

# THE BAGPIPE AND ITS MUSIC.

BY THE REV. DR. NORMAN MACLEOD.

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THE Music of the Highlands is the Pibroch of the Great War Pipe, with its fluttering pennons, fingered by a genuine Celt, in full Highland Dress, as he slowly paces a Baronial Hall, or amidst the wild scenery of his native mountains. The Bagpipe is the instrument best adapted for summoning the Clans from the far off Glens to rally round the standard of their Chiefs, or for leading a Highland Regiment to the attack amidst the roar of battle. The Pibroch is also constructed to express a welcome to the Chief on his return to his Clan; and to wail out a lament for him as he is borne by his people to the old burial place in the Glen, or in the sainted Isle of Graves. To those who understand its carefully composed music, there is a pathos and depth of feeling suggested by it, which a Highlander alone can fully sympathize with; associated by him as it always is with the most touching memories of his home and country; recalling the faces and forms of the departed; spreading forth before his inward eye panoramas of Mountain, Loch, and Glen, and reviving impressions of his early and happiest years. And thus, if it excites the stranger to laughter, it excites the Highlander to tears, as no other music can do, in spite of the most refined culture of his after life. It is thus, too, that what appears to be only a tedious and unmeaning monotony in the music of the genuine Pibroch, is not so to one under the magic influence of Highland associations. There is, indeed, in every Pibroch a certain 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. In the very reduplication of its hurried notes, and in the repetition of its one idea, there are expressions of vehement passion and of grief—"the joy of grief," as Ossian terms it—which loves to brood upon its own and ever repeats the one desolate thought which fills the heart, and which, in the end, again breaks forth into the long and loud agonising cry with which it began. All this will no doubt seem both meaningless and extravagant to many, but it is nevertheless a deliberately expressed conviction.

The characteristic poetry of the Highlands is Ossian, its music the Pibroch, and these two voices embody the spirit and sing the praises of "*Tir nam' beann nan' Gleann's nan' Gaisgeach.*"