

AN DAORACH MHOR. (The Big Spree.)

First Line.

Second Line.

Third Line.

THE Piobaireachd Society's recent publication gives four versions of this tune—first, the Society's own; second, Donald MacDonald's; third, Angus MacKay's, and fourth, Angus MacArthur's. These versions afford, one and all, most excellent examples of the "irregularity" resulting from non-realisation of the "regularity" of the music. It is extraordinary that writers of tunes in staff notation recognise, apparently, the absolute "regularity" of the Variations, yet fail to recognise the principle of "regularity" governs the Ground of a tune also. Apart from the differences in certain notes apparent in the various versions, the outstanding feature in the Piobaireachd Society's version is the timing, i.e., the division of the parts into bars and the time values given to certain notes or movements to bring them into proper time according to the bars or half bars to which they have been allotted. For instance, if we compare the movements to which the numbers 2, 5 and 3 are affixed, we find they are the same, but in one case on E and C and in the other on F and E, and yet these movements are differently written and differently timed in the Society's version, thus—



Surely this in itself is sufficient evidence of incorrectness? The movements should, of course, be written—



and if further evidence is necessary, compare the fifteenth and sixteenth bars of the Society's version, where the movements referred to stand out clearly as half bars. The reason for this "irregularity" is that the bar marks are wrongly placed and this brings out another timing error in the Society's version. The last two notes of the first bar and the first two notes of the second are written thus—



They really form the last half of the first bar and should be written thus—



The same point is noticeable with the ending of the third and beginning of fourth bars and the ending of the fifth and beginning of the sixth bars (and so on throughout the tune).

The next points to be considered are the discrepancies between the various versions as regards certain notes. We will deal with these in detail. The numbers following refer to the notes in the Compiler's version so marked—

- (1) In MacDonald's version only the note is B, whereas all the others have C, undoubtedly the correct note.
- (2) The Piobaireachd Society has B and recognises its version is open to criticism in this respect. In spite of the fact that Donald Cameron played B the evidence in the tune itself clearly points to C as being the correct note. Similar movements throughout the tune (see those to which the numbers 3 and 5 are affixed) consist of a simple doubling of E. Why therefore should this movement be otherwise than a doubling of C? The other three versions have C.
- (3) The three versions quoted by the Society have B in place of E. Nevertheless the Society would appear to be correct in adopting E. All similar movements throughout the tune (see movements to which numbers 2 and 5 are affixed) show that the initial note is the same as the doubled note at the end of the beat, the only exception being the first half of the last bar.
- (4) The Piobaireachd Society and MacKay have E, F, in place of C, E. The third and fourth bars of the second line are clearly "carry on" bars, as it will be noticed the second and fourth are exactly the same. Consequently we expect in the third bar the same beats on different notes and therefore have little hesitation in considering the C, E, more likely to be correct than the E, F.

The references to the discrepancies between versions also apply to the first two Variations. It is interesting to note that the B appearing as the opening note in the 5th, 11th and 15th bars is repeated in some versions in the Variations referred to, and this note might perhaps be considered the most doubtful note in the tune.