned.

In this very old and beautiful lament the writer in her sorrow turns to nature for consolation.

She suffers! but she is not alone in this. Nature gives her a peep behind the veil, and shews her at every turning, sorrow keen as her own.

Do not the very waves that have swallowed up the drowned man mourn his cruel death? True, the crane watching over her little brood nestling in the lonely marshlands makes melody just now, but her singing will soon be turned into mourning; for is not "the wild dog of two colours intent upon her nestlings."

Even the merry thrush in Drumqueen woods is sad as she finds her nest harried; the tuneful blackbird wails in Letterlee; and the hills give back a thousand echoes to the mournful belling of the stag bereft of his doe.

There is a great deal of repetition in these old laments, and alliteration often—I might almost say always—takes the place of rhyme. Sorrow—the burden of the story—begins and ends the strain;

and the first line, sometimes even the first word, is also the last.

This constant repetition, varied only slightly, gives a length and an apparent sameness in structure to such pieces, which make them distasteful or wearisome to the modern reader.

But to the lover of pibroch there can not be too much variation on one theme: no length is too great; and there is a certain charm in what may be called the recurring sameness of the music, that has to be felt to be understood.

If any one doubt this, let him make a study of pibroch for himself, then attend a few of the leading Highland gatherings: listen to the champions playing some old tune, such as "MacLeod of MacLeod's Lament" or "The Earl of Antrim's Lament," and if he does not fall under the spell of pibroch music, then is there something awanting in him.

Now, if I am correct in thinking that "Credhe's Lament," like "Ben Doran" and many another of these old-world poems, is pibroch made vocal, then at least was this form of music familiar to the Celt long before the oldest written pibroch of authenticated date which we possess.

And this would explain to some extent the wonderful completeness of the oldest known pibroch. There is no hesitancy, no doubt, no amateurishness about these old pieces, such as one would expect to meet with in a first attempt, but a roundness, and a finish, and a perfection of workmanship that is truly astonishing.

If the Bagpipe, as some say, was introduced into the Highlands about the fifteenth or sixteenth century, how are we to account for the early appearance of pibroch music there? The MacIntosh's Lament was written, it is said, in the sixteenth century; M'Leod of M'Leod's was certainly written in the middle of the seventeenth century, and these are not the oldest pibroch by any means which we possess to-day. If the Bagpipe was only introduced into the Highlands in the end of the fifteenth or the beginning of the sixteenth century, pibroch, with its scientific completeness, its complicated fingering, and its beautiful method of variations—these variations growing naturally the one out of the other, the simpler passing by gradation into the more complex—must in that case have “grewed” with Topsy, and not have been born; but this is absurd on the face of it.

It is entirely against the theory of evolution in things great or small that such marvellous music as this, so classical in form, so advanced when we first meet with it, could have sprung to full stature in one day, or at the bidding of one man.

Pibroch must of necessity have been of slow growth: the work of plodding musicians for centuries and centuries, as Mons. Guilmant said.

Other countries practising the Bagpipe, yea! even for thousands of years, have failed to produce anything like it, or anything worthy of the name of music.

But when once the foundation had been fairly

laid by the continuous efforts of many generations of Highland Celts, then a creative genius like M'Crimmon built upon this foundation, and gave to the world some of the most beautiful and original pieces of music, with a profusion and a celerity that seem to us, even to-day, little short of marvellous.

Now, to-day, although there are more pipers in Scotland than at any time since the '45, there is no writer of pibroch among them with whom I am acquainted.

Nor do I know of a single pibroch written in the present generation that is worth the playing, or whose fame will survive the death of its author.

From the middle of the sixteenth to the middle of the eighteenth century was the golden age of pibroch. Of what went before we know little; of what came after but little need be known.

This gift of the old masters might well, indeed, be called "the vanishing gift."

## CHAPTER XVII.

### GAELIC SONG AND THE BAGPIPE.

NOW pibroch music, or as the Highlanders call it, "*Ceol Mor*," is essentially Highland.

There is nothing like it in any other country in the world.

Whatever merits, therefore, it possesses must be claimed for the Highlander. Under the fierce light of modern criticism—so called—the Highlander has had a poor time of it lately.

The kilt has been taken from him, and the tartan proclaimed a modern fraud, and the Bagpipe has been held by the same authority to be but a borrowed instrument—borrowed from England too, of all places—with nothing Highland about it except the third or large drone.

But the most rabid hater of the Sons of the Mist cannot deny their claim to pibroch music.

He may sneer at it, as he has done at everything else Highland, but he cannot, with all his perverted ingenuity, fether it upon any other race. The genuine Celtic Highlander alone appreciates it at its true value, because he alone understands it. It

was written for him, and by him, and has always had for him a powerful fascination. Many of the tunes are rhymeful and haunting. They get into the crevices of the brain, and will not be dislodged nor are they easily forgotten, in after years—you have got to learn them, once having heard them, whether you will or not: they dominate the musical faculty for the time being just as the latest popular song controls the street boy's whistle, nor do they ever grow stale.

In the old days there were schools or colleges throughout the Highlands where piping was taught. To these resorts, the chief generally, or one of the leading gentlemen of the clan, sent those youths who showed a decided talent for the "Pipes." Here they were taught all the intricacies of pibroch during a course of lessons extending over many years, by one of the great masters of the art,—by a M'Crimmon, or a MacKay, or a MacKenzie, or a MacArthur, as the case might be,—and you may be sure that after so long an absence from home their return was looked forward to eagerly by one and all, from the chief in his castle to the poor squatter on the black hill.

These young men left their native villages with perhaps a gift of fingering inherited from a race of pipers, and able to play tolerably well the simple airs known in their respective districts, but without any knowledge whatever of music in general, or of "*Ceol Mor*" in particular.

Now, after seven or eight, or even ten of the

best years of their life had been devoted to the study of their favourite instrument, they returned home fully trained musicians, and frequently with a reputation which had preceded them. They brought back with them, too, the finest of tunes learned at first hand from the composers themselves, and played them in the finest of styles—and how excellent that style was, is known only to a few players to-day.

The skill acquired at these colleges—as the training schools were called—and the superior knowledge of music gained during these years of hard study, gave the young piper a standing in the clan of which he was justly proud, and which he seldom abused. He was looked up to by his neighbours, and treated by all as a gentleman of parts; and he never forgot that he was a musician.

So that it was in no mere idle spirit of boasting, or in ignorant pride—as the narrator of the story imagined—that the piper of a regiment at Stirling once referred to himself, when there was a dispute as to whether the drummer boy should precede the piper on the march or not. “What!” he said, “is that little fellow who beats upon a sheepskin to go before me, who am a musician?”

We can understand then how these young pipers, trained in the best schools, and filled with the enthusiasm and inspiration of their teachers, exerted so powerful an influence upon the musical taste of the people among whom they settled down on their return.

Their piping would be a revelation to the local players, who would be thus stimulated to further and better efforts. It would also be a never-failing source of delight to the listeners at the *ceilidh* or evening gathering.

The bard, too, would find in the many new and beautiful airs fresh inspirations for his muse, and in this way all the old pibroch tunes also became vocal.

And if this is true of the "Great Music" of the Bagpipe, or *Ceol Mor*, it is also, but even in a greater degree, true of the "Little Music," or *Ceol Aotram*.

Nearly all the lesser Pipe tunes, whether marches, reels, or strathspeys, were sung in the old days to words.

To give a complete list of such would be to fill pages of this book needlessly.

The names of a few of the better-known songs composed to Bagpipe airs will not, however, be out of place. "Tullochgorum," "Highland Kitty," "Hech! How! Johnnie, Lad," "Roderick of the Glen," "There Grows a Bonnie Briar Bush," "Cabar Feidh," "Blyth, Blyth and Merry was She," "Bonnie Strathmore," "There came a Young Man," "A Man's a Man for all that," "Scots Wha Hae"—these last two in spite of Mr Murray's criticism—"Lochiel's Awa' to France," "Highland Harry's Back Again," "Kate Dalrymple."

The last three tunes, and indeed nearly all the others, are to be found in MacDonald's collection



of "Quicksteps, Strathspeys, Reels, and Jigs," published about 1806.

It is one of the earliest, if not the very earliest book of the kind published in Scotland, and I have taken the tunes from this old book to avoid spurious or modern imitations.

I happened to play "Roderick of the Glen"—a tune not often heard now-a-days—on board the steamer *Glencoe* when crossing over from Islay last autumn.

The captain, who was a fine old Highlander, and—as I soon found out—passionately fond of the "Pipes," came strolling up, as if by accident, to where I was playing, and listened gravely. The tune had an extraordinary effect upon him; the tears came unbidden to the old man's eyes, and turning to me when I had finished, he said quietly, "Man! I haven't heard that song since I was a laddie at my mother's knee: she used to sing me to sleep with it."

This was good news to me, as letters were appearing at the time in the *Glasgow Herald* denying that Gaelic songs were sung to Bagpipe tunes, or could be put on the Pipe. I did not know until then that it was an old lullaby song. There is nothing in the name to suggest such, and it is given in the book as a quickstep. True, I had often played it at social meetings to slow time, and not as a march, but I had nothing to guide me in this beyond instinct: and here was Captain Campbell confirming my intuition.

“Did your mother just croon it over to you?”  
I said to him.

“Oh! no,” he replied. “She sang it to words; I can give you some verses of it now, if you would like to hear them: your playing has recalled them to my mind.”

And he was as good as his word. He sang to me, as we two stood close together under the storm deck, the wind the while whistling its accompaniment outside, half-a-dozen verses in the dear old tongue, soft and mellifluous as the tune itself. He also sang me a beautiful old Gaelic pibroch called “*Cumha Fear Aros*,” a lament for the laird of Aros: a very different tune from the one given in *Caintairacht* by MacLeod of Gesto; resembling somewhat the MacIntosh’s Lament, but yet quite distinct from it.

Let me close this short list of Pipe tunes that are also songs, with the names of two of the most truly beautiful and purely Gaelic songs known; two songs that “are also Pipe tunes.” These are “*Ho! Ro! Mo Nighean Donn Boidheach*” and “*Mo Dileas Donn*.”

So much for Mr Murray’s dictum that “very few of the airs of even the Gaelic songs can be played on the Pipes.”

No one would for a moment dispute his assertion that the Bagpipe is unfitted as an accompaniment to the human voice if he means by Bagpipe, the Great Highland Bagpipe. But there are other Bagpipes besides it, several of which I have in my

THE CUISLEAGH CIUIL OF IRELAND.

Bought through the late Mr Henderson, Bagpipe Maker, Glasgow.

Inside the green baize cover was found the following unstamped receipt :-

Glasgow, May 23rd, 1843.

" Archd. Wilson Bought off (sic) Arthur Finnigan, Broker, N 1

" Bridge Gate, a Pair Union Pipes Silver Mounted at £3 0 0

" sterling.

" Arthur Finnigan."







collection, and which make very good accompanists to the human voice.

The Great War Pipe of the Highlander on the other hand, as I have said more than once, makes a good accompaniment to the roar of battle—for which it was intended—when bullets are flying and men's patriotism burns brightly : or to the voice of nature in her wilder moods as heard in the storm on the mountain side, or in the booming of the surf by the lone sea shore, or in the roar of the torrent thundering down the glen.

It is only in a drawing-room instrument, like *the bellows pipe* of England and of La Belle France, that you can look for and expect to find in *the Bagpipe* a fitting accompaniment to the human voice.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE GLAMOUR OF THE HIGHLANDS.

IN the preceding chapters we have tried to prove that the “generally accepted view that the Bagpipe is our National Instrument” is based upon good sound reasoning and solid fact, and not a mere fanciful notion to be lightly exploded. We have also tried to show that the Bagpipe had a large—a determining—influence upon the character and style of Highland music. We also gave it as our belief, that centuries of piping in the South were not thrown away upon the Lowland Scot, and that to this influence almost as much as to the Highland airs finding their way to the Lowlands, was due those Lowland airs of markedly national character which so much resemble the Highland ones, that Dr. MacCulloch and many others supposed them to be nothing more nor less than Gaelic airs altered to suit the southern ear, and not always improved by the tinkering to which they were subjected. We also tried to prove—and we hope not altogether in vain—that pipe-tune and Gaelic song were inextricably mixed together, the one indeed often passing into the



other: that the two forms of music were in reality interchangeable, so that whether at feast or merry-making, if by any chance the Piper failed to turn up, there were always plenty of lads and lassies to sing to the dancers the live-long night all the well-known strathspeys and reels, as songs with words.

That, in short, the "*Port Phiob*," or Pipe tune, became the "*Port na Beul*," or mouth tune, and this is the reason why the Free Church, although it exterminated pretty thoroughly the Bagpipe itself (let this be written to its discredit), failed altogether to put down Pipe music; and why it must fail (if it is determined to pursue the same evil policy in the future as it has done in the past), unless it is prepared also in addition to burning the Pipe and the fiddle, to cut the throat of every Highland lad and lassie who can sing the old songs.

For this reason then,—in contradistinction to the views above quoted,—Gaelic songs, the music of which was written for the Pipe, and many of which have not yet reached the Lowlands, are to be heard here and there throughout the Highlands to-day; the one thing left, in a priest-ridden country, to these simple folks of much that was bright, helpful, and innocent in the past; the one thing preserved to them in this strange way from the tyranny of the Protestant priest. It is—to our shame be it said—in the Catholic districts that the old music, and the old dance, and the old traditions are best preserved.

Now the Bagpipe is not the only good thing pre-

served from the old days which the Highlander has presented to his country.

Scotland owes much to its Highlands, and to the primitive people who live there. It may be honest ignorance that makes an occasional Lowlander unwilling to recognise the Highland Bagpipe as our national instrument; but there are gifts from the same source which he cannot avoid accepting, and for which he should write himself down "Your most obedient, humble servant," whenever he sees a Highland face, or hears the Highland accent, or listens to the tuneful roar of the Great War Pipe.

But for the Highlander the old picturesque dress would ere now be a thing of the past, and the Scottish tartan would no longer wave.

The old Aryan speech, too, would have long since died out—a language which some scholars are now inclined to think may have been the original Aryan tongue.

But for the Highlander there would be no national dance. The reel, or strathspey, is to-day the only characteristic dance of Scotland.

True, in Shakespeare's time there was a *Scotch jig*. He compares "a wooing, wedding, and repenting" to "a Scotch jig, a measure and a cinque-pace. The first suit is hot and hasty, like a Scotch jig, and full as fantastical." But the Scot has long ago forgotten all about his own dance, and now he falls back upon the *Highland fling* when he wishes to show something distinctively Scottish to the inquisitive stranger.

Again, visitors from all parts of the world who come to see Scotland naturally bend their steps to the Highlands. They, of course, spend some days in Edinburgh, as being perhaps the most beautiful city in the world; and they give the Clyde a passing visit, not for its generous odours, which it gives off with too prodigal a hand, but for the sake of the wonderful industries along its banks; and then it is "Ho! for the Highlands."

It is Caledonia—the Scotland of the poets—which the traveller has come from afar to see.

Sir Walter Scott is on his lips, and in his heart, as he whispers to himself, when first his eye rests upon the great mountains,

"O! Caledonia, stern and wild"

The very name of Caledonia is taken from a tribe of Picts who inhabited the country round Loch Ness, comprising Stratheric, The Aird, and Strathglass, a district which is now, and has been for hundreds of years, the Fraser country and the home of the Chisholms.

And when the poet, glowing with enthusiasm for his native land, word-paints it so that others may see and love it, as he sees and loves it, he seeks not for inspiration by the banks of the broad smooth-flowing Clyde, or of the winding Forth, or of the swift flowing Tay.

He seeks it not in the flat Lowlands teeming with great cities, nor in the carse lands, rich and fertile, and beautiful as these may be.

With true poetic instinct his eyes are drawn north-

wards. On the wings of his imagination he is away to the Highlands, that land of poetry and romance, and he sees as through a golden mist, the birch glen and heath-covered mountain, and quick-running streamlet that to-day a child can cross with safety, and to-morrow is a roaring torrent, uprooting trees in its fury, and tearing the mighty rock from its base. And with his heart beating in unison with the mighty throb of nature's heart, an unerring instinct leads him to hall-mark Scotland for all men, and for all time, as the

“Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,  
Land of the mountain and the flood.”

The glamour that the Highlands has cast over Scotland's sons is well seen in the case of the Scot abroad.

The home-sickness which affects him is but natural, and is shared by the exile from other countries. But the craving for the tartan and the Bagpipe which characterises the exiled Scot, whether he be a Highlander or a Lowlander, is most pronounced, and is seldom or never absent. In Johannesburg, on Burns' Night this year, as in past years, we expected—and our expectations were realised—to see cockie-leekie and haggis grace the board, and to hear the usual Burns oration.

But why should the great War Pipe of the Highlands be in evidence on such an occasion?

Because to these exiles it represents Scotland as a whole, and not merely the Highlands. Because, in their eyes, it is the national instrument. Because it is eminently Scottish.

And as abroad, so at home. Quite recently Lord Rosebery presided over a great gathering of Scots at the Holborn Restaurant, London. These Scots met to celebrate the Festival of St. Andrew.

In the speech of the evening the noble Lord quoted from a book written by one of the "bloody" Cumberland's soldiers.

In this book, the squalor of Scotland, in those days, and more especially the evil smells to be met with in Edinburgh streets, were most graphically described.

"Malodours, which," as the speaker said, "seem almost to reach from the book through the centuries, and strike the modern nose, as it bends over the page. In that very book they compare the music of the Bagpipes, *to which we have listened with so much pleasure to-night*, to the 'shrieks of the eternally tormented.' I venture to say that there is *no part of this Empire where the sound of the Bagpipe is not welcomed and hallowed at this moment*. (Cheers.) There is no part of this Empire in which fond and affectionate hearts are not turning at this very moment with a warmer feeling than usual to the Land o' Cakes."

And what is this land to which the speaker's heart warms?

The broad domains of Dalmeny, covered with luxurious woods and green pastures, and fertile farms, might well at such a time draw out all the love in this Scotsman's heart: might well on this night of nights mean Scotland for him. But no! If he sees Dalmeny, 'tis but for a moment. His

eyes are lifted to the hills beyond. The Coolins, and Ben Nevis, and Ben Cruachan, with a hundred other Bens, make mute but powerful appeal, to which his heart as powerfully responds.

“Let me,” he says, “before I sit down, quote a stanza which I think one of the most exquisite that has ever been written about the *Scottish Exile*, and of which strangely enough we do not know the author. I am sure I shall not quote it correctly, but I will quote it sufficiently for my purpose.

‘ From the lone shieling on the misty island,  
Mountains divide us and a world of seas.  
But still our blood is strong, our heart is Highland,  
And we in dreams behold the Hebrides.’ ”

Skye and the Outer Hebrides evidently dominate the speaker’s heart and brain, as his thoughts turn to the land of his birth.

Can you want any stronger testimony than this to the powerful fascination which the Highlands exert over the Scotsman, be he Highland or Lowland, be he at home or abroad? In a gathering of Scotsmen anywhere, you cannot in truth exclude the Highlander: you cannot forget the Highlands. Long may the tartan delight the eye, and the Bagpipe make itself heard at such meetings.

Shorn of these two—the tartan and the Bagpipe—our social meetings would lose much of their charm, and Scotland would be deprived of all that to-day reminds us of our once distinctive nationality.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### NO PREHISTORIC BAGPIPE IN EXISTENCE.

“ And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons.”—Gen., chap. iii. ver. 7.

“ An’ music first on earth was heard,  
In Gaelic accents deep,  
When Jubal in his oxters squeezed  
The blether o’ a sheep.”

WE now come to the history of the Bagpipe. Everyone has heard of the famous “Breeches” Bible, but not everyone knows or remembers how the error, which cost the printer his life, crept in.

It was somewhat in this way.

The printer’s wife, who was a strong believer in “woman’s rights,” was looking over some type which her husband had just set up, and saw the objectionable word “aprons.”

A most unbecoming dress for one thing, she thought. And so, her husband’s back being turned, she slyly substituted the word “breeches” for the original word.

The printer, who did not discover the mistake until after the Bible was printed, and many copies

of it had been sold, was seized by the authorities and thrown into prison.

He was tried for the serious crime of altering the text without authority, and, worse still, of altering the text with the deliberate intention—for so it seemed—of putting woman on a level with her lord and master, man, if not even of making woman his overlord.

He was unanimously found guilty, and condemned to death ; but as some sort of compensation to the poor man, who should know it by this time, his better-half, by this one act of insubordination, has gained for both herself and him a certain unenviable immortality.

She was a German, this meddlesome woman who wanted to wear the breeks.

If she had been Highland, the sentence would no doubt have run thus : “And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves kilts.”

This would be a more correct translation, and one with which but little fault could be found.

There would also be this double advantage in it ; it would have put woman on a level with man, which was really the printer's wife's intention, and it would have settled once and for all the much-vexed question of the antiquity of the kilt.

The antiquity of the language, however, is still—thank God !—unchallenged.

The poet's assertion that the Bagpipe gave first utterance to it in Eden may be disputed, but not its antiquity ; some good scholars, as I



have said before, now believe that Gaelic—the much-despised Gaelic: Dr. Johnson's “rude and barbarous tongue”—was the original Aryan speech. But a little story which appeared in the *Edinburgh Dispatch* lately, supports the poet's contention thus far, that the Bagpipe—whether or not it was heard in Eden—speaks at times in this ancient language *to certain people*.

The story, shortly told, was that of a servant girl from the Highlands just come to town. It was her first place. She had never been from home before. She arrived at night, feeling home-sick and depressed; everything was strange and cheerless to her. The lady of the house, hoping to brighten her up a bit, told her she would soon feel at home and be quite happy, as the Bagpipe was played every night in the square by a young man who lived close by, and was taking lessons on it.

Next morning, in reply to a kind enquiry, the maid informed her mistress that she did hear the young man play, “But, ma'am,” she added sadly, “his Bagpipe was not speaking the Gaelic.”

Which meant, I suppose, that this young man, vulgarly speaking, “couldn't play for nuts,” and so failed to touch the proper chord in the young Highlander's breast.

Now, while the claim of Gaelic to be one of the oldest of languages is allowed, the counter claim of the Bagpipe to be an old Highland instrument has been denied. I dissent entirely from such pernicious doctrine. There is no proof of this latest craze.

The *Piob*, as the Gaelic-speaking race invariably calls the Bagpipe, is a *Celtic* instrument, and this at once stamps it as Highland.

*Piobmhala* (pron. *Peevaala*) is the full title of the Bagpipe : it is made up of *piob*, a pipe, and *mala*, a bag, both Celtic words.

*Piob Mòr* is the special designation of the great War Pipe of the Highlands, distinguishing it from the smaller Reel Pipes and others, such as the Lowland Pipe.

The *Piobmhala* is to be found in many countries, and is in most of these still a rude and barbarous weapon, with little or no music of its own. In Italy, for instance, there are not more than three or four real Bagpipe tunes, and yet the Italians have been playing the Pipe for two thousand years.

In the hands of the Celt only has it come to anything like perfection ; and the Highlander alone, of all Celtic peoples, has put the finishing touches to it without destroying its original character. Other nations, in trying to perfect it, have invariably killed it ; in tampering with its peculiar scale and tone, they have destroyed its originality, which is its charm.

The Celt alone has made it both useful and artistic.

He alone has had the genius to elaborate the intricate, but strictly scientific system of fingering, which adds so much to the beauty of the music.

He alone produced from the Pipe that which may be called the first classical music heard in the world : I mean *Piobaireachd*.

Now, if we are to credit the ancient historians, who are all agreed upon this point, the Celt was always more or less of an enthusiast or visionary: subject to sudden moments of exaltation as of depression.

A delight in poetry and music—these twin sisters—and in nature, ear-marked him from other nations, according to these old writers, at a very early period in the world's history.

It is therefore nothing strange that he should have invented the *Piob* or Pipe for himself. It would be strange indeed if he had not done so.

But he was never much of an historian, and has accordingly left behind him little to help us in our search into the origin of this same Pipe. We can learn a good deal about the Celt himself in pre-historic times from the remains he has left behind him in round barrow and kitchen midden. By means of these we can trace his primitive wanderings through the different countries of Europe, and locate the different colonies which he left behind, as he kept ever moving onwards; now east, now west, now south.

From the bones found in the burial mound we can tell what sort of a man he was physically, and more than guess at his mental powers. From the same source we learn what was his height, and what his strength, and what his comeliness: for it is not true to say with some that "beauty is but skin deep": we can even deduce the colour of his hair and eyes.

The remains of the kitchen midden, on the other hand, reveal to us the food which he ate, the animals which he followed in the chase, and those which he had domesticated; the wild fruits which were gathered and used by him, and those he cultivated, and many another thing that but for these semi-imperishable remains would have existed for us only as matters of controversy or conjecture.

In these survivals we have history as it should be written : history without a bias.

Little did the old Celt think that he was writing history for posterity, when he reverently laid his dead to sleep in the round barrows. Little did he think that his kitchen midden, which the modern inspector of nuisances would sweep away as a pestilence, would prove a mine of wealth to his descendants, hungry for information about the old life.

But when we come to trace the Bagpipe, the Celt's favourite instrument, we have no such guide at our elbow.

We search in vain for a specimen of the early Pipe.

Made of perishable materials : of thin hollow reed and quickly rotting skin, the *Piobmhala* has left not a wrack behind in burial mound or refuse heap. We have no prehistoric Bagpipe to show.

We must therefore go for our information to written history, and to the tradition or myth which represents for us the earlier or unwritten history.

But, first of all, what is a Bagpipe? Of what is it composed?

The earliest description of a Bagpipe in Scottish literature tells that it was then composed of “ane reid and ane bleddir.”

Such a pipe is seen on the following page. The earliest mention of it in Roman history tells us the same thing. In the first century before Christ, the Romans came across a Celtic race who lived on the banks of the Danube, and who used an instrument composed of “ane reid and ane bleddir,” to which the Roman historian gave the name of *Tibia Utricularis*; *tibia* being the Latin name for reed or chanter, and *utriculum* meaning a little bag or bladder.

These two, then, a reed and a bladder, are the essentials of the Bagpipe. When they became wedded into one is unknown. The Pipe without the bag is much older of course than the Bagpipe.

The Shepherd's Pipe, as it was called, now forms the chanter of the Bagpipe, and is one of the oldest, if not the very oldest, musical instruments in the world. Its history is full of interest, and makes delightful reading, but it is only as forming an important part of the modern Bagpipe that it claims our attention here.

Round this simple little instrument—the Shepherd's Pipe—there has gathered a wealth of story and poetry, and romance, greater than round any other musical instrument.

A favourite at all times with the primitive races, it was gradually introduced into the ceremonial of the tribe, and thus acquired a semi-sacred character;

and in time came to be regarded as a special gift from the gods.

This tendency to attribute a Divine origin to music was, however, all but universal among the ancients. I know only of one exception. The Jews gave the credit of the invention to man, for do we not read in Genesis that "Jubal : he was the father of all such as handle the harp and the Pipe," or the "organ," as it is usually translated? This text reminds me of a little incident which occurred not long ago, and with the relating of which this chapter may fitfully close.

Late one Saturday night a postcard arrived for me, and written upon it was, "Preach to-morrow from Gen. 4th and 21." Nothing more. The minister knew that I was studying the history of the Bagpipe at the time, and I immediately concluded that he had discovered in the text something about the "Pipes" worth knowing, and so I determined to go and hear the sermon. The following morning found me in church right enough, but alas ! for the information : all that we were told was that Pipe was a better translation than organ, as the latter word was too suggestive of the modern organ with its wonderful combination of pipes and pedals. Some time afterwards I met the preacher, and said to him, "By-the-bye, I got your postcard. It suggested Bagpipes to me, but you had nothing evidently to say on the matter. What did you send it for?"

"Well, you see," he replied, "your seat had been

empty for many, many Sundays, and we thought it was time that you were putting in an appearance." The minister was giving a course of sermons at the time to non-churchgoers.

Many years ago, the town-piper of Falkirk was waiting to be hanged. The execution was to take place on the following morning. He had been found guilty of some trifling offence—horse-stealing or something of that sort—and as it was his last night on earth, he was allowed to have one or two brother-pipers in, just for company's sake. The night passed pleasantly and swiftly, in dancing and piping, and quaffing of the nut-brown ale. The condemned man himself was in the middle of a tune—a gaysome lilt—when the early morning light suddenly shot down through the bars of his prison window, and reminded him of his coming fate.

"I play no more," he said, while the gloom gathered around him, and reluctantly, but reverently, he laid down his Bagpipe upon the bench beside him, for the last time: the Bagpipe with the tune upon it still unfinished—a fitting emblem of his own unfinished life! He forgot his *sang froid* for a moment; for a moment, but only for a moment, his gay demeanour deserted him, and he cried aloud in his agony, "Oh, but this wearifu' hanging rings in my lug like a new tune." A few minutes later, he was marching to the scaffold with jaunty step and head erect, the fear that held him prisoner for a moment, gone.

Let me confess it here, that I may have less to

confess hereafter ; the greater part of the sermon preached from Gen. 4th and 21, on that memorable Sunday morning, when I went to church to get information for my book, fell upon deaf ears, so far as I was concerned. The text had aroused thoughts within me which surged through my brain, and rung "in my lug like a new tune," with a persistency, too, not to be denied. And the refrain was always to these same words,

" An' music first on earth was heard  
In Gaelic accents deep,  
When Jubal in his oter squeezed  
The blether o' a sheep."



## CHAPTER XX.

### ANCIENT MYTH AND THE BAGPIPE.

“Imagination is one of God's chiefest gifts to man; to the Celt first, to the world afterwards, through the Celt.”—  
ANON.

**G**ENTLE reader, it has been said, with what truth I know not, that there are more false facts than false theories in this world.

If you are one of the many who profess to love fact for its own sake, and look askance at fable?

If you are one of those who care not for the house beautiful, but only for a night's shelter from the dews of heaven?

If you are one of those who consider flowers as an extravagance, and the monies spent upon them as worse than wasted, because the five per cent. comes not back to you in hard cash? Then may you skip the two following chapters without loss, and with a possible profit to yourself.

At the same time it is perhaps worth while remembering that there are false facts many in this world, and true imaginings not a few. I am about to make an excursion into Mythland, where imagina-

tion, which has hitherto been kept under with a tight curb, is given free play, and where theory flourishes, while known facts for the time being will be at a discount.

Although we do not hold this as proven, yet we believe that underneath many of these old-world fables many rare—because little suspected—truths lie hidden.

Mythland, indeed, reminds us very much of the Halls of Laughter, on entering which the stranger finds his advances met half way by the most extraordinary looking beings, unlike anything he has seen before, who excite his mirth by their comicalities. Right in front he sees a man with head flattened out in pancake fashion, supported upon the smallest of bodies, with the most diminutive pair of legs attached. On the right hand is surely Don Quixote come to life again! with his solemn mien and thin lanthorn-shaped jaws and pursed-up mouth; “a bout of linked sweetness long-drawn out.” While on the left is a third creature, with the *ceann cearc*, or hen’s-head, perched upon a “corporation” of sufficient dimensions to satisfy the most greedy of London aldermen. These hideous-looking caricatures of the “human frame divine,” peering out from every niche and cranny in the Hall, beck and bow and nod, and turn now to right and now to left, with every movement of the astonished onlooker, whose gravity and sense of decorum, long undermined, at length give way in peels of laughter, which, strangely enough, find no echo in all that grinning crowd.

This awakens him to the truth that has hitherto eluded his observation. He himself is the "*Deus ex machina*," the sole author of the show: the sole cause of the mirth. Behind every queer figure stands himself; every feature, every movement, is his own; his gentlest smile has been reflected back in broadest grin; the laughter cannot be but silent in that shadow-land, of which he is the father.

By means of numerous mirrors, of different concavities and convexities, cunningly inserted into the draped walls, the man's own face has been shewn to him in fifty different ways; *the truth* has been so cleverly disguised as to be unrecognisable even to himself.

In the mirror of tradition or myth, then, we often find reflected for us in the same way much of the prehistoric lore, previously learned from anthropology and other learned ologies: the truth, distorted it is true, sometimes beyond recognition: and in this way our knowledge of old-world affairs is further confirmed and strengthened.

Now there are two myths, both found in early Greek literature, which may perchance shed some light on the origin and development of the Bagpipe; and it is with some such hope that we introduce them here.

The story of Pan and the story of Athene's chanter are—apart from any important knowledge to be gleaned in their perusal—entitled to a chapter of their own in any work upon the Bagpipe, and will not, we are sure, be thought out of place.

In juxtaposition these two old-world deities—Athene and Pan—might well stand for Beauty and the Beast in the children's fairy tale. The uncouth hairy body of the old sylvan god, making a rare foil to the enchanting beauty of Athene: both passionately fond of dancing and music, and both noted for their performance upon the Pipe.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### PIPER PAN.

" 'Twas ever thus since first the world began !  
The adoration of his fellow-man,  
Proclaims the genius hero first, then God—  
Ruling his maker, man, with iron rod.  
'Twas thus with Thor, the strong, and Piper Pan,  
And all the ancient gods, now under ban."—

ANON.

PAN was one of the most popular gods in the heathen world. He was an universal favourite with the Greeks, and also—under a different name—with the Latins.

His divinity was, however, only first acknowledged by the Greeks about the year 470 B.C. He was worshipped by the country-folk—by the shepherds in Arcadia and round about—long before this, but he only became known to the learned dwellers in Athens shortly after the battle of Marathon ; and his country charms made him at once popular with that fickle people.

With his ruddy cheek, and his hearty laugh, and his jovial unsophisticated manners ; with his mouth dropping honey fresh from the comb, and his breath

sweet with the odours of the violet ; no ascetic he, but of jovial tastes—as the wine-stain still fresh upon his lips from late revels shewed—and carrying with him into the jaded town two gifts worth having, the fresh airs from Nature's wilds, and the gift of exquisite music, this hairy creature fairly captivated the volatile Greek heart.

We need not here repeat the story of Pan and his Pipes. It has been told by many writers, and well told too. None, however, excels Mrs Elizabeth Browning's version in the exquisite poem beginning with these well-known lines :

“ What was he doing, the Great God Pan,  
Down by the side of the river ? ”

She also tells the story of his death with a charm inimitable in the more ambitious poem entitled, “ Pan, Pan is dead.”

We may perhaps—in spite of all this—be forgiven for trying our hand, not at the story itself, but at the prologue to the story of Piper Pan.

The beginning of the tale takes us back to a very remote past: to a time when the Aryan race, hitherto one and undivided—with its home in the great central plain of Europe—was beginning to break up, by pressure from within, into a number of separate tribes or nations.

At first there was only one possessive pronoun in the language, *Meum*, or mine. But just about the time our story opens up there appeared a most unwelcome stranger, a troublesome little fellow,

This Photograph shews (from left to right)  
THE PAN PIPE, THE SINGLE TIBIA OF THE ROMANS,  
AND THE  
TIBIA PARES :

The latter got from a shepherd boy in North Africa.









called "Tuum," or thine, who claimed acquaintance-ship with "Meum," and demanded a share of his inheritance.

He had been heard of in several places, more or less remote, but had so far left the Celt unmolested. The rumours of his appearance had been gravely discussed by the seniors of the tribe in council, because from the very first he was noted as a mischief-maker.

Wherever he appeared speedy quarrels arose, and much shedding of blood often followed. But all mention of him was strictly avoided in public, and most of the people were as yet ignorant of the impending danger which, Damocles like, hung over their heads.

Formerly the patriarch of the tribe, as he stretched himself lazily in the door of his tent at break of day and narrowly scanned the horizon for sign of other life than his own, looked in vain. The world lying around him, far as the keenest of visions carried, was all his own. There was no sign of life in that vast region to disturb the roseate dawn, nor sound nor movement outside the sleeping camp.

Fresh pasture upon fresh pasture lay waiting for the coming of his flocks and herds, and of his alone. Peace and contentment reigned within and without. And as it was, so it had been, for untold centuries.

But in process of time the natural increase of population, and the rapid increase of sheep and cattle, brought about changes which were distasteful; imposed restrictions which were galling to a race

hitherto free as the wind—free to roam about from year to year, and from place to place; free to wander wherever its fancy led it, unchallenged of any.

When, therefore, for the first time in the history of the tribe the smoke of a stranger's camp-fire was perceived like a thin blue streak staining the deeper blue of the far-distant horizon, the wise men foretold that the day of trouble was at hand, and their forebodings were, alas! soon realised. Messengers were sent out to spy upon the intruders, and great was the excitement when these brought back word that little "Tuum," born of rumour, was settled there, and had come to stay.

"Tuum! tuum!" said the tribesmen, for the word was soon in the mouth of everyone. "What is this new word, and what does it mean?"

"It means," said the elders of the tribe, "that the time has come for us to trek."

And so tents were struck, the waggons were loaded with the household necessities, the women and little children were carefully stowed away on the top of these, and, last of all, the patient oxen were yoked to, and these simple shepherd folk, giving up all that meant home to them, wandered away out into the wilderness rather than submit to the unwelcome encroachments of little "Tuum."

Which, put into plain language, means that the cradle of the Aryans became too small, in the fulness of time, to hold the race now grown to manhood.

“The deeds of the times of old,” said Duth-marno, “are like paths to our eyes.” “A tale of the times of old,” sings Ossian.

As this prologue takes up a tale of the times of old, “a tale of the years that have fled,” we will begin it in the good old-fashioned way, beloved of our grandfathers, and dear yet to the youthful mind.

Once upon a time, a little shepherd boy, whose ruddy locks and light blue eyes bespoke him a Celt of the Celts, sat by the side of a river, paddling with cool feet, in the clear waters running below, while his flocks grazed peacefully along its green banks.

He was listening to and wondering at the music which the soft winds made, playing in and out of the reeds, that grew in the bed of the river.

He had often before listened to those sweet sounds and wondered. Fairy music they called it at home and among his playmates, but the explanation was not a satisfying one to this boy of enquiring mind. And so, on this particular morning, of which we write, with the sun shining brightly out of a cloudless sky, and leaving not a single dark nook or cranny anywhere for fear to lurk in, the boy, taking his courage in his hand, stepped boldly down into the water, and seizing hold of a reed which had been broken off by some stronger gust of wind than usual, he pulled it up by the root, and putting his mouth to the hole in the fractured stem he blew a sharp quick breath across it, and instantly

there floated away upon the still summer air the first note of human music.

Eagerly seizing another and yet another reed, he blew again and again, and always with the same result ; but also with—to him—a strange difference. Or did his ear play him false? For surely the notes were of varying quality, some high and some low.

He soon discovered that the low notes came from the longer reeds and the high notes from the shorter reeds, and so, putting together a number of these reeds of different lengths, he produced the first wind instrument in the world : one which is known to-day as the Pandean or Pan Pipe.

It was this instrument which gave the world afterwards the idea of the Bagpipe drones, and of the combined pipes of the more complex organ. It did not take very great thought, or research, to further discover that the different notes got from this combination of reeds could also be got from one reed by notching holes at uncertain intervals along its course.

This accordingly was done, and the Shepherd's Pipe came into being.

Now the shepherd's occupation, at all times a solitary one, gave the boy the very opportunities which he required for study. Nature was his teacher. The sighing of the wind in the tree-tops, the murmur of the running stream over the shallows at the ford : these were his studies.

His notes he learned from the feathered songsters

of the grove, and in his own poetical way—the Celt's way—he called the little instrument *Piob* (pronounced in the soft Gaelic tongue, peep), after the peep, peep, of his teachers, the little birds.

Practising constantly, steadfastly, cheerfully, the boy became a clever musician, and at length, falling in love with his own music—as who wouldn't—and neglecting his herds and his flocks, he wandered away among the neighbouring tribes, piping as he went, and was everywhere received with open arms by these rude children of nature, for the sake of the splendid gift which was his—the gift of music. A never-ending wonder it was to them; a never-ending source of delight. And if after a time, when he was taken from them, they deified the boy, can you blame them?

Now this boy, with all his quiet ways and gentle manners, cherished another ambition than that of becoming a musician. One night, when sitting on his father's knee, and supposed to be fast asleep, he learned from the talk of the elders, sitting round the camp fire at the end of the day, as was their wont, that long, long ago, part of the tribe to which he belonged had broken away—after a fierce family quarrel—from the main body, and disappeared over the mountains to the south. That a message once came through in some mysterious way, many years after, saying that they had prospered, and that they were living in a beautiful country, well-wooded, and full of green pasture-lands, where droughts were unknown, because through it all

there ran a great river of purest waters. But for many years nothing further had been heard of the wanderers. To visit his long-lost relations in their new home, a home which always appeared to him in dreams as Fairyland: this was the ambition which the little shepherd boy secretly cherished.

It was therefore with great delight that he received a message one day to return home, as his people had determined, on account of the persistent encroachments of strangers upon their pastures, to go in search of a new country, and of those relatives who had trekked over the mountains long years ago.

He arrived just in time to join the last of the waggons, as it was going out from the old home.

Of the long and wearisome journey over difficult country; of his piping with which the tedium of the way was beguiled; of the hundred and one dangers from storms and floods, from wild beasts and treacherous foe; of the terrible winter months spent perforce wandering in the mountains of Noricum, where they got lost in the snow, and where man and beast died off as in a murrain; of these and many other privations endured, what need is there to tell? Suffice it to say that one morning in spring, when the earth had put off its winter garments, and the little yellow flowers, coaxed into new life by the warm sun, peeped out cautiously from the crevices of the rocks, and a fluty mellowness in the twitter of the mountain linnet, recalled the fuller throated song of summer, the tired way-



farers arrived at the end of their toilsome journey. As they emerged from the passes which had engaged their attention for days, a gladsome sight met their eyes. At the foot of the mountains, rolling one into the other like the billows of some giant ocean, green fertile valleys spread themselves out before them, while in the distance a mighty river, shimmering in the soft morning light, went winding its sinuous way through bank and brake, by bush and fell, looking for all the world like some huge silver snake guarding the land. While the leaders stood gazing upon the magnificent panorama—the realisation of their hopes by day and by night, for weary months past, more than fulfilled—the scouts, who always preceded the caravan, brought in the joyful intelligence that in the valley below there dwelt a people bearing the same name as themselves, and the country, they were told, was called Pannonia, after them.

These Pannonians, then, were their long-lost relatives. The great river in front was the Danube; and the country, still thinly populated, which stretched out before them, beautiful as the Fairy-land of the little piper-boy's dream, was to be their future home.

When the two peoples met, there were great rejoicings on both sides.

Time had taken all the sting out of the old feud, and warm hands were clasped, and loving embrace met loving embrace. What questions were put and answered, what marvels recounted, what treasures

shewn, what memories revived, it matters not to us here. But of all the wonders each had to tell or to shew the other, none equalled in marvel the piping of the little shepherd boy. He was the hero of the hour.

In this beautiful country then, by the banks of the Danube, the gifted one lived and dreamed, and piped and taught, for the remainder of his days. And when he died in the fulness of time, his honoured remains were laid to rest beside his father's, to the mourning of a whole nation.

Now, as the years went by, while many things were forgotten, the memory of the piper's performances on the Pipe remained ever green ; the marvel of his playing grew and evermore grew ; until in time the personality of the player was altogether lost in the divineness of his gift. Hero worship, in short, raised him to a place among the immortals.

And when we first meet with our little shepherd boy in History, he is already known as the Great God Pan.

“What was he doing, the Great God Pan,

Down in the reeds by the river?

Spreading ruin and scattering ban,

Splashing and paddling with hoofs of a goat,  
And breaking the golden lilies afloat,

With the dragon fly on the river.

He tore out a reed, the Great God Pan,

From the deep cool bed of the river ;

The limped water turbidly ran,

And the broken lilies a dying lay,

And the dragon fly had fled away,

Ere he brought it out of the river.”

The god then fashioned a Pipe out of the reed, and playing upon it with power, he fairly startled the world with the sweetness of his music. The picture drawn for us by Mrs Browning, of the pause which took place in Nature's workshop, as the strains of the first music fell upon listening ears, is too charming to be omitted ; and with the last verse of the poem I will close this prologue, with full apologies to the classical scholar for the many liberties I have taken with the different texts in my treatment of Pan the Piper. Mrs Browning places the piping out of doors. This is as it should be, in the fitness of things. Piercing sweet, and blinding sweet, would not be sweet, indoors.

“ Sweet, sweet, sweet, O Pan !

Piercing sweet by the river !

Blinding sweet, O Great God Pan !

The sun on the hill forgot to die,

And the lilies revived, and the dragon fly

Came back to dream on the river.”

As it was in the days when the world was young, so is it in these jaded days of syren and steam-whistle.

It is not given to every man to hear, nor hearing to understand ; but nevertheless, the old music once so beloved of the Immortals can still be heard whenever a piper tunes up. Standing — like the great Dr Johnson — with “one fond ear to the drone,” the intelligent listener marks not time's flight.

Once under the spell of the master, what does it

matter to him that the sun has set, that the flowers have faded, and the dragon-fly has long since folded its gossamer wings in sleep?

He heeds not these things: he marks them not: his thoughts are elsewhere. He is back in the old days; and he sees his forefathers clad in goatskins leading the sheep with sweet music to the green pastures beside the still waters; or transported on the wings of the so "blinding sweet" music, he finds himself standing at the portals of Mythland, and there he catches a glimpse of a still older life within as he eagerly watches the gay crowds of "nymphes, faunes, and amadriades," disporting themselves on the green sward in the cool of the evening the while Pan pipes.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### PALLAS ATHENE.

“The thoughts of men true to the divine are the key to the thoughts of God; and here in the Greek Myths especially we have the Greek fancy, not an unfaithful one, of the Gods' fact. Read candidly, they speak worthily and truly.”—

REV. JAMES WOOD.

PALLAS ATHENE was at one time a very real personage, in the eyes of the uncultured Greek youth especially; but she was also held to be very real by the best and more sincere of the cultured classes. She was to the Greeks what Minerva was to the Latins, but a great deal more. She was originally an adoption by the nation from some outside race—introduced by the Phœnician or other trader;—but the Greeks, when the nation was at its best, made the Goddess as we know her, their very own, by the lavish and loving care bestowed upon her. Painter, and poet, and sculptor, vied with each other in depicting her many charms. A vision of all the wisdom and virtues of a charming sisterhood, and the greatness of the greatest of the gods, foregathered in one sweet body: this was Athene.

Perpetual youth and ever-sweet maidenhood, wisdom "beyond rubies," and beauty never fading, imperial strength combined with an infinite patience; these were a few of her attributes.

To the æsthetic Greek mind Athene was indeed the embodiment of all that is pure, and modest, and lovely in woman, and brave and noble in man.

Her virgin heart alone yielded not to the blandishments of love; but yet she was no prude!

She constantly interested herself in the affairs of men, and interfered at times in their quarrels—only, however, to right the wrong, and she always strove to lighten the burden of the suffering and the heavy-laden.

Strong in her heaven-born armour, she never used her god-like powers to oppress; but merciful withal, and full of compassion, she went about like a knight-errant of old, succouring the oppressed and down-trodden. Like a breath of sweetest purest air—which, indeed, she was, and this is why Ruskin calls her "Queen of the Air"—she swept into the sick-chamber, and dispelled the ill vapours, and infused fresh courage into the hearts of all those nigh unto death. She gave breath—which means endurance—to the runner and the wrestler, and strength to the warrior; but she was also the patron of the peaceful arts of letters and of agriculture.

If the following story shews that she had her little weakness—a woman's weakness—one only loves her the more for it.

The Greek goddess Athene, so the story runs, discovered the secret of wind music: the music which had hitherto lain hidden in the little reeds growing by the marsh lands of Phrygia.

She made herself a beautiful chanter or "aulos," as the Greeks called it, out of the leg bone of a hart. The hard, smooth bone out of which she fashioned it gave it a more permanent form, and one which lent itself to artistic decoration, such as is seen on the blow-pipe of the little Egyptian Bagpipe shewn here, better than any mere cane, however excellent.

This form of pipe, possibly this very "aulos" of Athene, suggested the name "tibia" to the Romans: a name which they applied to all chanters, whether made of reed or bone, because of this first one, which was made from the *tibia* or shin-bone.

The Goddess seems to have kept her secret to herself until she had perfected her play: when, proud of her invention and of her skill in piping, it seemed right to keep the secret a secret no longer, and with this intent she sent out invitations to all her acquaintances among the gods to come and hear her play upon this, the first instrument of its kind in the history of the gods or of man. The meeting-place was on Mount Ida, near by where flows the sacred fountain. The gathering was, I presume, somewhat of the nature of a modern afternoon party, which is called together by Lady So-and-So, one of the leaders of fashion,

to hear some famous scientist discourse upon the latest discovery in frogs' spawn, or to listen to some new singer wrestling with the top D.

On the day appointed, no distant relatives having died in the meantime, and none of the gods being from home on business, or ill, the expected guests turned up punctually, as well-bred people always do. Zeus himself was there, and the outspoken Here, and the exquisite Aphrodite surrounded by her admirers, and many others. Athene charmed the company with her sweet music, as she could not fail to do; and when the piping was over, and the applause had died down, expressions of opinion on this new art which had delighted them so were invited, and were freely given.

But while the gods to a man—to descend from the clouds for a little—expressed themselves as wholly charmed with the performance, the ladies, as is not uncommon where one of their own sweet sex is concerned, qualified their praise with ominous nods, and wrinkling of foreheads, and shrugs of lovely shoulders, which hinted at something behind the praise.

Was it ever otherwise? Did woman ever find perfection in one of her own sex? Is this wherein woman, "lovely woman," is so much wiser than man?

"Most excellent," said Here, "your playing is a perfect revelation, and *how sweet you looked!*" at which latter part of the sentence a ripple of quiet laughter went round the circle of lady critics.



“An exquisite gift! *such style!*” said a second, with a lift of the eyebrows and a marked emphasis upon “style”; and again that ripple of musical laughter!

“Your piping was entrancing, Goddess fair, *but is not the blowing very severe upon your cheeks?*” said a third, glancing at the company roguishly, and with a movement of the eye-lid, which in an ordinary mortal might easily be mistaken for a wink.

And so the pretty critics chattered on, one after another giving her opinion, each new comment punctuated with fresh bursts of merriment, the while the graceful Athene stood, with heightened colour, in perplexity and wonder; until at length Aphrodite, the “Queen of Love,” who, herself beautiful, was also perhaps a little jealous of Athene’s good looks, said, “It is not the music, Athene dear, which has set these giddy ones a-laughing. The music is everything that is beautiful. But *have you seen your own face while piping?* Your cheeks are like this”: saying which Aphrodite puffed out her own lovely face to unnatural dimensions; at which the laughter broke out afresh, some of the younger gods joining in the mirth thus provoked by her who was voted easily the wit of the party.

Now, Athene was but a woman after all. Her one weakness was feminine vanity. She shewed too great a concern for her beauty, which was too assured, too pronounced, to be easily slighted, and Aphrodite’s action rather than her words annoyed her.

So flying to the sacred fountain, which stood close by, she looked down into the clear waters the while she piped, and there she saw mirrored as in polished silver her face, so altered, with its pursed-up lips and blown-out cheeks, that she scarcely recognised the picture as her own.

Everything was in an instant clear to her as noonday sun; the laughter! the innuendo! the “becks and nods, and wreathed smiles!” and, in a sudden pet, she flung far out into space—far as her strong young arm could fling it—the little Pipe which had brought her to this *impasse*, and registered a solemn vow that she would never, never touch the accursed thing again.

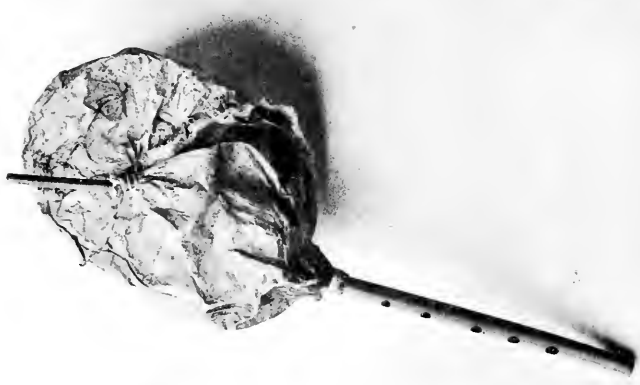
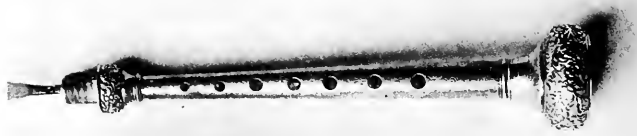
Now, it happened upon this very day—the day on which Athene challenged the admiration of the gods, with such a doubtful result—that Marsyas, the Phrygian, was on his way home, and was taking a short cut across the shoulder of Mount Ida. When more than half-way up the ascent—the sky being then clear of clouds, and of a lovely blue—he saw the lightnings begin suddenly to play round the top of the mountain, and he shrewdly guessed that a meeting of the gods was being held there, with Zeus presiding, else why this shaking of his thunderbolts? So being a wise man, and not reckless of his life, he immediately turned aside and took the longer way home, round the base of the mountain. He had not gone very far on his new course when his sharp ears were assailed with the sound of distant Pipe music.

A BAGPIPE OF "ANE REED AND ANE BLEDDIR."

Above is a full-sized chanter covered with silver of Indian design ; at one time belonging to Pipe-Major Gregor Fraser of the Gordon Highlanders.

Below is a Chinese chanter sent from Wei-hai-wei by A. N. FRASER, R.A.M.C.







Startled at so unusual an occurrence in such a lonely place, he dropped suddenly behind a huge moss-grown boulder, with the quick instinct of the wild animal, which still lurked underneath his hairy skin, and crouched, and waited.

Nearer and nearer came the mysterious sounds, and louder and clearer they ever grew; but of the musician, there was not a sign that the quick eye of the shepherd could detect. The thing was altogether uncanny, and got upon his nerves. The hair upon his satyr's legs stiffened with fear; his goat's beard shook; his teeth chattered as with intense cold; terror clogged his feet, else would he have fled. But just then he spied Athene's Pipe—the Pipe with the music in it—come rolling down the hill.

It struck the top of the rock behind which he lay, and rebounding, dropped at his feet, breathing forth the strangest, sweetest music this shepherd had ever listened to.

The possibilities of the future with such a Pipe in his possession opened up a delightful vista to his hopes and ambitions; for he was already famous as a musician. He saw himself already a piper of fame: the shepherds of the plain gathered round him at night, listening to the new art in open-mouthed wonder; the shy, soft-eyed nymphs showering favours upon him as they danced in the twilight to his music. So, taking up the "Magic Pipe" tenderly, he placed it in his bosom, and rising from his lair invigorated and refreshed, he

started off eagerly for home. Connecting in his own mind the meeting of the gods on Mount Ida with the "aulos," which had come to him so mysteriously, he murmured to himself, as he trudged stoutly along: "A gift from the gods! a gift from the gods!" and the little reed the while made music at his heart.

Yes, dear old Marsyas—first of pipers—it is a gift from the gods, and a fatal gift, too! Better throw it away from you while there is time; throw it away before it exercises its full fascination on you, and your head strikes the stars, and you come to sudden, signal grief. No?

Then, know that it will bring you two things—Fame and Death. No doubt many men before you have bravely courted death—even seeking, as Shakespeare puts it, "the bubble reputation at the cannon's mouth," for the thing which they called Fame! And why, if this be your choice, should not you?

'Tis better to be great in something, however small, than only "middling this and middling that" in larger matters.

Now, it happened unto Marsyas, as foreseen by him; his fame as a piper quickly grew, and spread, and reached other countries. At all the gatherings where he competed he won the prize with ease, until at last he felt, and—better still—knew that no man was his equal, and through this knowledge he got what is vulgarly known as "swelled head."



His ambition—fed upon the pride which grew with each fresh victory—impelled him in an unguarded moment to challenge the gods themselves.

He accordingly sent a message to Apollo offering to pit his Pipe against the god's own invention and favourite instrument, the cithara or lyre.

The challenge, which caused no little stir and indignation in the upper circles, was accepted, and a mighty gathering, wherein the sons of gods mingled with the daughters of men and found them fair, assembled at the appointed time and place to witness the great contest. After a long trial, in which the goatherd played as he had never played before, the judges—as was only to be expected, they being of the “upper ten”—gave the victory to Apollo, and poor Marsyas, the hitherto unbeaten one, for his presumption in daring to challenge the gods, was tied to a tree and flayed alive. And so in this way, the gift which brought Marsyas fame brought him also a cruel death.

There are many points of likeness between this story of Marsyas and the story of Pan, only in the contest of Pipe *versus* Lyre between Pan and Apollo, Midas, the Phrygian king, who was judge, decided in favour of the Pipe, and was presented with a pair of ass's ears by Apollo, who was very angry with his judgment.

The oldest-named Pipe tune in the world is called after this incident, “King Midas has Ass's Ears,” and was composed by the king's barber, to whom of all men living the poor king confided his dread secret,

for the very good reason that he could not hide it from him and also have his hair cut.

In both stories, the instrument is the Shepherd's Pipe, and is opposed in both by Apollo's lyre.

In both, the players are goatherds, as the hairy legs and the goat's beard shew.

In each case the instrument is invented and made by the gods. In the one case, however, Pan, the god who made the Pipe, also makes the music on the Pipe which he had made—he is himself the piper ; while, in the other case, the man Marsyas got the Pipe from the gods with the gift of music in it : Athene's Pipe invited no exertion on his part, *it could play by itself*. Here it seems to me that we have the first suggestion of a Bagpipe.

I have been in the habit, when lecturing upon this subject, of illustrating my theory in the following way. I use a simple Bagpipe without drones, which I conceal under my Highland cloak, the latter representing the minstrel's cloak of olden days. The chanter, which I first slip through one of the button-holes before inserting it in the bag, is all that the audience sees. Through a very short blowpipe I quickly fill the bag, and having done so, I let the blowpipe drop inside the cloak. I then play upon the chanter, which is the only part of the Pipe in view of the audience, without any apparent effort, a complete tune, such as the "Reel of Tulloch" or "The Lads of Mull."

Now, if instead of a small bag I used a large sheep or goatskin bag, such as you see on the opposite page,

and a very light reed made of straw, such as the early pipers fitted their Pipes with, I could easily, with one fill of the bag, play six or eight tunes in succession without any visible exertion.

Some such playing the Greeks must have heard at a very early period : long before the idea of the Bagpipe caught on with the nation : and even at first such piping must have seemed little short of miraculous. The player was some wandering minstrel who found his way into Grecian territory, his Pipe and minstrel's cloak his only passport.

Or the story of the magic Pipe may have been brought back by some soldier home from the wars, or by some merchant returned from distant markets. In whatever way the story arose, it would be passed on from father to son, the marvel of it growing with each telling, the details as the years sped, getting mistier and mistier ; until one generation would forget that the piper first blew into the bag before playing, and the next forget that there was a bag, and a third forget that there was a piper. And when the Pipe alone was remembered ! *of course it played by itself.*

According to the imagination with which each of us is gifted, will this suggestion of mine appear wise or the reverse. I make a present of it to my antiquarian friends, and only hope that one day a drawing of a Celt piping on such a Bagpipe to a crowd of wonder-eyed Greeks will be found, engraved on burnt brick or other material, in some of the

ancient ruins now being explored round about Athens or elsewhere.

The usual interpretation of the contest between Marsyas and Apollo is the very obvious one, that it was a contest for supremacy between wind and stringed instruments; and the result shewed that the Greeks preferred the stringed instrument.

Ruskin, however, draws from this incident a different meaning altogether. He says, "Whatever in music is measured and designed belongs therefore to Apollo and the Muses; whatever is impulsive and passionate, to Athene; . . . but the passionate music is wind music, as in the Doric flute. Then, when this inspired music becomes degraded in its passion, it sinks into the Pipe of Pan and the double Pipe of Marsyas, and is *then* rejected by Athene." Ruskin evidently forgot here that Marsyas only got the Pipe after Athene rejected it, a thing which he immediately afterwards remembers. "The myth which represents her doing so, is that she invented the double Pipe from hearing the hiss of the Gorgonian serpents; but when she played upon it, chancing to see her face reflected in water, she saw that it was distorted, whereupon she threw down the flute which Marsyas found. Then the strife of Apollo and Marsyas represents the enduring contest between music in which the words and thought lead, and the lyre measures or melodises them, and music in which the words are lost, and the wind or impulse leads,—generally therefore between intellectual, and brutal or meaningless music.

“Therefore when Apollo prevails, he flays Marsyas, taking the limit and external bond of his shape from him, which is death, without touching the mere muscular strength; yet shameful and dreadful in dissolution.”

Now Ruskin when he wrote the above was not thinking of the Bagpipe: he knew nothing about the Bagpipe, and yet unknowingly he supplies a link in my chain of reasoning as I will immediately prove.

For there is, according to my interpretation of the myth a great deal more meaning in it than either of the above interpretations gives. The contest was in my opinion, a contest between Town and Country, and this is very important with regard to the claim recently put forward, that the Pipe is an invention of the Greeks, when we recall the fact that the old Greek state or colony, was little more than a state town, or city, with little or no jurisdiction beyond its own walls, and surrounded on all sides by hostile peoples of different nationalities. If the Pipe, therefore, came from the country to the town, as we learn from this myth, it came to the Greeks from an outside source.

I hope to prove also that this Pipe of Athene's was a Bagpipe, and—this by the way—that Marsyas was not really flayed alive, but was merely stripped of his clothes.

Apollo then represents the city, the Greek colony. He is the dandy about town; tall, handsome, effeminate, scented. With his minstrel's cloak,

which is made of richest stuff and dyed of the most costly dyes, thrown carelessly over his left shoulder, he looks the ideal of grace and breeding. His instrument is the lyre ; a feeble tinkling thing, suitable enough for the ladies' boudoir, or as an accompaniment to the voice in song, but fitted only for the sweep of delicate fingers : a maiden's weapon and not suited to turbulent times or peoples.

Marsyas, on the other hand, represents the country : the outside world, and is entirely wanting in anything like Greek culture. He is strong and muscular, stout, healthy, ruddy-cheeked ; rude and unsophisticated, and smelling, not of sweet scents distilled from rarest flowers, but of the hillside and the sheepfold. His minstrel's cloak is a new goat-skin fresh from its late owner's back, and smelling fresh of the rennet. He has newly donned it to grace the occasion. His instrument is "the rude and barbarous Bagpipe," sprung from the soil, and as yet unknown to the dweller in town.

Marsyas no doubt has a bet with Apollo on the event,—or he differs sadly from the goatherd of Theocritus' time—and this it is which gives rise to the story of the flaying of him alive.

That such contests were of every-day occurrence we know from the testimony of many writers.

That much betting also took place at these friendly trials of skill is also certain.

The best ewe in his flock, a carved bowl, a carved stick, the goatskin on his back, the Pipe he played on ; anything and everything the goatherd possessed

he risked in bets during a singing or piping contest.

Read any of the old Greek pastorals if you doubt the truth of the above.

Here is an extract—the translation by Calverly—from Theocritus:—

“Daphnis the gentle herdsman, met once as rumour tells  
Menalcas making with his flock, the circle of the fells.  
Both chins were gilt with coming beards: both lads  
could sing and play:

Menalcas glanced at Daphnis, and thus was heard to  
say:

‘Art thou for singing, Daphnis, lord of the lowing kine,  
I say, my songs are better, by what thou wilt, than  
thine.’

Then in his turn spake Daphnis, and thus he made  
reply:

‘O shepherd of the fleecy flock, thou pipest clear and  
high;

But come what will, Menalcas, thou ne’er wilt sing  
as I.’

MENALCAS—

‘This thou art fain to ascertain, and risk a bet with  
me?’

DAPHNIS—

‘This I full fain would ascertain, and risk a bet with  
thee.

I stake a calf: stake thou a lamb.’”

But Menalcas—to his credit be it said—answered  
“No; the flock is counted every night, and the  
lamb would be missed; it is not mine to give, it is  
my father’s; but I will stake my Pipe of nine holes,

which I have made myself, and joined together with beautiful white wax, against yours.

To this Daphnis consents, and they get a passing goatherd to act as referee. They lay their Pipes aside on this occasion, and each in turn tries his hand at extempore song. When finished, the goatherd gives judgment as follows :—

“ ‘ O Daphnis, lovely is thy voice, thy music sweetly sung:  
Such song is pleasanter to me, than honey on my  
tongue.

Accept this Pipe, for thou hast won. And should there  
be some notes

That thou could'st teach *me*, as I plod alongside of my  
goats ;

I'll give thee for thy schooling this ewe, that horns  
hath none :

Day by day she'll fill the can, until the milk o'er-run.'

Then how the one lad laughed and leaped and clapped  
his hands for glee !

A kid that bounds to meet its dam might dance as  
merrily.

And how the other inly burned, struck down by his  
disgrace !

A maid first parting from her home might wear as sad  
a face.”

In the same boastful spirit Marsyas, I have no doubt—confident in his own skill—bet his new goat-skin coat against Apollo's fine town-made cloak, that the judges would decide in his favour ; but, as we have seen, he lost. With sad face, and downcast eye, the hitherto victorious one turned to leave the scene of his discomfiture, first promising to send back



his goatskin when he got home. Apollo, however, insisted on having the bet settled there and then : the judges held this to be the law, and so poor Marsyas, stripped of everything by the attendants, fled from before the face of the jeering crowd naked and ashamed. This was the flaying alive of Marsyas.

The other part of the myth, in which we are told that the blood of Marsyas formed a river down which his Pipe was carried for many a weary mile ; but which ultimately cast *them* up,—notice the plural here!—one on each bank, symbolises the spread of the “ Pipe ” in Arcadia.

Marsyas’ Pipe was afterwards found and brought to Apollo, who made it his own instrument thenceforward ; which conclusion to the story proves, in short, that the City Greeks adopted the Shepherd’s Pipe, although reluctantly, and only after it had spread throughout the country districts of Greece.

This latter part of the myth is borne out by a small bronze statue of Apollo which was discovered some time ago, in so far at least as he is there represented, with a lyre strapped on in front *and a Bagpipe behind* : the Bagpipe still taking an inferior position to the lyre in the Greek’s estimation.

Now, Ruskin tells us that Athene was the author of the *double Pipe*, which she invented *to represent the hissing of the Gorgonian serpent*.

We know that this Pipe, after the death of Marsyas, fell into Apollo’s hands. This is the myth, but history now comes upon the scene and tells us that Apollo’s Pipe, which was the Greek Pythaulos, *was a*

*Bagpipe.* And further, that it was used *to represent the hisses and the groans of the wounded serpent*, at the Pythonic games, which were held annually in honour of Apollo. If you have followed my argument so far, you will understand why I believe that in the myth of Athene and her Pipe—the Pipe which played by itself—we have the earliest suggestion of a Bagpipe.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### THEOCRITUS AND THE BAGPIPE.

WE shall now leave the flowery mazes of Mythland,—that realm of fancy and imagination—and descend to the safer, if more prosaic paths of written History, in our search after further information on the Bagpipe.

If I have not already wearied you with my idle excursions into the dim and misty past as we have it represented in Greek myth? If you do not reckon me one of the people “who”—as the Psalmist says—“imagine a vain thing?” I shall ask you once more to accompany me to the sunny South: to the land of romance, and song, and piping: “to the land which the old Greek has revealed to us: a land full of wonder and beauty, full of grandeur and majesty, haunted by the echoes of human laughter and tears: where truth and fiction still live in loving union together, and truth borrows grace from fiction, and fiction gathers dignity from truth.” And in this country I shall introduce you to a man who knew more of pipers and of piping than any other man of his day and generation. Some of you will immedi-

ately recognise in him an old friend : to others he will be a comparative stranger : while to a few he may be wholly unknown, as his writings—and how delightful these are!—have been too much neglected both at school and college.

It is of Theocritus the Greek poet that I would write. He is the great authority on the *Piob* or Shepherd's Pipe : the great delineator of Greek pastoral life in the old days. What he did not know of the shepherd and his Pipe is not worth knowing. While his writings are worthy of being read for their own sake, the poet is at the same time the prince of good fellows, in whose charming company the cares and worries of daily life are forgotten.

Should it ever be your unhappy lot to suffer from brain-fag, while the needful holiday is still in the far distance, try what a study of the old Greek poet's Idylls will do for you. If your Greek has gone musty, there are several good translations to choose from. Of these, I prefer the one by Lang, in the "Golden Treasury" series, for the sake of its scholarly introduction. There is also a metrical translation by Calverly : a delightful book in its way : a poet's translation of a poet. And if you wish a more literal rendering of the Greek, you will find it in "Bohn's Library." But the charm of the original infects all three, and for us, in this way, Theocritus becomes thrice eloquent.

Here, without doubt, we have a writer who can describe for us things and men as he saw them two thousand years ago. In his Idylls, there is no stilted

artificiality : naturalness overflows in every line : the laughter of bygone years still echoes through his pages ; the tears still wet them. With curtains drawn to shut out the slushy, sloppy streets, and feet made comfortable in well-toasted slippers, you can—with this little book in your hand—enjoy the pleasures of a country life while seated comfortably at your own fireside.

The poet, who makes the most fascinating of guides, will put back for you the hands of the clock of time two thousand years and more. In the twinkling of an eye he will transport you from this cold, bleak climate of ours, dark with winter fogs, or moist from dripping autumn skies, to a land of perpetual sunshine and blue ethers, and midsummer spice-laden airs and passionate flower-blossoming. Basking in the sunshine of his geniality, you will forget to shiver at the cold. The winter blast, rocking without and making the shuttered window creak and groan like some disembodied spirit in pain, will blow past unheeded, as you walk arm-in-arm with the poet through the streets of Syracuse, the city of his birth : the city he most loved—"sunniest of sunny cities, and Greekest of Greek."

Or passing out through the city gates into the country beyond—that country which he knew and loved so well, and where he spent so many happy days—you will find your cares fall from your shoulders, like a cast-off garment, as you wander with him in the meadows, already brilliant with "bells and flowerets of a thousand hues," where

first he met the little girl piping to Hippocoon's field-workers.

In these Idylls the poet has caught and made captive for us the warm spice-laden breezes that ever float up from the blue waters of the Mediterranean.

The sunshine of cloudless skies he has enticed into his pages, and it still warms the figures of Demeter and his love-feasters, of shepherd and shepherdess, of piper and singer, so that they, too, look out of the page at you with laughter in their eyes and smiles on their lips as real as when in life. So life-like, indeed, are this poet's creations that, as Mrs Browning once said of those of another and greater poet, if you were to put real men and women beside them, the best stop-watch in the world could not detect the least difference in the beating of their hearts.

But—you may well ask the question!—what has all this got to do with the Bagpipe? Not much, perhaps, but I was led to study Theocritus because more than one writer—in a more or less vague sort of way, certainly—had referred to Theocritus as being the first author to mention the Bagpipe.

Well, I have searched for *Sumphonia*, the Greek word for Bagpipe, in the original text, and again in the three different translations mentioned above, and I have completely failed to find it.

*Pythaulos*, and *Bumbaulos*, two other names given at a later date by the old Greeks to the Pipe, are also conspicuous by their absence. In short,

Theocritus, who was born about 300 B.C., does not mention the Bagpipe at all.

But I learned two things from my research.

I learned anew, and with increasing emphasis, the beautiful truth which is embodied in the saying of the old philosopher, "If you offered me the choice of *Truth* in the one hand, or the *Pursuit after Truth* in the other, I should choose the latter."

I did not find any reference to the Bagpipe in "Theocritus"—the truth which I was in pursuit of—but the pursuit itself was a delight and a treasure, and through it I spent many weeks of unadulterated happiness some years ago, wandering in the company of one of the world's great masters, utterly indifferent to the sleet and snow and biting cruel winds that so often brought the short days of a particularly stormy winter to a close.

I learned also this important fact, that the Bagpipe was unknown to Theocritus and—by implication—to the Greeks of the third century B.C.

The Idylls are filled with descriptions of pipers and piping.

The first Idyll opens up with these words—

"Sweet are the whispers of yon pine that makes  
Low music o'er the spring, and goatherd, sweet  
Thy piping ; thou art matched by Pan alone."

While the last Idyll sings somewhat after this fashion—I have not the book before me !

"Oh that my father had taught me the care of sheep, that I might sit in the shade of the wide-spreading tree, or in the cool of the overhanging rock, and there pipe away my sorrows."

Every page, indeed, betrays an intimate acquaintance with the different instruments used by the shepherds or goatherds of his time. There are three different kinds of Pipe mentioned by the poet, and these are called *Aulos*, *Aulos-calamus*, and *Syrinx*. We have a minute description given of these various forms, even to the number of holes in each, and to the kind of wax and thread used in binding the reeds together. We also find continual references to piping contests in the Idylls, so that it is impossible to believe that the most important of the Pipe family could be overlooked, by the poet whose delight was in minute word-painting of pastoral scenes. This careful recorder of the old simple, kindly, country life—with those keen eyes of his that missed not the twittering of a single leaf on the tree: with those keen ears of his that heard voices in the murmur of the bratling stream, and in the whispering of the flowers, as they bent and nodded to the gentle breeze—could never have so completely overlooked the King of Pipes if it had been in existence in his day. Even against his will it would have forced itself upon his attention during those constant country rambles in which he so delighted. For, what does this poet write about? It is not of the city and its busy life—although occasionally he ruffled it at court with the best of the young bloods: luxury and wealth he rarely mentions. His theme is the country, with its simple joys and sorrows, where money counts for little, because there is so little of it to count. Nothing is too small for him to take notice of!



The grateful shade of the pine tree ; the singing of the lark in the blue ether ; the restless moaning of the sea by the lonely shore ; the cool sound of the waters falling over the face of the rock ; the sweet scent of verbena, and lily, and wild thyme ; the lowly goat-herd contesting for the piper's prize, dressed in a new goatskin, with the fresh smell of the rennet still clinging to it ; the little girl piping in the field to encourage the harvesters in their work ; the midnight revel at the neatherd's cabin ; the poor fisherman in his hut of wattles, dreaming golden dreams down by the marshes—almost the only gold he mentions. These are the subjects he delights to dwell upon : always, however, coming back to piping, piping, piping.

We may take it, then, that in Theocritus' time, say 270 B.C., the Bagpipe was unknown to the Greek, whether of the town or country. This is something worth knowing, something worth remembering. When the Bagpipe was introduced into Greece the people had no name ready for it, and so they christened this instrument of many sounds *Sumphonia*, or the many-sounding one. The Romans came to know of it much later than the Greeks. They received it from two sources—a Celtic and a Greek source—as I hope immediately to prove. We must therefore look for the origin of the *Piob-Mhor* elsewhere than in Greece or Rome.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### THE CLASSICS AND THE BAGPIPE.

IN that grandest of all Classics, the Bible, we find the earliest historical reference to the Bagpipe.

The Bagpipe is mentioned in both the Old and the New Testaments, under the titles of *Sumponyah* and *Sumphonias* respectively—the accent being upon the *y* and the *i*.

*Συμφωνία*—a Greek word which had been in use for nearly three hundred years before the advent of the Bagpipe in Greece, and which meant harmony—was the name which the Greeks gave to the little Shepherd's Pipe when they had enlarged it, and made various improvements upon it, and fashioned it to their own mind.

These improvements were so considerable, and altered the tone, and, indeed, the whole complexion of the little Pipe so completely, that they entitled the makers to call the instrument thus transformed by a Greek name, although they were only improvers and not the inventors of the Bagpipe : and in this way the diminutive *Pipos* became the great *Sumphonia*.

Nor were the Greeks selfishly disposed to keep the

knowledge of the new instrument to themselves, but on the contrary, they freely spread its fame abroad, and so brought the hitherto little-known Bagpipe into repute among the different peoples with whom they came in contact. And if philology be at all a safe guide, they introduced it into Syria, Persia, Palestine, Egypt, and the countries to the east and south-east of the Holy Land ; for in those different countries, in the second and first centuries B.C., we find it always called by its Greek name of *Sumphonia*.

The Greeks then, it must be acknowledged, were great disseminators of the Bagpipe, but this is not equivalent to saying, as some writers quite recently have said, that the Greeks invented the Bagpipe, and that Arcadia was its home. The Greeks were receivers, before they became givers. Civilisation and all that this term implies—Celtic music, for example, and the different arts and sciences in their rude and primitive forms—first flowed into Greece, ere she gave the world its own back again, disguised, it is true, often beyond recognition in its new and beautiful Greek dress.

In short, these gifts from the outside became ennobled and purified in their passage through the alembic of the Greek mind, and the delighted nations received their own once more, but enhanced in value a thousandfold.

In this way the Bagpipe, although only an adopted instrument, fared well at the hands of the Greek. The simple single-reeded Shepherd's Pipe, with its scale of three or four notes, and its bag made of the

stomach or bladder of a goat,—the original *Piob* of the Celt—became the many-sounding, many-reeded powerful *Sumphonia* of the Greek, with a whole goat-skin for a bag. This enlarged Pipe, which soon became the favourite instrument of priests and kings, the Greeks endowed with a surpassing vitality, so that it has survived the choppings and changes of time for two thousand years and more, and we can see it to-day in all its pristine glory, perambulating our streets and alleys, still a very real live symphony, voicing for us in these degenerate days—but only very occasionally, I grieve to say—the old Greek music.

This Bagpipe, a fine specimen of which is shewn in the photograph opposite, and which is called by the Italians in the south of Italy *Zampogna*—the old Greek word, but slightly altered—is better known as the Calabrian Shepherd's Pipe. The set in the photograph was unearthed—after a good deal of trouble—in Rome some eight or nine years ago, and presented to me by a Falkirk friend, and is said to be very old. The drones were crumbling into dust when I first got them, but a liberal application of oil and eucalyptus checked further decay. Its neighbour is said to be in the Oxford Museum.

The ancient Greek *Sumphonia*, then, was a *Drone* Bagpipe in the strictest sense of the word. It was simply a collection of drones of different lengths—several of them pierced with holes like a chanter—in harmony with each other, and inserted into an air-tight bag ; the chanter when present being a separate

entity. When the chanter-player was absent, the real piper droned along pleasantly by himself. This ancient form of Drone Pipe is still to be seen and heard in Southern Italy, in Sicily, and in Greece ; and nearly every summer our own country is visited by one or more bands of strolling Italian *pifferari*, as these pipers are called. The photograph opposite is one which I took in front of my own house. It shews a characteristic group of these Italian performers, and also shews their method of playing upon the *Zampogna*. The chanter is in the hands of the pompous-looking individual on the extreme left of the picture, and next to him is the *zampognatore*, or piper proper. Notice the enormous size of the drones ; they are the largest that I have ever seen, but in spite of this they gave forth low soft music. The woman with the tambourine, and the little rogue with the bird-cage, are unnecessary accidentals.

I took a photograph of another group of Italian pipers some weeks earlier than the one shewn here. It was to complete a series of magic-lantern slides which I was anxious to shew next evening at a Bagpipe lecture. Being in a hurry, I sent the film to be developed by my daughter, knowing that she would do it quicker than the average photographer, and set off hopefully on my afternoon's round. When I got back in the evening, all impatient to know the result, the first question I put was, "Has Nelly done my pipers?"

"There is a note from Nelly: it has just come:

you can read it!" said my wife. And what I read, with sinking heart and falling face, was this—

"Dear mother,—Break it gently to father. He has drowned his pipers." I read no further, but turned to the picture. The explanation of the phenomenon flashed upon me in a moment. Taking sea-waves in Tiree the week before, I had omitted to turn off the last film, and there, in the midst of the angry waters, with nothing but their heads shewing through the salt sea-spray, the poor *pifferari* looked out at me with reproachful eyes. Sure enough, I had drowned my pipers. But to return to the Greek Bagpipe! The chanter, which still remains divorced from the drones, has a much wider range of notes now than it had in days gone by. This is partly due to a peculiar method the player has got of pinching the reed with his lips when playing, and partly due to the addition of extra notes; and although it has very little music of its own, and that little of a very ancient order, the extended scale unfortunately lends itself to all kinds of modern airs, which are accordingly played upon it by these strolling players with great vigour, to the inglorious accompaniment of tambourine, triangle, cymbal, and drum, and to the utter disgust of all genuine lovers of the Bagpipe. But as to the thing itself—the *Sumphonia*!—modern improvements have passed it by, leaving it untouched and primitive as when it was played upon before the golden image set up by the great King Nebuchadnezzar, and when at its call the princes and the mighty of the land bowed down and worshipped.

ITALIAN PIFFERARI.









As a good deal of misapprehension has arisen over the meaning of the word *Sumphonia*—a misapprehension which has acted prejudicially in the past to the claims of the Bagpipe—a few words of explanation may not be thought amiss at this stage.

*Sumphonia* is first met with in Plato (*b* 429 B.C.), where it means harmony, or symphony. For over two hundred years it retained this meaning. The harmony might be one of voices, or of instruments, or of a combination of these two. But about the end of the third, or beginning of the second century, B.C., the word came to mean a specific musical instrument—the Bagpipe; it being the thing which produced the harmony; and this latter meaning it has ever since retained.

Polybius, who flourished exactly one hundred years after Theocritus, is the first writer next to Daniel to use the word in its new meaning. To those classical scholars who did not recognise when the change took place, or did not perceive that the change was a permanent one, the word became a stumbling-block, and so arose those misconceptions in the Bible and elsewhere which have gathered round *Sumphonia*. In this way *Sumponyah* in Daniel iii. 5 (which is just the Greek word for Bagpipe transcribed into Aramaic) was translated dulcimer—a stringed instrument. “To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages, that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, *dulcimer*”—i.e., *Bagpipe*—“and all kinds of music,

ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up."

There was some excuse for the old divines going astray on this occasion, because when the Bible was first translated, the Book of Daniel was supposed to have been written in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, who ruled over Babylon some six hundred years before the Christian era, and at that time if the word *Sumphonia* existed at all, which is more than doubtful, it did not mean a musical instrument, and could not therefore be the Bagpipe.

But the context shewed those old divines that a complex instrument of some sort was intended, and taking the first meaning of the word,—a concord of sounds—what instrument was more likely to be meant than a many-stringed instrument like the dulcimer, which gave to the sweep of the fingers or to the tappings of the plectrum a harmonious combination of sounds?

It was a very good guess on the part of the old translators, but it was nothing more than a guess, and one which we, to-day, know to have been misleading.

All classical scholars are now, however, agreed that the Book of Daniel was not written for at least three hundred years after the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, and this knowledge, which was not available to the earlier critics, has cleared up many dark problems in the book, including the true meaning of the word *Sumponyah*. It is quite incomprehensible to me why, under these circumstances, the

translators of the revised Bible should have left the word dulcimer in the text, and only timorously inserted "or Bagpipe" in the margin.

Now, arguing from this word alone, and seeing that it is a Greek word, which only came into use some one hundred and fifty years after Nebuchadnezzar's time; and that it was first used by the Greeks in the sense of Bagpipe about 170 B.C., I am at one with those Biblical scholars who believe the Book of Daniel to have been written—in part at least during the reign of Antiochus (175-168 B.C.), and, in corroboration of this view I would point out that a large part of Daniel is devoted to an account of the Syrian monarch and his doings,—he is the "Little Horn" in the book—and it is in connection with this same Antiochus, King of Syria, that Polybius first mentions the Bagpipe. Polybius thus divides the honour with Daniel of being one of the two first writers to mention the "Pipes" in history, and both give it the same title of *Sumphonia*, which shews that the Jews were familiar with the Greek Bagpipe in very early times. It is also more than probable that Antiochus, who was a great propagator of everything Greek, first introduced the Pipe into Palestine.

Now this Antiochus was a greivous thorn in the side of the Jewish nation, and there is no doubt that he treated it badly on more than one occasion. The Jews could only retaliate upon him by giving him a bad character, which they accordingly did. In spite of this bad character, which has stuck to him ever

since, the king was a strong man in many ways, and a good ruler over his own people. He was also a good soldier, and a man of refined tastes, and energetic to his finger tips. He was, however, an undoubted mischief-maker: a genius run to seed, and his prototype is to be seen to-day in the person of a very high and mighty European potentate who is also a constant "thorn in the flesh" to his neighbours.

Epiphanes, he called himself, or *God manifest*. "Yea, he magnified himself even to the Prince of the host"; but his contemporaries called him Epimanes, or the madman, playing in Greek fashion upon the word Epiphanes.

Now in reading Polybius, one is left in doubt as to whether the Syrian monarch did not himself play upon the Bagpipe, as well as keep pipers. The Bagpipe which his piper proper played upon was a Drone Pipe, exactly like the present Greek and Calabrian Pipe, and a second player blew the chanter. This much we learn from one passage, where we are told that the king was in the habit of stealing out at night with his pipers, and if he came upon a band of young men enjoying themselves in a quiet place, he would creep near them, unseen, and with a sudden blast upon "the chanter and Bagpipe," so startle them that they fled as if the devil were behind them. Which latter statement also points to the fact that the Bagpipe was of very recent introduction into Syria, and but little known as yet among the people.

In another passage of his book, Polybius tells us that Antiochus danced to the music of the "Pipes."

Antiochus, you will perhaps remember, had established games at Daphne, on a scale of unparalleled magnificence, so as to eclipse the world-famed Roman games held in Macedonia; and on this occasion, the ceremonies were opened by a procession headed by the king in person, which took a whole day to pass a fixed point, and which even to-day beggars description in its magnificence.

It was during this festival, which lasted thirty days, and at one of the costly banquets given nightly by the king,—and when men had well drunken—that the incident about to be related occurred. I will give it in the words of Polybius, as translated by Shuckburgh, who, clever scholar and great authority though he be, misses the meaning of the Greek word *Συμφωνία*.

"And when the festivities had gone on for a long time, and a good many of the guests had departed, the king was carried in by the mummers, completely shrouded in a robe, and laid upon the ground as though he were one of the actors. Then at the signal given by the music"—*i.e.*, by the *Συμφωνία*, or Bagpipe!—"he leapt up, stripped, and began to dance with the jesters, so that all the guests were scandalised and retired. In fact, every one who attended the festival, when they saw the extraordinary wealth displayed at it, the arrangements made in the processions and games,"—all conducted by the king in person—"and the scale of splendour on which the whole was

managed, were struck with amazement and wonder both at the king, and the greatness of his kingdom ; but when they fixed their eyes on the man himself,"—stripped !—"and the contemptible conduct to which he condescended, they could scarcely believe that so much excellence and baseness could exist in one and the same breast."

So much for Antiochus and his "Pipes."

Mentioned once in the Old Testament, the Bagpipe is also once mentioned in the New Testament. This occurs in the parable of the Prodigal Son. Now the Master always illustrated His object lessons from the daily life around. His illustrations, which were addressed to the poor and the illiterate, commended themselves to the simplest intelligence, and were forcible in proportion to their simplicity. The very titles of these parables shew this. We have, for example, the parable of the Sower and the Seed ; the parable of the Lost Sheep ; of the Unjust Steward ; of the Marriage Feast ; of the Prodigal Son. He spoke of things which were familiar to His hearers : of things which were being enacted daily under their very eyes ; and for this reason any inaccuracies would at once be detected by His audience. When, therefore, He introduces the Bagpipe and the chorus or dance as the outward signs of the joy felt over the return of the prodigal, we may take it that the Bagpipe and the dance in conjunction were well known to the common people among the Jews of Christ's time : a fact which has been boldly denied by more than one writer.

Those responsible for the revised edition of the



Bible, which I do not wonder has “fallen flat,” have here again failed—it seems to me—to do their duty. They have translated the words, “ἤκουσε συμφωνίας καὶ χορῶν,” or, as they read in the Latin, “*audīvet symphoniam et chorum*,” into the emasculate sentence, “and he heard music and dancing,” when it should have been “and he heard the Bagpipe and dancing.” Not as a scholar—which I do not profess to be—but as a lover of fairplay, and a Highlander who has some regard for this old and “semi-barbarous” instrument, I must enter my protest here, and assert that the Bagpipe deserves better recognition in the future from critics and translators than it has had vouchsafed to it in the past.

It should no longer be entirely slurred over in the New Testament, or marked only by a marginal reference in the Old ; and Greek scholars should recognise by now, that *Sumphonia* in the pages of Polybius, means a musical instrument, and only one musical instrument, the Bagpipe.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### THE NATIVITY AND THE BAGPIPE.

IT is a curious and interesting fact, that tradition associates piping with two of the greatest events which ever happened in the world's history: the Nativity and the Crucifixion. And it is more than passing strange, that Christ Himself should supply those, who like myself believe in the tradition of the shepherds piping on Christmas morn, with a very important link in the chain of evidence.

As I pointed out in last chapter, it has been asserted that the Bagpipe was unknown to the Jews, or at least that there was no evidence that it was known, and that it could not therefore be the instrument which these poor shepherds played upon.

Christ's reference to it in the parable of the Prodigal settles the question for all time: it shews clearly, that in His day the Bagpipe was well known to the pastoral peoples in Palestine, and further, that it was an instrument of some repute, otherwise it would not be found in the home of the rich and great.

Now, with regard to the traditions which have gathered round the birth and the death of our Lord,

THE ZAMPOGNA OF ITALY : THE OLD SUMPHONIA OF  
THE GREEKS.

Bought in Rome and presented to the Author by Mrs. AITKEN  
of Gartcows, Falkirk.







sacred and profane writers are at one in asserting that strange and hitherto unheard of phenomena marked these events.

The world, which was satiated with and heartily sick of its own licentiousness, was expecting and eagerly watching for the advent of a deliverer, and the expected at length came to pass, but not in the expected way. No earthly, no human pomp and glory, found room for display in a cold rude manger. The simple birth was a distinct disappointment to the Jews, with their love of phylacteries and fondness of outward display. It was different, however, with nature.

We read in the Gospel of St. James of strange happenings which took place at the birth of Christ: of how the world stood motionless in awe and wonder! Of how the song of bird, and the lowing of calf, and the bleat of lamb, was hushed; and the chatter of women was turned into silence. And there were workmen lying on the earth with their hands in a vessel and—to give the very words of St. James, they are so extraordinary!—"those who handled did not handle it, and those who took did not lift, and those who presented it to their mouth did not present it, but the faces of all were looking up; and I saw the sheep scattered, and the shepherd lifted up his hand to strike, and his hand remained up; and I looked at the stream of the river, and the mouths of the kids were down and were not drinking; and everything which was being propelled forward was intercepted in its course."

To the shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem a glimpse of the real glory of the event was shewn; wonderful sights were seen, and angel voices spoke glad tidings. To these lonely midnight watchers, guarding their flocks from the attack of wild beast, or roaming thief, the hush and the darkness were suddenly broken into. A great light shone round about them, and out of the midst of it came a voice like a trumpet call—the voice of the Herald Angel proclaiming “Peace on earth, to men of goodwill.” Quickly these two phenomena came, and as quickly they fled, and once more all was still on the plains, but for the tumultuous beating of overjoyous hearts, and once more all was darkness but for the glorious light which shone within, never more to be quenched.

As the great, the all-absorbing, truth dawned upon these simple folk in all its radiancy, they felt their joy too great to be “pondered in their hearts”; it must have some outward expression, and what better way than Christ’s way in the parable of the Prodigal Son.

So, tuning up their Bagpipes, while the wondering sheep gathered around, they gave vent to their surcharged feelings in sweet strains of praise that startled for the second time on that eventful night the starry silence of the skies.

This beautiful tradition is still kept alive in the Roman Catholic Church.

In Rome, or in any of the great cities in Italy, it is the habit of the people to erect at Christmas time



a grotto representing the manger in which Christ was born. In it they place a live ox and a live ass, while Mary is represented by a young woman with a baby in her arms.

Some distance beyond is a green patch with shepherds piping ; these pipers are always present ; they represent the shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem.

At Christmas time, too, the shepherds come down in numbers from the hills to the towns, and there they stand all day long playing before the little shrines of the Virgin and her Child, which are to be seen at the corners of the streets.

An Englishman once—with more money possibly than sensibility—a well-groomed, pompous Englishman!—said with a sneer to one of these humble players, “Who are you playing to?” The shepherd pointed to the shrine of the Virgin Mary. “What!” said the Englishman, “do you think a grown-up woman could enjoy such wretched music as yours?” “Ah!” said the poor man, “*it is to the child I am playing ; children are easily pleased.*”

In my experience, nothing pleases the little ones more than the Bagpipe.

I remember once coming home late for dinner. I found the house quiet and deserted. The mother had gone out with the children to some entertainment. Nobody seemed to expect me, so, tired and worried, I threw myself down before the fire to rest. At that moment my eye fell on one of the many Bagpipes which I keep lying about. “Ah!” I thought, “now

for a tune ! it's the very thing I want. *Fiat justitia, ruat cælum*. Should the heavens rain, I will have a tune." So, taking up the Pipe, I soon played myself back into a comfortable state of mind. I had scarcely laid the instrument down when a knock at the door announced the nurse. "Please, sir, do you want anything to eat?" "My sensations decidedly tend that way," I said; "but where have you been? Where is everybody?" "Out, sir; I am left alone with baby, and when she discovered that her mother had gone out, and the rest of the children with her, she got into a state of panic, and it has been the cry with her ever since, 'Hold baby's hand, nuss! Hold baby's hand!' But this is what I wanted to tell you, sir. You had not been playing many seconds, when she said to me, 'Let doe baby's hand, nuss! 'Oo can doe now! Baby's doin' to seep!' and she did go to sleep while you were still tuning up."

I could not resist the temptation of having a peep into the nursery, and stole upstairs on tip-toe, and there lay the little one—the lately, wide-eyed, terror-stricken one—with a smile upon her lips, sound asleep; dreaming, perhaps, of the piper-shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem: a little pink spot upon her sweet cheek alone hinting at the late storm, through which she had passed.

Children as a rule do love the Bagpipe, as I have had innumerable opportunities of proving; but it may be, as the poor Italian piper said, only "because they are easily pleased."

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### AN OLD TRADITION.

NOW! if the world were awe-struck at the Nativity, it was thunder-stricken at the Crucifixion. "For three hours," St. Matthew tells us, "there was darkness over all the land." And when the weary spirit of the Crucified One, with "a loud cry," passed into the beyond, "behold the veil of the temple was rent in twain from top to bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; and the graves were opened; and the sleepers awoke."

When the Jewish mob, filled with insensate passion, cried aloud for the blood of our Lord, and its prayer was granted, then did the Christian religion become firmly established.

Then did the old gods, tottering, fall each from his golden chair.

Then did the oracles become for ever dumb.

Then did the Pipe fall from the nerveless fingers of the dying Pan.

There is a tradition, first mentioned by Plutarch, who wrote a few years after our Lord's death, recording strange happenings which he attributes to Pan's

death, but which are supposed really to have occurred at the Crucifixion.

It would have given a too great prominence to the small, and—from the heathen point of view—insignificant body called Christians, to attribute any such extraordinary events as then happened, to the death of their leader: the heathen gods in such a case would be altogether eclipsed by the new and as yet little known God, Christ. And so Plutarch tells the story in his own way, with a bias towards heathendom. Can we blame him heavily for this: for being faithful to the gods of his fathers, and to the religion instilled into his mind by his parents from his youth upwards? To understand the story which Plutarch tells, you have to read between the lines, keeping St. Matthew's narrative in view. The old order is passing away, and this is the heathen writer's description of an event in which he may be said to have participated.

One day,—he tells us—a sailor who was steering his ship through the narrow windings of the *Ægean* Sea, heard a voice commanding him in imperious fashion, to cry aloud when he arrived at a certain place, "Pan, Great Pan, is dead!"

An eerie message to deliver, and got in an eerie way, but the unseen voice shall be obeyed! This brave mariner accordingly, when opposite *Palodis*, which was the appointed place, stepped on to the poop of his ship, and raising his voice, cried aloud, in stentorian accents, "Pan, Great Pan, is dead!"

And while his cry still reverberated from shore to

shore, and from rock to rock, there went up from all nature a cry of deepest agony and distress.

“ And that dismal cry rose slowly,  
And sank slowly through the air ;  
Full of spirits melancholy  
And eternity’s despair !  
And they heard the words it said—  
Pan is dead—great Pan is dead—  
Pan, Pan is dead.”

The sorrow was real, and the cry of anguish was the cry of a thousand breaking hearts. Pan was a great favourite with man and beast. His music was divine. To dance to it once was to dream of it for ever. The woodland creatures well may mourn, for now that Pan is dead, no longer will nymphs and swains dance in the cool of the evening to the piping of the great piper. No longer will the birds of the air and the beasts of the field gather round to listen to the god’s sweet music. No more will his merry strains be heard at feast or harvesting. There is none to fill Pan’s chair.

No wonder, then, if at such a time, sounds of universal mourning fill the grove and echo through the vale.

The sun heard the cry in high heaven, and fled shuddering to its rest through lowering banks of golden cloud ; the sea was troubled and turned to blood ; the air grew dark and sulphurous.

And again, and again, and yet again, that mournful sound as of universal weeping, and of wailing, and of great lamentation, rose out of the darkness

and swept over the land, and sped along the deep.

The awful scenes, as depicted in the pages of Plutarch, might well stand for a representation of Dante's "Inferno." The very earth rocked on its axis.

" And the rowers from the benches  
Fell, each shuddering, on his face—  
While departing influences  
Struck a cold, back through the place :  
And the shadows of the ships  
Reeled along the passive deep—  
Pan, Pan is dead."

In the last verse, Mrs Browning places the tradition before us in exquisite phrase, wresting it from its heathen setting and giving it its proper Christian interpretation. She tells us why nature was thus convulsed : why the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in twain.

" 'Twas the hour when One in Sion  
Hung for love's sake on a cross—  
When His brow was chill with dying  
And His soul was faint with loss :  
When His priestly blood dropped downward,  
And His kingly eyes looked throneward—  
Then, Pan was dead."

With the passing away of the old god in such tragic fashion, much that made life worth living in those so distant times also departed. With much that was dissolute and false, much also that was wholesome and true, such as the *Sumphonias et*

*chorum* of St. Matthew, was swept away in the cataclysm of events succeeding the Crucifixion, and a great blank was left in the lives and thoughts of men, which for a time, not even the new God—Christ—could fill. The old music of the Bagpipe, about this time retired from the notoriety gained in town and village on the plains, to the quiet and exclusion of the everlasting hills, and we hear little more of it for three hundred years or more ; truly,

“ The old order changeth, yielding place to new,  
And God fulfils Himself in many ways  
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.”

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### THE ROMANS AND THE BAGPIPE.

**M**ANY people to-day believe that the Romans were the inventors of the Bagpipe. Many people also believe that the Celt borrowed it from the Romans.

Both beliefs, fostered largely—I am sorry to say—by expert ignorance in the past, are erroneous.

The Bagpipe was first introduced to the Greeks in the early half of the second century, B.C.

Two hundred years later it was still unknown to the citizens of Rome; which fact settles once and for all their claims to its invention.

Granted that the Bagpipe came from without, its earlier introduction into Greece is what one would expect when the history of the two peoples is kept in mind. Greece was a mighty world-wide power, while Rome was still in swaddling clothes, and she naturally—pushing out her colonies, now here, now there—came first in contact with the Celt, and with the Celt's instrument, the Bagpipe.

Her dominions extended from Italy—the southern half of which she occupied—and Sicily on the west,



to India on the east ; from the countries round the Black Sea on the north, to Alexandria and the Nile Valley on the south ; and at every point she came in contact with new peoples, including three separate Celtic nationalities ; civilising and being civilised ; teaching and being taught.

It was not until hundreds of years after, and only when Grecian influences were on the wane, that Rome rose to greatness. Then, and then only was she able, largely out of the ruins of "*Magna Græciæ*" to build up for herself that mighty empire, which at one time looked like lasting till the crack of doom.

It is no wonder then, that Greece first adopted the Bagpipe, or that the Romans, finding it in Sicily and Calabria after they became masters in these places, retained it in their service, but without improving upon it in any way, and have kept it even to the present day as the Greeks left it, and with the old Greek name of the harmonious one still attached to it.

But what of the Celt borrowing it from the Roman ?

This contention is easily disproved by the following references to the Bagpipe, taken from Roman history.

Mr MacBain, of Inverness, quotes the Rev. Mr MacLachlan, of London—a well-known Gaelic scholar—as being on his side, when he denies that the Pipe was known to any of the early Celtic nations ; but history is against Mr MacBain in this one, as in others of his many fallacies on the Bagpipe. We

have a history of two events of different dates to help us in coming to a decision on this question.

The first event is one taken from the recorded life of the Emperor Nero, which makes it pretty certain that the Bagpipe was unknown to the citizens of Rome up to the year A.D. 67.

Nero's reign was drawing to a close. The emperor had staged many a fine play for the Romans, but none so grand, from the spectacular point of view, as that upon which the tragic curtain had just been rung down. In this scene, Rome, the Empress City of the world, was to be seen in the background in flames, while in the foreground, illuminated by the glorious blaze of the doomed city, stood Nero, gloating over his own handiwork, and dancing as he fiddled. But now the curtain is being run up for the last time, and it is in connection with the closing scene in that pageant of horrors, that the Bagpipe as a Roman instrument first comes on the stage.

Utterly sickened by their ruler's licentiousness and accumulated cruelties, the citizens of Rome at length rose up against him. Blood for blood, was their cry; and Nero, seeing that they really meant mischief, turned coward, and fled for his life to a friend's house, some four miles out of the city. But the infuriated mob, thirsting for fresh excitement—the killing of an emperor was something new—were close upon his heels, and the conscience-stricken man, now half mad with fear, sent a trusty servant to meet his pursuers and give

a message from him, in the hope of appeasing their righteous anger, and of staying their further advance. His message—a silly one at best ; a most unkingly message!—was in effect : “ Give me another chance ; spare my life this time, and I will provide you with a treat—a something quite novel, and which you have never witnessed before : I will play you a tune on the latest and most marvellous of wind instruments, the Bagpipe.”

Now, whatever else Nero may have been, he was no fool. He knew his people well, and he knew—none better!—that the love of novelty was a ruling passion with the lower Roman orders. Many a time and oft had he kept them in good humour with his raree shows, even when he had to make the streets of Rome run with blood. The one essential, however, to success in these old Roman days was the novelty of the display—it must be something new.

And so, when the poor wretch believed that he could buy the bloodthirsty crowd off with a tune on the Bagpipe, we may be sure that the Roman ear had not been tickled with it before. In short, that the Romans and the Bagpipe were complete strangers to each other up to the closing days of Nero’s reign. These events happened in A.D. 67.

But in 35 B.C., almost one hundred years before Nero’s death, one of the Roman historians tells us that he heard this instrument, still strange to the Romans, played upon by the Celts inhabiting the mountains of Pannonia. Which again disposes

pretty effectually of the belief that the Celt borrowed it from the Romans, and also proves that it was a Celtic instrument long before it became a Roman one. As a matter of fact, the Bagpipe found its way into Rome by two doors. It came in from the north through the Celts, and from the south through the Greeks. From the north through Pannonia and Umbria, and from the south through Calabria and Sicily.

The Celts of Pannonia and Umbria were both powerful tribes in their day. It took the Romans two long and hard campaigns to subdue the former. The latter lived in the mountains to the north-west of Rome, and although only sixty miles from the walls of the Eternal City, retained its independence for many a long day; and those two Celtic nations used the Bagpipe, while the Roman players were for many a long year after, blowing upon the *tibia pares* or *impares*, with painfully distended cheeks and paralysed lips—a butt for the jester's wit.

This Pipe from the north was a one-drone Bagpipe with a chanter. The Romans called it *Tibia Utricularis*, but the Celts called it *Piob*, or, in full, *Pivalla*, and to-day, while the Roman name of *Tibia Utricularis* is forgotten, the Celtic name survives in the Italian *Piva*. The Romans called the piper in the old days *Utricularius*, but the Celt called him *Piobaire* (pron., *Peeparuh*), and to-day the Italians have dropped *Utricularius* and call their pipers *Pifferari*.

The Pipe, which came to the Romans from the

south, was a many-drone Bagpipe without a chanter, the *Συμφωνία* of the Greeks—the *Zampogna* of the Italians, and the piper was called *Zampognatore*. It was also called in the south the *Corna-Musa*, and the piper was then called *Suonatore de Corna-Musa*. To-day, however, the word for pipers all over Italy is *Pifferari*—the old Celtic word only slightly altered—and this is but right where a Celtic instrument is concerned, and is a good example of the survival of the fittest, for I do not suppose that the Umbrians ever used the name, *Tibia Utricularis* for *Piob*, nor did the Pannonian youth who were drafted into the Roman army.

These two Italian Pipes, both of which are shown in the illustrations which adorn the pages of this book, are as distinct now—the one from the other—as when different races inhabited the land. Their geographical distribution has remained the same for over two thousand years—so slow does the world move. And so conservative are the nations—even those which plume themselves upon their radicalism—that the old Celtic name of the Pipe survives in the north, and the old Greek name survives in the south of Italy, although the people to-day are of one race throughout the Peninsula—and that one a race neither Celtic nor Greek.

But, once more, we still find the Bagpipe flourishing in those countries where the old Greek and the old Roman found it. In Pannonia, now represented by Bosnia, Servia, and part of Bulgaria; in Roumania; round about Constantinople, where the

Boii, a powerful Celtic tribe, once flourished; and in Umbria—from whence came my *Tibia Utricularis*—it is still kept alive by the shepherds in the hills.

Thousands of years have left it the same simple, rude instrument that it was in early days, and the stranger to those countries may still hear among the mountains the same simple, primitive strains which greeted the ears of the astonished Greek soldier when he first passed through the Straits of the Dardanelles or coasted along the shores of the upper waters of the Adriatic.

It is certain, then, that the Romans were not the inventors of the Bagpipe, and that the Celt did not borrow the instrument from the Romans, but lent it to them.

Quite recently, I heard the statement put forward in all seriousness, that we Highlanders got the Bagpipe from the Egyptians. I was spending a few days last summer at Culfail, and when there I had the pleasure of meeting the kind and genial Laird of Melford, Captain Stoddart M'Lellan.

He displayed great enthusiasm over the Bagpipe, and all matters Celtic, and we became friendly for the day, owing to our tastes being in accord.

While discussing the *Piob-Mhor*, or Great War-Pipe of the Highlands, he suddenly asked me, "Where do you think the 'Pipes' came from originally?"

I answered cautiously, "Where?"

"From Egypt, of course!" he replied. "It is the *Sistrum* of Egypt. I was at a meeting lately in

**THE CELTIC PIVA OR BAGPIPE OF NORTHERN ITALY.**

The ancient Tibia Utricularis of the Romans — a very old Pipe, as the worn  
finger holes of the hard walnut chanter shew.

The gift of Mr SUTHERLAND, Solsgirth, Dollar.









London of pipers and one or two others interested in the Bagpipe, and we came to the conclusion that it came originally from Egypt."

I did not tell him that the Egyptian Pipe was nothing more nor less than the Greek *Sumphonia*, a borrowed instrument, but I said, "You are acquainted, I believe, with Eastern peoples, and speak several of their languages, and you have also studied, more or less, Egyptian hieroglyphics? Have you ever seen a Bagpiper in hieroglyphic?"

"No!"

"Then, why ascribe its origin to the Egyptians?"

"Well, you see, we came to that conclusion in London," which was no argument whatever, but the best which the gallant Captain could advance.

This craze, on the part of Highlanders especially, to find a far distant or outside origin for the Celtic Pipe, is more than puzzling to me. I cannot understand it at all. It was due at first, I think, to the mistake of the Lowlander, taking the old Highlander's blarney about its Roman origin, or its Scandinavian origin, or its Egyptian origin, as his real opinion and belief, while all the time the blarney was invented for the amusement of the inquisitive stranger.

The *Sistrum* and the *Sumphonia* of the Egyptians are two distinct instruments.

The *Sistrum* consisted of a long narrow box bent in horse-shoe shape, with the two ends fixed into a carved handle. Three or four metal rods were run through the box in loose sockets. When shaken,

this instrument produced a harmonious jingling quite pleasant to the ear.

There is, I believe, one reference to this *Sistrum* in Greek, under the title of *Sumphonia*, although I cannot at this moment recall where the reference is to be found. The Greek writer who gave this name to the *Sistrum*, must have used the word before it was applied to the Bagpipe, and when it meant only a harmonious combination of sounds such as the Greek instrument gave forth when struck. There is no other connection between *Sistrum* and Bagpipe that I am aware of, and if the Egyptians invented the Pipe for themselves, history and tradition are silent on the matter. The Greek Bagpipe was introduced into Egypt and was made familiar to the dwellers in Alexandria and surrounding districts by Antiochus among others, and Prudentius, the historian (b A.D. 300) informs his readers that the Egyptians of his day used this same Pipe to lead the soldiers on the battlefield.

In a magazine article which appeared lately, called "Arcadia, the Home of the Bagpipe," the writer claims the invention of the Bagpipe for the Greeks. This is entirely opposed to the teaching of the Greek myth which we have been considering.

There, the Bagpipe was the invention of one not originally a Greek: it was played on by an outsider, the Satyr, Marsyas; and if Marsyas, as many good scholars say, is no other than our old friend Pan, the Pipe judge—Midas of the long ears—was also

an outsider, and Arcadia was certainly not the original home of the Bagpipe.

From what race was the Greek likely to borrow the Bagpipe? The Greeks themselves tell us—and who should know so well?—that they borrowed their music largely from the Celt. The very fact that both Greek and Roman had various designations for Pipe and piper, while the Celt had only one, seems to me also to point to the latter as the inventor.

But while I hold, as much more than a “pious opinion,” that both nations got the Bagpipe from the Celt, it would be unfair to say that the Greeks and the Romans did not make any attempt to invent it for themselves.

The severe strain upon the piper’s cheek and lip muscles was realised to be a serious drawback by both peoples from a very early period, and the “faces” made by the poor players was for long a favourite butt with the court jesters.

To remedy this defect, both the Greeks and the Romans hit upon the same plan. Support was given to the tired muscles by means of an ingeniously arranged combination of leather straps, which were fastened to the head, and was called by the Romans the “little cap.” The remedy, however, proved worse than the disease. The straps on the face were held to be more ludicrous than the blown-out cheeks, and, as a matter of fact, the female players, who were the best judges in a question of beauty, refused to wear the “little cap,” and one cannot help sympathising with them.

The invention, then, of this cap, was the two great classical nations' sole contribution towards the solving of the problem, which the Celtic shepherd accomplished by putting the Pipe in a bag.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### THE SPREAD OF THE BAGPIPE.

**H**OW did the Bagpipe first find its way into Britain?

It followed in the footsteps of the Celt. There were two main Celtic invasions of Great Britain in the early days, with a considerable interval between the two, and many minor incursions during the centuries that followed.

There was also, for a long time, a constant going and coming carried on between the Celts in their new-found island home, and their friends and relatives who were left behind; and in this way the old traditions and customs peculiar to the race were kept alive: they had all things in common, so to speak, because the Celt of one tribe shared his knowledge with the Celt of another tribe; and this is not difficult to believe, when we remember that in those days there were no people so wedded to their own ways, so conservative in their habits, or so clannish towards each other as the Celtic peoples, and none so gifted with imagination or so musical. So lasting, indeed, are those racial characteristics,

that, even to-day, it is possible for a man of great authority on the fine arts—like Sir Hubert Parry—to say in all sincerity, that in spite of the advances which the world has made since the old days of which we write, the Celtic leaven still leavens the lump. “Celtic music,” he says, “is the most human, the most varied, the most poetical, and the most imaginative in the world.”

While written history then is silent as to the precise date of the introduction of the Bagpipe into Britain, we need not despair of fixing an approximate date for ourselves. There is little doubt that it arrived on our shores long before the Roman invasion, and this deduction we can safely make, if we can prove—which we have already done in the preceding chapter—that the Celt knew of the Bagpipe long before the Roman—we are not speaking here of its invention—and if we can prove that the different Celtic tribes kept in touch with each other long after they had broken away from the main body. In this latter case, if the Pannonians, or the Umbrians, or other Celtic body played on the Bagpipe—as history asserts that they did—their pipers would spread the custom among the other Celtic tribes, if these had not got a knowledge of it for themselves at the fountainhead.

Now, if you examine any good map of the ancient world, you will at once see how well Celt kept in touch with Celt. You will there find a range of Celtic colonies, extending in an almost unbroken succession—like so many links in a chain—from



the shores of the Black Sea to the English Channel, so that the different offshoots remained each within easy hail of the other, and communication between the most distant tribes would be easy and comparatively uninterrupted.

Along this Celtic chain, the Bagpipe travelled, and it is from these same old Celtic resting-places that my collection of Bagpipes has been gathered, and in these countries to-day, almost without exception, the Bagpipe still flourishes. And, indeed, I have found this combination of Celt and Bagpipe so persistent, that I have come to say, "Tell me where the old Celt settled, and I will tell you where to look for the Bagpipe."

The Pipe, after spreading over the greater part of Europe, had at first a very chequered career, more especially in the large centres of population, for it was ever a favourite with the scattered pastoral peoples. It was, in fact, a useful weapon to the shepherd, and all but indispensable, because "As sheepe love pyping, therefore shepherdes use the Pypes when they walk with their sheepe." But in the town, fickle fashion ruled, and as the Pipe's main use was now to while away time for the "Weary Willies" of society, it had its continual ups and downs, now basking in the sunshine of royalty, now treated as a pariah and an outcast.

It is not our intention to deal here with the many ups and downs which fell to the lot of the Bagpipe during its long career, but we would only remark, that the higher the wave of popularity on

which it was borne, the deeper was the succeeding trough of neglect into which it fell. Take the following—one example out of many—in illustration of this. When at the height of its fame in the seventh and eighth centuries, the Bagpipe might be heard at all important games and high festivals throughout Europe—wherever, in short, men were gathered together, even when the gathering was one of war; but from the ninth to the eleventh centuries the same instrument—without rhyme or reason perceptible—fell into complete disuse, and was almost unheard of in town or court. The usual revival followed this long period of repose, beginning in the eleventh century, and continuing well on into the thirteenth century, in the early years of which an event took place which had ultimately an important influence upon the Bagpipe in France.

In a secluded valley far away among the mountains, a little boy was born of humble parents. Colin Muset was his name. As he grew up he developed a genius for piping, and soon far outstripped his only teachers—the poor shepherds around. Stories of the boy's marvellous playing leaked out, and at length reached the court of France, and the ears of the king himself, who sent for Colin, and finding that his skill was even greater than report had made it out to be, offered him a post of honour in the royal household, which Colin accepted.

And here, surrounded by the royal favour, he lived and taught, and made popular the Pipe, and was loaded with honours and riches. There is no

doubt that Muset was a piper of note. He was the MacCrimmon of the thirteenth century. He also made great improvements in the construction of the Bagpipe, altering the scale and improving the reeds, and he is said to have been the first inventor of the Bellows-Pipe.

Another great revival took place about the time of the Louis'—Louis XIV. and XV. During these two monarchs' reigns, a regular craze for piping and the pastoral life spread like an epidemic throughout Europe—kings and queens neglecting the affairs of State, and shutting up their palaces, retired with their courts to some sweet, sylvan glade, far removed from the busy haunts of men, and putting themselves on an equality with their subjects, competed with them as shepherds and shepherdesses; each fair lady, in quaint, rustic fashion, striving to be more beautifully dressed than the other, while their royal lovers competed with each other upon the Shepherd's Pipe. The Pipe was the little Bellows-Pipe or *Musette*.

Here they led the simplest of lives—a healthy, bracing life—during the summer months. With no shelter from the storm but the spreading bough of the greenwood tree, and no bed but the soft, warm moss, and no covering but the forest leaves, and no roof but the blue vault of heaven: with no food but the simple fruits which the earth produced, and the warm, frothing goat's milk, fresh from the pail, and the clear water from the purling brook—the only wine with which they quenched their thirst—an ideal

life was lived, while, for a time, the burdens of State and the cares of society were left to look after themselves. Pastoral plays, written for the occasion, were enacted nightly, and pastoral music for the Bagpipe was composed in spates.

Their duties over for the day, these amateur shepherds filled in their spare time with piping and dancing. An artificial life, it might be in many ways, but a charming one.

This revival reached its height in the reigns of Louis XIV. and Louis XV., only to be followed once again by a gradual decline, which has lasted in France and the Continent to the present day, leaving traces, however, which are still apparent in the different countries, of the influence the Pipe once wielded over men's lives.

In Germany, for example, although the Bagpipe is now all but confined to the museums, it has been perpetuated on canvas in the sixteenth century by the great painter, Albert Durèr, among others, and immortalised in stone at Nuremberg, etc. Albert Durèr's picture is too well known to require further notice here. His piper, short kirtled to the knee, might well pass for a kilted Highlander.

At Nuremberg there is a fountain which is over three hundred years old, surmounted by a life-size piper, dressed in his old minstrel's cloak, with a one-drone Bagpipe on which he is playing, thrown over his shoulder, and through its chanter the sweet clear waters have flowed all these years.







THE HUNGARIAN BAGPIPE :  
A one-droned Pipe bought in Buda-Pesth.



I shew here a Bagpipe from Buda-Pesth; a poor, feeble, one-drone Pipe, reeded with straws, serving only to show that the Hungarians were once acquainted with it, and that it can have made little or no advance in their hands for hundreds of years. In Bulgaria — part of old Pannonia — the Pipe might still almost be called the national instrument, and is very common. It, too, is a very rude and homely instrument, although much superior to the Hungarian. The set of Bulgarian “Pipes” shewn is distinguished by the peculiar leaden crook at the end of the chanter, and by the lead ornamentation, which is only to be found in this country on very old Bagpipes. In France piping still goes on in one or two places, but the days of its glory have long since fled—days recalled to our memory as we wander through the picture galleries of Paris, by the frequent brush of the artist, who loved to depict pastoral life in the old days, with the piper always presiding over the dance.

*Chalumeau* was the French name for the Shepherd’s Bagpipe, but the Bellows-Pipe they named *Musette*. I have three different forms of French Bagpipe, which are photographed here. The first two—one from Auvergne, the other from Bretagne—are blown by the mouth—the third is the famous *Musette*, or Bellows-Pipe of France, and is made entirely of ivory, with silver keys attached to the chanter, which has two octaves; the Pipe has six drones.

The first Pipe—the French Shepherd’s Pipe or *Chalumeau*—came to me in rather a nice way.

You will notice that it has a drone placed alongside of the chanter, like its next neighbour, the Brittany Pipe; but it has also a second drone, inserted separately into the bag — evidently an after-thought on the part of its possessor. It is made of ebony and ivory, and a kind of spotted cane. The termination of the chanter is quite peculiar, and is an exact miniature, in bone, of the end of the large Calabrian pipe. The decoration is of lead, and a small mirror inserted into the stock is very “Frenchy” in appearance.

This curious little Pipe is evidently in a transitional stage. The original drone is the one which lies alongside the chanter, where the drone in early days was always placed. The advantage, however, of having the drone removed where it would not interfere with the fingering was evidently apparent to its owner, but his conservatism prevented him from altering the old arrangement, and so he simply added on a second drone.

I said above that this French Bagpipe came to me in rather a nice way. It also came with quite an interesting story attached.

Mademoiselle D—— was a Frenchwoman, endowed with all that vivacity and nameless charm which is so characteristic of her race.

She had lived long enough in Edinburgh to learn something of the Highlander, from frequently seeing detachments of Highland soldiers marching in and out of the Castle. She told me that she loved the kilt, and adored the Bagpipe. I had the honour and

A very old specimen of  
A TWO-DRONE FRENCH CHALUMEAU :  
From Avignon, in France.  
The gift of Mademoiselle D'ARTOUT.







pleasure of finishing her Highland education, by teaching her some Highland quicksteps.

One day when shewing her my collection of Pipes, I pointed out to her the French *Musette*, with its beautiful ivory chanter, and its ivory case of drones, and she was astonished as well as gratified to think that the French had such beautiful "Pipes" in the old days. But she was more astonished to be told that the Bagpipe was still played in France.

"But no!" she said. "But yes!" I answered. "In Picardy among other places, and in Brittany, and," I suggested, "probably also in Auvergne, where we are told that the purest Celtic race of to-day exists."

"Ah!" she said, "I may be going back to France some day, to the district of Auvergne, and I will listen for the Pipe. I promised long long ago, to go back if ever my old nurse's daughter should happen to get married, and she is now quite grown up."

In the following year, the expected wedding took place in Avignon, south of Auvergne. Mademoiselle D——, true to her promise, was there; and when she returned, she brought back with her the little Bagpipe, with the two drones, which you see in the picture.

Her story of the marriage reads like a description of an old Highland wedding. The bride's and bridegroom's parties came down from the hills in two separate processions, meeting for the first time that day at the church door. The one was headed by a fiddler, and the other by a piper. As Mademoiselle D—— walked up to the church where the wedding

was to be held, the first thing she heard was the sound of the "Pipes"; her delight was unbounded.

So, when the ceremony was finished in church, she spoke to the piper, and arranged with him to buy the Bagpipe, and take possession of it after the festivities were over. She also saw, at the dance, two little tin plates being handed round. The collections were for the musicians. The whole scene, in short, as related to me by Mademoiselle D——, reminded me of the weddings of my boyhood's days.

The invention of the bellows, as an adjunct to the Bagpipe, spread to other countries from France: unless, indeed, it was invented independently by each of these, which is very improbable.

The Bellows-Pipe found its way into Germany, Austria, Hungary, Roumania, and other countries by the banks of the Danube.

It also penetrated into England, Lowland Scotland, and Ireland; but the barrier of the Grampians stayed its further course in Scotland. It proved a costly innovation—as all so-called improvements have done, and are likely to do—by, for one thing, lessening its usefulness; and there followed, in the track of this improvement, the inevitable decline, and gradual disappearance of this emasculated instrument, until to-day it is little more than a thing of the past.

A ship's captain from Falkirk, who sailed regularly to the Black Sea, and who promised to look out for foreign "Pipes" for my collection, met a Roumanian piper one day, playing upon a Bellows Pipe in Bucharest, but being very Scottish, he did not



recognise it as a Bagpipe at all, *because it was not blown by the mouth.*

The reason for the decay of the Bellows Pipe is not far to seek: what it gains in sweetness, it loses in power; and it is no longer, as I said before, a useful instrument. With its correct sharps and flats, and its numerous keys, giving the scale a greater range of notes, it lends itself to other than Pipe music, and is thus at once brought into competition with more precise, more powerful, and more modern instruments; and it fails naturally, in the inevitable contest, to hold its own.

It has died out in France and Germany, and on the Continent, with the exception, perhaps, of Roumania. It certainly still lingers on in these Islands; in Northumberland, in Aberdeenshire, and in one or two parts of Ireland; but it has long lost the power to excite the admiration and enthusiasm of men, as the good old-fashioned, old-world Highland mouth-blown Pipe does.

We shall now quit the Continent—sketchy and altogether incomplete as our remarks on its Bagpipes have been—and devote the remaining portion of this book to the Pipe in Great Britain, and, above all, to the King of Bagpipes—the great War Pipe of the Highlands.

It would require several chapters to do justice to the History of the Bagpipe in England; but a few lines must suffice here.

The earliest reference to the English Pipe is one in an illuminated manuscript entitled “*St. Graal*,”

written in the thirteenth century. The Piper is drawn with the bag held in front of him, as it always was held at first—the *chorus* has the bag not only carried in front, but held clear of the body of the player, according to one writer—there are *two chanters*, and one large bell-mouthed drone attached to the bag.

The Celt in England refusing, like his brother Celt in Scotland, to bow the knee to the invader, was driven back slowly into the marshlands of Wessex and the fens of Lincolnshire, and across the borders into Wales and Scotland, where for many a long day he was able to keep the foe at bay. Here he lived the old life, keeping up the old customs which he had refused to give up at the bidding of the world, and the old music: and it is from these places of refuge that the Celts' special instrument, the Bagpipe, emerges later on.

Having once made its appearance, however, it soon became one of the most popular of instruments in England; for we find the piper installed at the English court as an honourable member of the king's household as early as the fourteenth century.

The Bagpipe was also much sought after by the officers of the English navy in days gone by; and this partiality of the English sailor for the "Pipes" was continued as late as the seventeenth century, when notices were to be seen all over the country, calling upon pipers to join the navy. To-day, the old custom still survives, and there are pipers on board several of H.M. battleships. Lord Charles

A BEAUTIFUL SPECIMEN OF THE FRENCH CHALUMEAU :

Made in the 17th Century. From the Basque Country.  
Presented to the Author by Mr SUTHERLAND of Solsgirth.







A Beautiful Specimen of  
THE MUSETTE,  
OR  
FRENCH BAGPIPE OF THE 17TH CENTURY.

This Pipe is made entirely of ivory, and has got a chanter of two octaves. The drones, five in number, are enclosed in an ivory case, like the old shuttle-pipe of Northumberland.









Beresford had the well-known piper, M'Crae, with him in the Mediterranean when in command of the fleet there, a few years ago. The sailor finds no instrument more to his taste when dancing "Jack-a-Tar," and no music trips more sweetly off the chanter than "The Sailor's Hornpipe."

The Bagpipe was never, so far as we can determine, used by the English as a war instrument on land. They used it, however, as a peace instrument in religious services very generally at one time.

A piper frequently made one of the church choir; and Chaucer, who makes the first literary reference to the Pipe in England, tells us that a bagpiper—what more fitting companion could the saints have?—marched, or rode, in front of the bands of pilgrims on their way to some favourite shrine—a frequent sight in those days—cheering on the weary-footed with his gay music.

Chaucer's picture of the lusty miller puffing and blowing on the Bagpipe, and rousing lone echoes on the dusty road as he heads the long line of pilgrims, marching from Southwark to Canterbury, and Beckett's shrine, will live as long as the English language itself.

Not only was the Bagpipe used in religious services in early England, but the priest was himself occasionally a piper. Brand, in his "Popular Antiquities," says: "I know a priest—this is a true tale that I tell you, and no lye—which, when any of his friends should be married, would take his Backe-Pype and so fetch them to church, playing sweetly afore them:

and then he would lay his instrument handsomely on the aultare till he had married them and said masse: which thing being done, he would gently bring them home again with Backe-Pype."

Let me finish this quaint picture of the olden times, and at the same time shew how similar were the customs in Scotland, by giving you a Scotch story of a priest, who was also a piper, and not afraid to use the Bagpipe on solemn occasions.

The Rev. Mr M'Donald, of Ferintosh, was a famous piper in his day. He, however, began his ministrations as piper where his English brother left off. He did not play the company to church, but after he had married the couple, and got the company safely back to the hall of feastings, he would take up his Bagpipe and play to the dancers until a certain hour, *which he first fixed upon*, when he would send the people home to bed, locking the door behind him, so that they could not renew the festivities when his back was turned, even if so inclined.

Not many years ago the pipers of a Highland regiment took part in the performance of a sacred cantata in York Cathedral, and their playing had a beautiful effect, according to the reports in the daily papers, and was much admired by the English audience.

Shakespeare, Spencer, Milton, and several other great writers, also mention the Bagpipe in England. From drawings of the time, we learn that the Pipe was composed at first of a simple chanter, or of a





1. The first part of the paper is devoted to the study of the properties of the function  $f(x)$  defined by the equation

THE NORTHUMBRIAN SMALL PIPES :  
The gift of Mr MARSHALL, Newcastle-on-Tyne.



chanter and one drone, similar to the Scotch and Irish Pipe of the same period.

There are engravings of the Bagpipe in many parts of England, as, for example, on a screen at Oxford, of date, 1403; in Henry VII.'s chapel; at Cirencester, Hull, Beverly, and many other places. In Exeter Cathedral there is a carving in stone of the choir, with a piper in their midst. The date is the fourteenth century.

The Drone Pipe, as it was called, was in use in Lincolnshire until quite recently. It was also in use in Northumberland until the middle of last century, when it was superseded by the Northumbrian or "Small Pipe."

The form of Northumbrian Pipe which I shew on the opposite page, has a closed chanter, and is quite peculiar to Northumberland. It is, in fact, the only example of the closed chanter in the world. This form of Pipe is a great improvement upon the older Pipe, with open chanter, a specimen of which I also shew here.

The open chanter is an older form of instrument than the closed chanter, and is at best but a poor peepy-weepy sort of Pipe.

As a writer in 1796 says—"It slurs the notes, which is unavoidable from the remarkable smallness of the chanter—not exceeding eight inches in length—for which reason the holes are so near each other that it is with difficulty they can be closed, so that in the hands of a bad player they (*sic*) become the most shocking and unintelligible instrument imaginable."

The modern Northumbrian Pipe, with chanter closed at the bottom, is free from these defects, as it plays all its tunes in the way called by the Italians *staccato*, and cannot slur at all.

Both these Pipes—the last survivals of the Bagpipe in England—are, I need hardly say, Bellows Pipes.

The drones in Northumbrian Pipes are sometimes enclosed in a case, like that of the French Musette, and the Pipe is then known as the Shuttle Pipe.

The Bagpipe at one time occupied an important place in the Irish economy also.

It was the war instrument of the Kernes and was a two-drone instrument in the sixteenth century; it was blown by the mouth, and was identical in every way with the old Northumbrian and Scotch Bagpipe.

The Irish piper, also, was a man held in high esteem, and ranking as a gentleman.

The story of M'Donel, the Irish piper, is said to be quite authentic.

When he went abroad he had his horse to carry himself to the place of entertainment, and a servant to carry his Pipe.

One day a gentleman who was having a large company to dinner engaged M'Donel's services to entertain his guests.

With more than questionable taste, considering the standing of the piper, he had a table and a bottle of wine on it, and a chair set for him on the landing, outside the dining-room door.

The piper's pride was roused when he saw the







### THE GREAT IRISH PIPE

With double bass regulator and 27 keys.

This Pipe is made of ebony and ivory with brass mountings, and was said to have been a gift from the late Queen Victoria to one Ferguson, a blind piper in Dublin.

reception prepared for him; so quickly filling his glass, he stepped into the room and drank off the wine, saying—"Mr Grant, your health and company."

"There, my lad, he said to the servant appointed to wait upon him, "is two shillings for my bottle of wine, and a sixpence for yourself."

He then mounted his horse and rode off in state.

But, with the adoption of the bellows by the Irish piper a rapid decline in public estimation came about; and to-day there is not one piper of any note in all the Green Isle. I shew here several different forms of Irish Pipe, which explain themselves better than I could do.

The large set, with no fewer than twenty-seven keys on it, is said to have been a presentation by late Queen Victoria to one Ferguson, a blind piper, who played in and out of the large hotels in Dublin in the early part of last century. Such a Pipe would cost anything from £30 to £50 and upwards, and it came to be known as the Irish Organ. When played on as an organ, the chanter was put out of use by having the neck of the bag twisted tightly, and the piper devoted both hands to the keys of the regulators.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### THE PIPER.

“Who being a Gentleman, I should have mentioned sooner.”—  
BURT’S LETTERS, 1730.

“**I** KNOW no man,” writes J. M. Barrie, “who is so capable on occasion of looking like twenty as a Highland piper.”

Dr M’Culloch, who wrote nearly one hundred years earlier, says the same thing, but in somewhat different fashion.

“The very sight of the important personage,—the piper—the eye of pride, and the cheek of energy, the strut of defiance, and the streaming of the pennons over the shoulder, form in themselves an inspiring sight.”

No book on the Bagpipe would be complete which did not devote a chapter to the piper.

The piper, as Captain Burt said, was a Gentleman in the old days, and a very important member of the clan. None was more useful than he in piping times of peace; none more in evidence when the glen resounded to the tocsin of war. The clan piper was frequently a cousin or near relative of the chief’s,



and held his lands in fee simple, and never needed to soil his hands with manual labour.

He was often an educated man, and a much-travelled one, as it was his duty to follow his chief to the wars.

He was welcome in the best company, and was treated as an equal by the gentlemen of the clan, and had every reason for holding his head high, and "looking like twenty."

His house was generally superior to his neighbour's: his croft, too, was much larger than the ordinary croft. The lands on Boreraig, in Skye, held for several generations by the MacCrimmons, pipers to M'Leod of M'Leod, is now divided, if I am not mistaken, into seven crofts, supporting seven families.

A general who had been through the late war in South Africa, speaking in public recently, said that, next to being a general, he would be a bugler boy. Well, if I had my choice, I would, next to being the king's physician, be a piper in a Highland regiment, or—if it were only possible—the clan piper in the olden days.

The stately carriage of the piper in times gone by was proverbial. The blow-pipe, which was at first very short, and is so still in all other Bagpipes, was lengthened by the Highlander to allow of the piper marching with head erect.

And why shouldn't he carry himself with a proud air? He could look back upon a long line of ancestors, who gained by their own skill the reward

due to it, and whose courage on the battlefield has never been questioned.

Leaving out of account the three pipers of royal birth—Antiochus of Syria, Nero of Rome, and King “Jamie,” the poet king of Scotland—there is still much to be proud of from the piper’s point of view, and the remaining records have quite a respectable air of antiquity.

The very first piper mentioned in Scottish history is already, *i.e.*, in 1362, a member of the king’s household. He is also of high rank in the household—some seventh or so, if we are to judge by his position at the Welsh and English courts.

When trying to estimate the antiquity of the Bagpipe in Scotland, it is important to remember this fact, that the piper, early in the fourteenth century, was already a man of mark, the associate of men of birth and education, he himself being probably the most learned of the lot.

For it is not a matter of conjecture that the piper was thus early assuming the duties of the minstrel, just as the minstrel had previously usurped the duties of the bard.

Now, when we remember how men devoted half a lifetime, and more, to the acquiring of the special knowledge without which they could not become bards, and that to this we must add the weary years devoted to the piper’s special calling, it will be seen that his education was no sham but very real, and there is little doubt that King David’s piper owed

THE PIPER IN CAMP :

" A quiet afternoon."







his influence in the royal household as much to his general knowledge as to his skill in piping. At court he was the "Poet Laureate"—the composer and singer of songs, the reciter of old-world tales, the storehouse of ancient traditions, the repositor of genealogies—a royal almanac, in short, consulted by high and low. With an unbridled tongue, licensed to speak the thoughts which came uppermost, no man was safe from its lash, not even royalty itself; and it is on record that old King Hal once put out the eyes of a minstrel who ventured for the second time, after full warning, to lampoon his sacred person.

Combining the duties of bard and of minstrel in his own person, the piper-bard stood forth on the battlefield as a separate entity, wielding more influence over the fortunes of the fight with his impassioned War Song than twenty good claymores. To offend so powerful a personage was to waken up some fine morning and find oneself famous in scathing epigram or humorous verse—the laughing-stock of the world—a kind of celebrity which the real Highlander even to-day dreads and avoids like the plague.

The Clan piper never carried the Bagpipe himself; to do so would be considered menial: this custom he brought down with him from the golden age of minstrelsy. He never handled the "Pipes," except when playing on it, and had a boy (*gille-piobaire*) to carry it for him. When finished playing, he handed it back to the *gille*, or, as one writer affirms, "threw down the Pipe disdainfully on the ground," to make it clear to his audience that any merit in the

performance was due to the player, and not to the instrument.

Is it likely, then, that the Piper, if he came from the outside—from England, as Mr M'Bain says—would be found, immediately on his arrival, in this exalted position of king's Piper? What could a stranger know of the minstrel's or bard's duties at the Scottish Court?

If it is a far cry from the little soft-voiced shepherd's Pipe, made of "ane reid and ane bleddir," to the great, loud-sounding king of war instruments, it is also, I should say, a far cry from the shepherd's cot, the birthplace of the Pipe in the Highlands, as elsewhere, to the king's palace, where we find it naturalised in 1362.

We have a good example of the slow growth of the Bagpipe in the Bulgarian or Spanish Pipe, which is as crude and primitive to-day as it was in the days of the Romans; and common sense surely asserts that the Piper's skill could only keep pace with the improvement of the instrument, and was of no mushroom growth, nor the work of one generation, but of many.

Let those therefore, who argue that the Bagpipe is a late introduction in the Highlands explain the post of king's Piper, already instituted in the fourteenth century, and explain how *Poibaireachd*, that most complicated and classical species of music, was so speedily evolved, by the early Piper in the Highlands, out of his new-fangled Pipe—almost as soon, indeed, as he had fingered the chanter.



Captain Burt's story, mentioned previously, is so apropos to the Piper and his claim to the title of musician, that we quote it here in full.

The incident mentioned happened about 1720, nearly 200 years ago.

"The captain of one of the Highland companies," writes the gallant Englishman, "entertained me some time ago at Stirling with an account of a dispute that happened in his *corps* about precedence. This officer, among the rest, had received orders to add a drum to his Bagpipe as a military instrument ; for the Pipe was to be retained, because the Highlandmen *could hardly be brought to march without it*. Now the contest between the drummer and the piper arose about the post of honour, and at length the contention grew exceedingly hot, which the captain having notice of, he called them both before him, and in the end decided the matter in favour of the drum, whereupon the piper remonstrated very warmly—"Ads wuds, sir," says he, "and shall a little rascal that beats upon a sheepskin take the right haund of me, *that am a musician!*"

The two jolly captains, one or both English, made merry over the piper's claim to be called a musician, because they were ignorant of the history of the piper, and of the long and severe training he had to submit to before he became a finished piper. Otherwise they must have known that the piper had authority and custom on his side. The piper, at all events, was not afraid to remonstrate warmly with his superior officer on the injustice of the decision

come to : he respected himself if no one else did, and carried his head high accordingly.

Six or seven hundred years ago, we learn from old records, the piper belonged to the Guild of Minstrelsy. And why was he admitted to this close corporation ? Because he was a musician ! On two occasions, at least, history informs us that the king's permission was granted to *his piper* to go over the seas to study music.

This guild was a very powerful body, with branches all over Europe.

It had courts, appointed by royal charter, at the different centres ; these being managed by regular officers.

The head officer was called *Le Roi*, or king, and he was assisted by four officers.

These courts had jurisdiction over the members, dealing out fines and imprisonments, and the members could elect to be tried by these courts for any misdemeanours short of murder or serious crime. They were elected every year with great ceremony, and existed down to the end of the seventeenth century.

Many privileges were granted by successive sovereigns to the members of this guild, until it became overweening in its pride. The heads of the order always rode on horseback, and had each a servant to carry his instrument, whether harp, Bagpipe, viol, crowd, or fiddle, as the case might be.

Large sums of money were given to them when they had to appear at court in connection with some

great function, such as a royal marriage ; and many enjoyed annuities from the king.

They had the right of entry into the king's palace, and—by implication—into the knight's castle, and claimed as a right both meat and drink and a bed from gentle or simple wherever they went.

There are many entries in the Exchequer Rolls of Scotland which shew that English pipers frequently appeared before the king at Linlithgow Palace and elsewhere.

Some people have argued from this that the Bagpipe was not much known in Scotland, or there would be no need for English pipers at the Scottish court. But these frequent appearances simply shew that, although Englishmen, yet, as members of the Guild of Minstrelsy, these pipers claimed, and were not denied. "the right of entering into the king's palace." And the Scottish minstrels as frequently returned the compliment by visiting the English court.

The leading members of the guild—for there were graduations of rank, all of which were known by their dress—were distinguished by a specially beautiful short mantle and hood made of the finest materials, and embellished in the most extravagant manner with rich embroideries.

One writer, a poet, who was evidently left out in the cold by the guild, and jealous in consequence, advises knights to dress more plainly, as in their fine feathers they are apt to be mistaken for minstrels.

“ Now thei beth disgysed  
So diverselych i-dight,  
That no man may know  
A mynstrel from a knight  
Well my :  
So is meekness falt a down  
And pride aryse on hye.”

The pride here complained of by the poor poet was soon to have a fall, when, unfortunately for him, the ranks of the starving poets would be still further augmented ; but not just yet.

It took many repressive enactments by successive sovereigns before the once powerful guild was stripped of power and pride of place.

On one occasion, at least, a minstrel *rode* into the royal presence unmolested. Here is the statement of the fact.

“ When Edward II. this year (1316) solemnised the Feast of Pentecost, and sat at table in the great hall of Westminster, attended by the peers of the realm, a certain woman dressed in *the habit of a minstrel*, riding on *a great horse, trapped in the minstrel fashion*, entered the hall, and going round the several tables, acting the part of a minstrel, at length mounted the steps to the royal table, on which she deposited a letter. Having done this, she turned her horse, and saluting all the company, she departed.” On the doorkeepers being remonstrated with for admitting a lady, they replied “that it never was the custom of the king’s palace to deny admission to minstrels, especially on such high solemnities and feast days.”

The minstrel’s cloak and the minstrel’s trappings

on the horse evidently rendered the bold rider inviolate, etiquette assenting.

We also read in an early Irish record, of date 1024, that "the piper in Ireland had the right of entry into the king's house by night or day, and the privilege of drinking of the king's beer."

In the Scottish Exchequer Rolls there are numerous payments to pipers and other minstrels, not always princely in amount; and an idea has got abroad that these pipers were badly paid.

I have said before that they were better paid than were the priests, and the following account shews how handsomely the minstrel was paid at times, and how high he stood in the esteem of the great and wealthy.

In the year 1290, two of England's royal daughters got married—one in May, the other in July.

To both ceremonies came minstrels from many countries, playing upon many instruments.

On the first occasion 426 minstrels attended, including three "Roys," or kings—viz., King Grey of England, King de Champagne from France, and King Cawpenny from Scotland.

The bridegroom presented a sum equal to £1500 of our money to be distributed among the minstrels, each of the kings receiving £50 as his share.

On the second occasion there were six kings. These included our three friends above mentioned, now designated as "Le Roy Robert," "Le Roy de Champagne," and "Le Roy Cawpenny"—the latter a characteristic name surely for a Scotchman. Each

of the six kings received the same sum again of £50.

In all, on this occasion some £3000 of our money was distributed amongst the minstrels.

Now, many people always associate the harp, and the harp alone, with the minstrel ; but the term is a generic one, and means a musician—a musician of any sort.

The word “harper,” in the same way, grew in time to mean any musician ; and so the harper’s seat in Mull, and the harper’s croft : and the harper’s window at Duntulin, in Skye, probably applied equally well to the piper or the fiddler, and does not necessarily mean that harpers, as distinguished from pipers or fiddlers, filled these seats.

In England, of course, the harp, which was an Anglo-Saxon instrument, and the favourite one, was the constant companion of the minstrel there, and thus got so closely associated with his calling in people’s minds that minstrel and harper became synonymous terms. And the following three incidents, which I mention to shew the great immunity accorded to the minstrel in the olden times by friend and foe alike, and which happened to the Saxon, centre naturally round the Saxon weapon, the harp.

Every one is familiar with the story of King Alfred and the harp? of how he once played the harper or minstrel, and passed through the Danish camp in his disguise, unmolested ; and of how afterwards he turned to good account the secrets which he picked up from the Danes.

But there is a much earlier instance of the same kind, which occurred somewhat as follows, about 450 A.D.

Colgrin, the leader of the Saxons, was besieged by the British in the town of York.

He had agreed to surrender on a certain day if no help came to him, as the water supply had been cut off, and the food supplies were running terribly short, and he had all but lost hope of some expected reinforcements.

At this juncture his brother, who was the bearer of news from the outside, came boldly up to the British lines, having first, however, "*shaved his head and face*, and assumed the minstrel's cloak." In this disguise he passed up and down through the British lines singing and playing to the unsuspecting soldiers. When night arrived he got into the moat and played an air, which was immediately understood by the soldiers inside the fortifications. By means of ropes he was lifted over the wall, and gave his brother the joyful news that reinforcements were on the way, and would be at the gates in three days.

All idea of surrender was then over, and the British had ultimately to raise the siege. This story would lead one to infer that the minstrel in the fifth century shaved in a peculiar fashion to distinguish him from the common crowd, as well as wore the minstrel's cloak.

The third incident is perhaps better known, because of the flavour of romance with which the two central

figures are surrounded. The story of Blondel's successful adventure in quest of King Richard has always been a favourite tale with the English people. During one of the many wars waged by England on the Continent, Richard was taken prisoner, and his captors managed to smuggle him away so secretly that none of his friends, although they hunted "high and low," could learn of his whereabouts. His faithful minstrel continued the search after all the rest had given up hope of ever finding the king. With his harp for sole companion, he visited every keep and stronghold on the road, and under the frowning walls of each he sang always the first verse of a song which had been a favourite of the imprisoned monarch, and waited often and wearily for the reply, which seemed as if it would never come. But one day—the day of days it was ever after to the brave and patient Blondel—out through barred window floated the second verse of the song in the well-known and beloved voice of his lord and master ; and the faithful harper's search was at an end.

This story shews that the minstrel's cloak was a protection to its wearer in foreign countries, as well as at home ; and as far back as history goes we find the same sense of security nestling under its ægis, and the same honour and respect accorded the wearer of it.

These three stories—and I could give many more such—point to the delight with which music inspired the early inhabitants of these islands ; but nothing can shew how great was the respect accorded to the



musician in those days better than the story of Blondel, which also demonstrates that the enemy's country, and even the enemy's camp, *in times of war*, were open to the visits of the man with the shaven head and the minstrel's cloak.

But, again, the minstrel took a much higher standing in the estimation of the people than the priest; and we have seen that he was better paid. It was in these early days that the seed of strife was sown between piper and priest, as the priest naturally grew jealous of the attentions paid the piper. When the glory passed away from the guild, and its membership no longer protected the piper, and he was classed with the "vagabond," then did the priest, who was rapidly acquiring fresh power, and a big hold over the people, do everything in his power to stamp out the poor musician who had so long robbed him of fat fees.

And what the Roman Catholic priest began so well in the South in the fifteenth century, the Free Church priest in the Highlands finished handsomely in the nineteenth century; so that it is no uncommon experience to meet with Highlanders to-day in Argyleshire and Inverness-shire—I speak of the two counties which I know best—who shut their ears in horror (or pretended horror!)—at the sound of the Bagpipe, and call the piper "a bad man." So much for the teaching of the Free Church. This may seem an exaggerated statement to make, but it is, alas! sober truth, to which many can testify, and is in accord with my own

experience, gained during many holiday wanderings through the Highlands and Islands.

Only last June I was staying in one of the smaller Western Islands, and there I became acquainted with one, Mrs M'Phee, a decent, God-fearing woman, albeit a little gloomy and severe, and with Highland manners which could not be improved upon, who looked after our golf clubs. On the last day of my stay in the island, feeling that the modest fee charged by her for cleaning the clubs was rather less than her due, I took my Bagpipe, and accompanied by a friend, started off to walk to her house, which was almost two miles from the hotel.

She lived in a very lonely spot, with no neighbours near, and I felt sure that a tune on the "Pipes" would be welcome, and would cheer her up a bit. When I told her of my mission, she—to my utter amazement—told me that she did not want to hear the "Pipes." "No! no! whateffer." At first I believed that she was only bashful, and began to play, but she soon undeceived me by her behaviour, and shewed that she was in deadly earnest. Her face grew black as night, and the children, who crowded behind her, as she stood in the doorway and struggled to get a peep at the "piper," she drove back into the house with strong Gaelic epithets. While I struggled along, piping under these adverse circumstances, Mrs M'Phee entered into a long and earnest talk with my friend, paying no attention whatever to poor me.

My performance otherwise was received with

chilly silence, and when I had finished there was not one word of thanks forthcoming. It was not in the cheeriest of moods that I walked to the links for my last game, and on the road, Mr — repeated the conversation that he had had with Mrs M'Phee, or rather which Mrs M'Phee had had with him, for she did all the talking, the while I inwardly blessed the cause of it all.

She told him that she did not *approve* of the Bagpipes, or of any secular music “whateffer,” and looked upon all such as part of the devil’s wiles to draw away people’s thoughts from heaven, and all that sort of thing. And she finished off with a very pointed rebuke to myself, saying, as she watched me fearfully out of the corner of her eye, “My father was a great piper, oh yes; and he won many prizes, and he played on the ‘Pipes’ until six years before his death, *when he became a good man, and destroyed his ‘Pipes,’* and I don’t want any of my children to learn them. The eldest one — *ah! Bheist!*!” — this to the boy as she caught him looking over her shoulder and listening, “he is too fond of the chanter already.” It was heart-breaking to me to find such prejudice and fanaticism in the Highlands, the old home of the Bagpipe: its innocent music condemned as ungodly; its cheery companionship refused; the piper shunned as a leper.

I often wonder how Mrs M'Phee’s children amuse themselves in that lonely spot during the dark and idle winter months, and think how much brighter

the house would be for an occasional tune on the despised Pipe.

Fond of music as these children are, what substitute does the Free Church mean to provide for them when they leave home and become dwellers in the great city with its "sins and sorrows?" Once free to follow the bent of their own fancy, music they will have, and in that day will music of the Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay type be as healthy, or as good for them, as that which their own Church denied them at home?

I said before, that the Priest gave the Piper a bad name once, and in some places it has evidently stuck to him ever since. He called them "Profligates, low-bred buffoons, *who blew up their cheeks* and contorted their persons, and played on harps, trumpets, and pipes for the pleasure of their lords, and who, moreover, flattered them by songs and ballads, for which their masters are not ashamed"—this is evidently the sore point!—"to repay these ministers of the Prince of Darkness with large sums of gold and silver, and *rich embroidered robes.*."

At times the piper did his best to earn this sorry character; but the old proverb, "As drunk as a piper," is, I think, misread. It came into existence in an age when the piper was a gentleman—as the Highland Clan piper always was—and it only meant that a piper could get as drunk as a gentleman, or get drunk, and still be a gentleman. In other words, that he could always play, stopping short in his drinking before the maudlin stage was reached.

“As fou as a fiddler,” on the other hand, meant the bestial form of drunkenness, of which no gentleman ever could be guilty. The old Crowder, in short, never was a gentleman, and did not know how to drink genteelly. He was a sot, and kept on swilling as long as a drop of liquor was left, or until the fiddle dropped through his listless fingers. I speak, of course, of the old days, long since gone, when the Guild was breaking up. From my own small experience of pipers and piping, I can bear testimony to the fact that drinking and piping go very badly together; and the piper who drinks immoderately has no reputation to lose, for he cannot win at competitions. There is a story told by Mr Manson which seems to contradict this:—

William M'Donald, a well-known piper in his day, could play, drunk or sober, “so well,” to quote this writer, “even when rivals had given him too much drink, that he always got a prize at competitions.” I could not understand this at all, because in my own case, a single glass of beer or wine puts my fingers out in piping, and I was therefore more than pleased to learn from Mr John M'Donald, of Inverness—himself one of the finest *Pibroch* players of the day—that the story is not true.

William M'Donald, who was his uncle, was not born in Badenoch as Mr Manson says, and he was a life-long teetotaller; so that the story of his brother pipers making him drunk is a libel on both parties. The story of Wm. M'Donald's son, who was piper to the Prince of Wales, giving up his situation and

burning his Bagpipe from religious scruples—as the good Mr M'Phee did—is, I believe, quite true. Of course, there were always pipers *and* pipers. When the Guild of Minstrely was at length suppressed, the pipers in the South, in common with the Harpers, were denounced as vagabonds, and were liable to be whipped, and to be put in the stocks for following what had hitherto been a respectable and strictly legal calling, and in this way they were forced to herd with the lower classes, who were themselves outside the pale of society—often, even, outside of the law, but who sheltered and favoured the poor musicians, and it is no wonder that the character of the latter rapidly degenerated. But the Clan Piper, not exposed to such degrading surroundings, maintained his dignity and his character of gentleman to the last; and never, above all, forgot that he was a musician. He never gave himself up to riotous living, or to beggary, like the crowd of disrobed minstrels, and his descendants to-day, I am proud to say, maintain well, on the whole, the old character of “musician and gentleman,” so worthily held by their forefathers.

## CHAPTER XXX.

### THE BAGPIPE IN SCOTLAND.

THERE are more frequent references to the Bagpipe in Early England than in Early Scotland, not because the Pipe was first introduced into England, but because English records were made earlier, and are fuller and more complete, and were better preserved, as M'Bain says, than Scottish records.

Scotland was too much occupied with the sword in her young days to take up the pen, and perhaps with nation-making on hand, she had too little leisure; her early scholars also thought the small details of everyday life too trivial to be recorded, and in this way the Bagpipe was neglected, and the historians of England stole a march upon her.

Indeed, but for the fact, firstly, that a Welshman in the twelfth century—who visited Scotland with the express object of studying its musical system—wrote a book, giving a list of the musical instruments used by the Scots; and, secondly, that the expenses of the

Royal Household in the fourteenth century were jotted down and preserved in the old exchequer rolls, we would be without any certain proof to-day that the Bagpipe was known in Scotland before the middle of the fifteenth century, when M'Vurich, the bard, reviled it in song ; and the claim of those who say "it came, of course, from England into Scotland," would be as strong now as it is weak, and would be much more difficult to disprove by men who, like myself, believe in the Celtic origin of the Bagpipe.

The history of the Bagpipe in Scotland is similar to its history elsewhere in Celtdom : it is a story of gradual progress from small beginnings.

The historian who first mentions the Pipe in Panonnia agrees, in his description of the instrument, with the writer who first describes the Pipe in Scotland, although fifteen hundred years separate the two.

The early Bagpipe in both countries was found to consist of a simple reed and bladder ; and out of this little Pipe the Great War Pipe of the Highlands has been slowly, but surely, evolved. We in the south did not get it put into our hands a ready-made instrument of one drone, nor did the Highlander in the north begin with the "Great Pipe" of two drones, as the Inverness School asserts. The little Bagpipe of "ane reid and ane bleddir," the original Pipe of the Celt, survived alongside of its more powerful and useful offspring, the Drone Bagpipe, almost to our own day ; and in 1548 the author of the "Complaynt of Scotland" places this little Pipe second in a list of



seven instruments well known to the Scottish peasant of that period.

The first instrument on the list—in order of merit and popularity, I presume—is a Drone Bagpipe; the second is “a Bagpipe of ane reid and ane bleddir;” the third is the Jew’s Harp or Trump, an instrument very common in my young days; and the seventh is the Fiddle.

There is no mention of the harp whatever, which is surely strange if the harp were in such universal use among the common people as recent writers would have us believe; and the Fiddle—Sir A. C. M’Kenzie’s Scotch Fiddle—comes in a bad seventh.

There is an old tradition still in existence, which the poet Burns heard at Stirling and elsewhere, that the Pipe was played at Bannockburn, and for believing in which he was laughed at by the wiseacres of the next generation, who said that there were no Bagpipes in Scotland for at least two centuries after 1314, the date of the battle. The truth is, that although there is no historical reference to the use of the Bagpipe on this occasion, we now know, what the writers of twenty years ago did not know, that the Pipe was a well-known instrument in Scotland at the time the Battle of Bannockburn was fought, and for some centuries before.

Now, if Bagpipes were used at Bannockburn, as tradition asserts—an assertion which our later and fuller knowledge of the facts strongly supports—they were Highland Bagpipes, because we learn from history that the Highlander was the first to discover

their stimulating effect in battle, and was the first, since the days of the Romans, to substitute the Pipe for the drum in war. From the beginning of the fifteenth century and onward, numerous references—owing to the advancement of letters—shew how universal its use was throughout Scotland in early times. We know that it was always a favourite with the herd boy ; but the very fact that King David II. kept a piper, and that King James I. was himself a piper, must have increased its popularity with the upper classes as well. And so we learn without surprise that soon after King James' time every burgh in Scotland had among its recognised officials a piper, dressed in the town's livery—often gay with bright colours and tassel decorations, and with a cock of parti-coloured ribbons in his bonnet—whose duty it was to open and to close each day with a tune on his "Drone." So popular, indeed, was the Bagpipe with us in the olden days, that whenever a piper turned up at the Township—be it morning, noon, or night—work came to a standstill : the weaver left his shuttle, the tailor his bench, the blacksmith his forge, the hind his plough, and with the lassies, who were never far away, flocked to the village green, where dancing was begun, and generally carried on until nature, worn out, called a halt.

In that most delightful of songs, "Alister M'Alister," we have the best description of the impromptu dance to be found in literature. So excellent, indeed, is it, and so impregnated with the

spirit of the times, that I offer no apologies for giving it here in full :—

Oh, Alastair MacAlastair,  
 Your chanter sets us a' asteer,  
 Then to your bags, an' blaw wi' birr,  
 We'll dance the Highland Fling.  
 Now Alastair has tuned his pipes,  
 An' thrang as bumbees frae their bikes,  
 The lads an' lasses loup the dykes,  
 An' gather on the green.  
 Oh, Alastair, etc.

The miller, Hab, was fidgin' fain  
 To dance the Highland fling his lane,  
 He lap, as high as Elspeth's wame,  
 The like was never seen.  
 As round about the ring he whuds,  
 An' cracks his thumbs, an' shakes his duds,  
 The meal flew frae his tail in cluds,  
 An' blinded a' their een.  
 Oh, Alastair, etc.

Neist rauchle-handed smiddy Jock,  
 A' blackened ower wi' coom an' smoke,  
 Wi' shauchlin' bleare'd Bess did yoke,  
 That slav'rin gabbit queen.  
 He shook his doublet in the wind,  
 His feet, like hammers, strak the grund ;  
 The very moudiewarts, were stunn'd,  
 Nor kenn'd what it could mean.  
 Oh, Alastair, etc.

Now wanton Willie wasna blate,  
 For he got haud o' winsome Kate,  
 "Come here," quo' he, "I'll show the gate,  
 To dance the Highland fling."

The Highland fling he danced wi' glee,  
And laps as he were gaun to flee.  
Kate beck'd an' bobbed sae bonnilie,  
An' trip't sae neat an' clean.  
Oh, Alastair, etc.

Now Alastair has done his best,  
An' weary houghs are wantin' rest,  
Forbye wi' drouth they sair were pres't,  
Wi' dancin', sae, I ween.  
I trow the gantrees gat a lift ;  
An' roun' the bicker flew like drift ;  
An' Alastair, that very nicht,  
Could scarcely stand his lane.  
Oh, Alastair, etc.

It is rather interesting to learn that the miller in England, as well as in Scotland, was often the village piper.

In Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales," the piper is a miller to trade, and King Jamie's piper is also a miller.

"With that Will Swan came smeiland out,  
Ane meikle miller man,  
Gif I sall dance have done, lat se,  
Blow up the Bagpype than."

Its popularity, however, did not begin and end with the dance. King James also writes:—

"The Bagpipe blew, and they outdrew  
Out of the townis untald."

shewing that it was used in Scotland as a marching instrument, just as in England; and all processions

in those days, whether of pilgrims or of the ordinary people to or from fairs, markets, weddings, or funerals—even the Royal processions from Church on Sunday—were headed by the piper.

From this we see that the Bagpipe was once popular throughout the length and breadth of Celtic Scotland, and was not peculiar to the Highlands. No doubt the adoption of the bellows helped to hurt the growing popularity of the “Pipes” in Lowland Scotland, as it had certainly done in England and in Ireland, for when the original Great Pipe became whittled down to suit the ears of drawing-room dames, it lost more than its loudness. It lost its usefulness and its individuality. But it was only after the Lowlander had developed into the peaceful trader, to whom the flash of a broadsword or the “skirl of the Pipe” was hateful, and after the Highlander had developed into the soldier of fortune who found the very spirit of battle in the Pipe’s wild war-notes, that the Great Bagpipe began to be looked upon as a purely Highland instrument.

It was this retrograde development of the Pipe into a household weapon by the Lowlander, and the forward development by the Highlander of the same Pipe into a still louder and more powerful instrument—an out-of-doors instrument—fitted for the clamour of battle, that brought the Bagpipe its lasting fame. It seems almost like the irony of fate that a pastoral instrument—the most peaceful of instruments—first invented by shepherds to beguile their lonely vigils with—to lead gentle sheep to the

fresh pastures—should become the delight in war of the fierce soldier.

Who could foresee that this little shepherd's Pipe, of "ane reid and ane bleddir," a poor thing at best—a feeble-voiced, soft-toned, primitive, droneless instrument, should one day blossom out into the Great War Pipe of the Clans, with its loud clarion-voiced call to arms?

Now, so long as the Bagpipe consisted only of chanter and bag, not much improvement was possible or could be expected: its usefulness was greatly curtailed, and it never could—and never did—become an instrument of any note. The noise of combat drowned out the little Pipe, and the old historians, if they knew of its existence, thought it unworthy of notice.

The Greeks learned this lesson very early, and the Pythaulos—a drone Bagpipe—was the result. In the evolution of the primitive *Piob*, then, the first and greatest improvement of all was the addition of the drone. The drone Bagpipe, once invented, became in turn, to the eager, open-mouthed listeners, a teacher of concord or harmony, and the oldest part-song in the world, called, "Summer is a cumen in," is a song composed to a Bagpipe tune in which the men's voices *droned* a bass of one note—the keynote—right through the song, just as the drone of the Bagpipe did.

After the first drone was added, it required no great stretch of genius or imagination—Celtic or otherwise—to add a second, or a third, or a fourth

drone for that matter to the Pipe, and no country could justly claim the Bagpipe as its own, because of such addition; so that the Highlander who, according to Mr M'Bain, only added the third drone to the newly-borrowed two-drone Bagpipe, had no right whatever to claim the instrument as a Highland one.

When on the subject of the drone, I may here say, that in this country, as we learn from the descriptions of old writers, confirmed in many instances by drawings of the actual Pipes, the second drone was added early in the sixteenth century, and the third drone about the middle or end of the eighteenth century, although the present three-drone Bagpipe did not become general, especially in the Highlands, till well on in the nineteenth century.

In his preface to the *Piobaireachd* Society's first collection of tunes, published in 1905, the writer disputes the above view, and holds that the three-drone Bagpipe was the Highland Pipe from the first, and in proof of this somewhat bold assertion he quotes from a fifteenth century satire on the Pipe, composed by one Niall Mór MacVurrich. From this Gaelic poem the following quotation—translated first into English—is taken:—

“The first Bag(-pipe)—and melodious it was not—came from the time of the Flood. There was then of the Pipe but the chanter, the mouth-piece, and the stick that fixed the key, called the *sumaire* (drone?) But a short time after that, and—a bad invention begetting a worse—there grew the three

masts, one of them long, wide, and thick," etc.

Now, taking for granted that this poem is authentic, and the translation correct, it may still only refer to the two-drone Pipe where the second drone—as we constantly see it in old pictures—was added, "long, wide, and thick," and the two drones with the mouthpiece would represent the three masts.

No doubt there were three-drone, and four—nay, even five-drone Bagpipes before the eighteenth century, but the three-drone Highland Pipe of to-day was not much used in the Highlands until the nineteenth century. In my young days the Inverary Gipsies, who were—many of them—great pipers, never used any but a one-drone or two-drone Bagpipe, and it is not quite fair for the writer of this preface, or for the *Piobaireachd* Society, which is responsible for its publication, to belittle the one-drone or the two-drone Bagpipe, and praise only the modern form of Highland Pipe, as if it were the real and only Simon Pure. "It has been frequently stated," we are told, "and repeated *in most of the recent works* on the subject,"—not that there are any ancient or recent works on the subject, except Mr Manson's book, which was published in 1901—"that the bass drone was added to the Bagpipe early in the nineteenth century, or, in any case, not fifty years earlier." The "*Seanachas Sloinuidh*"—M'Vurich's poem—"disproves that assertion, *and even should it not*" (there is evidently a doubt in the writer's mind) "it is impossible to believe that at the time



the greatest of the Macrimmons composed their masterpieces, they should have played on an *impossible and incapable instrument*." Now, as a matter of fact, the two-drone Bagpipe is not an impossible or an incapable instrument at all, and if the great Macrimmon wrote his "masterpieces" with a three-drone Bagpipe at his elbow, it was not from the third drone that he drew his inspiration, but from the Pipe as a whole. Indeed, for practising purposes, and in the dance, the big drone is no improvement, and in holiday time I fall back on the older form of two-drone Pipe as being easier to play on, and easier to dance to, for those at least who are not accustomed to Pipe music.

To say that the full-fledged instrument is the only original Highland Bagpipe is to say that the Highlander did not invent it for himself, but borrowed it—as Mr M'Bain says he did—and such "impossible and incapable" claims put forward in its favour by rash friends, lend weight to the verdict of those hostile critics who say that the Highland Bagpipe is neither ancient nor Highland.

Of its age I treat elsewhere. That it is a genuine Highland instrument I have no doubt. And if the invention of the Bagpipe has been denied to the Highlander, I must be honest, and say, "right away here," that for this misapprehension he has himself only to thank. He was the first to start the stories which gave the credit of it now to this nation, now to that. He did not value the instrument, in later days at least, as he should have done. After the

Rebellion of 1715, the Highlands began to be opened up to the outer world, and the Highlanders were forced to meet English-speaking strangers, whose surprise and, in many instances, contempt for what they saw, was but half veiled. And so Donald, to be on "the right side of the laugh," began to disparage everything distinctively Highland.

We have seen that the Clan piper himself was not always above displaying this same poor spirit in the hope of standing well with the stranger. He was no doubt a gentleman of parts, and a musician. It might be beneath his dignity to carry the "Pipes" himself. He had a boy—the *gille Piobaire*—to perform this office for him. But he did not need to throw the "Pipes" on the ground disdainfully when the tune was over, to show his English friends that the Bagpipe, in his opinion too, was but a sorry instrument for so great a musician.

There is no man so thin-skinned as your real Highlander fresh from his native hills, and the Highlander was never so thin-skinned as just after the '45, when, deserted by his leaders, he, in consequence, lost the old confidence which he previously had in himself, and in things Highland. He thought the world was laughing at him, and the fear of being laughed at was as gall and wormwood to him. Accordingly, when the Sassenach quizzed the dress, or language, or Bagpipe, Donald was ready to go one better, and like poor doubting Thomas, disown and curse what in his heart he loved more than life.

When the great Dr. Johnson called his language "the rude speech of a barbarous people," Donald acquiesced by his silence in a dictum born of ignorance. Only here and there, like the voice of one crying in the wilderness, was a protest raised. In like manner he has been stripped of his kilt without a murmur. And Mr M'Bain, who would take from him the last and most precious of his three great possessions, without caring how much pain his words carried to many a loyal Highland heart at the time they were written, walks the streets of the Highland capital to-day in safety. O, Highlanders! of a surety ye are a long-suffering race.

This is why I say that Donald was himself to blame for the spreading of false stories about the origin of the Highland Bagpipe.

When Pennant, or Martin, or M'Culloch, or other inquisitive traveller, one hundred to two hundred years ago (these visitors being really interested in things Highland), began to question Donald—in all good faith—about the origin of the Bagpipe, Donald (suspicious and sensitive, and understanding but imperfectly the language in which he was addressed), anticipated hostile criticism by attributing the origin to the Dane, or Northman, or Roman, or Greek. And so the opinions of the Highlanders—I speak especially of the days after the '45—are not worth the paper they are written on, and are wholly misleading.

Does history afford us any help in our research? Have we any reliable data to go upon? I think so,

and the dates, so far as known to me, although few, I will give you later on when I come to talk of the antiquity of the Bagpipe in Scotland.

Now, of all Bagpipe playing peoples, the Highlander, as I have said before—if we except the Roman and the Alexandrian—was the first to substitute the Pipe for the drum in war; and was alone in resisting the addition to his Pipe of bellows and keys. He perfected it as far as possible on the old lines, and refused to assimilate it to modern instruments.

A “semi-barbarous instrument” it began, and a “semi-barbarous instrument” it has ever since remained in the Highlanders’ hands. To modernize it, even if this were possible, would mean its decay.

The Highlander long ago believed in himself, and looked down upon the more effeminate Lowlander. He was not ashamed but proud of his language, and of his dress, and of his music. His Bagpipe was perfect in his eyes. It did not admit of improvement. No bellows for him; no modern scale; no keys on the chanter.

A war instrument he made it, and a war instrument he meant to keep it; and so, to-day, thanks to this belief in himself and in his Pipe, the people of Scotland—almost alone among peoples in this—can boast of a national music, and a national instrument.

The history of the Bagpipe in the Highlands—as apart from Scotland—is, in reality, the history of the Highlander, and would require a book to itself. No event of any importance took place in the old

days that was not recorded on the Bagpipe; whether the death of the Chief's piper, or the birth of the Chief's son and heir; whether the little Clan fight in some out-of-the-way corner, or the Jacobite death-struggle at Culloden; it was the only record the Highlander possessed of these events; and we can safely wander along the highways and byeways of Highland history with no other guide in our hands than Bagpipe music.

"The Desperate Battle," 1390; "*Pibroch of Donald Dhu*," and "*Ceann na Drochit Mor*," 1427; "*Blar na Leinne*," 1544; "*Ceann na Drochit Beg*," 1645, and fifty other *Pibrochs* I could name, had each their separate tale of battle for the Highlander. Play, even now, to one of the old school, well versed in *Pibroch*, "The Desperate Battle," or "The Massacre of Glencoe," and watch his face. In the waves of feeling which come and go with the music, you can read, in the first case, of the fierce love of battle, which still smoulders beneath the calm exterior, and in the second, the whole tragedy enacted on that bitter night of shame and treachery.

And so to-day the history of the rising in '45 is summed up for us Highlanders in three tunes:—"The Prince's Salute," "Hey, Johnnie Cope," and "Culloden Day."

After Culloden, the Bagpipe became once again more of a national instrument, and less distinctively Highland, and its records are those of a whole nation, not of one part only.

Its strains are no longer confined to the hills

and glens of its native home. Its gay streamers float proudly on many a foreign shore. Its fame has already gone forth on the heights of Alma; in the streets of Lucknow; at Bloody Quatre Bras; and on the stricken field of Waterloo. Ever in the van of battle; ever in the thickest of the fight, its proud bearer courts the post of danger and of death as his own peculiar right, sanctified by length of years. And when his name is missing at roll-call, look not for him on the outskirts of the battlefield; waste not your time hunting behind boulder, or peering into sheltering hollow, but make straight for the front, where the fight waxed fiercest, and the dead lie thickest, and there you will find him sleeping with his comrades: surely the bravest among many brave ones, for of all who lie there, he alone went forth unarmed to battle and to death.

For many years I hunted high and low for the "Great War Pipe" of two drones, but without success.

The Bagpipe shewn here is a facsimile of one that lies in the Edinburgh Museum, without—unfortunately—any history attached to it. There is no "combing" on the drones, and the terminals are more or less pear-shaped, and the ferules are made of lead. The chanter is of the same bore as the present full-sized Highland Pipe, and the only difference between this Pipe and the modern one—with the exceptions mentioned above—is the absence of the large drone. This Bagpipe is made of hawthorn, is very light to carry, and is the one I

THE GREAT TWO-DRONE WAR PIPE OF THE HIGHLANDS :  
Ornamented with lead, to be seen in the Edinburgh Museum.









personally take with me when going from home. I had the offer of a very nice two-drone set made out of boxwood—a genuine eighteenth century set—not many months ago. It came up from Wales, but the owner did not know the value of it, and before he had made up his mind what to ask, I picked up a set in England for a tenth of the first price he mentioned. I had some pleasant experiences when on the hunt for the old Highland Pipe. Once I found myself stranded for the night at a small village on the West Coast, with no means of getting away before morning.

To wile away the time, I asked an old school-fellow who resided there, and one or two of his friends, to spend the evening with me at my hotel. After all the local gossip—much of it going back over twenty years or more—had been discussed at interminable length, and the night was still young, conversation began to flag, in spite of the jogging of an occasional tumbler of toddy, and my spirits sank at the prospect of the long night before me. But just a little before ten o'clock, my friend was called out of the room, and after some mysterious whisperings with the pretty barmaid behind the door, he returned to announce in a sort of shame-faced way, that a particular friend of his was downstairs wanting to see him, and might he bring him up?

“He is only a piper, although a good one, doctor. But perhaps you wouldn't care to have him in the room with you?”

A piper! I wouldn't care to have him in the room with me? For me, everything was changed in a moment. "Bring him up, by all means," I said, and placed a chair for him on my right hand. He was quite a gentlemanly lad, and modest for a piper, and I had my reward before long for the poor entertainment—all I could offer him—when shouldering my "Pipes," he opened up in masterly fashion with that fine *Pibroch*, "*Moladh Mairi*," or, "The MacLachan's March," of which I am very fond, largely for its own sake, but partly also because my mother was a MacLachlan. After this auspicious beginning, we two piped alternately, while the others smoked and listened, and the evening which threatened at first to be too long, but which ultimately proved itself all too short, came to a pleasant termination in the small hours of the morning. And when I asked the young player to whom was I indebted for so much good music, he replied:—

"I am piper at Skibo Castle to Mr Carnegie. He is away in America just now, and I am on holiday."

With books as cheap as they are to-day, I am no great believer in Free Libraries, but I shall not forget that once I was under obligation to Mr Carnegie because, being a wealthy man and able to afford it, he had the good taste to keep a Piper.

On another occasion, when yachting with my friend, Mr Southerne of Solus, in the "*Alcyone*," a well-known Clyde boat, and a most comfortable

one, we were driven early one evening by stress of weather into Loch Torriden, Loch Broom being our real destination. I had accepted my friend's invitation to spend a fortnight with him cruising among the Western Isles, principally in the hope of picking up an old set of "Pipes."

My search, so far, had resulted in failure, so you can imagine the delight with which I listened to the store-keeper at Loch Torriden, as he told me that there was an old piper—a very old man, well over ninety years of age—living down by the shore, not more than two miles away, who had been a good player in his day, and who had still in his possession the original old Bagpipe of two drones upon which he used to play. My informant, who was a most intelligent man, was quite sure that there was no big drone. Away I went in high glee with Mr Southerne—who is almost as enthusiastic in the search after Pipes as myself, and who has added two of the most valuable Bagpipes to my collection—feeling assured at last of success.

After a stiff walk over the hill by the very picturesque but narrow and uneven track which did duty for a road, we soon dropped down—or scrambled down, for it was a very steep descent—upon the piper's home, which we had no difficulty in finding, as it was, indeed, the only house in the place.

The daughter, an old woman with thin grey hair, and wrinkled, sallow skin, came to the door, and blinked feebly at the two bold strangers, who had so unceremoniously invaded her retreat. But after a

word of Gaelic from myself—a word which has often stood me in good stead in the Highlands—and a tune on the “Pipes,” she became quite communicative, and informed us, in a queer mixture of English and Gaelic, that her father was not at home, and that the old Pipe had been burnt in the fire, two years before, by her brother, *at the request of the minister.*

A lonelier spot than this where the old piper lives you could not imagine, nor a bleaker.

The one redeeming feature is the glorious expanse of sea in front—its clear blue waters at flood-tide swelling up almost to the door of the hut; and the glorious sunsets—one of which we watched with delight—to be seen from the little window, which looks west across the bay. Otherwise, there was nothing here to soften the asperities of life, or to relieve its monotony. And yet, the one little earthly source of comfort and consolation left to these lowly dwellers by the lone sea—the chanter which the old man had loved all his life, and fingered so fondly and so often, and to which he had confided all his little joys and sorrows in the past, was taken from him, and burnt before his eyes, by his own son, at the instigation of the F.C. minister. The old maiden lady looked sad as she told us the story of the burnt Pipe; otherwise she complained none, but ever and anon she cast a wistful glance at the well-appointed Bagpipe under my arm, and her looks were eloquent of regret.

"You like the Pipes?" I said.

"Oh, that I do," she answered in Gaelic.

"Would you dance if I piped to you?" I then asked.

She peered at me closely out of half-closed eyes, as if not comprehending my meaning—as if trying to read my thoughts—half afraid that I must be laughing at her. But when I quietly repeated the challenge, it touched my heart to see the tears well up in those dim eyes, and the blush of pleasure struggle through the tan on those thin cheeks.

She looked down at her feet, with a coy movement of her short skirts, eminently feminine. The feet were hopeless. The heavy, clay-covered boots were sizes too large, and there was not the vestige of a lace in either of them, so that the hard, fire-baked tongues curled down in front.

As she stood on the large flat stone by the side of the door, raised above the muddy pools of water which lay everywhere around, waiting, with sad, impassive face for the music to begin, she looked a pathetic sight. Standing there, without one feminine grace to relieve the hard, bony, angular, weather-stained and weather-beaten frame; without one trace of colour in her dress to relieve its drab monotony; without one line of beauty on her face, to tell that she had once been young, she seemed, indeed, but the veriest anatomy of a woman—the empty husk, out of which the joyousness of being had long since fled.

But under the influence of the music, a perceptible

change was quickly brought about, and she became transformed. The poor, bent back grew erect ; the dull, expressionless face lighted up ; the frail-looking body, keeping time to the music, swayed gently to and fro ; the clumsily shod feet began to move about—at first with a dreamy, uncertain sort of up-and-down motion, more like a woman walking cloth or tramping clothes, then with more and more confidence as memory wakened up under the spell of that king of Strathspeys, "*Tullochgorum*," until at length we saw evolved as out of chaos, some beautiful old-world steps, smooth and graceful in movement, and quite unknown to the modern lightning-speed dancer.

Once before I saw the same steps danced by an old lady of eighty, in Skye—Miss M'Leod, of Caroline Hill—whose offer to teach me some thirty-two different Strathspey steps, which she said she could dance, I have ever since regretted not accepting.

When the dance was over, it was time for Mr Southerne and myself to be getting back to the yacht ; so I paid the old lady a well-deserved compliment on the pretty steps she shewed us, and we bade each other a kindly good-bye. How little it costs to give pleasure to a fellow-creature at times, and yet how often we miss the chance ? On this occasion I felt pleased to think that we had managed, with so little effort, to add a few happy moments to the life of this lonely woman, whose chances of amusement were so few. I like to think of the old piper's daughter, not as we first saw her, when she



came blinking and winking at us out of the smoke, a worn-out, wizened woman, spiritless and dejected-looking, but as we left her on that day, standing upon the flat stone in front of the cottage, looking years younger, and waving us a smiling farewell; I like to remember her as we saw her from the crest of the hill for the last time, bathed in the warm glow of the setting sun, with the light of the dance still in her eye, and a look of happy wonderment on her face at something which Mr Southerne had whispered into her ear—or?

Well! I was not looking, and so could not swear to it.

I hurried back to the Manse to have it out with the old vandal, but found him from home, so I discussed the situation with his housekeeper, a stout, pleasant-looking old lady, who sympathized with me, but could not understand what I wanted with an old set of Bagpipes when I had such a nice one under my arm.

“I am very fond of the Bagpipe myself,” she said, “and I like no dance so well as the “Highland Fling.”

Here was a chance to avenge the burning of the Pipe, so I immediately proposed a reel.

“O! indeed, sir, I am much obliged to you, but I am too stout: but there’s Christina in the kitchen. She comes from Inverness, and is a fine dancer.”

Christina, a fair-skinned bonnie lassie, with a wealth of golden hair, and straight as a lath, came tripping out at the first call, every movement full

of grace. She wasted no time in idle pretence when she learned from the housekeeper that we wanted to see her dance, but turned to me, and said quietly, "Can you play the '*Sean Truis*?'"

In reply, I struck up the tune, and if her movements in walking were graceful, her dancing was superb. After a short rest, she danced the "Highland Fling," and again we were forced to applaud, for—as the old teller of tales would say—if the "*Sean Truis*" was good, the "Highland Fling" was better. In the meantime some young men from the village, which was a good way off, attracted by the sound of the Bagpipe, joined us, and soon I had three or four sets dancing together, under the very manse window.

My revenge would have been complete, if only the minister had come back in time to see his staid housekeeper dancing on his own lawn, with an *abandon* which savoured of anything but the Church, while Mr Southern, her partner—an absolute stranger, too!—endeavoured, but in vain, to encircle that ample waist.

Christina, during this time, was doing great execution among the young men of the village—in fact, she fairly danced herself into the heart of more than one susceptible that night, and I felt that it was time to be moving yachtward, when I saw Mr Southerne—all-forgetful of his dear wife at home—disputing with one of the natives as to the possession of the ruddy-cheeked, ruddy-haired, laughing, dancing nymph of the manse, who

in all she did, was but obeying nature, if perhaps disobeying the mandates of the Free Church.

In the autumn of 1893 I found myself at Tongue, in Sutherlandshire, on the old quest. Tongue was famous at one time as a piping centre, and gave more pipers to the British Army than any other district of Scotland, excepting Skye. I found pipers in plenty, but no Bagpipe older than myself. After being entertained with some excellent Pipe music in one house where no fewer than five brothers fingered the Chanter, I, in return, was asked to give a tune on the Northumbrian "Small Pipe," which I had with me, as I generally found that the sight of a strange Pipe gave a jog to the memory, and set people a-talking, but on this occasion, the Tongue—I apologise—refused to wag.

No sooner had I strapped on the bellows, and given it a squeeze or two, than a young girl, who had hurried in from the shearing, astonished to hear piping at such an hour—a delicate-looking girl, with a sweet face, and a glorious head of rich brown hair (who being an only daughter, was evidently the pet of the family) burst out laughing.

"*Fan Samhach*," said the mother, sharply. "Be quiet!"

But although the poor thing made convulsive efforts to obey the warning voice, and stuffed the corner of her apron into her mouth in the brave attempt, she bubbled over, every time I began to play, with uncontrollable laughter—in which I had to join, so infectious was it—until at length she was

ordered out of the house ; but the others present remained grave and stern as judges.

Time and again, peeping timidly round the corner, the irrepressible one tried to come back—for, Eve-like, she was curious to hear the strange little instrument—but never got further than the door. The Bellows-Pipe was too much for her keen sense of humour. At every fresh attempt she broke down, and at last turned and fled from the rising wrath of her angry mother, who was afraid lest I should “*think her very rude.*”

Now, about the same time that I was picking up my experience in the little village of Tongue, a great lady out in India found herself in somewhat similar plight to this crofter lassie, and the Bagpipe was again the cause—shewing anew how true it is that “one touch of nature makes the whole world kin.”

The following story is told of herself by Lady Dufferin :—

“The Maharajah entertained us right royally, and every meal is a banquet ; his pipers played for us at dinner, and walked round the table afterwards. They are really rather good, but they played several different tunes in the room.” I suppose the writer here means that they stopped at the end of each tune, and started again without leaving the room, not that they played different tunes at one time—“and the Bagpipes groaned in such a fearful manner at the beginning of each, that in spite of

the viceregal gravity of D.'s face, *I could not help laughing.*"

On another occasion, her good manners were also severely tried, and the Bagpipe was again to blame.

"Another Punjaub Chief, Nabha, let his pipers play to us at luncheon. It was very amusing to see them, as the whole costume is Scotch, but *pink silk tights* have to be worn to simulate the *delicate complexion* of the ordinary Highlander's knee." (The italics are mine.)

I like Lady Dufferin's description of the Highlander's knee, although it puts a different *complexion* upon it. English tourists who wear the kilt in Scotland to distinguish themselves from the natives, might, perhaps, take a needful hint from the pink silk tights of this Indian Chief, and so bring the over-delicate complexion of their knees—which is frequently painful to contemplate—more into harmony with the dress and its surroundings.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### PIPING AND DANCING DYING OUT IN THE HIGHLANDS.

IT is a great pity that piping and dancing have been so much discouraged in the Highlands in recent times. The sources of amusement in the long winter evenings left to these people, living often in lonely townships—frequently cut off from all communication with the outside world for a great part of the year—were never too numerous, and it would have been a wise and a generous policy on the part of their spiritual guides to have left them undisturbed, and added to them wherever possible.

But to-day, the choice of entertainment for the Highlander lies between these two things—theological discussion, and whisky—both good, no doubt, in moderation, but both dangerous, and apt to lead to quarreling when abused. For over fifty years, the Free Church, carrying out, as I have said before—perhaps, also, unconsciously?—the earlier policy of the Catholic clergy, has been the sworn foe of piping and dancing.

For over fifty years the Free Church priest

has done his best to stamp out other innocent amusements, such as the telling of old tales, and the singing of old-world songs at the *Ceilidh*, until to-day, all sounds of mirth have fled the land and left it desolate.

I have piped to the children standing in the market-place, and they have not danced; I have mourned to them—over the loss of strathspey and reel—but they have not wept. It is difficult to believe that changes so sweeping could have taken place in so short a space of time, but it is true. Some years ago I passed through the Caledonian Canal on board the S.Y. “Ileen,” owned by Mr Salvesen of Lathallan, and I was very much struck with the number of people we met who had seldom or never heard the Bagpipe.

The Strathspey and reel, and “Highland Fling” seemed also to have fallen into complete neglect, and to be all but forgotten.

Whenever I got a few children together, I questioned them on these matters, and was more than astonished at their ignorance of Highland music and dance. Some of the children could dance a polka or a waltz, or even a schottische, to the accompaniment of a concertina, but could not dance a single reel step, even to the music of the Great Highland Bagpipe. I tried always to wean them from the Lowland abomination; I tried always to interest them in the dance of their forefathers; and at several places in the neighbourhood of Invergarry, I taught the little ones a reel step or two

wherever I could get a few together—whether on the public road, or in the fields, or by the river side. It was quite refreshing to note the quickness with which they picked up the old steps, and to mark the evident delight with which they listened to the old music.

One beautiful afternoon we started off to visit the Falls of Gary, and while walking by the side of the river, I saw a little school, which stood on an eminence some distance back from the stream, but on the opposite side, dispersing for the day. One blast of the Pipe was enough to draw the whole school trooping down through the meadows to the river side, and from the opposite bank, cries of:

“Please sir, a tune!” “Please, sir, a tune!” came quickly in pleading accents from a score of little throats.

“Give me a song, first,” I said, “and I will give you a tune.”

“What song would you like, sir?”

“A song about Prince Charlie.”

“Who was Prince Charlie?” queried the spokesman of the party, a tall, red-lipped, red-cheeked, shapely laughing girl, with stray sunbeams in her hair.

“You know well enough who Prince Charlie was, and I want a song about him,” I replied. After a hurried consultation, and much whispering in groups, and shaking together of little heads, the leader stood forward and shouted bravely across the swift-flowing



stream—"We can't sing any song about Prince Charlie."

I at once took "we can't" to mean "we daren't," and said—"What! you call yourselves Highlanders, and live in the beautiful Highlands. and don't know who Prince Charlie was, and you can't sing a song about him? You should be ashamed of yourselves! Why, I live in the Lowlands, but yet I can tell you a lot about Prince Charlie, and I can sing you a song about him too; and I love his memory after all these years. My forefathers bled and died for Prince Charlie, if yours did not."

"Have you four fathers, sir?" piped in a little girl; "I have only one." "And quite enough too," put in a second mite; at which they all laughed heartily. No dullards, evidently. And—this I said to myself—they know of, and can sing about, Prince Charlie, in spite of their assumed ignorance. So, as a last shot, I asked once more for a song, and promised—in as solemn and mysterious a manner as I could assume—that I would not tell the "Meenisther."

Again there was a clustering together of little heads in consultation, but this time I was to be rewarded for my perseverance. Falling back to right and left, the group disclosed my *Nighean Ruadh* standing erect like a queen in their midst. Stepping slightly in advance of her companions, she sang in a clear voice, and with many blushes which became her well, that beautiful old song, "Come o'er the stream, Charlie, brave Charlie, dear Charlie," leaving the chorus to be taken up by the others.

It was a glorious day altogether—an Indian summer day—and the warm sun shone brightly overhead, lighting up the beautiful glen rarely. Seated by the banks of the murmuring river, lazily enjoying the warm air which came floating down the glen laden with the smell of larch and spruce, my thoughts insensibly went back to the days of the '45, and I thought of Prince Charlie as he was before continuous misfortune tried the temper of his spirit, and found it awanting. I remembered him only as the brave young soldier, hardy and temperate, kindly and true, gallantly fighting for a crown that was his own, as surely as anything can be called one's own in this world. And the refrain of the old song, "Come o'er the stream, Charlie" (in which perforce we joined), sung by these little children as they sat round their leader on the grassy banks of the Gary, with the rushing sound of its black, quick-hurrying waters for an accompaniment, went to my heart, and—I am not ashamed to say it—brought the tear to my eye. I responded with a Jacobite air on the "Pipes," and the ice being now fairly broken, and the fear of the "Church" put behind us—after some dancing, which, I am sorry to say, did not include the reel, as none of them could dance it—we sang and piped to each other alternately until the lengthening shadows warned us to start for the Falls if we were to get back before dark. For some miles through the glen, these children—always separated from friends and myself by the swollen stream, which was that day in spate—followed the piper, altho' he was not what you might

call a brilliant performer ; and it was always the same soft, childish, pleading cry that floated across the dark waters—"Just one other tune, sir ; just one other tune."

And yet this day of innocent pleasure for old and young alike, and the children's evident delight in the dear old music, would be denied them if the "Meenishter" had his way. But, in spite of the Free Church, I am glad to think that the so-called reformers in the Highlands, who reformed on Knox's principle—"Pu' doun the nests, and the rooks will flee awa'"—have not quite eradicated—have not eradicated at all—the love of the Celt for Bagpipe, and dance, and song. It is still there, ready to assert itself on the smallest encouragement, in spite of the repeated attempts of clerical bigotry to stamp it out. I had a capital example of this one day while waiting on the *Ileen*, as she made her slow way through one of the many locks on the canal. On the hillside, due north of the lock, and not very far away, a little thatched cottage peeped down timidly at the passer-by. It looked old enough and Highland enough for anything ; so being anxious to throw away no chance of finding an original Highland Bagpipe, I ascended the hill and knocked at the door. No welcome "*Hic i stoi*" fell upon my ears in answer to my summons, but, after some delay, a man with a very pale face and black bushy whiskers, appeared in the doorway, and eyed us suspiciously. I greeted him in Gaelic, but he only stared at me : he knew no Gaelic. Campbell was his name. He was a shoe-

maker to trade. He knew nothing about the Bagpipe, and he had never seen an old set of "Pipes," nor had he heard the sound of the Bagpipe itself for years. Strathspey and reel had ever been strangers to him. His children, the eldest of whom was a nice-looking, intelligent boy of six, had never seen a Bagpipe, nor even heard of the Highland fling. Not a healthy state of affairs, surely, in a Highland cottage—no Gaelic, no kilt, no Bagpipe, no Highland fling. I began at once to teach the little ones something of these matters, and finished off the lesson with a practical demonstration—Mr Ure, one of my friends, dancing to them, while I piped. Then by dint of a little coaxing, and the expenditure of a few pence, I got the children themselves formed up in line, and in an incredibly short space of time my friend and I had them going through the figure of eight—at first without, and then to music—"as if to the manner born."

When the smaller ones were tired, I took Johnnie, the eldest, and taught him one or two strathspey steps, which he was soon able to dance to the music of the Pipe, along with other steps of his own, extemporised on the spot.

The old love of the Pipe and the reel was here, evidently, in the blood. Before our arrival, Johnnie knew nothing of the Bagpipe or of the Highland fling, and yet after one short lesson of ten minutes or so, he learned to wriggle and throw his feet about in most precise fashion, and even to extemporise steps for himself, keeping all the while most excellent

time to music, the like of which he had never heard until that moment ; and he heeled and toed, and curved his arms gracefully over his head, as he spun now to right, now to left, and gave an occasional little “Hooch!” at the psychological moment, as if he had danced and “hooched” all his life before.

When we reached Fort Augustus, the Royal Mail steamer *Gondolier*, crowded with passengers for Oban and the South, could be seen coming down Loch Ness, and the *Ileen* was detained above the lock until she first passed through. This, it seems, is the custom. Here we met with a poor Highland crofter and his family, who had just been dispossessed of their croft, and who were now travelling west in search of a new home. Why they had thus been suddenly thrown out upon the cold world I did not learn. They carried their household goods with them, strapped on their backs. The father, who told me his simple story, without any grumbling against the hard fate which dogged his footsteps, groaned under the weight of a heavy kitchen table and two wooden chairs ; the mother, who stood patiently in the background while her goodman recited his woes, was bent double beneath a huge bundle of linen wrapped up in a couple of red and black bedcovers ; while the children were laden down to and beyond Plimsoll’s mark with pots and pans, and the minor household utensils.

They were footsore and travel-stained ; and little wonder, as they had been on the road since daybreak. The little ones looked tired and hungry, and when

I learned that they were of my own clan—bad luck to it!—I got my friends interested in them, and we feasted them upon milk and scones from a little wooden stall which stood close by for the convenience of travellers by the different boats passing through the canal. The milk and scones disappeared in princely fashion, but before famished appetites were appeased the *Gondolier* had entered the lock. And while she was still in the deeps, and the gates were being closed, a brilliant idea came to me, who am generally rather slow in seizing the occasion, and I acted instantly upon it.

Why not get up an impromptu dance, with the assistance of my companions, and make a collection for the poor wanderers? There was only one objection to the carrying out of the idea. Two of my four friends knew little or nothing about the strathspey, and the other two owned only one step between them. But when I divulged my scheme, they, like the good fellows that they were, immediately consented to give an exhibition; and they kept their word.

Hurried orders were given by everybody to everybody, and in a moment all was excitement and bustle. The directions reduced to paper were delightful in their simplicity. Jump high enough, and “hooch” smartly, and do an occasional figure of eight.

There was time for a little practice before the boat rose to view, and I took advantage of it, as I must confess I felt nervous about dancing before an audience. It happened exactly as I feared it would. The reel went fairly well until the rising boat brought

us within ken of the people on board ; but then, with all eyes turned upon them, my scratch team broke down—the gyrations of arms and legs grew more and more erratic; the “ hoochs,” losing all regard for time or fitness, degenerated into wild shouts ; the figure of eight got into knots, which none could disentangle. Gray accused Becker ; Salvesen made a brave attempt to put both right, although he was a bit off the rails himself ; while Ure, true to his kindly nature, tried to throw oil on the troubled waters, and keep the dance going, by leaping higher and higher, and shouting bravely like a quarter-minute fog-horn at sea. The look of wonder and amazement which spread over the faces of the crowd on board the steamer as their eyes fell upon the wild war-dance of the Highlands—danced by five men, including the piper, with never a kilt between them—was most entertaining to watch. Under the gaze of so many eyes, all vestige of a dance soon disappeared, and the *exhibition* degenerated into something not unlike a football scrimmage.

With tears of laughter running down my cheeks, it was impossible for me to play any longer. And so, dropping the Pipe, I stepped forward and apologised for our poor show, and shortly explained its object.

I then took off my cap, and first calling for a contribution from each of the four dancers—I called it a “ fine ” for their execrable performance—I passed the cap on board the boat ; and, thanks to warm hearts beating behind loud checks, and kindly natures lurking behind fierce eye-glasses, I had it returned

to me with over twenty-seven shillings in it, which comfortable little sum I handed over to my poor clansman, and sent him on his way rejoicing.

In that very clever and very charming book, "South Sea Bubbles," by "The Earl and the Doctor," the authors had an experience among the children in Raritonga and Samoa very similar to mine in the Highlands. They tell the story to show how difficult it is thoroughly to uproot old customs among primitive peoples.

The Earl and the Doctor went to church in Raritonga one Sunday afternoon in the exalted company of the king. The congregation was particularly attentive, "but it was really painful to see both men and women dressed according to the lowest style of European 'go-to-meeting.' Where on earth did the earlier missionaries pick up that curious idea of the necessary identity of piety and ugliness?

"In front of us sat a grave and reverend elder, with the most broad-church cut of black coat and white tie, and a mighty pair of spectacles, looking exactly like a very bilious Scotch precentor. He kept his eyes steadily fixed on his hymn-book during the singing, and bore his 'burden' by keeping up that prolonged humming drone so popular as an accompaniment in these seas.

"This hum is by no means unlike the drone of a Bagpipe. I have an indistinct recollection of attending a cottage dance somewhere in the Highlands long, long ago, when, for want of better music, one man played the Jew's (or Jaw's?) harp, and two



or three others kept up a prolonged monotonous nasal drone very like that of my (black) friend in the front benches.

“The warm-hearted, sensible Highland lady and gentleman who represent the mission at Raritonga are very different people from the typical missionaries of the South Pacific.

“By no means believing that they can wash the black-a-moor (or rather brown-a-moor) white by a sudden application of Calvinistic white-wash, they try to make him as good a brown-a-moor as they can, and their labour has certainly not been in vain. How easily this white-wash cracks and peels off may be seen or heard by any one who keeps his eyes or ears open.” Dancing, I may explain, had been put down for a long time by the missionaries, more thoroughly even at Raritonga than in the Highlands ; and this fact is necessary to remember in order to comprehend how the missionaries’ white-wash at times cracks and peels off.

“One fact which we heard from a ‘high personage’ rather tickled us. A short time ago a native drum was brought to Raritonga from one of the neighbouring islands, and the very moment the first finger taps were heard, all the girls, down to the wee chiels ten or eleven years old, began to wriggle and squirm like so many galvanised frogs, shewing plainly that the old dancing blood still ran in their veins.”

The old paganisms are not to be stamped out so easily.

“The Gawazee of Egypt and the Gitana of Spain

have kept to their old dances, in spite of priest or mollah, for many an age, and so it will be here. If any real improvement is to take place, I should propose that each ball should be attended by the missionary and his wife."

This good advice I pass on to the F.C. ministers in the Highlands and Islands, with the earnest hope that it may be accepted, and acted upon.

"What right has an English or French missionary"—or Highland missionary?—"to say to a whole race, 'You shall not dance, you shall not sing, you shall not smoke, under the possible penalty of eternal damnation in the next world?'" What right, indeed?

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### SKYE IN 1876.

“ My heart is yearning for thee, O Skye !  
Dearest of islands !  
There first the sunshine gladdened my eye  
On the sea sparkling ;  
There doth the dust of my dear ones lie,  
In the old graveyard.”—NICHOLSON.

A CHAPTER on Skye — the home of the MacCruimeins—will not, I hope, be thought out of place in any book on the Bagpipe.

Skye ! at one time the land of romance and song : the pipers' paradise, the fountain-head for many generations of all that was good and worthy in piping and Pipe music.

Skye ! the birthplace of many of our finest *Probaireachd*—the pibroch of rude, wild nature, with the living breath of the great North Sea in it—the Pipe tune filled with the echo of breaking waves, as they churn themselves into ragged foam in the great sea-caverns below—the melodious Skye song, with the sound of the rowlocks in it, and the *irriom* of the boatmen as they sail by on summer seas, and the cry of the sea-birds, and the sigh of the south-

west wind—the ‘lament,’ with the sadness and the sorrow in it, and the slow, stately movement of the mighty ocean in it—the lone ocean that plays ever round the island (now in calm, now in storm), waiting patiently for that great day when its secrets shall be disclosed, and “the sea shall give up its dead.”

What Highlander can listen unmoved to Bagpipe music “with the story in it,” such as we have in “The Lament for the Children,” “The Lament for the Only Son,” “MacIntosh’s Lament,” or “The Lament of the Sisters”?

Or again, knowing the circumstances under which “MacCruimein’s Lament” was composed, the heart must indeed be of stone that fails to respond to that saddest of sad refrains, “*Cha till! Cha till! Cha till mi tuille,*” when heard sung—as it ought always to be sung—in the old soft Gaelic tongue.

“MacCruimein will Never Return” is the Highland emigrant’s song above all others—the song with the bitter cry of the exile in it, the song that makes vocal the dumb moan of the despairing heart as the loved shores recede with each blast of wind that hurries the ship onward. There is a story attached to this pibroch, as to so many others,

During the Rebellion of 1745, MacLeod of MacLeod led a military expedition from the Isle of Skye—and it was not to help Prince Charlie either. The night before sailing, MacCrimmon the piper, who formed an important part of the expedition, had a peep into the Book of Fate. A dream came to him in the stillness of the night; and in his dream he beheld

the shrouded figure of a man stand before him—a dead man, with pale wan face, and shrouded up to the eyes. And as he looked, the face seemed to him strangely familiar, and the dreamer awoke with a start. It was his own face that shewed above the shroud.

The story varies, and the second sight came through a friend gifted with the power. But what does it matter through whom comes death's summons, when it does come?

It was the strong presentiment of something evil going to happen to him, and the yearning and love for his island home, which he was forced to leave on an expedition in which his heart was not, that wrung from MacCrimmon the agonising cry, “*Cha till! Cha till! Cha till mi tuille.*” And to this circumstance we owe one of the most beautiful Highland songs ever written.

Not “*Au revoir!*” sang the “Pipes” on board the wherry on that fateful morning, but “good-bye!” And his friends, left weeping on the shore, and remembering the “second sight,” too surely knew that they were looking for the last time on the passing of the great Piper, and that his “Farewell” was indeed “For Ever.”

I once heard “MacCrimmon's Lament” sung at a Highland gathering in Glasgow, and while I live I shall not forget how vividly it recalled to my mind the whole scene of that last leave-taking. Those who have read this book so far will not, I feel sure, think me over-imaginative; but on this occasion my

imagination ran riot, and I felt as if the sorrow and the burden of that bitter parting had fallen upon me. I was the piper under the death warrant ; I it was who was leaving the “dearest of islands,” every stone of which I loved ; I it was who was playing the “Farewell” which my tongue refused to utter : for me the women and children on the shore were waving farewells and weeping.

The spell of the singer lay long upon the meeting—long after the last note of the song had died away in silence—but at length the well-deserved applause thundered forth, and woke me from my reverie ; and it was with a tear in my eye and a sob in my throat that I turned to my companion and whispered in his ear the words which stand at the head of this chapter—words which, I need hardly say, are taken from the best song ever written by a son of Skye. Walter Smith called it Nicholson’s one genuine song—

“ My heart is yearning for thee, O Skye,  
Dearest of islands.”

I lived for many years in Skye, and made my first home there, and during my stay I learned to love the island—and I love it still—with the love of a Nicholson. Can I use a stronger expression ? Pleasantest of companions was the late sheriff—a Celt of Celts, a Highlander of Highlanders ; and oh ! how he loved the land of his birth.

On more than one occasion I have sailed with this loyal Skyeman up Loch Snizort and round about Lynedale and Greshornish, and past grim Dubeg, and listened to his grave deliberate talk, so full of

pawky humour, while the rowers pulled lazily at the oars, or the wind gently wafted us over the clear blue waters.

Now he would quote from his own writings, or retail some old-world lore picked up in his journeyings through the Highlands; or, again, he would sing songs in his own quaint way. "Kate Dalrymple" he was never tired of; giving the chorus nasally, and scraping upon an imaginary fiddle across his left arm, dividing the honours of the song equally between Bagpipe and fiddle; but always, whether talking, or singing, or story-telling, he kept looking to right and to left, and drinking in with greedy eye and ear every sight and sound of his beloved Skye. Songs of his own composition, too, he often gave us by request. Of these his favourites were "The British Ass," "Skye." "Ho! Ro! Mhorag," and "The Isles of Greece." Of these songs, and of the singer, Dr Walter Smith, Preacher and Poet, wrote:—"A bright, breezy ditty is "The Beautiful Isles of Greece," and it was good to hear him sing it. 'British Ass' has received the imprimatur of the great Association for which it was written. . . . There is no march so delights the Scottish Brigade of the British Army as '*Agus O Mhórág!*' But the triumph of his verse is the exquisite—

‘My heart is yearning for thee, O Skye!

Dearest of islands!’

Which breathes throughout the sweet pure air of the Coolins by the sea. I would give a good deal to have written that song—to have been capable of

writing it. Many a time I have felt my eyes grow dim as he sang it ; and the last time not less than the first. It is indeed a very scanty wreath we are able to lay on his grave, but this one rich blossom will perfume all the rest."

Nicholson studied for the Church, but soon gave up theology, thinking—in his own words—"the *uniform* of the esteemed Free Church, of which I am a member, *too strait for me*." And, thanks very much to the teaching of this same strait-laced Church, Pipe music in Skye in the seventies—I talk of last century—was a negligible quantity, and the quality was even more so.

A stranger in those days might travel round the island and never hear the sound of the Bagpipe. From Dunvegan to Portree there was not a single piper—unless Skeabost's man-servant could be called one, the piper whose silence on the Sunday morning the late Professor Blaikie lamented—and except at the Skye gatherings, when pipers from the mainland came to compete, I may say that during the six or seven years which I lived on the island, I never either saw a Piper or heard a Piper play.

Two amateurs of the "upper ten," who could afford to defy the "priest," occasionally blew the bag ; but of the crofter class I met with none who could finger the chanter.

The attitude of the Free Church in the Highlands towards all forms of innocent amusements, including piping and dancing, has much to answer for. It has taken all the colour out of the people's lives, and at



the close of the day the tired workers have nothing to look forward to but dreary theological discussions, fittingly carried on in blinding peat-reek.

The narrow policy of their spiritual guides has taken the very colour out of the people's clothes, so that on Sundays the church pews are filled with solemn, gloomy-looking faces, staring at you out of rusty blacks and rusty browns, and on week-days the potato-drills are sprinkled with uninteresting crouching bundles of coarse, dull drabs, out of which every vestige of bright, cheery, healthful humanity has been well-nigh crushed.

The Rev. Roderick MacLeod, known sometimes as "The Pope of Skye"—uncle to the great Dr. Norman MacLeod—was returning late one evening from a long tramp over the hills, when he met one of his elders, and stopped to talk to him. After the ordinary salutations had passed between the two men, the minister, rubbing his hands, as if highly pleased with himself, said—"Well, John, I have burnt the last Bagpipe (or fiddle) in the parish. What do you think of that, man? What do you think of that?"

"It may be as you say, Mr MacLeod, and it may be for good," replied John, "but you have not stamped out all the music in the island yet; to do that, Mr MacLeod, you will have first to cut all the mavis' throats in Skye." And good, honest John was right.

The minister's boast however, was not far off the mark, and the Bagpipe was then, and for many a long year after, pretty completely stamped out in its old home.

Nor was the Free Church minister who lived near Dunvegan in my day a whit behind the Rev. Rory in his display of intolerance towards the music of the Pipe. And what these two—narrow-minded men, shall I call them?—were doing for the Winged-Isle, others of the same creed, and equally bigoted, were doing for the rest of the Highlands.

Once, when Miss MacLeod of MacLeod was giving an afternoon tea party to the children on the estate, she engaged an old piper to go round with his Pipe and gather the children together from the widely-scattered townships, and march them down in a body to the Castle grounds. The Free Church minister on the following Sunday actually denounced the dear old lady from the pulpit, for doing so.

He took for his text "The Scarlet Woman," a name suggestive to the poor people, who sat silently listening to the impertinent tirade, of everything that is vile and worthless.

A more refined, charming, altogether delightful old lady than Miss MacLeod of MacLeod I have never met. She lived her whole life in Skye, and could not be tempted south, summer or winter, in order that she might have more to spend on the poor. The heavy-laden found in her a friend. She forgot not "the widow and the fatherless"; she nursed the sick with a tenderness not always to be learned in hospital; she was the confidant of half the parish. When she had more than usual difficulty with a case, she took me into her counsels, and I felt honoured at such times to be allowed to work with her, and proud that

I could be of some assistance to her in her great lifelong work of charity. Whatever I prescribed on such occasions, whether medicines, jellies, soups, or wines, she ungrudgingly supplied.

Nor did such services to the poor round about the door satisfy this large-hearted woman.

Some reports appeared in the newspapers about this time commenting on the high mortality among the newly-born children in St. Kilda—the loneliest and most remote part of her brother's vast domains—and she consulted me in her distress, for she was deeply affected by these reports. When I suggested to her that the cause was a preventable one, she said quietly, "I shall go out to the island and see for myself." And she did! sailing across the treacherous stretch of waters that separates St. Kilda from Skye in an open boat. There she lived for several months—this fine, delicately-brought-up, high-strung lady, with hair white as the snowflake, making her bed with the poor islanders, and eating of their simple fare. And when she returned from her self-imposed mission she again sent for me, and taking me up to the roof of the Castle, where we would be undisturbed, she told me in triumph that the cause was what I had more than suspected, and that she had saved several little lives while nursing on the island.

The last time I met this dear old lady is indelibly impressed upon my memory. I got a letter one day shortly before leaving Skye asking me to meet her at a certain hour at a poor widow's house about a mile and a half out of Dunvegan. With a horse in front

of me that could trot, I was there rather punctually. It was a real Skye day : the wind bellowed and thundered, and the rain came down in torrents. The black, bleak-looking moorland in front of the cottage was mostly under water, and there, stepping carefully along from tussock to tussock, holding her thin black dress carefully up out of the wet, battered and buffeted by wind and by rain, in thin house shoes out of which the water poured at every step, was the Lady of the Manor, on her errand of mercy. My heart filled with admiration and love as the whole truth dawned upon me. This high-born lady was in rags, or little better, that the sick might be tended, and the hungry fed, and the naked clothed. And yet the F.C. priest, who was, no doubt, at that moment—for it was early in the morning, and such a morning!—sitting snug in his warm parlour toasting his feet at a comfortable fire—had once dared to denounce her, whose shoe latchet he was not worthy to unloose, for entertaining the little children with a tune on the Great Highland Bagpipe. Assuredly the *Piob-mhor* has fallen upon evil days in its old home in Skye !

In 1883 I left Skye for Falkirk, and, with the exception of one flying visit paid to it in the following summer, the island and I remained strangers to each other for eighteen years.

In 1902, however, I again visited Skye, while on a cycling tour through the Highlands in company with my eldest daughter, and we spent a very pleasant week there, visiting places new and old. We made Kyle Akin our headquarters, putting up at the King's

Arms Hotel, where Mrs M'Innes, the genial hostess—an old Skye friend of mine—made us most welcome. We cycled round the island by easy stages, going to Edinbane (my daughter's birthplace), *via* Broadford, Sligachan, and Portree, and returning to Kyle Akin by Dunvegan, Struan, and Carbost.

I am glad to say that things are different to-day in Skye from what they were in 1876.

At Struan, where we spent a night, and got up a reel dance, in which the young men from the hill joined, we met Mrs M'Lean, the lady of the Manse, and from her we learned with pleasure that the people were rapidly emancipating themselves from the grievous thralldom of the Free Church in such matters as music and dancing.

This is as it should be: the Highlander ought not to give up his old customs and habits, when good and innocent, at the call of Church or State. As our forefathers fought for the restoration of the kilt and the tartan, so should we fight for the restoration of the old dance and the old music, and go on fighting until the Highlands becomes once more the land of dance and song.

With the most picturesque dress in Europe, seen to most advantage perhaps on the ball-room floor or on the field of battle; and a wealth of song that is our very own, and which, for a certain sweet, quaint pathos which it possesses, is difficult to match; and the Bagpipe, that is now the national instrument of Scotland; and a dance—the Highland fling—as truly characteristic of the nation to-day as the Pipe,

why should we copy the South in our pleasures and dress, to the utter neglect of these?

I had, unfortunately, only one short week to spend in the island; but I learned enough in that time to assure me of the truth of Mrs M'Lean's statement.

"Pipe to us," said the children, and the Pipes were scarcely shouldered when I had around me an eager, happy crowd.

At Kyle Akin each night we had a dance, in which the visitors, old and young, joined, and I took care to make it as Highland as possible.

It was on this visit that I met the "MacWhamle," who rated against the idle, lazy, contented poverty of the Skymen. Remembering this against him, we determined to take notes as we went along with which to refute him on our return.

We arrived at Kyle Akin one Wednesday afternoon in the second week of September, and cycled away the following morning after breakfast. The day was gloriously fine, and the wind, which was but slight, was in our favour. The road was simply perfect for the first eighteen miles. Revelling in the scenery and the freshness of the heather-scented air, we sped along joyously. We had not gone many miles when we saw a boy coming along the road towards us.

"Look out for rags and hunger," I said; but we were agreeably disappointed. The boy was busy with a huge "jelly piece," which he seemed to be enjoying heartily, and returned my salutation pleasantly. He was a sturdy little chap, with bare feet, certainly,

but a grand pair of legs over them, and looked very comfortable and clean in a nice suit of homespun. A little farther on, we came upon three children chasing a pet sheep out of the corn ; and their gay laughter, as they shouted and ran hither and thither in high glee, after the errant one, fitted delightfully into the gay feelings inspired by the bright sunshine and beautiful scenery. Down by the shore, washer-women were busy at work, and they gaily waved us a wet welcome and farewell in "one breath."

Just before entering Broadford, we came up with a little country cart. A smart little pony in a set of bright new harness ambled along between the shafts. The body of the cart was painted green, and the wheels bright red. It was spotlessly clean. A young lad drove, while seated on the straw in the bottom of the cart, was a group of chubby, red-cheeked, well-dressed children, looking so happy and contented, and evidently enjoying the ride as only children can. "Where," we asked, "is the idleness, and misery, and poverty pictured by Mr MacWhamle?" so far we only saw comfort, and happiness, and content. And so it was all through our tour. We conversed with everyone on the road ; we entered many of the houses and saw few signs of grinding poverty such as you meet with constantly in the slums of all great cities ; we questioned, and were answered brightly and pleasantly ; we piped, and they danced ; if we gave pleasure, it was assuredly returned to us fourfold, and when our short acquaintanceships came to an end, we felt each time as if we were leaving

old friends. And how pleasant the flattery with which our healths were drunk at parting, and how polite the manners. "Here's to your health, young leddy"—Donald's cap at this point is raised for a moment, showing the innate gallantry of the man, and then quietly replaced, showing his sturdy independence—"you are a Skye-woman, and you are the one that can dance whateffer, may your life be happy whereffer you go, and may you often come back to see us." "And here's to your health, sir, and you pipe very well too, and you are not ashamed of your native land, etc., etc."

No Irishman could improve upon this.

When we left Kyle-Akin, our intention was to go as far as Sligachan, and rest there for the night, visiting Loch Coruisk on the following day. The journey from Sligachan to Coruisk and back takes a full day, which, as it happened, we could ill afford, and knowing that Broadford was not much farther from the Coolins than was Sligachan, I enquired of an old man who was standing in the Post Office when we called there for the inevitable post card, if there was not a road to the famous Loch, other than by Sligachan.

We were delighted to learn from him, that there was such a road, although "a hilly one," and that if "the leddy"—this with a polite bow—was not afraid of an extra fifteen miles run to a place called Elgol, and a sea journey of four or five miles at the other end, we could do Coruisk much more easily and expeditiously than by the wearisome tramp over



the hills from Sligachan, and also save a day of precious time.

The idea fitting in to our plans well, we at once acted upon it, and following the directions of our now self-appointed guide—who was most courteous to us, although we were complete strangers to him—we turned off the Portree road sharply to the left, just under Ross's Hotel, and cut across country to Elgol by Strathaird. This part of Skye was all new to me, and we were richly rewarded for our enterprise in invading unknown territory, by a most lovely run through Suardal.

To describe the beauties of land and sea which everywhere met our delighted eyes on this never-to-be-forgotten day is outwith the scope of this book, and far beyond the power of my poor pen. Some miles out of Broadford, we came upon "Cill Chrìosd," the quiet burial-place of the MacKinnons.

It is situated just a little way off the main road in the very centre of the beautiful Strath, and is guarded on the south by a fresh water loch of the same name, Loch Cill Chrìosd, while to the north, keeping watch and ward over the sleepers, Ben na Cailleach rears its tall head to the skies. Basking in the warmth of the soft September sun which shone brightly out of a cloudless sky, Cill Chrìosd, as we saw it on that day, looked an ideal place in which to rest when life's weary strife is o'er. With the exception of a solitary fisher, who stood waist deep in the water silently plying his rod, nor sight

nor sound of life was there in all that vast expanse to disturb its still repose. Here I read on the tombstones the names of several old friends who were alive and in their prime when I bade farewell to Skye ; and even since the day on which I stood there with uncovered head, another once well-known and kind-hearted Skyeman, Donald M'Innes, has been added to the number.

The road, as far as Torran, where we came again within sight of the sea, proved almost as ideal as the Kyle Akin road of the morning, cart ruts and loose stones being noticeable by their absence. At Torran, we sat down on a hillock by the roadside, and, it being now past mid-day, we lunched off chocolate cake. For drink, we enjoyed the clear water from a tiny rivulet that gurgled close by, and for dessert, we had a tune on the Bagpipe, then filled with a lazy content, and the joy of idleness, we turned to admire the scenery. A quiet sense of repose covered the land. On our left, the picturesque township of Torran lay simmering in the mid-day sun ; in front, huge Blaavin, sloping down grandly to the very edge of the water at the head of the loch, slumbered peacefully ; at our feet, the blue waters of Loch Slapin danced and sparkled in the autumn breeze ; while on our right, Ben Dearg spread its mighty red-stained shoulder far up the lonely glens, Srath Mor and Srath Beag. The Great Glen—Srath Mor—forms a continuation on land of the sea valley, and looking at it from Torran, it curves slowly to the right in a great semicircle, and

gradually disappears among the mountains, a noble and imposing spectacle.

On the opposite side of the loch, we could follow with the eye for a mile or two, the road to Elgol, as it wound itself ever upward round the mountain side, its steep gradient warning us that to cycle up would be impossible, and to cycle down might be somewhat dangerous.

While we sat enjoying the quiet and beauty of the scene, a young lad came whistling merrily up the hill. Of him I enquired if there were any Pipes or Pipers in Torran, and was told that there was "not one since young M'Kinnon the shepherd left. He played the Pipe ferry well: Oh yes! he was a ferry goot piper whateffer."

I have seldom heard the Highlander—the West Coast Highlander at least—soften the *v* into *f* as this lad did: "Tonalt" is not often met with out of English novels, or I have been fortunate hitherto in missing him.

As there was evidently nothing to be learned in Torran that would be helpful to me in the writing of my book, we resumed our journey without visiting the township. After a pleasant run on the level round the head of the loch, we came to the foot of the hill, where—as we feared—we had to dismount and walk, which was perhaps as well, the surface being very rough in parts. A fast spin down the other side of the hill—the road here again being excellent—made up for lost time, and brought us to the lodge of Strathaird.

Here we stopped for a few minutes, and made friends with the "keepers," through their children, whose pockets we stuffed with sweets, and after another long climb we arrived at the gates of Elgol—for the place is guarded by a wall and gates on its landward side, and protected by nature on the opposite side, where it shews a bold, precipitous face to the sea.

Elgol, meaning, as I was told, "the cold spot," was anything but a cold spot on this bright September day.

Its position, perched on a cliff high above the sea, is not unlike that of one of the beautiful cities on the Mediterranean.

When we arrived there, it was to find the fields all astir with shearers—men, women, and children—busily cutting down the golden grain; and one of these, a smart, sailor-dressed lad, came forward and spoke to us as we stood with uncertain hand upon the gate. He seemed to understand our errand before we spoke, and led us promptly to the head-man of the village, who lived in a large two-storied, well-built house, with slated roof, standing on the edge of the cliff—a house much superior to any of its neighbours. A profusion of oars and sails and tarry rope giving off a delightful aroma in the warm sun, announced the calling of the master—MacLeod was his name, if I remember aright.

Standing on the edge of the plateau, just behind the house, where we discussed terms, the view we had was simply magnificent.

Such a wealth and profusion of wild beauty and grandeur on land and sea as spread itself out before our astonished gaze, it would be difficult to equal the world over. I speak as a traveller who has visited many strange countries, and seen many wonderful sights.

Nature was in befitting silent mood here, as if resting satisfied with her handiwork ; and well she might feel satisfied. Beyond the faint murmur of the sea rising up from the foot of the cliff, as it caressed with gentle touch, the golden tresses of sea-weed floating lovingly upon its breast, and the distant call of the sea-mew, no sound broke the deep silence.

A flock of gulls lazily swinging to and fro at the foot of the cliff, looked, from the heights on which we stood, like drifting snow-flakes.

Not a breath of air was stirring.

The great Coolins across the bay tower'd aloft, huge in their giant repose.

There was not a cloud in the sky, nor a speck of mist on the mountain's side, to veil the clear, clean, sharp-cut peaks, as they pierced the blue ether.

Viewing the fair scene from right to left, Elgol looks down upon Camasunary, with its pleasant white-walled shooting lodge and sheltered bay—in which, on the day of our visit, two yachts, looking no bigger than sea-birds, lay at anchor—and upon Loch Scavaig, whose blue waters play ever round her feet ; and northwards to where the Coolins sit, nursing Coruisk in their lap ; and out west—over Minginish headlands on to the great Atlantic, and

down once more upon Eilean Soay guarding the entrance to the bay ; and south to where Rum and Canna lie sleeping, and Ardnamurchan wages eternal battle with the waves. And still farther south by west—so clear was the air on this particular day—the many peaks of the mountain range extending from Morar to Morven, through Strontian, Kilmalieu, and Kingairloch could be seen silhouetted, faint but clear, against the opal sky.

It was under such weather conditions that we visited the famous Loch Coruisk, but the want of cloud and mist took away largely from the solemnity and mystery of the place, and I preferred the scene as I had seen it many years before, on a day when the heavy wind-driven mists were rolling grandly off the sides of the mountains, and the lofty peaks were buried in black thunder-clouds.

Slipping, and sliding, and stumbling over loose stones, we made our way to the shore by a steep path fit only for goats, and while we were launching the boat—no child's play, I can assure you, pushing the ancient-looking, heavy, water-logged thing through the loose shingle, and over innumerable boulders of black slippery rock—a smart breeze sprang up.

Our boat was an old fishing boat, its only seat, the beam in the centre. It was not one whit better equipped, or more seaworthy than that from which the great Dr. Johnson dropped his spurs into the sea more than a hundred years before when coasting round Skye. The men sat in the bottom of the boat, the steersman sat aft on the gunwale, while

my daughter and I occupied the seat of honour in the centre. Before starting, we took on board for ballast, a number of large stones.

The wind, which kept growing in force, being dead against us, the men had to row for a good hour, but at length trusting to catch a slant of wind coming off the mountain side, the primitive lug-sail of brown cotton, and indifferently patched, was hoisted on a rude primitive mast, which was "stepped" primitive fashion in a heap of loose stones.

A curious little incident happened on the way out. My daughter, who was born in Skye, as I have said before, and who spoke Gaelic as a child fluently, had unfortunately completely forgotten the old tongue during her eighteen years' sojourn in the south. Just as we were approaching the mouth of Loch Scavaig, and the old boat, in spite of much creaking and groaning, was slipping along splendidly, a sudden squall struck her so heavily that she heeled over until the gunwale was under water, and I—who knew a little about boats—thought we were going to the bottom. I was piping at the time, and my hands being occupied (as I continued playing with a seeming indifference to what was happening—an indifference which I was far from feeling) I was shot along the seat, with my daughter on the top of me, and if I had not managed to stop our precipitate flight to leeward, by getting my outstretched foot against the gunwale of the boat, it is a matter of speculation as to whether my researches into the history of the Bagpipe would have been continued

or not. As we slid along the seat, my "*Nighean don Boidheach*," in the excitement of the moment, called aloud to the men in Gaelic, "*Hic-i-stoi! Hic-i-stoi!*," and immediately coloured up to her eyes with a most becoming blush. The three sailor lads, who had quickly lowered the sail, looked round in gentle wonder, but said nothing.

We took to the oars after this for a time, and the wind soon dying away as quickly as it had risen, we rowed the remaining part of the journey to the accompaniment of "The MacIntosh's Lament," which I piped at the request of our skipper, John MacIntosh.

I had just got to the last variation—the Crumluath—when two torpedo-boats, which had been lying close inshore, hidden behind the Islands, shot out past us at a tremendous pace, throwing up huge cataracts of white foam as they tore along, stern first. I immediately changed from the "Lament" to the Sailor's Hornpipe. Jack hitched up his trousers as he heard the well-known tune, saying by his action as plainly as words could say, "you're piping to us, and we would dance to you if we dared, but we're on duty," and smiling "good-bye!" was swiftly carried out of sight.

We saw Coruisk this day without a ripple on its surface, reflecting back the clear blue sky as from a mirror of polished silver. The bright sunshine penetrating, revealed every crack and crevice on the steep, scarred sides of the grey-black rocks as they rose abruptly from the water's edge; and there was not



anywhere—look high or low—a patch of mist the size of one's hand, to soften the stern outlines, or to deepen the mystery of that loneliest of lonely spots.

When walking round Loch Coruisk, I said to Nelly (my daughter) :

“What was that you said to the sailors when the squall struck us?”

“Oh, yes; did you hear me, father? Did you hear me? It was Gaelic!” and again she blushed with pleasure at the remembrance.

“I know that,” I answered. “But what was it?”

“I told them to ‘Hurry up.’”

“You told them to ‘Come in,’” I replied. “‘*Hic-i-stoi*’ is not ‘Hurry up,’ but ‘Come in,’ and it is no wonder that the men who were already ‘in,’ looked astonished at your imperative call.”

Now here, under the influence of congenial surroundings—the surroundings of her childhood's days—a language which has been in abeyance for eighteen years is suddenly recalled; but the special part of the brain concerned having grown “rusty” for want of use, gives off in the hurry and excitement caused by the sudden approach of grave danger, not the words wanted, but the first that come to hand—the words which had been oftenest heard, or oftenest used in infancy, and which had made the deepest impression on the palimpsest of the young brain—the words of welcome which greeted the ear of every stranger knocking at the door of a Highland cottage, “*Hic-i-stoi*.”

Hospitality was the failing of the Highlander in

days gone by. Its over-indulgence spelt ruin to many a good family in those days, and the law itself had at one time to be put in operation to protect him from the consequences of his own over-generous impulses. In those days there was no suspicious peering out from behind half-closed doors when rat-a-tat-tat wakened the slumbering house dog. "Come in!" rang out frank and free at the first summons.

That he knocked at the door, shewed him to be a stranger. That he was a stranger, made him welcome. These were his credentials. His rank or business was of secondary consideration. The time of calling mattered not. Morning, noon, and night, "*Hic-i-stoi*" was to be heard all over the Highlands, and the children, listening, took the words to heart, and stored them up for future use. If they occasionally sprang unbidden to the lips, as in the present instance, is it to be wondered at?

I have said that hospitality was a failing of the old Celt; and a grand failing too!

No doubt it was often taken advantage of, and abused by the lazy and the "ne'er-do-weel"; seldom, if ever, by an avowed enemy. This it is which makes the treachery of the Campbells at Glencoe all the more glaring. "*Hic-i-stoi*" said the simple, trustful people in the glen, when they saw the Campbells shivering at their doors — the bleak winter night fast closing in and a snow-storm coming on. And the MacIans took them in out of the cold, and feasted them, and rested them, sharing their very beds with them.

In the morning, when the Campbells moved out down the Glen, muttering in [their] cowardly beards, there were no good-byes—not even one innocent child's voice to cry after them—"God-be-with-you."

Fire and sword had done their work thoroughly and well. The desolation of death filled the glen. And when the news, which spread like wild-fire, brought incredulous friends on the morrow to the scene, they saw before and around them, nothing but blood-stained hearths and blackened rafters and smouldering ruins, where but yesterday was sweet smiling home with its welcome "*Hic-i-Stoi.*"

We sailed back to Elgol in sunshine, the men rowing leisurely over a sea smooth as glass and matching in colour the brilliant hue of the finest sapphire. The wind, ashamed of the trick it had played us on the way out, hid itself away for the rest of the day.

We heard of three pipers in Elgol, but as they were still on the Clyde yachting, we had no opportunity of judging their playing.

We found the Elgol men a smart, intelligent lot of fellows, quick and decided in their movements. There was also an independent, manly bearing about them, which spoke volumes in their favour. They were all dressed in navy-blue cloth, sailor-fashion, spoke English fluently and correctly, without forgetting their Gaelic, and were not content—O delighted shade of MacWhamle!—with even a millhand's wage for a day's work.

These young fellows, with frank, fearless eyes,

that looked through and beyond you—with that look begotten of long days and nights spent in “going down into the sea in ships”—make their living in the South during the summer months as yachtsmen, and know every inch of the Clyde as well as, or better than, their own native lochs.

We left Elgol, with regret, at 6 p.m. for Broadford, with one and a half hours in which to do fifteen miles. It was our intention, owing to the roughness of the surface, and steepness of Loch Slapin Hill, to throw ourselves upon the mercy of the “keepers,” and stop for the night at Strathaird if darkness overtook us; and something of this intention was probably in my mind when I took a leaf out of the “Unjust Steward’s” book, and borrowing “striped balls” from my daughter—what the Americans call “suckers,” gave to the children.

But although the first seven miles, owing to the hilly nature of the road, took us just one hour to cover, we did the last eight miles in half an hour, and, tired but happy, ran into Mr Ross’s hotel at Broadford, two minutes before the dinner gong sounded, having spent what turned out to be the most enjoyable day in our week’s tour round Skye.

Broadford has well been called the Manchester of Skye. The dwellers therein are proud of the title. A Broadford lady once told me this, and I remember well how she stiffened and drew herself up to the full height, and minced and affected her accent as became a citizen of this “no mean city.” She spoke as if the Lowland title conferred some honour

upon the little town and its inhabitants, and gave them a superior standing over the rest of Skye.

Broadford has always had too free communication with the South to be characteristically Highland, and its ways and manners are largely those of the Southron. I learned nothing in its streets that I could not just as easily have learned in Falkirk. It is too refined to flaunt its knowledge of Gaelic and the Bagpipe in the face of the stranger.

It was, therefore, without any keen regrets that we started on the following morning at ten o'clock for Portree and Edinbane. Portree was only twenty-six miles distant, and we arranged to lunch there before going on to see our old friends at Edinbane; but alas for good intentions! the wind went round to the north, and blew so hard that we had practically to walk the twenty-six miles; lunched at 1.30 p.m. at Sligachan instead of at Portree, and only arrived at the latter place at 5.20 in the evening.

Some distance out of Broadford, feeling out-of-breath, and somewhat tired with the constant struggle against the wind, we sat down to rest by the wayside, near the delightful little village of Luib. Here, sheltered by a soft, brown, turf dyke from the north wind, and bathed in sunshine, we lay and dreamed, watching from under half-closed lids, the fleecy clouds chasing each other across the bright blue sky, and listening to the moan of the waves in the bay below as they leaped over each other in haste to escape from the scourge of the bitter north wind.

Our quiet retreat was discovered before long by

the village children, who drew near boldly and fearlessly but in perfect silence. Having found out long ago the secret of unloosing little tongues, we soon learned all that was interesting about Luib; but most interesting of all to me was the news that there was a piper in the village called Murdo M'Innie.

Leaving my daughter to look after the bycycles, I made a bee-line over some very rough ground for Murdo's house. It was a neat little thatched cottage, but the walls I noticed were built solidly of stone and lime, and more substantial looking altogether than I was accustomed to see in the old days.

It was whitewashed outside and in, and looked dazzlingly white in the bright sunshine. It had a register grate in the room, which jarred upon me at first as being out of place; but thanks to the grate there was in the house itself just that soupçon of peat reek flavour which greets the visitor's fresh sense of smell so gratefully on a first visit to the Highlands.

The whole place was as neat and tidy as a new pin. Why was MacWhamle the discontented not here to see how goodly and pleasant the Skye crofters' lot can be?

The door stood open, but I chose to knock. "*Hic-i-stoi*" flashed out the quick response. I entered without more ado, and there stood Murdo—frank of face and frank of manner, beaming a welcome upon the stranger.

"I have just heard that you are a piper," I said to him after the usual greetings had passed between us.

"Oh! no indeed, sir," answered Murdo, "I'm not much of a piper."

"But I hear you can play a bit," I replied, "and I've come for a tune!"

"It's not much of a player I ever was," said he, "and it's a long time since I played, and you can't have a tune whatever, for my bag is burst."

The bag of his Pipe is what Murdo refers to here.

I liked Murdo for his bashfulness, a most uncommon failing in a piper, as I have observed more than once. "But," I said, "I have a set of Pipes here," pointing to the little bundle in waterproof under my arm—at which Murdo smiled a little doubtfully.

So did the boatmen at Elgol when I offered them a pibroch instead of the bottle of whisky which they asked to have thrown into the bargain, and—worse luck for them—accepted my offer, not believing that I could give them a tune.

I soon had the Pipe together, and after I had tuned the drones, I handed it to Murdo. He had barely taken a turn once up and down the room, before an old woman ran in at the door, and holding up her hands in astonishment, exclaimed in Gaelic, "Gracious goodness, what's up with you, Murdo!" then seeing me for the first time, said nothing more, but incontinently fled. The old woman was followed by a bright-eyed laughing girl, who did exactly the same. Using the very form of speech of the old woman, she gave vent to an exclamation of astonishment, "*Yeeally Gràish*," and

ran away with the sentence unfinished, on catching sight of the stranger. Then, as the music rose and fell in that little room, lad after lad dropped in, till the house could hold no more. These lads needed no invitation—the door stood open, wasn't that enough! they spoke no word, but sat and listened in quiet wonder to the piper. In the meantime I had sent for my daughter, who was received in silence and shewn to a seat in the window by one of the young men, who politely made way for her. When Murdo, who played with great spirit, and no little touch of good fingering, had blown his cheeks into a state of paralysis—largely from want of practice—he had to stop. I then—as a farewell—played “M'Leod of M'Leod's Lament,” an old tune written in 1626. What possessed me to play so sad a tune I do not know. I had not well begun when an old man came quietly in at the door just as the others had done. I nodded to him and went on playing, but I noticed that he alone went up to my daughter and shook hands with her in a grave and dignified fashion, then turned suddenly away, and going quickly to the back of the press door, where he was out of sight of the others, he wiped his face with a towel that hung there. Coming in fresh from the field, this seemed a natural enough thing to do on the part of the old man, and I thought nothing more of the matter.

After a smoke and a few words of praise to Murdo for his piping, and of encouragement to him to follow it up, and never again to let the bag rot, I



said good-bye, and came away. But Murdo *would* see me across the moor to the road. My daughter walked a little in front, and did not hear what Murdo said as he gave me his history in pocket edition.

"The old man who came in last is my father," said Murdo. "We live by ourselves. My mother is dead, and my only sister died three years ago. And since then the Pipe has been silent in the house, and that's how the bag is in holes. You broke the silence of three years to-day."

"I'm sorry, Murdo," I said, "if I have awakened painful memories unwittingly, but three years is a long time to mourn for the dead, with life so short. I think you should have looked sooner to the "Pipes" for comfort, after the manner of your forefathers; and I will see to it that you get a new bag if you will promise me to continue the piping so well begun to-day."

To which Murdo replied simply, "I promise that."

As we rode along the side of the Loch, my daughter said to me "Father! who was the old man who came in last, and why did he cry when he shook hands with me?"

He was really weeping then, when he went behind the door!

The sound of the Pipe in the house after so long a silence had overcome him—flooding his brain with half-forgotten memories, and his heart with tears.

Five minutes before she spoke, I would have answered her question readily enough, with "Why

of course, it was the 'M'Leod of M'Leod's Lament,' played with the proper feeling, that affected him." But now, I told her Murdo's story instead, and for some time after, we rode along the shore in silence.

This day's journey, although short, was the only toilsome one in our tour, and we crawled rather than rode up to the Portree hotel; but after a most delightful high tea, in which freshly caught herring and freshly laid eggs with ham piping hot, figured largely, we started off as fresh as ever for Edinbane, fourteen miles to the north-west.

The way—every stone of which I knew—was beguiled by stories of the various driving accidents which befel me in the old days, and a short hour and a half brought us to the hospital, just a little after dark, where we were kindly entertained for the night by Dr. and Mrs Sandstein, and where my daughter had the pleasure of sleeping in the room where she first saw the light.

At Edinbane, as indeed all along the road, I noticed a great improvement in the crofters' houses; the rudely-thatched, badly-built, dry stone house of my day, having given place to neat cottages, built of stone and lime, with large windows and properly built chimneys, and all nicely slated.

The Crofters Act is surely doing good.

A few of my old friends who heard of our arrival came to see us off in the morning, and their enthusiasm was delightfully refreshing. They, one and all, expressed surprise at Nelly's having grown

so much. Said John M'Kinnon, "the Marchand," to her, "And you are little Nelly! Well! well! And do you remember how you used to call to me in Gaelic from the nursery window in the morning, and say, 'Iain Mach Kinnie, I am your sweetheart.' Well! well! who would think that little Nelly would grow such a big leddy."

Alas! "the Marchand," who was ill at ease and depressed that day over a telegram which he had just received, saying that his son was coming home from Calcutta ill, heard next morning before we left of his boy's death, which took place on board ship when one day out at sea.

John M'Farlane also, was very amusing about Nelly. He swore he could tell her anywhere by her likeness to her mother. "And when you left here, you were just the size of that"—pointing half-way to the ground—"and now you are a great big leddy, taller than your mother"—which was quite true—"but not so plump," which—publish it not in Gath, whisper it not in the streets of Askelon—was also quite true.

John, like the rest of our kind Skye friends, was forgetting that "little Nelly" had been away from her island home for over eighteen years, but their warm remembrances were very welcome to us, and after all, it was really "little Nelly" that they knew.

Next day we rode to Dunvegan about mid-day, and lunched there. While I was playing "Lord Lovat's Lament" in the churchyard, round the tomb of Thomas Fraser of Beaufort, who was father to

the famous Simon, Lord Lovat, of the "Forty-five," Dr. Sandstein, who was to drive me over to Boreraig, the farm which the MacCrimmons held for so many years, arrived at the hotel, and went off without me, believing that I had gone on by myself. As it was now raining heavily, we thought it better not to attempt Boreraig, and so made straight for Struan, where we spent the night. Next day, although it was Sunday, taking advantage of beautiful weather, we cycled to Kyle Akin, a distance of 60 or 70 miles. At Struan, we got up a dance in the kitchen of the inn, at which several young men from the hills joined. One of these, a splendidly built fellow, and handsome looking, was an excellent dancer, and also played very well upon the "Pipes." The Bagpipe was also very much in evidence at Kyle Akin during the remainder of our stay, where we had nightly dances in which visitors and servants joined heartily.

I had a call on the morning after my return, from one of the natives called John McRa. Hearing that I was interested in the Bagpipe, he said that he would like to show me some relics which he had in his possession. He had, among other things, an old chanter belonging to his grandfather, Donald McRa, and a silver medal won in 1835.

This same Donald had won the championship in 1791, and in 1835 when over eighty years of age, the old man again went south to compete for supremacy. But although he did not win the gold medal, he was awarded a special silver medal for his pluck as well as for his skill.

This same Donald McRa married a Fraser, and had two sons, John and Sandy, who were both pipers in the 71st. John afterwards became piper to Charles Sobieskie Stuart Wells, whose remains lie buried in the Fraser country.

Donald was a teacher of Bagpipe music, and one of his pupils was the famous player, M'Rae (*Patanbeg-vounderlech*), piper to the Earl of Seaforth.

The grandson took me to his house, a neat, well-furnished cottage, where he unfolded to me his treasures.

He also told me stories of Angus Mackay, and of the MacCrimmons, and of many a piper long since forgotten.

One of the last of the famous MacCrimmons, according to John, died in the old Fort of Glenelg, after the American War. Another MacCrimmon, named Bruce, went as piper to Louis Philippe, after the battle of Waterloo. John rambled on in this way of old-world affairs for quite an hour, and I came away quite delighted with himself, and his house, and his treasures.

My impressions formed during this short visit to Skye, point to the conclusion that the Bagpipe is once more coming to the front in its old home, and that one day ere long a new race of MacCrimmons may arise to delight future generations with their skill.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### THE CHORUS.

A GREAT deal of idle discussion has centred round the musical instrument called by early English writers, the "chorus."

What is a chorus?

The old Greek scholar would have answered this question by saying, "The chorus is an organised band of dancers and singers."

The ninth century Anglo-Saxon scribe would just as readily have answered, "The chorus is a musical instrument used by the Britons, and called by them, *Piob-mala* or Bagpipe."

While the twentieth century musician would tell us that, "The chorus is a body of singers, singing in concert."

Now each of these three answers, although differing the one from the other, would be correct, and in refusing to recognise this shaded meaning, a good deal of confusion and misrepresentation has been introduced into the discussion by writers in the past.

It is the old story of a word which has acquired different, and apparently contradictory meanings, at

various stages in its march down the centuries. And so, when one authority tells us that it means "*this*," and another equally learned authority tells us that it means "*that*," both may be right, or both may be wrong—it all depends on a date.

The story of the word "chorus" is, in fact, the story of the Greek word, "*sumphonia*," over again. Curiously enough, too, both words at an early stage of their history were closely connected. From the chorus came the symphony. And both words, after many centuries of divergence, came to mean the same thing—a musical instrument—the Bagpipe.

"Chorus," however, no longer means Bagpipe, and has gone through a greater number of transformations than "*sumphonia*" which is still the name in Southern Italy and Greece for the Pipe.

"Chorus" meant originally a dance, to the accompaniment of singing. Next, a body of singers without the dance. Then a dance, danced to instrumental music: after many centuries, a Bagpipe; and now—back to a former meaning—a band of singers.

The two words, "*sumphonia*" and "chorus," are almost interchangeable indeed, and were so often used together—"Audivit *sumphonicum et chorum*," said the Master—that to name the one was to suggest the other; and in history, "chorus" might well come to mean the Bagpipe. The dance that was danced to the Bagpipe, became the Bagpipe Dance, and after a time, the Bagpipe itself. I know that the word has been derived from the Latin

for *skin*, of which the bag was made, but I prefer the origin suggested here.

We have fortunately more than one description of the British Chorus on record, and these shew conclusively that it was not a dance nor a crowd of singers, but that it was a *wind instrument*, consisting of two reeds inserted into a bag made from the skin of a goat, doe, gazelle, or other animal. The reed inserted into the neck, we are told, was the blow-pipe, the second reed was the chanter, and was generally fixed into the mouth of the beast, the head having been left attached to the skin for this purpose.

In an old drawing in the British Museum, a copy of which I have seen, the bag is made out of an entire pig's skin, and the chanter comes away from the pig's mouth.

From another old drawing we also learn that the bag of the "chorus" stuck out in front of the player, and was squeezed by both arms against the breast. All the older forms of Bagpipe, indeed, were held by the players with the bag in front, and not under the arm like the present Highland Bagpipe.

The idea of the Pig-Bagpiper, which is so often to be seen in old pictures, and on sculptured stones, as at Melrose Abbey, has probably been taken from a "chorus" of this kind—the dead pig played upon, suggesting to the sculptor, a living pig piping. When "fooling" however, minstrels often assumed strange garbs, dressing themselves as apes, bears, pigs, etc. Nothing, indeed, was too grotesque, in



pipe or in dress, or in speech, for the old piper, who, like his neighbours, acted the clown or the mummer on occasion.

This "chorus," so often mentioned in English records, was also a Scottish instrument—one of three—which Giraldus Cambrensis (b. 1118) found in general use among the Scots at the time of his visit. It was also the instrument with which King James whiled away the lagging hours on the night of his assassination.

If we can prove then, that this British instrument of the ninth century was a Bagpipe, its "introduction" into Scotland must have taken place several centuries earlier than the earliest date yet fixed upon by the modern antiquarian.

It will take more than dogmatic assertion, or an antiquarian's reputation, to explain away the following facts, which, to my mind at least, prove conclusively that the Saxon "chorus" was no other than the British Bagpipe, known as the *Piob-mala*.

And now for the proof.

In a Latin "Commentary on the Scriptures," written in the ninth century, the "chorus" is described as a musical instrument consisting of "a single skin, with two pipes—a single-reed Bagpipe—the description is perfectly clear, and fits no other instrument of ancient or modern times.

In a second "Commentary on the Bible," written about 1320, the writer is arguing on this very point, and he says that the word "chorus" in Psalm cli., verse 4 (Psalm cl., verse 4 in the modern edition)

—means a concert of singers, and “*not a Bagpipe.*” The words in italics clearly shew that there was a Bagpipe known to this writer, and to others in his day by the name of “chorus.” The denial also shews that some previous translator had read the word “Bagpipe” into the psalm—a translation from which our writer very wisely differs.

Now, when one reads the psalm carefully, it really looks as if the Psalmist, when he used the word “chorus,” had meant a musical instrument. It is of *instruments* that he is speaking. “Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet; praise Him with the psaltery and harp; praise Him with the timbrel and *chorus*; praise Him with stringed instruments and organs; praise Him upon the high-sounding cymbals.” The French seem to have recognised this, and have translated the word as “flute,” while we have turned the same word into “dance.”

I do not myself however, for a single moment believe that the “chorus” of David, the Psalmist, was a Bagpipe, although the word meant a Bagpipe in the ninth century. This would be as illogical as to assert, with some, that “chorus” *never* meant Bagpipe, because it *now* means a choir of singers.

That there may be no mistake, however, about the fact that the word, “chorus” meant a Bagpipe at one time, I will give you the learned commentator’s own words, literally translated:—

“Some say,” he writes, “that ‘chorus’ is an instrument made from a skin; and has two reeds, one through which it is inflated, and the other through

which the sound (music) is emitted, and is called in Gallice, *chevrette*."

Now there is no ambiguity about the above description of the "chorus": it can mean only one thing: but it proves also that the "chorus" of the early fourteenth century, was one and the same instrument as the "chorus" of the ninth century: an instrument composed of a skin (or bag) with two pipes: that it was, in short, a Bagpipe.

The further fact that it was called by the Gaelic peoples "*chevrette*" also strengthens the proof. Because the word "*chevrette*" comes from *chevre*, a she-goat, or from *chevrette*, a doe, the skin of both these animals being most commonly used for the bag. Now *Chevretter*—the name given to the man who played upon the "*chevrette*," was a common name for Bagpiper in the fourteenth century.

In the reign of Edward II., for example, the Exchequer Rolls shew a payment to "*Jauno Chevretter*," or to John the Bagpiper.

This last is another link in a chain of evidence which is, to my mind, complete, and which leaves no doubt that the instrument called "chorus" was a Bagpipe.

It was a droneless Bagpipe, and very primitive: the more advanced Pipe was known as the "Drone Bagpipe," or simply "the Drone."

I do not deny that this term "*drone*" may at times have meant a Bagpipe without a chanter: the melody made by perforations, or vent holes in the drone itself, as we have it in the Italian "*Zampogna*"

of to-day—of this I am not quite sure. But from ancient drawings, we learn that it generally meant an ordinary one-drone Bagpipe. Take the two following as examples out of many, from a period, when drawings and cuts tell us that the Pipe was a one-drone Pipe.

“Forming part of King James’s household were Jamé Wedderspune Fithelar, and Jamé that plays *on the drone*.” In 1505, there is also mention made in the Exchequer Rolls of a payment to the “Inglish piper with the Drone.”

If further proof is wanted of the fact that the “chorus” was a Bagpipe, you can get it from the pages of Dauney, where there is an argument, which proves that *Choraules*, or players on the “chorus,” and *Pythauls*, or players on the Pythaulos and *Utricularii*, or players on the Roman Pipe, always mean *Bagpipers*.

Ten years ago, I wrote to a friend in Newcastle, to see if he could buy or borrow for me, an African Bagpipe which had been exhibited at a meeting of some learned society—I forget what—by Dr. Bruce, the great antiquarian of Newcastle.

I got back a letter, with some notes on the Bagpipe taken at the meeting. The Pipe itself had gone amissing, to my great disappointment.

The letter said :—

“May 31, 1895.

“I only got your letter yesterday, and have had to rummage my MSS. to find the information you ask. I perfectly remember the Bagpipes (*sic*) which Alderman

W. H. Richardson of Jarrow gave to Dr. Bruce. I made a full examination of them at the time, and enclose you a copy of the notes I took.

"I do not know what became of them. The last time I saw them was at Backworth, at a Pipe contest, after which we supped at Mr Forster's, where the Doctor and I both tried to play them, but were unsuccessful in getting notes fit to hear, *and they had an abominable smell.*—Yours sincerely,

J. S."

The Pipe contest here referred to, was for players on the "Northumberland Sma' Pipes": a competition which Dr. Bruce initiated, and which was carried on for several years with considerable success, but which is now—I fear—defunct.

Whether the supper at Mr Forster's, or the "abominable smell," had to do with the disappearance of the "Pipe" on this famous occasion, I cannot tell, but it has not been heard of since.

I hunted Newcastle everywhere for the Pipe on three or four separate occasions, but was always unsuccessful in my search.

The notes kindly sent me I give below:—

#### "AFRICAN BAGPIPES."

"Alderman W. H. Richardson, of Springwell Paper Mills, Jarrow, presented to Dr. Bruce a set of African Bagpipes which he had purchased from a band of itinerant negro musicians when on a journey about Oran, in Africa, for esparto grass.

"I had the opportunity of examining and trying them, and found that the bag was made of the skin of a doe gazelle, which had been cured with castor oil, and had a most rancid smell. The tail hole and the skin of

the hind legs had been turned inside and fastened up, the two udders left untouched. A small part of the skin of the fore legs had been left, and the ends closed by affixing the extremities of the gazelle's horns therein, between which was an aperture for the blow-pipe, the latter made from the thigh bone of a flamingo. The end of the neck was closed by a wooden patrass with two holes, into which was inserted two reeds, each about five inches long, with four holes each.

"The reeds played in unison, and as near as could be were F, G, A, or Bb and C of our scale. The ends of the reeds had portions of a gazelle horn for the bell, and were ornamented with beads, small coins, brass chain, *a shirt button*, and a small leather case, empty then, but supposed to have held a charm, which would be probably a verse of the 'Koran.'"

Four weeks ago, while working up the subject of this chapter, I was fortunate enough to acquire two sets of African or Egyptian Bagpipes. The larger of the two faces this page, and you can compare it with the clear description given above of the lost Newcastle set.

At the same time the notes might well stand for a word-picture of the old British "chorus," the instrument which we have just discussed, and which history tells us was in common use in the early centuries throughout Great Britain.

In some parts of Africa the negro plays his Bagpipe in a peculiar fashion. He plays it while lying full length on the ground, with the bag under his stomach.

He utilises the weight of his body to force the wind through the chanter. This leaves both hands

#### AFRICAN OR EGYPTIAN BAGPIPE :

The bag made from the entire skin of some small animal ; consisting of a blow-pipe and double bell-mouthed chanter. It is decorated with two rows of coloured beads.









free to manipulate the reeds, and in this he has an advantage over the old piper of the "chorus," whose hands must have been much hampered by the bag, which stuck out in front.

Captain Dalrymple Hay—now, I hope, Major, or Colonel Hay—who, at one time, was Adjutant to the 4th V.B. Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders, once promised to get me a set of African Bagpipes. He learned that the Africans had a Pipe, when out in the bush on a six weeks' shooting expedition with a friend.

One hot, sultry evening, the two friends were seated, one on each side of their tent, tired of each other's company for the time being.

Suddenly both got up, and made a simultaneous rush for the bush.

This display of energy was called forth by the sound of the Bagpipe in the distance.

Surely there must be some Scotsman at hand; and the sight of a new face, and the sound of a new voice, was yearned for at that moment by the two friends.

But alas! when they got to a small clearing in the midst of the forest, from whence proceeded the welcome sounds, there was nothing but, as the Captain put it, "A dirty nigger lying on his belly on a dirty pigskin, and grinding forth unintelligible noises, not unlike the real thing at a distance."

"If I had known you collected Bagpipes," he added, "I would have secured that one for you. But I am going back to Africa in a year or two,

and I will get you a set, although I have to shoot the nigger."

To which I have only to add, that neither of the sets in my possession has come from the gallant Captain.

This chapter was written early in 1905, and I believed that the subject, so far as I was concerned, was finished; but in the autumn of 1906 I was called suddenly to Ireland, and picked up some fresh information there.

Mr Kennedy, of Baronrath, Straffan, near Dublin, at whose house I stayed for a few days, on learning that I was interested in the Irish Bagpipe, kindly shewed me an article on Irish music and musical instruments—an eighteenth century article, written by one Ed. Ledwick, LL.D., author of a voluminous work (which quickly went through two editions) called "The Antiquities of Ireland."

This article is interesting, and is worth quoting from if only for its clear description of the Irish Pipe. But it is also strongly confirmatory of the above views on the "chorus," and it is the work of a scholar.

The learned Doctor opens up in no unhesitating fashion, thus :—

"The *Piob-mala* or Bagpipes, the 'chorus' of the Latin writers of the Middle Ages, do not appear of great antiquity in this island.

"Cambrensis does not mention them among the Irish musical instruments; though he asserts that both the Welsh and Scots had them.

"The 'chorus,' so denominated by the Latins from

having the bag of skin, seems to be a very ancient instrument. It was probably introduced into Britain by the Romans, and among the Saxons by the Britons. In England it retained its original form and power to the eleventh or twelfth centuries. In subsequent ages it received several improvements, a 'chorus' was added, consisting of *two side drones*, in which state it still remains among the Highland Scots, and in this state it probably was introduced into Ireland, some time prior to the fourteenth century; for we find it is a martial musical instrument of the Irish kerns, or infantry in the reign of Edward III., and as such continued down to the sixteenth century. Having obtained this instrument from Britain, the Irish *retained its original name*, and called it *Piob-mala*, or Bagpipe. It had the loud, shrill tone of the present Highland Pipes, being constructed on the ancient musical scale.

"The chanter had seven ventages as at present. The lower sounded the lower D in the treble, and the upper C. The first drone was in unison to E, the second hole in the chanter, and the *large drone an octave below it*. This seems to have been the state of the Bagpipes throughout the British Islands to the close of the sixteenth century, when *considerable improvements* were made, by taking the pipe from the mouth and causing the bag to be filled by a small pair of bellows on compression by the elbow. This form, Mr Walker (Hist. Mem. of the Irish Bards), asserts they received from the Irish, by whom they were no longer denominated *Piob-mala*, but *Cuislean* or *Cuisleagh-Cuil*, *i.e.*, the Elbow Pipes, or Elbow Music. Under this denomination they still remain among the people, and are at present *much improved*, having no longer the loud martial sound of the Erse *Piob-mala*, but more resembling a flute, and are reduced to the modern scale. . . Their component parts in the Irish language are the *Bolg* or Bag; the *Bollogna Cuisli* or Bellows; the *Feadain* or Pipes; and the *Anan* or Drones, so denominated from *their resemblance to horns*, whence *anan* sometimes in Irish signifies the Base in music.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### THE GREAT HIGHLAND BAGPIPE.

“Don’t be afraid, I am not about to antiquarianize.”—SALA.

“NORTH-WEST of a line from Greenock, by Perth, to Inverness, is the land of the Gael —of the semi-barbarous instrument, the Bagpipe ; of wild piobrach tunes or rude melodies, very little known, and still less admired.”

These words of wisdom were penned over two hundred years ago by an English traveller who had visited Scotland. And exactly one hundred years later, a fellow-countryman of his laments over Scotland’s “barbarous music.” “The Bagpipe,” he says, “is a sorry instrument, capable of little more than making an intolerable noise.”

The “semi-barbarous,” incapable Pipe here mentioned, is the Highland instrument of which I am about to write.

The *Piob-mhor*, or Great Highland Bagpipe has indeed, always had its detractors, as well as its admirers, and a kind of desultory warfare over its value as a musical instrument has been waged between

OLD BILL OF 1785 :

Original given to the Author by Mr GLEN, Bank Street, Edinburgh.

It is interesting as shewing what were the favourite tunes with the old pipers.





# IN DUNN'S ASSEMBLY ROOM. ANCIENT MARTIAL MUSIC.

## PLAN of the COMPETITION for PRIZES TO BEST PERFORMERS ON THE GREAT HIGHLAND PIPE.

To begin at Eleven o'Clock forenoon, of TUESDAY, 30th Auguft, 1785.

Pieces.	English Translation.	Candidates names and Country.
ACT I.		
1. A Salute by Profeffor M'ARTHUR.		
2. Cean Drochaid Beg.	{ <i>Head of the Little Bridge, or the Cameron's Gathering.</i>	{ To be played by John M'Gregor, fen., from Fortingall, who won the first Prize at Edinburgh last year.
3. A Piece by Peter M'Gregor, who won the first Prize at Falkirk Competition.		
ACT II.		
1. Failte a' Phrionfai',	<i>The Arrival or Welcome—A Salute.</i>	John Cumming, Piper to Sir James Grant of Grant, Bart.
2. Failte Shìr Sheumais,	<i>Sir James M'Donald's Welcome.</i>	Robert M'Intyre, Piper to John M'Donald, Esq., of Clanronald.
3. Cumhachd Mhìc an Leathain,	<i>The M'Lean's Lament.</i>	John Cumming
4. Failte a' Phrionfai',	- - - - -	Robert M'Intyre.
5. The fame,	- - - - -	Alexander Lamont, Piper to John Lamont, Esq. of Lamont.
6. Glais-mheut,	<i>A favourite Piece.</i>	Colin M'Nab, Piper to Francis M'Nab, Esq. of M'Nab.
7. Moladh Mharai',	{ <i>A Piece in praise of Mary, or the Laird of M'Lachlan's March.</i>	Alexander Lamont
8. Failte a' Phrionfai',	- - - - -	Colin M'Nab.
9. The fame,	- - - - -	Donald Gun, Piper to Sir John Clark of Pennycuik, Bart.
10. Comhachd Mhìc Chruimean,	{ <i>The Lamentation of Patrick More M'Crimmon.</i>	Donald M'Intyre, fen., of Rannach.
A HIGHLAND DANCE after Act II		
ACT III.		
11. The Grants March,	- - - - -	Donald Gun,
12. Failte a' Phrionfai',	- - - - -	Donald M'Intyre, fen.
13. The fame,	- - - - -	Dougal M'Dougal, Piper to Allan M'Dougal, Esq. of Hayfield.
14. Pìobrachd Eranach,	<i>An Irish Pìobrach.</i>	John M'Pherion from Badenoch, Piper to Colonel Duncan, M'Pherion of Cluny.
15. Failte Shìr Dheorfa,	<i>In Praise of the Laird of Callendar.</i>	Dougal M'Dougal
16. Failte a' Phrionfai',	- - - - -	John Pherion
17. Teuchd am Phrionfai' gu Mui-deard,	{ <i>The Landing in Moydart.</i>	Hugh M'Gregor, from the stewarty of Montcaith.
18. Failte a' Phrionfai',	- - - - -	Malcolm M'Pherion from Breadalbane.
19. The fame,	- - - - -	Hugh M'Gregor.
20. Glais-mheut,	- - - - -	Malcolm M'Pherion,
A HIGHLAND DANCE after Act III		
ACT IV.		
21. Leannan Dhomail Chruaimeich	<i>Donald's Love.</i>	{ Donald Fisher from Breadalbane, who won the second prize last year.
22. Failte a' Phrionfai',	- - - - -	Archibald M'Gregor from Fortingall.
23. The fame,	- - - - -	Donald Fisher.
24. Leannan Ghìoll Chruaimeich,	<i>The Stern Lad's Sweetheart.</i>	Archibald Macgregor.
25. Failte a' Phrionfai',	- - - - -	Alexander M'Gregor, from Fortingall.
26. Cean Drochaid Mhòid,	<i>Grist Bridge.</i>	John M'Gregor from Glenlyon.
27. Shìf-fealach Strach Gblaia,	<i>Chifholm's March.</i>	Alexander M'Gregor.
28. Failte a' Phrionfai',	- - - - -	John M'Gregor.
29. Pìobrach Shìabh an t Siora',	<i>Sherrifmuir, a Pìobrach</i>	{ John M'Gregor jun. a boy of twelve years of age, too to the above John M'Gregor from Fortingall, who won the Prize last year.
30. Failte a' Phrionfai',	- - - - -	Donald M'Lean of Edinburgh,
A HIGHLAND DANCE after Act IV.		
ACT V.		
31. Failte, a' Phrionfai,	- - - - -	The boy John M'Gregor
32. Cumhachd Eoin Ghairbh,	<i>Lamentation of Rough John.</i>	Donald M'Lean.
33. Suibhal Mhìc Allain,	<i>Clanranald's March.</i>	{ Donald M'Intyre jun. from the estate of Sir Robert Menzies of that ilk, in Rannach, Perthshire.
34. Pìobrachd Mhìc Dhomail Dhuibh	<i>Cameron's Gathering.</i>	{ Paul M'Innes from Lochaber, Piper to John Cameron, Esq. of Callart.
35. Failte a' Phrionfai',	- - - - -	Donald M'Intyre jun.
36. The fame,	- - - - -	Paul M'Innes.
37. Suibhal Mhìc Allain	<i>Clanranald's March.</i>	Allen M'Intyre of Edinburgh.
38. Failte a' Phrionfai',	- - - - -	{ John M'Pherion from Strathpey, late Piper to the Atholl Highlanders.
39. The fame,	- - - - -	Allen M'Intyre.
40. Cumhachd an Aoin Mhìc,	<i>Lamentation for an only Son.</i>	John M'Pherion.
41. Glais-mheut,	- - - - -	Duncan Stewart from Rannach.
42. Failte a' Phrionfai'	- - - - -	John Dewar from the estate of Sir Robert Menzies.
43. The fame,	- - - - -	Duncan Stewart.
44. Cean Drochaid Mhòir,	<i>Head of the Great Bridge.—a Pìobrach.</i>	John Dewar.
45. Shìabh an t Siora',	<i>Sherrifmuir.</i>	Ronald M'Donald, from Culloden.
46. Failte a' Phrionfai',	- - - - -	Robert M'Dougal from Fortingall, Perthshire.
47. The fame,	- - - - -	Ronald M'Donald.
48. Moladh Mharai',	<i>In Praise of Mary.</i>	Robert M'Dougal
A HIGHLAND DANCE after Act V.		

The whole to conclude with a Piece by Profeffor M'ARTHUR



those two for more than a hundred years. To this perennial source of strife, there has been added in recent years other knotty points which have formed the subject of keen debate—such as the origin of the Pipe, the date of its introduction into the Highlands, its influence—if any—upon the music and folk-song of the country. Within the last dozen years or so, its Celtic character has been traduced, and doubts of its genuineness as a Highland instrument have been sown broadcast over the land by Highlanders themselves.

This is not as it should be. Genuine Highland relics of the olden days are getting rare, and should be carefully hoarded up—not thoughtlessly discarded, as it has been too much the fashion of late to do.

It was not until the middle of the eighteenth century that such doubts arose. Until then, the Bagpipe, although mentioned by several writers, was always spoken of as if it were indigenous to the country. There are authentic references to it—if not in the first century—in the twelfth, fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries, and we get no hint anywhere from these that the Pipe was not Highland—that it was a modern introduction from England or the Continent. Giraldus Cambrensis (b. 1118) simply mentions it as in his day a well-known Scottish instrument. M'Vurich the Bard, in his satire (written in the fifteenth century) upon the Highland Pipe, would have scored more heavily than he has done if he had had the slightest suspicion that it was an English instrument which he was girding at.

It has been reserved for the modern critic—drawing largely upon his own imagination I suspect—to discover the foreign extraction of the Highland Bagpipe. And if we are to believe the teaching of what, for convenience sake, I call here the “Inverness School,” it is worse than foolishness any longer to hold the hitherto cherished belief, that the Bagpipe is an ancient Highland instrument, or that it was ever dear to the old Highlander’s heart. We are told, in short, by the learned authority of the North, that the Bagpipe was not known in the Highlands until the sixteenth century, and that, with the exception of the large drone, it is an English instrument pure and simple.

The kilt, as an ancient Highland dress, has long been discounted by the same authority, but I feel sure that many people, not Highland, would miss both kilt and Bagpipe, if they were allowed to die out. And yet, if, as Mr M’Bain of Inverness says, they be not relics of a past age, then are they valueless, and the founding of Highland Societies at home and abroad for the study and preservation of these hitherto supposed old Highland characteristics is a piece of worthless sentimentality, and the exclusive use of the “Pipes” as a military weapon by Highland regiments is little better than a pious fraud. Nor does the third, and in some respects, the most important characteristic of the Highlander in days gone by, fare much better in the North.

Do away with its originality, and you do away with the high antiquity of the Gaelic tongue.

This is exactly what is being attempted to-day, with perverse ingenuity, by a few Gaelic scholars. In a recent Gaelic dictionary, for example, published in Inverness, the author goes out of his way to trace the Celtic root-word *Piob*, to the Latin *Piva*, while the latest scholarship in the South tells us, on the contrary, that this is certainly not the case, and that *Piva* is most probably derived from the Celtic word, *Piob*.

On every possible occasion, Gaelic words are thus being traced to other languages, but never other languages to the Gaelic, if it can be avoided.

For my own part, I should prefer, with Dr. Johnson, to look upon the language of my ancestors as "a rude and barbarous tongue," but old; rather than think it a modern thing of shreds and patches, culled from other languages—a poor conglomeration of Latin, Greek, and French.

Of outside modern criticism on these matters, we have abundance and to spare, but such is generally vitiated by a total want of acquaintance with the subject; and it seems to me, that if we had the real opinions of the old Highlander on these things, which we are now told are but recent introductions, this would be of much greater value in helping us to arrive at a correct decision.

"By their fruits ye shall know them," was written of old, and it is not by the spoken word, but by the accomplished deed, that we can get a glimpse into the heart of the old Highlander, and learn there something of his true thoughts and feelings

upon the subject of his music, his language, and his dress.

It is a happy chance for those who, like myself, believe in the antiquity of the Highland Bagpipe and dress, that "the deeds of old" have been occasionally recorded, as in these we find reasons for "the faith that is in us."

When the old Highlander stood on the field of battle, sword in hand, the shyness that clogged his tongue at other times disappeared, and his manhood boldly asserted itself. Proud of his chief, proud of his clan, proud of his country, proud of the old speech and dress, but, above all, proud of the War Pipe whose martial strains had so often roused his ancestors to battle, he no longer hid his passion for these things behind a cloud of words, but blazoned it forth in the face of the world. This is no exaggeration, as the following tale—which "is a true one, and no lye"—proves:—

The good old town of Falkirk was early astir one fine morning in the second week of April, 1779. The people in the streets were all agog with excitement. A rumour had arrived the night before that a large body of Highlanders had broken out into open rebellion at Stirling Castle; that they had been overpowered and disarmed after a terrific struggle and much bloodshed, and that they were to be sent under armed escort to Edinburgh for trial, on the following morning. But when the Highlanders appeared, the Falkirk "bairns" were grievously disappointed.

These men were not prisoners ; they had not mutinied. As they marched along, their proud bearing told its own tale.

They were armed to the teeth.

Pipers played at their head.

They had no escort.

Dressed in kilts of brown, crotal-dyed ; averaging 5 ft. 7½ ins. in height, hard, bronzed, and wiry-looking, with muscles taut as steel, the two companies made a sight worth looking at, as they swung gaily up the Tanner's Brae, and past the West Port, with heads erect, and with that quick springy step born only of many years spent among the mountains.

Falkirk had seen no such sight since Prince Charlie and his men had overrun her High Street thirty years before.

But although rumour on this occasion had proved a lying jade, there was some excuse for it. Jacobite emissaries had got at the ears of the simple Highlanders in Stirling, and had whispered that the Government was playing false with them ; that in spite of their having enlisted only for foreign service with Highland regiments, they were to be kept at home, and drafted into Lowland regiments, where they would be forced to march to strange music, and speak English, and wear trousers ; to all of which the Highlanders answered grimly, "We shall see," but refused to take any action in the matter, trusting to the assurances given by Captain Innes, the officer in charge.

On their arrival at Leith however, the men were told very abruptly that they were to be turned over to the 80th and 82nd—the Edinburgh and Hamilton regiments, and at once the heather was on fire.

The Highlanders refused to submit to this injustice, and flying to arms, entrenched themselves on the shore at Leith, and refused to yield. Soldiers were sent down from the Castle at Edinburgh, to quell the insurrection, and a fierce conflict ensued, which was stopped only by the intervention of a well-known Highland officer who appeared on the scene, and spoke in Gaelic to the mutineers, but not before Captain Mansfield, of the South Fencibles, and nine men, were killed, and thirty-one soldiers wounded.

At the trial of the three ringleaders—and this is the point to which I wish to draw your attention—one of them, hailing from Caithness, pleaded through his agent that he had only enlisted into the 71st, or Fraser Highlanders ; that Gaelic was his native and only tongue ; that the kilt was his only dress ; and that he wouldn't know how to put on trousers. After being sentenced to be shot, they all received a free pardon from the King, who thus gracefully acknowledged the original injustice done to the poor Highlanders.

Nineteen years before, almost to a day, the Fraser Highlanders were retreating sullenly before the enemy at Quebec. The General, in a blazing temper, rode up to the Field-Officer, and complained of the disgraceful behaviour of his corps. The



angry soldier was told very plainly that he himself was to blame for the disaster, in forbidding the Pipers to play that morning:—

“Nothing encourages the Highlanders so much in the day of battle, and even now they”—the Bagpipes—“would be of some use,” said the Field-Officer.

“Then, in God’s name, let them blow up,” said the General. And at the first sound of their beloved Pipes, the Highlanders—who but a moment before were retreating—rallied, and shoulder to shoulder as in the old days, rushed straight at the foe, and drove him before them, as chaff is driven before the wind.

Here, then, we have, at last, the opinion of the old Highlander, expressed in no uncertain fashion. In defence of his dress and of his language, he is willing to lay down his life on the shores of Leith. But at Quebec, in defence of his favourite war instrument, the Great Highland Bagpipe, he is ready to risk that which he values a thousand times more than his life—his honour. It is impossible for me to believe that my forefathers would have staked life and honour in such gallant fashion for a mere whim, or in defence of “newly-borrowed plumes.”

To the Highlander who believes otherwise, I would only say, “Go, tell it to the Marines.”

Murray, in that monumental work which he is bringing out just now, called, “A New English Dictionary,” defines the Bagpipe as “a musical instrument of *great antiquity and wide distribution*, consisting of an airtight wind-bag, and one or more

reed-pipes, into which the air is pressed by the performer;" and with this definition, every authority on the subject is in accord.

I have tried to shew its *antiquity* from history. The Greeks have known it for 2100 years, and the Latins for 1900 years, and these two peoples only borrowed it from the Celt, or other stranger.

The illustrations in this book give a good idea of its *wide distribution*. If I had in my collection the "*Volynska*," of Russia—a Pipe very similar to the Egyptian—and the Afghan Pipe—both of which I hope still to get—it would prove, without any written or oral demonstration, that in its *distribution* it is *wide*, extending from our own Hebrides on the West, to India in the East, and from St. Petersburg in the North to Cape Town in the South.

It is also the same to-day as yesterday in essentials, and is composed of the same simple materials—"an air-tight wind-bag, and one or more reed pipes."

The *Piob Mhor*, or Great Highland Bagpipe, is a good example of the survival of the fittest.

Like the different Bagpipes of the world, it started from the tiny Shepherd's Pipe, and its development was slow and gradual in the Highlands.

To prepare the way for a better understanding of the *Piob Mhor*, I shall recapitulate shortly.

The Greeks had a one-drone Bagpipe very early, called *Pythaulos*, or Apollo's Pipe. They also had a many-drone, chanterless Pipe, named *Sumphonia*. This latter, is, I believe, the very first Bagpipe

BULGARIAN PIPE :

The gift of Mr RANKINE, Rosebank

The chanter of this Pipe is decorated with lead, and ends in a peculiar knee made of lead.















A SECOND SPANISH BAGPIPE :

Shewing a small additional drone. It is more modern and much better finished than the preceding one.

mentioned in history, and dates from 176 B.C. In the *Sumphonia*, two of the drones were pierced with holes, and were played upon like a chanter, and made the melody. The first Roman Pipe specially mentioned in history (A.D. 54) was a two-reeded droneless Pipe, and we have the same form perpetuated for us in the Egyptian Pipe of to-day, a specimen of which graces the opposite page.

The Italian Shepherd's Bagpipe (or *Piva*) is still a one-drone Pipe, as is also the *Gheeyità*, or Shepherd's Pipe of Spain, and the Bagpipe of Bulgaria. The chanter of the Spanish Pipe is furnished with only seven holes, the thumb-hole being wanting; but in a very modern set, of which I shew a drawing here, there is the thumb-hole, and also an attempt at a second drone. It seems improbable, however, that the two drones, judging from their comparative lengths, are in harmony, unless, indeed, two or more octaves separate them.

The workmanship of these two last-mentioned Pipes is very defective; the ornamentation is of the meagrest and cheapest; the sliders of the drones fit very imperfectly; and the reeds are of the rudest construction. In fact, they shew little or no improvement upon the original Bagpipe, which those three peoples had given them, long centuries ago.

The German Bagpipe—the *Schalmei*, *Dudel-sac*, *Sac-pfeiffe*, Shepherd's Pipe—for it is known by these and other names—grew into a variety of curious forms—the arrangement of the drones especially shewing great ingenuity. It was the favourite instrument of

the German shepherd from the very earliest of times. It became, ultimately, more or less of a monstrosity—the huge bell-shaped ends attached to both chanter and drones making it a burden to the player and a most unwieldy instrument. The bell of chanter and drones was probably derived from the ancient Pipe with animals' horns for terminals. The addition of the bellows in the German Bagpipe—which took place about the same time as in France—was alone wanting to complete this chameleon-like monster, and having attained to perfection (in the eyes of its admirers), it speedily declined, and is now practically defunct. Nor do I think that the innumerable German bands which have sprung up in its place are an unmixed blessing.

In France, the *Chalumeau*—a one-drone Pipe—attained its highest popularity when its would-be improver turned it into a Bellows-Pipe—the *Musette*, with four, five, and six drones—which, after a short existence as the plaything of the Louis, also fell into disfavour, from which it has never recovered. In England, where the improver was also at work, the Bagpipe has died out, except in the north-east corner, where the “Northumbrian Small Pipes” still exist.

Everything possible in the way of improvement has been done for this Bagpipe. The scale has been modernised; keys providing sharps and flats have been added; the scale has been lengthened out almost to two octaves, and, by a very ingenious arrangement, the drones can be changed from G to

D, to suit the two keys of the chanter. But what is the result? Alas for the theorists! its constitution has been so weakened by all this tinkering that it can hardly eke out sufficient breath with which to sing its own death-song.

I first heard this little instrument played at Choppington by one of the foremost players of the day. He was anxious to impress me with its merits, and he opened up in his best style with his favourite piece, which was (Heaven help us!) the "Viennese Waltz." When the Bagpipe is reduced to playing rubbish such as this, the sooner it sings "*Nunc Dimittis*" and retires gracefully from the stage, the better.

In Ireland, where the improved Bellows-Pipe has come to the greatest perfection of all, it has fared no better.

I venture to say that there is not one person in Ireland, now that Professor Goodman, of Trinity College Dublin, is dead, who can tune the double bass Regulator Pipe, to say nothing of being able to play upon it. This is the Pipe which is shewn on the opposite page, and described in another place.

A judge of Pipe music, who was present in Dublin some years ago at the Irish *Mod*, told me that not one out of the five or six pipers—all they could get together, from the whole of Ireland!—who entered for the competition, had his Bagpipe tuned.

And as the playing, too, was of a very inferior order, the effect upon his ear, he said, was anything but pleasant.

Now, the lesson I draw from all this is, that any attempt at improving the Great Highland Bagpipe must prove futile. It is all very well in theory, but in practice we have before us the fate which has invariably overtaken the improved Pipe in this and in other countries.

It is an undisguised blessing that the Highlander resisted all such improvements in the past, preferring to use the bellows which God gave him to the poor substitute provided by man, and also refused to have the old-world scale of the chanter altered to the modern scale.

The Highland Pipe of to-day, if we except the addition of a few holes to the chanter, is the unexpurgated edition, so to speak, of the original Shepherd's Pipe, when once the "burden," or drone, had been added to it. And here, in passing, I may mention that the addition of the drone led to a new style of music. Singing in unison, which was the almost invariable custom in the Highlands in olden times, and is common to this day, was, practically speaking, the only method at one time in vogue in this and other countries.

But the drone accompaniment added so great an additional charm to Bagpipe music that it was copied by the early vocalists, and part singing grew out of it. Quite a number of the oldest English part-songs have a drone bass in imitation of the Bagpipe; and you can provide no better bass yet to the good old song of "The Phairson Swore a Feud," than the nasal drone bass. Any other

accompaniment to really old Highland airs is all but an impossibility.

But it was of the Great Highland Bagpipe, the *Piob Mhala*, or *Piob Mhor*, that I intended writing ; of its age, construction, peculiarities of scale, etc.

The Great Highland Bagpipe is *par excellence*, the King of Bagpipes, because it has hitherto refused to be modernised. It is the type from which the *Pythaula* of the Greeks, and the *Piva* of the Latins was derived.

It is almost as primitive in construction as when the shepherds piped on the plains of Bethlehem on that first Christmas morn.

The workmanship is better certainly, and the scale more extensive, and the tone richer and fuller owing to the use of stronger and better constructed reeds and the larger bore, but otherwise it is very little altered. It is now invariably furnished with three drones ; the two small ones being in unison, and pitched one octave higher than the large drone ; but in everything else, it is just the old primitive *Piob*, *Piva*, *Chalumeau*, or Shepherd's Pipe.

The scale of the chanter is still the old Eastern scale of neuter thirds.

It has survived until now, because it has persistently turned a deaf ear to the critics who said, "With a few keys added and a truer scale, you would be a much superior instrument."

To these tempters, it has hitherto said "My defects are my own, and have given me my individuality. Without them I would be just a common

modern instrument of eight notes, with no flexibility, stiff and formal: and with nothing distinctive or characteristic about me, unless it were the monotonous drone.

“In competition with modern instruments, I would be nowhere. The Eastern scale is my charm, and gives a variety to the music otherwise impossible, even if at times, it does offend the modern ear; and without it, I would soon be accorded a fitting repose in the antiquarians’ rubbish heap.”

The vitality of this semi-barbarous instrument is surpassing, only because it has been true to itself in the past, and will last, only so long as it is true to itself in the future. With so many theoretical advisers about, it must not forget the lesson—a lesson as much required to-day as ever—learned from a contemplation of the untimely end to which the improved Bagpipe in the past has come.

The scale of the Bagpipe differs from that of all other instruments of the present day.

It is an old-world scale, and is still in use by one or two of the Eastern nations. When we call it a scale of neuter thirds, we mean that there are no proper sharps or flats in it.

The drones are in the key of A major, and are tuned to A of the chanter, which practically makes A the dominant or key note, but the tunes for the Bagpipe are written indifferently in G (one sharp), D (two sharps), and A (three sharps).

The scale extends from low G to high A, an octave and one note, and as there are no keys, or



other method of taking in or leaving out a sharp in the transition from the key of A to G, or from the key of G to D, there is none of the three keys correct according to modern notation. Nor are they correct when measured by the modern scale. But by using this ingenious old-world scale without sharp or flats proper, the seeming difficulty—nay! at first sight the impossibility—of playing a tune in G at one moment, and in A the next moment, without adding to, or taking away from the sharps, is cleverly got over: because as there are no sharps or flats in the chanter scale, you cannot take away from what is not; and yet you get an effect almost identical with the effect of transposing from one key to another, as is done in the modern method by taking in or leaving out extra sharps or flats provided for the purpose.

But there is—there must be, a decided difference in the two methods; and it is this very difference in the Bagpipe scale which makes the music so delightfully original and refreshing to the trained ear.

If I have not made myself clear to you, first play upon the piano from the Pipe score such tunes as “Highland Rorie,” “Roderick of the Glen,” “Highland Laddie,” or the modern tune of “Elspeth Campbell,” and then play the same tunes over on the chanter. On the piano, the discord is all but unbearable, while on the chanter, it is hardly perceptible.

“Highland Rorie,” for example, opens upon A for the first two bars, then suddenly repeats the same

upon G, and so on. It is this sudden transition from one key to another without any alteration of the scale, which gives Bagpipe music its quaint piquant flavour.

Marching tunes are written principally in A and D, while G lends itself more to *Piobaireachd*, and especially to laments, such as "The Lament for the Children," by Patrick Mor MacCruimein, and "MacLeod of MacLeod's Lament."

The tune in D, I must confess, I do not like, the "burden" the while booming along in A; it grates upon my ear.

Many good pipers, however, do not share this objection with me, but I am quite sure of this, that it is the tune ending in D which ordinary people cannot tolerate, and which gives them a distaste for the Pipe. The composers of D tunes, however, seem aware of the fault of a too prolonged or too-often repeated discord, and they try to avoid this by touching lightly and as seldom as possible on the D, although it is the key note for the time being.

There is no doubt that the practising chanter is mainly responsible for so many tunes being written in this key, as there is no drone to warn the composer that he is writing for it as well as for the chanter. In the Northumbrian Pipe this difficulty is got over by changing from the drones in A, or rather in G, to D.

In spite of the prejudice I have to D tunes however, I acknowledge that there are many good ones, more especially dance tunes.

But to return to the instrument itself, there is no doubt, as I have said more than once, that this neuter third scale, and the monotonous drone accompaniment, while giving it a distinctive character among musical instruments, also detracts largely from its reputation in the eyes of the musical critic. And when to these peculiarities you have a performer who, although fairly capable otherwise, does not know how *to keep his instrument in tune*, then indeed does listening become perforce a pain and a burden.

But a well-tuned Highland Bagpipe in capable hands is difficult to beat. It can still charm and delight the ordinary listener as well as the highly-cultivated musician.

To any one who wishes to have a scientific explanation of the Bagpipe scale—a flight too high for me to attempt—I would recommend the article on it in the appendix to Mr Manson's book. I have only given you my own impressions, in homely language, and the conclusions which I have formed after a long and intimate acquaintance with the subject, and have studiously avoided anything which might savour of the expert, seeing that I am not learned in the theory of music.

If I have lingered too long over the old-world character of the Great Highland Bagpipe chanter, trying to prove that it should on no account be altered to suit modern requirements, it is because there is a real danger of some such attempt being made in earnest one day, when, if it should succeed,

then good-bye to the ancient Pipe of the Highlands. The expert knowledge and common-sense of our Bagpipe-makers have kept things right so far. A speaker at a Highland gathering held this year at Johannesburg (and a Highlander himself to boot!) devoted a large part of his speech to the argument that "a more correct scale, and the addition of a few keys to the chanter, would make the Highland Bagpipe a much better instrument," and his remarks were received by his Highland audience with applause. Now, not one writer in one land, but many writers and speakers in many lands, are asking thoughtlessly for these so-called improvements. I hope I do not boast when I say that I have some little knowledge of improved Bagpipes; I play a little upon the Northumbrian, the Lowland, and the Irish "Pipes," and I possess practically all the music which has been written for the English and Irish Bagpipes; but I always, after dallying with the improved instrument, return to the Great Highland Bagpipe with an increased zest and a keener sense of its superiority over all others; and I would not give one good pibroch for all the Bellow-Pipe music in the world.

Leave the Great Highland Bagpipe as it is then I say.

Improve the piping by all means.

Teach the piper to tune his instrument properly; to use only good reeds; to stick more to the old music, especially pibroch; to avoid modern rubbish, such as waltzes and polkas, and the music of other

instruments cut down and altered to *suit the "Pipes."* If this were done we should hear less of Bagpipe reform in the future. The Bagpipe, in fact, needs no reforming—will stand no reforming. The piper may. And the reformer? Let him study the instrument more closely, and listen oftener to its music, so that his ear may get used to its old-world scale, and all will be well with the Great War Pipe of the Highlands in the years to come.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### THE GREAT HIGHLAND BAGPIPE—ITS ANTIQUITY.

The Antiquarian is "too often a collector of valuables that are worth nothing, and a recollector of all that Time has been glad to forget."—"Tin Trumpet," by HORACE SMITH.

MR MACBAIN'S three-drone, or Great Highland Bagpipe, the only "Simon Pure," dates no further back than the eighteenth century.

It is not of it that I would speak in this chapter, but of the Highlanders' War Pipe, the "*Pìob Mhor*," the "Great Pipe," which George Buchanan, the Historian tells us led the Highlanders on the field of battle in his day—*i.e.*, in the early part of the sixteenth century.

Have we any dates to help us in our research?

The Inverness school apparently can find none, and its disciples, along with their leader, are reduced to feeble guessing.

The leader of this school, who has apparently got a few followers in the South who allow him to do their *thinking* for them—if it can be called thinking—says that, "like the potato, the kilt and the Bagpipe are *recent introductions* in the Highlands."

These three things are evidently bracketed together to trip up "the unwary." But because the potato and the gramophone are recent introductions in the Highlands, that is no proof that the kilt and the Bagpipe are modern.

Every school child knows how the potato got into this country.

No Highlander ever claimed it as a Highland invention or discovery, but most Highlanders *do* lay claim to the kilt and the Bagpipe as Highland out-and-out; and they are quite within their rights in doing so. To bracket the three things together—one modern, and two ancient—as Mr MacBain has done—is at once to introduce into the discussion the "*suggestio falsi*"—a poor method of argument for a scientist or scholar to employ.

The potato has, in short, as much to do with the Bagpipe as the man in the moon.

The earliest notice of the Bagpipe in Scotland is to be found in a work by Aristides Quintilianus—a writer who flourished about A.D. 100.

The next earliest mention of the Bagpipe is by our friend, Gerald Barry, the Welshman, who was born while the twelfth century was still young.

And the third and only other date necessary to mention is the date of payment to King David's (II. of Scotland) Pyper, viz., 1362.

It is now acknowledged (because it cannot be denied) that the Bagpipe was known in Scotland in the fourteenth century.

We have, therefore, to consider only the two first

dates given here, and as no other, so far, are available, it becomes all the more necessary for us to verify them. History, however, is not everything, and it would be absurd to deny the antiquity of the Bagpipe as a Highland instrument, because the written proof is scanty. You cannot always expect chapter and verse for every little detail in an age when there was no one to write these down: and for many centuries after the Romans left the country, Scotland was without a historian, but she existed all the same; and so did the Bagpipe—both unrecorded.

When the first real historian came on the scene in the person of George Buchanan (born 1506) one of the most learned and cleverest men of his time, he found the Bagpipe, as we learn from the introduction to his book, a very important instrument in the economy of the Celt. It was already the *Great Pipe*, the *War Instrument of the Highlanders*, having supplanted on the battlefield both horn and trumpet, and—if it pleases you to believe so—harp. This means that it was, in George Buchanan's time, a loud-toned, powerful instrument, able to make itself heard amid the din and roar of battle, with a drone or drones attached, and practically identical with the present Pipe, the only difference being a simpler ornamentation—no combing on the drones, and, instead of ivory ferrules, ferrules of horn or bone, with the terminals of the drones larger, elongated, and of pear-shape, and the G of the chanter flatter. A few rings also of brass wire on the



drone, or a simple inlaying with lead, was not uncommon.

“It would appear,” writes Mr Glen, “as if the Bagpipe was not employed by the Highlanders for purposes of war until the beginning of the fifteenth century.

“Previous to this date the armies were incited to battle by the *prosnacha*, or war-song of the bards. The last *prosnacha* was recited at the Battle of Harlaw (1411) by MacMhuirich, the bard, who was also the first satirist in this country of the Bagpipe.”

Here is a verse from MacMhuirich's poem, as translated by Mr Stewart in the *Piobaireachd* Society's collection of *Piobrach* :—

“The first bag (-pipe), and melodious it was not, came from the Flood. There was then of the pipe, but the chanter, the mouthpiece, and the stick that fixed the key, called the *sumaire* (drone?).

The poem goes on to say “But a short time after that, and—a bad invention begetting a worse—there grew the three masts, etc.

“At the close of the fifteenth century,” continues Glen, “the Bagpipes seems to have jumped into general favour; or, *what is more probable*, information on it becomes more abundant.”

Writing in short had now come to stay, and events were being chronicled regularly, and to this, as Mr Glen shrewdly guesses, its *seeming sudden popularity* is due.

Now, the first of our dates, 100 A.D. is discounted, as I have said, by the antiquarian, because, he says, Quintilianus never visited this country, and therefore could know nothing about the Highlanders, or as the Romans called them—Caledonians.

I do not know myself whether Aristides Quintilianus ever visited this country or not, but I do know that Agricola was pushing his way through Scotland at the very time when Aristides was writing his book at Rome. Agricola also, according to the custom of the Roman General of the day, sent back to Rome typical specimens of the Caledonian Celt chosen from among the prisoners of war, and these men dressed in their native garb, armed with their native weapons, and carrying their native musical instruments—in short, surrounded with every distinctive mark of nationality to make them as conspicuous as possible, were exhibited in the streets of Rome during one of the many processions organised to appease the insatiable vanity of the Roman people, and to spread the fame of the ever victorious army and of its noble leaders.

In this way, the Roman procession became an educative force ; and the dweller in Rome, although he had never travelled beyond its walls, got to know a great deal about the various peoples in the then known world, and could truthfully describe their armour, dress, and musical instruments without having visited the different countries.

Strabo, the Geographer, who was born 64 B.C., and whose great work on “Geography,” in seventeen volumes, was even thought worthy of translation within the last fifty years, affords an excellent example in illustration of the above.

He was an acute observer of men and manners, and an accurate scribe, and in one of his books he

describes the *Celt of Lincolnshire* as a tall, straight, shapely, and powerfully-built man, with rufus-coloured hair, and blue eyes. He was particularly struck with the great size of the British Celt, as compared with the average Roman citizen. And yet, Strabo never was in Lincolnshire! Can we believe him, then? Of course we can, for he tells us that he saw, "with his own eyes, five typical Celts from the Fens of Lincolnshire exhibited in the streets of Rome."

Now, the home of the Celt has ever been the home of the Bagpipe, and 1500 years later another writer of keen intellect and great powers of observation—our own Shakespeare—presents us with a curious little fact in corroboration of Strabo's truthfulness, for while he mentions Bagpipes in his writings over and over again, he only singles out one named Pipe—the *Lincolnshire*. The Pipe of the Fens was evidently the Pipe of Pipes in Shakespeare's day. The words are put into the mouth of Falstaff, that humorous rogue, who says he is as melancholy as "the drone of a *Lincolnshire Bagpipe*." Several old writers also mention this Pipe.

With such facts as these before him, the man must be blind who denies the close relations which have subsisted for ages between the Celt and the Bagpipe.

Strabo, the great Roman writer of his day, writing about the time when Christ was born, finds the typical Celt hidden away in the Fens of Lincolnshire. Shakespeare, the great English writer, born

1500 years later, finds there—in these same Fens—the typical Celtic instrument, the Bagpipe.

All of which also points to the conclusion that Aristides Quintilianus knew what he was talking about, and may well be believed, when he asserts that the Bagpipe was known in the Highlands of Scotland in his day. What does it matter to us whether he gained his knowledge while travelling in this country, or while watching the daily processions from his parlour window in Rome?

But in a matter of this kind, I sometimes think that common sense is as safe a guide as any antiquarian conjecture.

Horace Smith's estimate of the antiquary of his day was not far from the mark, and except that our modern antiquary, from being over-bold, and full of belief in things ancient, has become over-timid, and profoundly sceptical of everything savouring of the antique, the estimate still holds good.

When I was young, the story of the Inverary Standing Stone was a constant source of amusement to the boys at school.

The sight of any old man dressed in rusty black, with a napless, concertina-hat covering his bald head—a snuffer, of course, from the brown stains upon his upper lip, and the huge, red cotton pocket handkerchief sticking out between his long coat tails behind—always revived the story, for we felt sure that in this innocent old rubbish-heap grubber, there dwelt the soul of an antiquary, a thing which we despised heartily.

The story, as it was told to us, and as we retold it to one another, was as follows :—

There once stood in a field, somewhere outside of Inverary, a large, solitary, upright stone, one of two which at one time had formed the pillars of a gate ; but as far back as the memory of living man went, there had been but one stone in the field, forming a sort of “ Lot’s Wife ” landmark to the traveller passing by. The companion pillar, and dividing dyke, and wooden gate, had long since disappeared.

One hard winter, when masons had gone curling mad for want of better to do, one of their number, during his enforced leisure—being a bit of a wag, and not much given to the roaring game—secretly carved upon the old stone, the following mysterious legend in Roman characters :—“ For cows to scratch their backs on.”

Mysterious, I call it, for the artist had broken up the words erratically, making out of them a word puzzle something like the following :—“ FORC OUST OSCRA,” etc., and a fourth century date.

With the assistance of a bit of pumice stone, a little moss and brown earth, the engraving quickly became quite weather-beaten and ancient-looking. Such a find could not long escape notice, and before long its discovery was noised abroad.

The mason may have had something to do with the discovery, but at this stage he kept discreetly in the background. When the story got abroad, the whole countryside flocked to view the wonder, but no man was able to read the writing on the stone.

The assistance of the Antiquarian Society was called in, and the world, now all on tiptoe to learn what the inscription meant, had not long to wait. It was announced, by the learned gentleman sent out by the Society, to be a *Roman inscription*, recording the passing of a Roman legion through the district; the name of the commander, and the date.

"A brilliant piece of work," said the admiring world—and it was. The date was certainly all right.

Until then it had been a secret that the Romans had ever occupied Inverary, and but for the newly-found writing on the pillar, the secret might have remained a secret for ever.

But when the young mason who had perpetrated the joke—thinking, perhaps, that it had gone far enough—wrote to the papers and gave the true reading of the Roman inscription (more graphic than mine, if less polite), the laughter which followed was not confined to the illiterate classes.

Numerous mistakes of a similar nature to the above, turned the all-believing fossil of sixty or seventy years ago into the sceptical fossil of to-day, who believes nothing to be old without written proof, and who, through nervous timidity, and a desire to stand well with the world, misses truth as surely as did his predecessor from over-confidence.

For my own part, I believe in Quintilianus when he says that we had the Bagpipe in the first century; and I feel sure that he wrote out of the fulness of his own knowledge.

The value of the second date (1118), turns upon the meaning of the word, "chorus" or "*choro*." If it meant Bagpipe in Gerald Barry's time, then was the Bagpipe a Scottish instrument in (say) the eleventh century.

I have already shewn that "chorus" did mean Bagpipe in England in the ninth century, and that it still retained the same meaning in the thirteenth century. Gerald Barry, who is familiar with the Bagpipe in Wales, where, according to him, it is also called "chorus," coming north in the beginning of the twelfth century, finds a Bagpipe in Scotland—one of the three musical instruments of the country—to which he naturally gives the name of "chorus." Not that the Bagpipe was ever known to the Highlander by this name, but Barry is writing for the Welsh people, and uses the Welsh name.

This instrument, to which he applied the English name, could be no other than a Bagpipe (similar in every respect to the English or Welsh Bagpipe) otherwise Barry, who was an expert in musical matters, would have given it its proper name of *Piob Mala*, and noted down its peculiarities.

The proof, to my mind, is overwhelmingly strong, that the "chorus" was the Bagpipe, and that it was one of the principal musical instruments of the Scots at the time of Barry's visit, *i.e.*—the middle of the twelfth century. So much for the second of our dates. The third date requires little or no confirmation from me.

"Tradition," says the antiquarian, "is quite

unreliable, when unconfirmed by early writers or historians," and so he proceeds to ignore tradition altogether.

When Burns was in Stirling, he heard there the tradition that the tune known as "Hey, tutti taiti," was King Robert the Bruce's March, and was played on the Bagpipe at Bannockburn.

This tradition was repeated to him at many other places further south, and, believing in it, the poet composed to this air the stirring song of "Scots wha hae."

"But," says Ritson, the antiquarian, "it does not, however, seem at all probable that the Scots had any martial music in the time of this monarch." And why? Because "horns are the only music mentioned by Barbour; so that it must remain a moot point whether Bruce's army was cheered by the sound of even a solitary Bagpipe."

It is creditable to Ritson that he did not deny the possibility of the Bagpipe being present at Bannockburn, because, in his day, the antiquity of the Pipe as a Scottish instrument was denied, and the discovery that King Robert's son kept a "pyper" had not been made. The tradition, in short, was *unconfirmed* when he wrote, and therefore, "*quite unreliable.*" But with the new light shed upon the antiquity of the Pipe, the tradition gathers weight and value.

Burns has been sneered at for believing in it, but the Poet's rare insight was a better guide after all, than the best lore of the antiquarian. "Hey, tutti



taiti" is a Bagpipe tune in spite of *dicta* to the contrary, and is still played on the Pipe. On the horns (of two to five notes) used at Bannockburn, the air would be unplayable.

Our third date—1362—is unassailable. It is an entry of payment to King David's Piper, recently found in one of Scotland's old exchequer rolls. And yet! I heard Mr White of Glasgow—better known as "Fionn"—say, in a lecture to the Highland Club of that city, that the above payment shewed that "the Bagpipe was known in England long before it was known in Scotland." This is really sublime. And worse still! On the strength of Mr White's *dictum* the Glasgow evening papers, not perceiving the very palpable double blunder made by the lecturer, had paragraphs in large headlines, "The Bagpipes an English Instrument." This is how the Highland Bagpipe is treated by its friends; and the young Highlander is being gradually taught to look upon it as a modern thing which came from England, and with which his forefathers were unacquainted. In this lecture, Mr White showed himself to be a faithful follower of Mr MacBain, and denied the antiquity of the "Pipes" in Scotland. His lecture, however, was little better than a rehash of the Inverness heresies, and showed a slavish adherence to the numerous blunders perpetrated by Mr MacBain. But Mr MacBain, bold as he is, would never venture to make such a use of the 1362 incident. He would never dare to talk of David II. of Scotland as an English king

before a body of educated Highlanders, and infer from this that *the Bagpipe was known in England long before it was known in Scotland*. Less ridiculous arguments must be brought forward by those writers—Highland or otherwise—who wish to prove England's prior claim to the Highland Bagpipe, or to disprove its antiquity.

A fine example of the ordinary

**IRISH BELLOWS PIPE.**

It has three drones and one regulator, and is made of ebony and ivory, with silver keys. The maker of this Pipe appeared before the Highland Society in—I think—1832, and gave selections on one of his own Irish Pipes. It may have been this very Pipe.







## CHAPTER XXXV.

### MR MACBAIN AND THE BAGPIPE.

“Or, Baggepype-like, not speake before thou’rt full.”—1618.  
—BELCHIER.

WHAT reasons for doubting the antiquity of the Highland Bagpipe can the antiquarian give? With what arguments does he assail the mass of proof in favour of its antiquity brought together in the preceding chapters?

What record for consistency on this subject can he shew?

At first, the antiquarian said, that the Bagpipe was introduced into Scotland by the Romans. This gave the instrument a fine air of antiquity, and was flattering to the Highlanders. But after a few blunders on the lines of the Inverary *fiasco*, he began to search history for written proof. “There must be no more guessing,” he said; and having found what he believed to be the earliest mention of the Bagpipe in George Buchanan’s history, and having learned, in some way or another, that Queen Mary had probably brought over a Piper in her train—a *musette* player—he then asserted that the

Bagpipe was introduced to the Scottish people for the first time by Queen Mary in the second half of the sixteenth century. His attention, however, was, after a time, called to a book which had been published some years before Queen Mary came to this country, in which two different kinds of Scots Bagpipes were mentioned. This was rather disconcerting to the Queen Mary hypothesis, and again our antiquary had to shift his ground, if only by a few years.

The book referred to was written in 1548, and not by one day more would he allow that the Bagpipe was known in Scotland. When I came to Falkirk, twenty-four years ago, the introduction of the "Pipes" had been put still farther back.

The end of the fifteenth century was pronounced to be the correct date. Burgh records shewing payments to the Town-Piper of this period had in the meantime turned up. But only a few more years had passed when the first of the old Exchequer Rolls was published, and as the Bagpipe is there mentioned as a Court instrument, the date had again to be shifted, this time back to the middle of the fourteenth century, to the year 1362; and at this date, so far as our antiquarian friends are concerned, it still stands; not a very consistent record for the antiquary this. I hope, however, that I have given sufficient proof to make it necessary for him to shift back the date once more, some 250 years or so—tracing it down certainly to the middle of the twelfth century. And I feel sure there are



many who, after they have read this book, will go farther and believe with Aristides Quintilianus that the Bagpipe was known to the Celt of Scotland in the first century. We are not therefore indebted to any other nation for it, as I have always maintained, but we brought it with us from our old home in the East, and other nations are indebted for it to us.

Now there is a paper called *The Home Journal*, published, I believe, in Inverness. In the number dated Saturday, February 4th, 1899, there is a long article on the Bagpipe by a well-known scholar and antiquary, who signs himself Alex. MacBain, M.A.

He is said to be one of the best Gaelic scholars of the day, and has written a most excellent Gaelic Dictionary. He has also written numerous articles upon Highland matters, in which latter he has always shewn a great interest; and if any man can produce proof to demolish the belief held by so many Highlanders that the Bagpipe is an old Highland instrument, Mr MacBain is the man of all others to do so. As it happens, he has made the attempt in this very article of February 4th, 1899, and we will now note carefully, and also test, what he has got to say on the matter. The very title of the paper, "The History of the Highland Bagpipe: a lesson in anachronism" is aggressive, and partly prepares us for what follows: viz., that it is a modern instrument in the Highlands and not Celtic at all.

"The potato," he says, "has become such an

integral part of our food material in the Highlands, *that it is now difficult to realise that it is only a century and a half since it was introduced into the country.*" This we have already answered by shewing that the task he puts to us is not in the least difficult. "The heroes of Culloden were not reared on potatoes; it is the same with the Bagpipe."

Rather foggy this! but let it pass.

"It is now our national instrument of music. It is so engrained in the musical system of the Highlands, and in the hearts of the people, that there is no wonder that *unwary writers have postulated for it a hoary antiquity.*"

Ah! cautious antiquary. No more mistakes about ancient writings on scratching stones. You leave that to the "unwary."

"The Great Highland Bagpipe and the philabeg, or modern Highland dress, came into existence about the same time—the *beginning of last century.*"

This is definite enough in all conscience. Mark the cautious "but," which follows. "But they both represent older forms. The Bagpipe then" (at the beginning of the eighteenth century), "*got its third or big drone added. Hitherto it was the same as the Lowland and Northumbrian Bagpipe, having only two drones.*"

As a matter of fact, while a third drone was known to many nations, and may have been occasionally used by the Highlander long before the dawn of the eighteenth century, it was not an acknowledged

THE OLD FORM OF THE NORTHUMBERLAND  
BELLOWS PIPE :

Differing from the lowland Pipe in having all three drones of different lengths. The chanter, which has got one key, is open below.

The stock, drones, and chanter are made of ivory and ornamented with silver.







part of the Great Highland Pipe until near the end of the century, and only became really fashionable in the first half of the nineteenth century. It is within my own recollection that most of the pipers, who were largely of the Gipsy class, and went round the country piping in the summer time, used only one-drone or two-drone Bagpipes.

The Highland Bagpipe of two drones was certainly in use in Northumberland until about 60 years ago, but the "Northumbrian Pipe" (which is quite a different instrument), has always had three or more drones. There is some excuse for Mr MacBain getting mixed a little between these two Northumbrian Pipes, but there is none whatever for the same writer when he asserts that the Lowland Pipe had *only two drones*, and *never* got beyond two.

Mr MacBain continues thus:—"An unpublished poem of the Rev. Alex. Hume, minister of Logie, 1598, contains this couplet:—

" 'Caus nichtelie the weirlic nottes breike,  
On Hieland Pipes, Scottes and Hyberniche.' "

"This seems to show *that the Highland pipers had begun to improve on the Lowland variety, as we know they did*, before ever they put the third drone on."

What nonsense this is!

These lines shew *that in 1598 there were three kinds of Bagpipes known to the author*, which he writes down, probably in order of merit. The order may be for the sake of the rhyme; and if the Highland pipers began to *improve* on the

Lowland variety (which I deny altogether), *there is not one word in these lines to shew this.*

The Pipe came into the Highlands according to the MacBain gospel, a full-fledged two drone Pipe; and the only difference between the Great Pipe of 1598 and the Great Pipe of 1905 is the third drone. The *other improvements* spoken of never existed outside the imagination of the writer.

A more incorrect account than the above, a more excellent "lesson in anachronism," was never penned by any person claiming to be an authority on the subject. The ignorance displayed, coming especially from such a source, is truly amazing.

With the exception of one line, where the author says "it is now our national instrument of music"—and that statement is even disputed by some,—there is not a single statement in this article on the Bagpipe which is in accordance with the facts.

Mr MacBain gives the title of "Great Highland Bagpipe" to the three-drone Pipe alone—the present form taken by the Highland War Pipe—and here he at once misleads, for we read of the *Great Pipe* of the Highlands centuries before the large drone was added, or rather, I should say, before the *third* drone was added, as there is plenty of proof that the large drone was used first on a two-drone Bagpipe.

Again, he imagines that the addition of the third drone, which he wrongly claims as an *original* Highland invention, converted the Lowland-English Bagpipe into a distinct species—The Highland



Bagpipe. But the *two-drone Bagpipe* was recognised to be the Great Highland War Pipe, and was used in all competitions as such until 1822—more than 100 years after the MacBain three-drone Bagpipe came into existence!—when, to secure *uniformity*, it was decided by the Highland Society of London, to limit the competition in future to the three-drone Pipe.

If Mr MacBain applies his undoubted abilities to the study of this matter, I think he will very soon discover that his boasted Highland improvement was quite as much a Lowland improvement, if not more so!

At the Competition in 1785 (a copy of the Bill announcing the Competition is one of the illustrations in this book), the two-drone Bagpipe was recognised as the “Great Highland Pipe,” or it would not have been allowed to compete. In short, the addition of a third drone was not distinctively Highland, as other nations had used a third drone centuries before the Highlander put it upon his Bagpipe.

The Greeks had four or more drones on their Bagpipes 2000 years ago.

The French *Musette* of 1631 had no fewer than five drones. The Calabrian Pipe, which is the successor to the Greek, has always had four drones—while the Irish, Lowland-Scotch, and Northumbrian have each not less than three.

“Its introduction into Scotland is as difficult to trace as its introduction into England. Of course, it came from England into Scotland.”

So writes Mr MacBain.

But, as a matter of fact, its early appearance in England is only coincident with its early appearance in Scotland, and is due to the fact that the early Briton was a Celt, and that the Celt took the Bagpipe with him where'er he went.

"We should maintain, *judging from the spread of Puritanism*, that the northward advance of the Bagpipe must have been slow."

He gives 100 years for its spread from the Lowlands to the Highlands, and if we give the same time for the slow advance from England into Scotland, this shews us the Bagpipe as a one-drone instrument in the thirteenth century in England becoming a two-drone instrument in the hands of the Lowland Scots in the fifteenth century—"In general, it had a chanter, and two drones." And so, after another slow and tiresome journey along the Puritan track, it at length appears in the Highlands, where it takes the "musical genius" of the hill tribes two hundred years *to invent a third drone*.

This is Mr MacBain's History of the Bagpipe in a nutshell.

"The real Lowland Bagpipe," he continues, "never got further than the two drones, and so too with the Northumbrian Pipe; it was in the Highlands that the Bagpipe grew to its acme of perfection."

Everything in the argument is so nicely arranged—so easily grasped, that any child can follow it.

#### THE BELLOWS PIPE OF LOWLAND SCOTLAND.

This old Pipe is made of ebony and ivory, and has no combing on the drones. It has three drones, two small and one large, like all Lowland bellows Pipes.







You see the Pipe progressing slowly on its northward journey, by even stages, like the stones in a flight of stairs, each step in advance of and a little higher than the other ! The Pipe more perfect at the end of each journey ; the last host putting the “acme of perfection” touch to the welcome stranger.

Lucky for us that this corrector of anachronisms has made himself so clear, but unfortunate for him that the facts won't square with his theories ; for of real facts there are few or none in his argument.

In the “Encyclopædia Britannica” for 1793 there is an excellent article on the Bagpipe ; one of the most correct and full accounts of the Pipe given anywhere.

It was written nearly 100 years after Mr MacBain's three-drone and only *Great Highland Bagpipe* came into existence.

The writer, whose exact words I give, says :—  
“While the Lowland Bagpipe *has three drones*, and the Irish Bagpipe *has three drones*, the *Highland Bagpipe has only two drones*.”

Pennant, also, wrote from the Highlands in 1772 :—“The Bagpipe has *two long pipes or drones*.”

What are we to think of Mr MacBain's statements after this ? He has surely talked at random, without ever giving a moment's thought to what he was saying—trusting too much perhaps to his reputation. But the best reputation in the world could not gloss over a flimsy article such as his is.

He cannot ever have seen a Lowland set of "Pipes," or an old set of the Great Highland Bagpipe; and he is evidently a stranger to the Irish and Northumberland Pipes; and yet, he writes as if these were quite familiar to him.

I have conversed with Lowland pipers on this subject, and not one of these players on the Bellows-Pipe ever heard of a two-drone set. I have seen and examined many sets myself, some of them very old, but they all had three drones.

Pipe-makers one and all, from the Messrs Glen, of Edinburgh, downwards, say that they have never seen a set of Lowland Pipes, except with three drones. All of which disproves, once and for all, the rash statement made by Mr MacBain that the Lowland and the Northumbrian Bagpipes never got beyond two drones. The following inscription is on a Bellows-Pipe with four drones, which I once saw in Newcastle, and proves that the Northumbrian Pipe had *four drones* in the seventeenth century:—"The gift of Simon Robertson to Salathiel Humphries, 1695."

The present Irish Pipe also has any number of drones—from three to seven.

I have devoted a fairly long chapter to this discredited article on the Bagpipe, not because of any intrinsic merit which it possesses, but because of the man who wrote it.

He is looked upon by the Highlanders as a great authority upon Celtic matters, and his paper on the Bagpipe must have struck—nay! did strike dismay



into the hearts of his Highland admirers. "I spoke in haste," said the Psalmist, and the only excuse which suggests itself to me for the inaccuracies and "anachronisms" which disfigure every page of Mr MacBain's paper, "A Study in Anachronism," is that he, too, spoke in haste, and failed to do himself or his subject justice, like the piper who began to play before his bag was full.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### A GREAT WAR INSTRUMENT.

“At Quebec their\* piobroch shrill  
Up the hill went breathing terror.”—  
SHERIFF NICOLSON.

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“To pipe at Highland games  
With a host of smiling dames  
To cast admiring glances as you play,  
Is a different matter quite  
From the piping in a fight  
Where the Pipers march in front and shew the way.”—  
T. ALEXANDER.

IT is more than likely that the Celts of Pannonia used the Bagpipe in war, before the Christian Era.

The Greeks used it in the mimic warfare of the Pythonic games about the same time.

But it was during the gallant struggle in the cause of freedom, waged for two seasons against the full power of Imperial Rome, by these simple shepherds in the uplands of Pannonia, that the Celt's Bagpipe is first heard of in history.

Prudentius, however (b. A.D. 348)—the greatest

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\* The “Fraser Highlanders” 13th September, 1759.

of the Roman Christian poets, is the first writer, so far as I am aware, to mention the Bagpipe as a recognised instrument of war.

He says :—"Signum *Symphoniæ* belli Aegyptis diderat"—which, when translated, reads :—"The Bagpipe gave the signal for the battle to begin, to the Egyptians," *i.e.* the Bagpipe sounded the charge.

Thus early do we find the piper in the forefront of the battle.

The Roman army—with these examples before it, was not slow in adopting the War Pipe, and one of their writers, Procopius by name, mentions that in his day it was the recognised marching instrument of the Roman infantry.

After the fall of the Roman Empire, the Bagpipe seems to have been forgotten as a military instrument, until its fame was revived by the Highlanders—at what precise date, we do not know—who forced the authorities gradually to recognise its stimulating effect on the soldier, and its consequent usefulness on the field of battle.

And so to-day, the War Pipe of the old Highlander, covered with glory and honour, is now the War Pipe of the British Empire.

The Great Highland Bagpipe, indeed, is without doubt, one of the grandest military musical instruments that the world has ever seen—firing the hearts of the Highlanders to deeds of heroism, but breathing only terror to the foe. It has gained for itself on the battlefield an undying fame.

The reasons for this are not far to seek. Its shrill

notes and clear powerful tones are well suited to the roar and din of warfare, and its handiness in action—(it is easily carried and the piper is able to play upon it while at the double) and the stimulating effect of its music upon the soldier, whether in pressing home the charge, or in “lulling the retreat,” as an old Irish writer quaintly puts it, have earned for it a well-deserved popularity. The Piper’s place has always been in the fighting line. The Regimental Piper would consider himself disgraced if he were not allowed to go forward with his regiment, and to strike up when the command “Charge” rings out.

During the late Russo-Japanese War the soldiers of the Tzar were reported on more than one occasion to have gone forth to battle with massed bands playing and colours flying. A magnificent spectacle no doubt, and one which shewed great bravery on the part of all concerned, but it was not war as we understand it to-day. What the custom is with a nation like Russia, I do not know, but in the British army, when the tocsin of war sounds, the military bands are left at some *base* town, the bandmaster and the boys who are under age remain behind, and while the war is proceeding, those boys go on with their musical training under the eye of the bandmaster as if nothing particular were happening, while the majority of the men go out as stretcher-bearers. Only the pipers, drummers, and buglers go forward with the army. A stranger hearing the Great War Pipe for the first time on the battlefield, or in the midst of nature’s wilds,

instantly appraises it at its proper value, otherwise its many charms may remain hidden to him for years.

The effectiveness of Pipe music, heard among the hills, is much more striking than when the same music is heard down in the plain.

It was up in the hills that M'Culloch, who was for many years bitterly prejudiced against it, got to know it in reality, and to respect and admire it, and ultimately to love it. In one of his letters from the north, he said:—"It has a grand and noble sound, that fills the valley, and is re-echoed from the mountains." And the old Highlander, who knew well this "echo from the mountains"—not one mountain, notice you, but several; up one valley and down another, the echo travels, tossed like a hand-ball from ben to ben!—has incorporated the echo in his Pipe music to quite an extraordinary extent. He also discovered for himself—how long ago, no man knows—that the Pipe was the one instrument for mountain warfare, and that there was none other to compare in purposefulness with it.

And so we find reflected in the pages of Pennant's book, "A Voyage to the Hebrides," the views of the Skyemen and others on the Bagpipe, one hundred and fifty years ago.

Pennant's opinions are worthy of being placed on record, as these were formed on the spot, after a close study of the subject, and they thus may be listened to as "an echo from the mountains" of 1769.

He had just been dining at the house of Wm. MacDonald, piper to Kingsburgh—a large, comfortable, well-built house—and listening to the music of the Pipe—in the very home of the Bagpipe.

From what he was able to learn on this journey, he formed the opinion—to give his own words—that “it had been a favourite with the Scots from time immemorial,” and “suited well the war-like genius of the people, roused their courage to battle, alarmed them when secure, and collected them when scattered; solaced them in their long and painful marches, and, in times of peace kept up the memory of the gallant deeds of their ancestors. One of the tunes—wild and tempestuous—is said to have been played at the bloody battle of Harlaw in 1410.”

Thirty years later, John Stoddart, who also visited the Highlands, wrote of this war instrument:—“The powerful tones of the Bagpipe, together with its sudden and rough transitions, render it peculiarly consonant with the turbulent feelings of warfare.”

In more recent times the valuable qualities of the Bagpipe on the field of battle have forced recognition from Lowland or English officers attached to Highland regiments, although such were at first sometimes out of sympathy with the men in their passionate love for it, and heartily disliked the instrument itself, as the following story well shews:—

General Sir Eyre Coote first heard the Highland Bagpipe sounded in war at the battle of Port Novo, in 1781.

Previous to that day, when a handful of Highlanders, with their pipers, won for him a great and glorious victory, he had expressed his opinion that "it was a useless relic of the barbarous ages," and "not fitted for the discipline of the field."

But when he saw the pipers go forward bravely with the men into the thick of the fight, and learned, from personal observation, of the stimulating effect which the music had upon the Highlanders, he could no longer restrain his admiration for the hitherto despised instrument, and riding up to the pipers, who were playing in the thick of the fight as if on parade, he shouted through the roar of battle—"Well done, my brave fellows! you shall have a set of silver Pipes for this."

And he was as good as his word, for he presented the pipers next day with £50 to buy the Pipes. Nor did he ever again refer to the Pipes as "a useless relic of the barbarous ages."

The enthusiasm called forth by the sight of the gallant pipers piping in the midst of battle; by their military bearing, and by their conspicuous bravery, has been well described in eloquent words by the historian, Napier, in his "History of the Peninsular War."

General Sir Eyre Coote's experience in days long since gone by, has been the experience of many an officer since. Once let a soldier hear the Pipe in actual combat, and he is immediately won over to its side, as was Sir Eyre Coote, and he becomes attached to it, and loves it ever after for its worth's sake.

I am glad to know that the officers of our Highland regiments to-day uphold and cherish the old war instrument as keenly and whole-heartedly as ever their forefathers did.

The army is, in fact, a great school for pipers—one of the best—and a great help in perpetuating the Bagpipe. There are between two and three hundred army pipers; and among them are several champion players, and more than one youthful coming champion.

But not only do the officers encourage the playing of the Bagpipe among the men; in many cases they shoulder the drone themselves during spare hours; and I could name at least three gallant officers whose play is far above the average, and to whom I have often listened with pleasure; but as there are, no doubt, many more equally skilful players in the Highland regiments, although unknown to me, this might seem an invidious distinction on my part to make.

“There is no sound,” said a distinguished general once (speaking at a meeting of Highlanders in Edinburgh, shortly after Waterloo), “which the immortal Wellington hears with more delight, or the marshals of France with more dismay, than the notes of a Highland Pibroch.”

“The Bagpipe is, properly speaking,” writes Dr. MacCulloch, “a military weapon. It is a handsome weapon also, with all its pennons flying, and the piper when he is well inflated is a noble-looking, disdainful fellow.”



In that most interesting of books, "With Kitchener to Khartoum," Mr Stevens hits off the Bagpipe on the battlefield in two words; he is describing the battle of Atbara, just before the charge of the Highlanders, and says "the trumpets sounded the advance, and the Pipes *screamed battle*."

All who have heard the "Pipes," know that it can scream and make a noise pleasant enough out of doors, but unavoidably disagreeable in the house—to over-sensitive ears at least. But this instrument of rude, wild nature, while it expresses the fire and fury and lust of battle, is not unmindful of the slain.

In the "call to battle" you can hear the din and roar of warfare, the tramp of armed hosts, and clash of swords.

You have of a surety in the upper notes the call to action, whether on the ballroom floor or field of battle; but it is in the lower notes that a great deal of the charm and pathos of Bagpipe music lies.

Here you have the sadness, and the sorrow; the sadness that looks out at you from quiet grey eyes in the Highlands to-day as then; the sadness that broods over the lonely Highland glen—now tenantless, but once filled with a brave and happy people; the sorrow that dwells beside the grey moss-covered stone, marking the old burial-place at the head of the glen; the sadness that lurks in the shadows of the mountain ere the storm breaks; the sorrow that clutches with icy fingers at the breaking heart when death has taken some loved one hence.

“There is indeed,” as Dr. Norman M‘Leod so beautifully expressed it, “in all Pipe music, a monotony of sorrow. It pervades even the *Welcome*, as if the young chief who arrives, recalls also the memory of the old chief who has departed. In the *Lament* we naturally expect this sadness; but even in the *summons to battle*, with all its fire and energy, it cannot conceal what it seems already to anticipate—*sorrow for the slain.*”

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

### THE PIPE AT FUNERAL RITES.

"Shortly was heard, but faint yet, and distant, the melancholy wailing of the 'Lament.'"—M'CULLOCH.

THERE is no doubt that the Great Highland Bagpipe has gained lustre, and an undying fame on the battlefield. But if it had never sounded in the ear of a single soldier, inciting him to bravery, it would still claim a warm place in every true Highlander's heart.

The *Pibroch*, which is a piece of classical music, is the real business of the "Pipes," and it was by means of the *Pibroch* that the old piper gave vent to his deepest and most sacred feelings. Luckily a large number of these old pieces of Pipe music have been preserved for us. "*Ceol Mor*," the last book published, contains 275 in number, and of these the majority is devoted to two subjects, "*War*," and "*Death*."

Now of these two, Laments for the dead are more numerous than War pieces, and it is in the Lament that the great pipers of old are seen at their best.

The Highlander has always shewn great respect for his dead, and in the old days the Bagpipe was never awanting at the funeral obsequies, which were sometimes carried out with a lavishness and prodigality that almost takes one's breath away to-day. Here is the description of the funeral of Hugh, tenth Lord Lovat, who died April 27th, 1672:—

“At eight o'clock of the morning of the 9th May, being the day appointed for the interment, the coffin, covered with a velvet mortcloth, was exposed in the courtyard, the pall above it being supported by four poles, the eight branches of the escutcheon fixed to as many poles driven into the ground—four at each end of the coffin. A large plume surmounted the whole. Two hundred men in arms formed an avenue from the gate to the high road. Four trumpeters, standing above the grand staircase, sounded an alarm on the approach of every new arrival. A sumptuous entertainment was given about mid-day. Between twelve and one the trumpets played the “Dead March.” Then the mourners raised the coffin, and the pall above it. Two trumpeters preceded, and followed the body. A horseman in bright armour, holding a mourning spear, led the van, two mourners in hoods and gowns guiding his horse. At the ferry, two war-horses, covered with black trappings, and held by grooms attired in sables, had been placed in ambush, who, starting up, here joined the procession. From the west end of the moor to the kirk-stile, a mile in length, armed bands of men were drawn up, through whose lines the procession went slowly. The Earl of Ross alone sent 400 of his vassals, with their drums covered with black. There were 1000 Frasers, with their Colonel, Thomas Fraser, of Beaufort, at their head. There were a great number of armed M'Kenzies, Munros, Rosses, M'Intoshes, Grants, MacDonells, and Camerons.

“The Bishops of Murray, Ross and Caithness, with

eighty of their clergy, were present, and a body of 800 horsemen. At the church-stile, the Earls of Murray and Seaforth, the Lairds of Balnagown, Foulis, Beaufort, and Stricken, carried the coffin into the church, which was hung in black.

“After singing and prayer, the funeral sermon was preached from 2nd Sam. iii. 38:—‘Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel?’

“At four o’clock the whole ceremonies were over, and the trumpets sounded the ‘Retreat.’ The different clans filed off, with banners displayed and ‘Pipes’ playing, the Frasers forming a line, and saluting each as they passed.”

The humble funeral of the poor clansman was, however, more in accord with the Bagpipe than all this pomp and display.

The following description of such a funeral is from the pen of Dr. M’Culloch, and shews how beautifully and sympathetically he could write of the Bagpipe, and of the Highlander, after he had learned to know both:—

“I shall not soon forget the last beautiful evening that I spent in Lochaber, and such scenes, I doubt not, have come across your path also. The slanting rays of the yellow sun were gleaming on the huge mass of Ben Nevis; the wide and wild landscape around had become grey, and every sound seemed to be sunk in the repose of night. Shortly was heard, but faint yet, and distant, the melancholy wailing of the ‘Lament’ that accompanied a funeral as its slow procession was seen marching down the hill—the bright tartans just visible on its brown declivity. As it advanced, the sounds seemed to swell on the breeze, till it reached the retired and lonely spot where a few grey stones, dispersed among the brown heath,

marked the last habitation of those who had gone before. The pause was solemn that spoke the farewell to the departed, and as the mourners returned, filing along the narrow passes of Glen Nevis, the retiring tones died away, wild, indefinite, yet melodious as the Æolian harp, as they alternately rose and sank on the evening breeze, till night closed around, and all was hushed."

There is no doubt that the Bagpipe lent a beautiful picturesqueness to the old Highland funeral, completing and rounding off the last kindly services to the dead. Never were time and place and circumstance more favourable to the Pipe. Never an audience better attuned to its plaintive music—a music that fills the glen and is re-echoed from the mountain side.

One can scarcely credit in these days of hurry and cremation, the yearning of the clansman for the dear old music when trouble overtook him and death seemed near. "However little a Southerner may be able to enter into this passionate enthusiasm for what in his ears seems shrill discord, he must bear in mind, that just as in him the scent of a flower, or the few chords of an old melody will sometimes waken up a long train of forgotten memories; so to one whose earliest love has been for the wild mists and mountains, those strains bring back thoughts of home, and the memory of the dead and absent comes floating back as on a breath from the moorlands, mingling with a thousand cherished early associations such as flood the innermost heart with hidden tears."

"I truly may bear witness," writes Miss Gordon Cumming, "how twice within one year, while watching the last weary sufferings of two of the truest Highlanders that ever trod heather, I noted the same craving for the '*dear old Pipes.*'"

"Roualeyn Gordon Cumming died at Fort Augustus, March 24th, 1866, in the grey old fort at the head of Loch Ness, which has now been demolished and replaced by a Roman Catholic College. Dear to us is the memory of that strange sickroom, the rude walls still bearing the names of the Duke of Cumberland's soldiers carved in their idle leisure, but adorned with trophies of the chase, each one of which recalled to the dying hunter the memory of triumphs in the days of joyous health. Now his mighty strength was slowly ebbing. As night after night passed by in pain and weariness, yet to that lion-like beauty each morning seemed to add a new refining touch of radiant spirit-light—a light that foreshadowed the celestial dawn.

"Night and day, through long weeks of suffering, his faithful piper, Tom Moffat, never left his side, tending him with an unwearied devotion, the love 'that passeth the love of woman,' fanning his fevered brow with the wing of a golden eagle,—and ever ready, at his bidding, to tune up the old Pipes and play the wild melodies he most loved.

"His elder brother, Sir Alexander Penrose Gordon Cumming, only survived him five months—five weary months of pain—during which he, too, lay—

'Dying in pride of manhood, ere to grey  
One lock had turned, or from his eagle face  
And stag-like form, Time's touch of slow decay  
Had reft the strength and beauty of his race.'

"Far from his beautiful home, and from the woods and river he loved so dearly, he lay, held prisoner by dire illness in the dull town.

"One night, shortly before his death, when after long

fevered hours of pain he lay exhausted, yet unable to sleep, and the home voices usually so dear to him seemed to have lost their spell, he exclaimed 'Oh! that I could hear a pibroch once more before I die.'

"It seemed like a heaven-sent answer to that cry, that at this moment, faint but clear there floated on the night wind, a strain of distant Pipe music. Nearer and nearer sounded the swelling notes, played by the piper of a Scotch regiment, who, when he learned how precious to the ear of the dying chief was this breath from the breezy hills, gladly halted and made the dull street re-echo the notes of pibroch and wild laments, 'That is music,' he murmured; and when at length the piper went his way, the long-strung nerves were soothed, and the blessing of sleep so long denied—a deep refreshing sleep—told how well the dear, dear music of the mountains had worked its spell.

' Music that gentler on the spirit lies,  
Than tired eyelids upon tired eyes.' "

To the Highlander, indeed, Bagpipe music is wholly impregnated with reminiscences of a life that is now a thing of the past—the soft boom of the drones ever reminding him of the old ways and old days which, as seen through the mists of time, were not altogether bad, but altogether lovely, and recalling to the exile on a foreign shore sweet dreams of the dear old home among the mountains.

With memories such as these clustering round this old—it may be, rude instrument—is it to be wondered at that we Highlanders—brushing aside as unworthy of notice the cheap sneers of ignorant critics—should love it, and love it dearly, in spite of its simplicity, in spite of its rudeness, in spite of its many imperfections. Given place, and time, and



“The Master,” what other instrument is there to compare with it? As Dr. M’Culloch said, when writing to Sir Walter Scott, “It is to hear it echoing among the blue hills of our early days; to sit on a bank of yellow broom, and watch its tones as they swell, mellowed by distance on the evening breeze; to listen to it as it is wafted wide over the silent lake, or breaking through the roaring of the mountain stream. This it is to hear the Bagpipe as it ought to be heard, to love it as it ought to be loved. It is wide and wild nature that is its home; the deep glen and the mountain that is its concert-room; it is the torrent and the sound of the breeze that is its only accompaniment.”

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

### BAGPIPE MUSIC.

“Or is thy Bagpype broke, that sounds so sweete?”—(1579).  
—SPENSER.—Sheph. Cal.

**I**S Bagpipe music really worthy of the name of music? Spenser's shepherd evidently thought it “sweet.” We all know that it is great in quantity! Is its quality at all in keeping with its quantity?

Of *Piobrach*—the only music worthy of the instrument, according to many good authorities—we have some 275 still in existence. How many more are lost to us for ever, no one can say; but the number must be exceedingly great.

From the “Forty-Five” onwards—until its revival at Falkirk in 1781—Pipe music was tabooed. The tunes had never been written down (if we except *Caintaireachd*), but were carried in the piper's memory; and to any one who knows the length and variety, and complicated fingering of *Piobrach* such as “Donald Dougall M'Kay's Lament,” or “Patrick Og MacCrimmon's Lament,” the wonder is that any but the simpler ones should have survived.

It was from *Piobrach* that Mendelssohn got the inspiration for his "Scotch Symphony."

For three whole days the great musician wandered in and out of the old Theatre Royal, in Edinburgh, listening to the finest pipers of the day playing *Piobrach* during the great annual competition for the championship, which was always decided by "*Piobaireachd*," and by "*Piobaireachd*" alone—no "*Ceol Aotram*" at these meetings.

Many of these old *Piobrach* are well-known and beautiful airs. Great singers of Scotch song have made them familiar as household words with the public. I once heard Sims Reeves, when at his best, sing the "MacGregor's Gathering," and can still remember the thrill which went through my whole being during the performance. When he rolled out, in a voice of thunder, "*Gregalach!*" the audience was electrified.

The "MacGregor's Gathering," then! "The Children's Lament," most beautiful and pathetic of airs! "MacCrimmon's Lament," with its mournful refrain, "MacCrimmon no more will return!" "*Piobrach* of Donald Dhu," most thrilling of war songs; and many others, too numerous to mention, fully justify the term—"Bagpipe Music." When we leave "*Piobrach*,"—"the real business of the Pipe"—as M'Culloch calls it—and come to the simple Highland Bagpipe airs, a better claim to our consideration, or, at least one more easy of comprehension, can be made out for Pipe music. Burns composed many of his best songs to Pipe airs. "A man's a

man for a' that," "Scots wha ha'e," "Highland Laddie," "Rantin', Rovin', Robin," are all Bagpipe tunes. "I'm wearin' awa', Jean," by Lady Nairne, "Blythe, blythe, and Merry are we," by Gray; "Hey, Johnnie Cope, are ye wauken yet?" and innumerable other songs by various writers, have been composed to Bagpipe music.

Again, as a war instrument, the Bagpipe has produced many excellent marching tunes.

Is there any other war instrument that can shew a better record in respect to marches?

In 1815, when John Clark, the piper-hero of Vimiera, who was presented with a gold medal by Sir John Sinclair at the annual competition in "Ancient Martial Music" for bravery on the field (his legs were mangled with chain-shot, but he continued piping as he lay and bled), came stumping in on his wooden leg, he received a great ovation, the audience, which filled the theatre from floor to ceiling, rising to its feet and cheering lustily for several minutes.

Mr Manson, who tells the story of Clark's heroism, has evidently overlooked the above event, for he says in his book that Clark, after the war, disappeared from human ken, unrecognised and unrewarded.

Sir John wound up the occasion in an eloquent speech with these words, already quoted:—"There is no sound which the immortal Wellington hears with more delight, or the marshals of France with more dismay, than the notes of a Highland *Piobaireachd*."

Three years later (in 1818) Sir John MacGregor Murray, speaking on a similar occasion, said:—  
“The piper’s post in olden times was in front of his comrades in the day of danger—an honourable post.”

“This honourable post has still continued to him; and it was his duty to march forward, with the cool determination of a true Highlander, stimulating his companions to heroic deeds by the sound of the *Piobaireachd* of his country.”

To name half the good marching tunes written would occupy several pages; nor is there any need to do so, as their pre-eminent fitness is unchallenged.

I take leave, however, to quote from an unsigned article in *Chambers’s Journal*, which appeared several years ago, and which bears independent testimony, in graceful language, to the effect produced by the sound of the Pipes:—

“It is not assuming too much,” the writer says, “to claim for Highland music that it has produced tunes more eminently fitted for marching than the music of any other nation. Most of us, at some time or another, have come across a Highland regiment on the march. Who does not know the roll of the distant drums? and, mingling with it, that prolonged drone which gradually resolves itself into some old familiar tune. To the Scotsman, there is never any mistaking that sound; and though we may be nineteenth century individuals, with tall hats and black coats, we cannot help going just a little way, and keeping step also. The pulse beats

just a little quicker, and, despite all cheap sneers, the memory of a thousand years is a little more real than might have been expected. If an impartial observer should take such an occasion as this, he will notice that there is a swing and a go about a Highland regiment quite peculiar to itself, and due, in great measure, to the music of the Pipes. It is a something *born of the music*, hard to account for, but nevertheless, very apparent."

I think, then, that Spenser's shepherd in the sixteenth century, had good reason to mourn over his "sweete-sounding" Pype; and every true critic must admit that there is "a something" in Bagpipe music, which the enlightened twentieth century would be all the poorer without.

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

### CAN THE BAGPIPE SPEAK?

"The sweet ballad of the Lincolnshire Bagpipes."—(1590).

—"Three Lords and Three Ladies of London."

THIS raises the whole question of "programme" music. Can any instrument speak, in the sense of telling a story? The old classicists were content to appeal to the feelings in their works.

"Form" was everything with them. Each piece was built up according to rule, just as a house or a ship is built. Beethoven, in his "Pastoral Symphony," was among the first musicians of note to disregard the rules—to break away from rigid "form"—but he never professed to make music *tell a story*. He still insisted that his music appealed only to the feelings.

Since his day, however, men have gone a great deal farther, and profess to be able to write music up to a story. A "programme" takes the place in modern music of "form" in the old; but these authors take good care that the audience is supplied with the *written programme*—the word story—by means of which only it is expected to struggle

bravely along—in the rear, possibly, but still keeping in touch with the music.

Richard Strauss has gone one better still, and insists that music can speak with an unmistakable voice, and needs no word story. This is “programme” music.

It is no new claim that Strauss makes. Long before the days of Wagner, Berlioz, or Strauss, the Highlander foolishly made the same claim on behalf of Pipe music, and got sneered at for his pains.

Many stories were told, and believed, in the old days, of how the piper, in an *impromptu*, warned his friends of danger; told the numbers and disposition of the enemy; pointed out the ambush, or indicated the weak spot in the defence.

The great masters in piping, however, never ventured beyond the classical *Piobroch*; never attempted to do anything more than appeal to the feelings. With them “form” was everything.

The *Piobroch* is built upon a plan so definite—so invariable in its form—that, given the theme, groundwork, or “*urlar*,” any good piper with a knowledge of Pipe music, can build up and perfect the tune.

Descriptive music, such as “The Desperate Battle,” “*Au Daoroch Mhor*,” “The Weighing of the Ship,”—where sounds and movements are imitated—there is in plenty; but “programme” music on the Pipe there never has been. The genius of the old masters, the MacCrimmons, and others, recognised the limits of the Bagpipe, and judiciously



kept within these ; and so the music suited the instrument admirably. The "programme" school of to-day will also sooner or later have to acknowledge the limits of instrumentalisation, and the limits of music, and acknowledge that the "story" is not within these limits.

In a very interesting article on the orchestral concert given by Herr Richard Strauss in Edinburgh, on December 22nd, 1902, the *Scotsman* asks, is the "programme" really necessary, and does it not reduce the divine art "to the level of the ornamental border which often decorates the printed verses of our exquisite poets.

"Richard Strauss is really trying to succeed at the very game in which Berlioz magnificently failed.

"Berlioz, in his 'Episode from the Life of an Artist,' had thrown down the gauntlet to the classicists. 'Here,' he said, 'is a story ; here is a programme, and I shall write up to it.' A young artist, imaginative and sensitive, is in love, and the first movement represents his pilgrimage of passion. In the second movement he wanders a-field (literally) and, amidst shepherds' pipes and thunderstorms, communes with Nature. Next he is in a ball-room, watching the dancers, and eating out his own heart. Finally, in a fit of despair, he poisons himself with opium ; but, instead of dying, he falls into a De Quincey swoon, in which he dreams that he has killed his mistress, and witnesses the fall of the guillotine on his own neck. Then comes a horrible orgie of witches and demons, who dance

round his coffin, and the whole mad medley ends with a mock '*Dies Iræ*,' delivered by all the gibbering fiends of hell. 'All this,' says Berlioz, 'I will say in music.' But strange and moving as the music is, no one would ever be able to interpret it unless Berlioz's own word story were before him. The music itself may seem clever and appropriate, when joined with the 'programme'; without the story it is only a mass of condensed sound, alluring, terrifying, astonishing, *yet without form, and void.*"

This is severe criticism, but none the less true. Programme music is a failure, and the story in music must for ever remain untold.

Keeping always before us, then, the limits of the Bagpipe scale, and the limits of music itself, I think it may be said that the Bagpipe can speak as well, at least, as any other instrument, and is understood by the Highlander better than any other, because it has been his one instrument in the past.

For my own part, I doubt much whether any kind of music will ever be able to tell a story unaided.

Music, telling its story—a simple love story, say—to twenty experts, would receive exactly twenty different interpretations; and these would all differ (in the details) from the intended story.

Music can express, in a general way, the coarser feelings of joy and sorrow, as in the "Wedding March" of Mendelssohn, and the "Dead March" from *Saul*; of war and love, as in the "March of the Men of Harlech," and "My Love is like a red, red Rose."

But the finer gradations of feeling, and the ordinary events of the day, which, combined, go to make up a man's life, can never be so clearly expressed by music alone that the average man can read there the story as in an open book.

Under the above limitations, the Bagpipe speaks to the Highlander with no uncertain voice.

Old associations, of course, have much to do with this gift of being able to read a meaning into Pipe music.

The sounds which filled the child's ear as it lay nestling in its mother's arms, and enlivened the spare moments of his boyhood's days, and cheered his spirits when he drew his virgin sword on the field of battle, could hardly fail to have a special meaning for him in his old age, or to be understood of him ; but beyond this, there is no speech in the Bagpipe.

I would close this book, which is already too long, with a story — "a poor thing, but all mine own," in which, perchance, an answer may be found to the question put at the head of this chapter, "Can the Bagpipe Speak?"

One glorious afternoon in September, 1902, I stood inside the old castle of Inverlochy — my daughter for company. It was only natural that the historic pile should revive memories of the stirring days of old, and I thought of Donald Balloch of the Isles, with his regal ways, "*Ego Donaldus Rex Insuloram*"; of Lochiel, the dark ; and Montrose, the brave boy-soldier ; and Argyll, the grim, the

pusillanimous ; of Ian Lom, the "Bard," and of his answer as he stood on the battlements of the old castle with his leader, watching the battle of Inverlochy, as it raged down by the river side.

Ian was asked by Montrose why he did not join in the fray?

"And if I did fight, and were killed to-day, who would sing your praises to-morrow?"

Was it not a good answer for the royal bard to give? It might not sound well, coming from the lips of a coward, but Ian Lom—bard though he was—was a fine swordsman, and had proved his courage in a hundred previous fights.

The whole scene rose in imagination before my eyes as the old tune rang out, and I could see the great soldier smile as he put the question to Ian, the question that would have been a deadly insult to any other Highlander. Now, Montrose was the last man in the world to hurt the Highlanders' feelings, but he knew the bravery of the man he was speaking to ; moreover, his practised eye saw that the battle was practically decided before he spoke. Argyll had taken to his galley, and his rowers waited with oars poised ready for flight ; and the Argyll men, brave as they were, deserted by their leader, lost heart and were already as good as beaten. So that Ian's aid was not needed when Montrose spoke, and both men knew this ; it did not require a soldier's eye to see that Argyll was beaten. And so, when Ian Lom, looking up into his leader's face, saw the quiet smile

playing round the beautiful mouth, and the spirit of gentle humour looking out of that eagle eye, he jested lightly in reply, "And if I did fight and were killed to-day, who would sing your praises to-morrow?"

It was in such a mood, as the above thoughts suggested, that I took up my Pipe and played "The Battle of Inverlochy." Soon I had quite a little gathering inside the old walls listening to my piping. First came some children from the neighbouring cottages. These were soon joined by the workers on a farm close by; the milkmaid left her cows, the herd his cattle, the ploughman his team. As I played, I could swear that other players invisible played along with me; from every corner came a different echo, until the warm air within the great square vibrated and danced to the measure.

When I had finished, I said to the oldest person present: "This is a fine old place"; "Yes, and a fine old tune with the sound of the battle in it," was his answer.

"You knew the tune, then?" I asked.

"That I did," he answered promptly.

"I heard it out yonder," pointing to the field by the river, "and knew it in a minute."

My Pipe spoke to the listener out in the meadow, and this ploughman, I could see by his face, got out of, or should I say read into, the music the old story of the battle of Inverlochy.

This is how the Pipe spoke to the Highlanders

in the old days. It is in this way that the Bagpipe voices the feelings of the Highlander better than any other instrument, and because of this it may be said to speak. It is the instrument of rude wild nature, and interprets the elemental passions—if I may so call them—of human nature, in a way that no modern instrument with its refinement and niceties of scale can ever attempt.

And in the old days, when the Pipe was the one solace of the Highlander in his leisure hours, and down in the glen, Pipe-call answered to Pipe-call the long summer day through; and when every clan had its own distinctive clan tunes; and when nearly every man was a player—piping being contagious in the Highlands in those days—and when every tune had a history, I have no doubt that the language of the Pipe was a verity to the old Highlander, and was understood by him almost as well as was his mother-tongue—rousing him to a sense of danger, or lulling him into a happy security; reminding him continually of the brave deeds of his forefathers, and thus keeping alive within his breast a strong sense of emulation; speaking with no uncertain voice of love and hate; of joy and sorrow; of revenge and death; and after death, of the reunion with his forefathers, whose spirits hovered near—watchful, silent, sympathetic.









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