



INTRODUCTION.



THE music of the Highland bagpipe is usually said to be divided into three categories: Ceol Mor, the "big music" or Piobaireachd; Ceol Beag, the "little music," that is quicksteps and dance music, and Ceol Meadhonach, the "middle music," which lies between the other two, and consists of such tunes as are neither constructed in the measure of Piobaireachd, nor adapted for the quick march or the dance.

Ceol Meadhonach comprises most of the simple primitive airs of the Highlands. It is probably the oldest form of Highland bagpipe music, and for many centuries was perhaps the principal form, until the MacCruimen school had perfected the development of that most remarkable of all musical products, the Piobaireachd.

The heyday of the Piobaireachd seems to have lasted up to the '45. The proscription dealt it a blow, from which it has never recovered, but the bagpipe itself survived as the special musical instrument of drilled Highland regiments, with the natural result that the quickstep came into prominence, possibly for the first time. After 1780 Piobaireachd was kept alive spasmodically, first by means of competitions organised by the Highland Society, and through the few survivors of the old piping families, who had remained in the service of their hereditary chiefs, and later on by a more extended system of competitions for valuable money prizes. Ceol Meadhonach was probably lost sight of at the moment when piping outside the regiments began to depend upon the competitions for its vitality.

Within the last thirty years an enormous national reaction

in favour of the bagpipe has taken place, and has brought with it a new class of Ceol Beag, consisting of marches and dance tunes, which have been composed, and are played, not for marching or for dancing, but solely for exhibition and competition purposes. This kind of music is immensely popular at the present moment. Its proper execution demands the highest technical skill, and many people are inclined for that reason to consider it the highest expression of pipe music. But, in spite of its undoubted fascination, it is probably too artificial and unreal ever to become classical.

The effect of the new spirit on Ceol Mor has not been so marked. The art of composing appears to have gone from us for ever, and the old music is still engaged in a struggle for bare existence. Nevertheless several causes have been at work during the last few years, which may, it is hoped, bring about a revival of Piobaireachd playing for its own sake.

In the meantime Ceol Meadhonach has remained almost unnoticed. The active enthusiast, whose interest inclines him towards the musical side of the Celtic renaissance, and to pipe music in particular, is absorbed in the rescue and preservation of the Piobaireachd. The popular taste is for "competition" Ceol Beag, preferably rendered by several pipers playing in concert.

In the hope of drawing attention to the fact (as they believe it to be) that Ceol Meadhonach is a separate and interesting branch of pipe music, which of late years has been most unreason-

ably neglected, the editors have resolved to issue the present work, containing some of the most characteristic tunes known to them. They have been encouraged to do so by the fact that these airs, when played even by such mediocre performers as themselves, meet with the approval of Highland audiences.

Perhaps it will be objected that many of the airs were never intended to be played on the pipes, because, in the form in which they are nowadays set to songs, they extend beyond the compass of the pipe chanter. It may be so. But the editors believe that pure Highland music cannot be out of place on a purely Highland instrument, and they have therefore ventured to arrange for the pipes several favourite melodies, which they have no other means of rendering. It is not impossible that some, at least, of such melodies were originally derived from pipe tunes.

The settings are the best that the editors have heard, or in the airs, which they have adapted, the best that they could make. Where a song has no second part, they have added what they consider an appropriate variation. Otherwise they have only diverged from the air, as they have heard it sung, when forced to do so by the exigencies of the pipe scale.

The names given are those by which the editors know the tunes. Possibly some of them are incorrect, but to fix the authentic name of every pipe tune is a well-nigh impossible task.

Regarding the method of playing little need be said. There is no class of pipe music which affords more scope for individual taste. A practice in some vogue nowadays is to play airs of this nature in parts. It has not, however, been thought necessary to print "seconds," as any piper can evolve these for himself.

The present work is not intended to be a compendium of Ceol Meadhonach. Generally speaking, tunes known to have been composed in entirety during the last few years have not been included, *The badge of Scotland*, No. 34, being practically the only exception. The editors have purposely omitted several fine airs, which have appeared in recent publications, and with which they were not previously acquainted. They have also left out

Lord Lovat's lament and some other tunes of like nature, because they are familiar to almost every piper in a universal fixed style.

For the sources from which the airs now presented have been acquired reference should be made to the notes at the end of the volume. In these the editors have, they hope, made acknowledgment in every case where they are indebted to others for assistance or inspiration. They will be extremely grateful for any further information regarding the history or correct nomenclature of the tunes, or for any criticisms on the settings. And should the book reach a second edition, all such help will be acknowledged in the revised notes.

