

heath, marked the last resting place of those who had gone before.

Then comes a pause, the farewell to the departed; and, as the mourners return, filing along the narrow passes of the mountain, the retiring tones of the pipes die away, wild, indefinite, yet melodious as the Aeolian harp, as they swelled and sank into the evening wind, till night closed around and all was hushed.

It can hardly be expected that the supremacy of the pipes would be granted as a matter of course by all natives of Britain. Some people declare that the bagpipe, musically speaking, is as vile a contrivance as it is possible to imagine: Harsh, imperfect and untunable. That there is as much resemblance between Highland music on the one side and real music on the other, just as much, indeed, as between porridge and a puree of woodcocks. And they would be wrong.

A recent novelist has shown most conclusively and irrevocably the difference in the point of view of the Highlander and the rest of the British people. Speaking to the Highlander: "How do you find life in these parts?" I inquired

"Indeefferent, sir—vera indeefferent; tae be sure, at fairs an' sic-like I've often had as much as ten shillin' in ma bonnet at a time; but its just the Kilties that draw 'em; they hae no real love for the pipes whateffer; a rantin' reel pleases 'em well enough, but eh! they hae no hankerin' for the gude music."

"That is a question open to argument, Donald," I said; "can any one play real music on a bagpipe, think you?"

"Sir," returned the Scot, "the pipes is the king of a' instruments, 't is the sweetest, the truest, the oldest, whateffer!"

"True, it is very old," said I thoughtfully; "it was known, I believe, to the Greeks; yes, it is certainly a very old and, I think, a very barbarous instrument."

"Hoot toot! the mon talks like a muckle fule," said Donald, nodding to the fire.

"For instance," I continued, "there can be no comparison between a bagpipe and a—fiddle, say."

"A fiddle!" exclaimed Donald in accents of withering scorn, and still addressing the fire. "Ye can juist tell him tae gang tae the deil wi' his fiddle!"

"Music is, I take it, the expression of one's mood or thought, a dream translated into sound, therefore—"

"Hae ye iver heerd the pipes?"

"Why, yes, long ago."

"Then, ye shall juist hear 'em again." So saying, he took up his instrument and began slowly inflating it.

Then, all at once, from drones and chanter there rushed forth such a flood of melody as seemed to sweep me away upon its tide.

First, I seemed to hear a roar of wind through desolate glens, a moan of trees, and a rush of sounding waters; yet softly, softly there rises above the flood of sound a little rippling melody which comes and goes, and comes again, growing ever sweeter with repetition. And now the roar of wind is changed to the swing of marching feet, the tread of a mighty host whose step is strong and free; and, lo! they are singing, as they march, and the song is bold and wild, wild wild! Again and again, beneath the song, beneath the rhythm of marching feet, the melody rises, very sweet, but infinitely sad, like a silver pipe or an angel's voice tremulous with tears. Once again the theme changes, and it is battle and death, sudden and sharp; there is the rush and shock of charging ranks, and the surge and tumult of conflict, above whose thunder, loud and clear and shrill, like some battle cry, the melody swells, one moment triumphant, and the next lost again.

But the thunder rolls away, distant and more distant—the day is lost, and won; but sudden and clear, the melody rings out once more, fuller now, richer, and complete; the silver pipe has become a golden trumpet. And yet, what sorrow, what anguish unspeakable rings through it, the weeping and wailing of a nation! So the melody sinks slowly, to die away in one long-drawn minor note, and Donald is looking across at me with his grave smile, and I will admit both his face and figure are sadly blurred.

"Donald," said I, after a little, "Donald, I will never speak against the pipes again; they are indeed the king of all instruments—played as you play them."

"I'm glad ye like it, for, Sassenach though ye be, it proves ye hae the music."

Looking forward to the glorious time when the regiments come marching home again, having fought the good fight and won, I have not the slightest doubt we shall have ample evidence that the marvellous pipes contributed in no small degree towards the winning of the great victory.

"The man that hath no music in himself . . . is fit for treason, strategies and spoils."—Shakespeare.