

THE HIGHLAND PIPES.

NA E instrument, however sweet,
Can wi' the Hieland Pipes compete;
For tho' its notes are only nine,
Its warbling voice is so divine,
That when evoked with skill and art
It moves all feelings of the heart,
And Rage and Love, and Joy and Grief,
Thro' it find utterance and relief.

Nae brazen band can sae inspire
The soldier's heart wi' martial fire,
And make him dash with such delight
Thro' shot and shell into the fight,
And stab and pound wi' sword and gun
His trembling foes until they run;
Or when with feet ill-shod and sore,
He marches on a foreign shore,
And feels, thro' want of food and rest,
Exhausted, weary, and depressed,
Nae instrument that man can name
Can like the Pipes refresh the frame;
New blood seems thro' his veins to bound
When shrill the cheerful chanter sounds,
His step grows firm, his head erect,
And toil no more his thoughts deject;
Wi' supple joints, and muscles strong,
And spirits high, he steps along.
But tho' in war the Pipes excel,
In love they answer quite as well.

In fact, you'd think they had been made,
The drowsy fair to serenade.
What maiden could, unmoved, remain
Indifferent to her faithful swain,
If 'neath her window, all alone,
He blew the chanter and the drone!
He who is sunk in deep distress,
And has a grief he can't express,
Who feels a "woe too deep for tears,"
A heavy sorrow nothing cheers,
Will, in the bag-pipe, find a vent
For all the anguish in him pent;
Its sweet pathetic voice will cheer
When all around is dark and drear.
But equally in jovial hours
The bag-pipe shews its magic powers;
Its comic lilt in jigs and reels
"Puts life and metal in the heels,"
And is so mirthful and inspiring
That young and old will dance untiring,
And snap their thumbs, and hoop and shout,
To let their bursting spirits out.

For ages past the Pipes have been
An object of contempt and spleen:
The butt of all the English nation;
And Scotchmen, moved by imitation,
Who, like the adder, will not hear,
And to the charmer shut their ear;

But now, methinks, there can be traced
The dawning of a better taste,
And soon, we hope, despite of banter,
That every Scot will learn the chanter.

Taste, like the ocean, ebbs and flows,
Tho' why and wherefore no one knows.
Time was when folks no beauty saw
In Ben Mac Dhui or Loch Awe;
The Hieland hills, to men of taste,
Were all a dreary barren waste,
Where heather grew instead of corn—
A region mentioned but with scorn;
But now, how many thousands pour
To make each year a northern tour,
To gaze with guide-books in their hand
On loch and glen and mountain grand,
To roam in speechless admiration
Thro' scenes of utter desolation?
The bag-pipe too, tho' long neglected
Will, like the hills, be yet respected;
Its simple scale, devoid of art,
Speaks like the mountains to the heart:
On nature built, it need not fear
The hackneyed jest and shallow sneer
That fall on it, like ocean spray
Upon the crags that stand for aye.