

A decorative border of Celtic knotwork frames the text. It features a large circular knot in the top-left corner, a vertical strip of repeating knot patterns on the left, and horizontal bands of knotwork at the top and bottom.

Irish Music

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Ph. D



IRISH MUSIC:

BEING AN EXAMINATION OF THE MATTER OF SCALES,
MODES, AND KEYS, WITH PRACTICAL INSTRUCTIONS
AND EXAMPLES FOR PLAYERS.

By REV. RICHARD HENEBRY, Ph.D.



Ἄτ Cuiat :

an cló-cumann (Teórantas), Clódoiri Gaeilge,

Spáio mhór na Tríáda.



MATRI PIÆ.

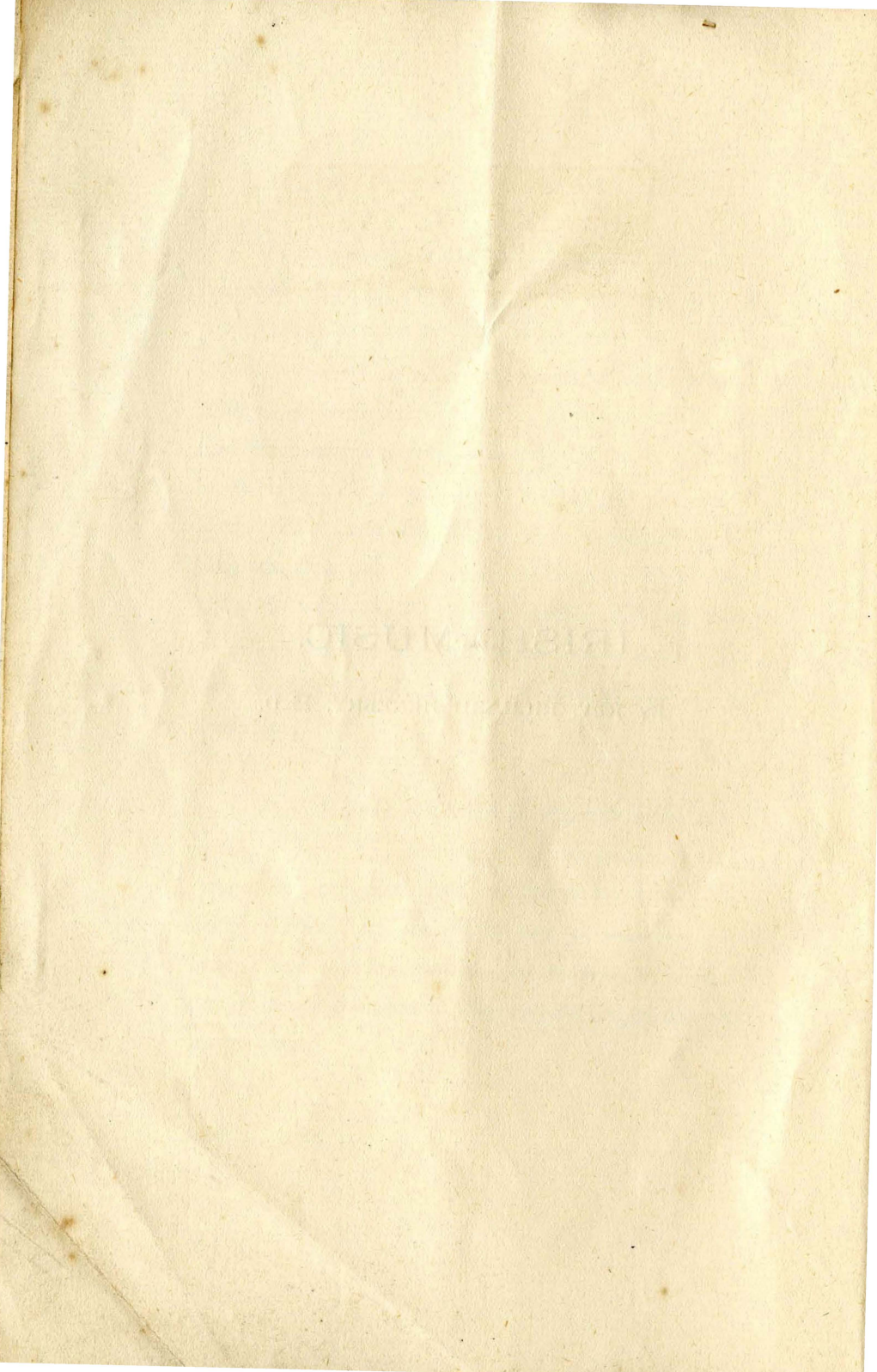
The following is intended as a practical and not a scientific study of Irish music. It has been written throughout with reference to the fiddle, which is the instrument best known to me, and, fortunately, also the most suitable for such a purpose. Hence the letters, both Roman and Irish, used in making scales represent their respective fiddle values—the former the ordinary fingering, and the latter their specifically Irish values as depicted on the diagrams § 57. For that reason I have refrained from using the terms Do, Re, &c., as also for that they have become so wedded to the notes of the modern system, that they cannot now be applied to Irish music without causing confusion.

I have to thank Rev. Prof. H. Beyerunge, of Maynooth, first for his examination of the modes of Irish music lately published in the New Ireland Review, without which I would not have been able to undertake this study; and, in the second place, for his kindness in reading the proofs and making many valuable suggestions and corrections.

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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

1. Irish Music constitutes a large integral part of our traditional civilisation. We find ourselves in possession of a unique body of melody which, if judged by all the motives and canons of music, is of the most perfect type, and which has been transmitted to us orally and instrumentally from the remotest times. And notwithstanding disturbing influences of the gravest and most extensive kind now for a long time in operation, we still can display this inheritance of ours unimpaired. Singers still sing with absolute perfection, and there are fiddlers and pipers who, though strangely despised by a badly de-educated nation, are even still in the enjoyment of the full wealth of native musical tradition. This music is of the most varied and comprehensive character, inasmuch as it was both the accompaniment and complement of language. For in use it was not only co-extensive with speech, but even gave expression to a large domain of ideas that lie beyond the power of words. No people has the same past musical record as ours, nor anything to compare with our present musical deposit. Nor can the literary record of any other nation show a like appreciation of musical skill. The practical apotheosis of the power of music so often encountered in our Northern or Keltic sagas has a significance absolutely without parallel.

2. We have abundant evidence of the unapproachable skill of the old-time Irish musical composers and performers. As for composition, it might be asserted that all our genuine Irish music is as flawless in its way as the illumination in the great initial pages of the Book of Kells. Each tune appears full of special character and colour, and it would be difficult to imagine the transposition of a single note without marring the whole strain. The principles of Irish composition, so far as I know, have never been examined, still even one having but slight musical knowledge cannot attempt the analysis of one of our classic melodies without being struck by the consummate art displayed in its structure. This will be no surprise to anybody acquainted with the wonderful proficiency of our forefathers in the art of poetry and the science of grammar, not to mention others. But though there is evidence of art on the surface,

it is very likely there is far more beyond, and that the task of examination will be more intricate than might be imagined at a first glance. One quality in certain of those tunes transcends all art: it is the startlingly clear and unmistakeable voice in which they deliver the burthen of their message. Another is the wonderful nature of the secrets they unfold. Their meed of success in those particulars seems to excel the most inspired efforts of human genius. Whoever sets about deducing the rules regulating Irish composition need have no fears for the want of material, nor should he imagine that the task is beneath his acquirements.

3. The oldest evidence of the power of our performers is found in the Keltic sagas, where the witchery of music was a common theme. The far later but still sufficiently ancient evidence of Giraldus Cambrensis is a remarkable piece of testimony from the outside, and from a bitter enemy. I forbear to quote the very hackneyed little bit of Latinity, it is already too well known. But its value as evidence in a book so universally discredited must be considered. Cambrensis made a tour of Ireland from one Norman grange to another, and undoubtedly compiled his book from the materials thus gleaned. At that time the Normans had not become naturalised Irish citizens, the *ipsis Hibernis Hiberniores* period was in its early inception, and only to be discerned by the jealous eye of the visiting Norman. The conquerors regarded the aborigines, the mere Irish, pretty much as we do the negroes of Africa, and no doubt regaled the traveller with stories of the impossibility of the native and his entire lack of the faculty of self-government. And Cambrensis eagerly dished up the legends probably in justification of the conquest. But he was a man with eyes and ears, and could not avoid inserting a little truth drawn from his actual experience. I remember Prof. Rudolf Thurneysen once showed me all the testimony of this character which he could squeeze out of the book. The whole was written on one sheet of notepaper, this remark about Irish music included. Hence we are justified in regarding it as a report of his impressions of the harpers who played in the great houses, probably the only Irish he came in contact with. And coming from such a source it is remarkable evidence.

4. Bunting's description of the harping of old Hempson, the old centenarian who struck the strings with his finger nails, is also valuable proof. The astounding grace and facility of his technique was a source of extreme wonderment to Bunting. His playing was probably the swan song of the Irish harp, and from the description it must have been exceedingly sweet.

5. The present players of Irish music are a living proof of the excellence of our performers. Fiddlers, pipers and singers may still be heard whose skill it would be hard to beat. The best fiddling I ever heard was done by a tramp player. And if anybody is doubtful of what may still be done on the pipes let him hear Patsy Touhy or Barney Delaney of Chicago, or Mr. Burns of Trim, who is now, to our disgrace be it said, wasting his sweetness in the desert air of East Munster.

6. We still have Irish music and musicians then; the tradition

of melody is almost as full as ever it was and performers are perfect of their kind. The present pervading ignorance concerning Irish music is entirely on the outside, and arose from the habit of regarding it from the standpoint of the vulgar music, and especially from the calm assumption and crass insistence of the arch error that it was composed on the do, re, mi, fa, scale. And all the time that this controversy was being waged and innumerable essays written, now for over a hundred years, the pipers piped away unconscious of the din, playing and transmitting Irish music. They knew as much as tradition gave, and they handed it on as ever before. But the actual hearers, with an obtuseness whereof the unaccountability is too stupendously subtle for the ordinary grade of intellect, insisted they heard the do, re, mi, fa, scale, wrote down their music as such, and then began theorising in the air. It must ever remain a curious puzzle how two systems of music, differing from each other as day from night, could possibly be mistaken one for the other.

7. Unfortunately the nescients could advertise, and so they subsidised the fetishes of print and fashion. Tom Moore's Melodies, bad and debased from every point of view, let loose a flood of false notions that can be curbed God knows when, if ever. Indeed before his time there was evidence of decay. Carolan, now everywhere mistakenly lauded as the greatest Irish harper, composed only what must be regarded as debased music, for his style had been contaminated by contact with the vulgar system. And the music of Jackson is about on a parallel with the efforts made in 1840 to write poetry in *debride* rhyme. The rules of composition, like the rules of Irish prosody, must have been deleted by the savagery of Cromwell's conquest.

8. In exact conformity with the false ideals of Nationality foisted upon our people over a hundred years ago is the mistaken appreciation of Irish music. Even now at certain Feis gatherings there are prizes for singing in the "modern style." The piano is supreme, and children are so diligently taught the do, re, mi, fa, that it is doubtful if one in ten thousand of them can sing a song like its parents or whistle a reel within the limits of bare decency. And all this virulent obscurantism is carried on in the names of civilisation, education and progress.

9. Over a hundred years ago we find the beginnings of an attempt to understand Irish music. Bunting was the first, and, as far as my recollection of his observations goes, the best of those who undertook to solve the puzzle. Moore wrote an essay on Irish music as he wrote a History of Ireland. The curious may consult it in his works for themselves. Petrie, with the devotion that marked everything he did for his country, collected a large body of Irish music and published as much of it as he could. Later Joyce issued two small collections, and numerous single tunes have appeared in various publications for the past twenty years. All those collectors used the modern staff notation unchanged, and subjected their tunes to the whole modern economy of playing. In reality what they did was to report the Irish interval accurately where it chanced to coincide with the modern, and where it did not to sub-

stitute the nearest modern interval. The result was a string of notes altogether out of tune with the rules of modern composition on the one hand and totally unknown to Irish music on the other. And the whole has been labelled Irish music, and in all seriousness and good faith played and sung and studied as such. For, as will be shown below, the great body of our music is constructed on a scale whereof four of the intervals differ from the modern scale and three coincide with it. And a numerous class of tunes, and they the most important, are composed on a scale having but two interval coincidences with the modern and five differences. There have not been wanting, however, evidences of a consciousness that somehow all was not going smoothly with Irish music reported in the modern staff notation. An effort at closer expression is often evidenced by the number of accidentals found in modern Irish music. And if the occurrences were collected it would be found that those accidentals actually are inserted most commonly where there is a difference in the two systems. But the accidentals proved no remedy, for they had only modern values, and hence were always out of tune with the Irish scale at least a quarter of a tone.

10. Prof. O'Sullivan, of the Queen's College, Cork, in the introductory volume to his edition of O'Curry's "Manners and Customs," made the first rational attempt to determine the nature of the Irish scale system. His study is a very valuable piece of work, as far as my recollection of it goes. But it was defective inasmuch as it did not go out from a practical examination of the music itself, and besides it was overloaded with a vast deal of musical information not strictly connected with the subject. Curiously enough this, the only classic work on Irish music, seems to have fallen still-born from the press for all the use made of it in Ireland. People continued printing Irish music as of yore down to our day.

11. I picked up traditional fiddling, both bowing and fingering, more or less, as a boy. Irish music was first upon my ear. Later I fell upon modern influences, and in an evil moment became possessed of "The Violin Without a Master," price 6d. From that and numerous other sources I acquired "correct" fingering. In a little time I was astonished to find that the "correct" fingering failed to return Irish music. As I thought it impossible for the book to be wrong, I was at a *non plus*. Finally, Rev. W. P. Bourke directed my attention to O'Sullivan's book, and, as far as I understood it at the time, his theory seemed very reasonable and coincided with my own experience as to the difference of scales. About five years ago I helped to judge the singing at the first Feis of Ardmore. Some neighbouring educational institutions had trained children to sing to the piano for the occasion. Of course beside traditional singers those were hopelessly outclassed, and judgment was passed against them accordingly. A controversy arose about the fairness of that judgment, and I endeavoured to show in the *Waterford Star* that the music which came within our purview was entirely distinct from piano music. This controversy attracted the attention of Father Bewerunge, of Maynooth College, a thoroughly trained musician, and he has devoted a good deal of attention to the subject ever since. Quite recently on returning to

Ireland his examination of Irish modes fell into my hands, and proved of the greatest service to me in the preparation of the present study.

12. About four years ago I conceived rightly that the chanter of the Irish bag-pipes must sound the Irish scale. I determined to procure a chanter and register the value of each note with the help of a syren. While in Washington I procured the loan of a set of bag-pipes from Mr. Hogan of Philadelphia, but found that the syren in the University required an inch pipe to blow it, and as that was far too large for my purpose, I abandoned the idea. A closer acquaintance, too, with the peculiarities of the Irish chanter increased my esteem of that instrument, and I discovered that I should be a trained piper in order to thoroughly understand it. Failing health then forced me to abandon the study of Irish music, and for a whole year I neglected to consider the matter at all.

13. Later, my zeal was enkindled afresh by contact with Captain Francis O'Neill, Chief of Police in Chicago, and by intercourse with the Irish Pipers' Club of that city, of which he is patron and president. And I derived a good deal of help from Jim and Pat Boyle, two very good fiddlers from Glen Columcille, Co. Donegal, whom I met in Denver, Colorado. While living in Colorado Springs, Col., last year, I determined to make some little study of the finger-board of the fiddle. I was forced to this while taking down some reels from the very correct whistling of Mr. John Grandon of that city, a boy from the neighbourhood of Queenstown. Gradually I re-discovered and mentally noted certain niceties in the matter of Irish fingering. Little by little I exhausted the finger-board, and had full though unconscious possession of the scheme of Irish scales and modes. Then, as tunes must fit in a certain position on the fiddle, I discovered that one style of fingering had endings D and G on the third string. I found also that by sharpening this G and its octave a quarter tone, a scale was produced which suited a set of tunes having endings one tone higher than the above respectively, viz., E on the third string, and A, the second string, open. See § 30. I might remark that the F of this scale should be = modern F \sharp , but that I discovered later. See the reasons below *loc. cit.* Also that by a quarter tone here is meant the minutest interval value of the Irish scale merely; it is not intended as a mathematical expression. I also observed a number of tunes differing in fingering very much from those already mentioned, but having endings in G. I noted the only endings were Dd, Ee, Gg, Aa and B; I never knew an Irish tune to end in F or C. Then irregularities of fingering attracted my attention, and I noticed that the fingering of the fourth string was transferred to the third, that of the third to the second, and the fingering of the second to the first. By observing this I stumbled on the theory of fiddlers' keys, by which tunes are played a fifth higher, merely by transferring the fingering to the next higher string. And finally I was able to resolve the endings E and A of the second class of fingering, one into a key and the other into a mode of the first class. This I did from noticing that the G a quarter tone sharp required by those tunes was merely the Irish C natural of the fourth string

transferred to the third. See diagrams, § 57. From those observations I have been able to deduce the following elucidation of Irish scales, modes and keys. For the purposes of this study it will be necessary to say that the terms scale and key are used in their ordinary signification, and that by a mode I mean the scale constructed by counting from any note other than the lowest, *i.e.*, the Doh, of the scale. For example, when some tunes end on one note of the scale and others on another without causing transference of fiddle fingering or re-tuning of the harp, one set of tunes are on the tonic and the other on a mode. But it must be carefully noted that in Irish music there is no difference of feel between a modal and a tonic ending, for they balance so evenly that it is a matter of indifference which we call the regular scale, or tonic ending, and which the mode. On the other hand, there is a marked difference in weight and roundness between the ending, be it called modal or tonic, and the modulation or weak ending. Compare the long accented note often occupying the place of the second beat in the fourth bar of a double and notice the sharp contrast between it and the ending which the tune demands. But there is no trace of such a difference of fullness between the variant modal endings of two tunes played on the same scale. One fills the ear as much as the other. I strive here to make my meaning clear, especially in the use of terms, because I have never received a lesson in music, and am unlearned in the science of modern music.

14. I have been moved to undertake the following study in the hope that our children might be taught their own music correctly, and that it might be a means through which our music, at least as far as the mechanicals go, could be expressed accurately on paper. For though the mechanical differences of scale constitute the main motive differentiating our own from the vulgar music, there are others almost as striking, but which, like the scale differences, have practically escaped observation. And this will be as good a place as any to set down what are the differences separating Irish from modern singing. These are then :—

- (a). The difference of scale, which is a main and fundamental difference.
- (b). The pitch of Irish music was $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 tones lower than the modern. Let the testimony of this be upon the old chanters of bag-pipes, upon the tuning of Irish fiddles, and upon the singing of our old women who, when they do not sing falsetto, take that pitch.
- (c). The phrasing of Irish music was altogether different. This is a most important point. Moore's Melodies and all printed Irish music are played with modern phrasing. The effect is indescribable.
- (d). The technique was also entirely different. Note the marvellous ease and accuracy with which Irish singers render runs and other florid adornments.
- (e). The timbre of the voice was entirely different. Then, so must be the economy of breathing, or of voice production, or of resonance room in the mouth, or of all to-

gether. At contests I could almost with certainty tell an Irish singer from the first note before any interval the scale was made.

- (f). The mental state that motived an Irish singer was different from the corresponding subjective condition of a modern singer.
- (g). The language and its associations made an important but a very subtle difference.

15. Thus the analysis of the matter is beset with physiological and psychological puzzles. But such analysis is necessary only to point out and emphasise the distinction separating the two systems. The question of phrasing deserves more than passing comment. The combinations of notes in Irish phrases were entirely unknown to modern music. Also they differed in length and in accentuation. By accent here is meant not that which corresponds to the stress accent in speaking, but rather to the cadence or sentence accent. The accompaniment of the words to a written air tune would do a great deal to determine its phrasing. Hitherto written Irish tunes have been rendered on a sort of accommodation of the modern phrasing system. For this reason integral elements were broken and the bits joined to make new phrases, the result being nonsense. Tunes in Moore, Petrie, etc., no longer known traditionally, cannot be phrased accurately. A good Irish player might do something with them if he were provided with a restored score of those pieces. This applies particularly to the long airs that cannot be well confined within the rules of bar and time. There will be less difficulty with dance tunes, for in those the time is so strongly marked that it overlays the phrase.

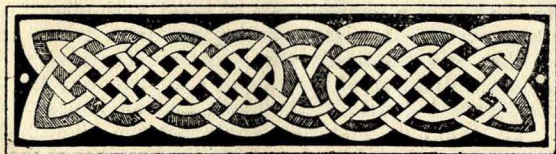
16 The difference between the Irish and the English languages is an exact parallel with the difference separating Irish from vulgar music. And the present poor meed of appreciation accorded to such a rich and precious inheritance as our own music is a bitter comment on the grade of intellectuality we have reached after a diligent century spent in trying to assimilate Englishism. And, like all our own belongings, our music must be looked at from the standpoint of the foreigner. Hence it is so common to hear round-mouthed nescients declare that we must now expand and develop our National music; that the simple themes of Irish tunes cannot any longer be expected to satisfy the ears of people who have gained a knowledge of the limitless scope of modern music. My answer to them: if their knowledge of Irish music bore any nameable proportion to their assurance, they would not speak so loud. For let them know that as the Irish of old exhausted the possibilities of rhyme before that art was known to the barbarians, even so did they exhaust the resources of tonality. Compare the rules and examples given in Thurneysen's *Mittelirische Verslehre* with the teaching on rhyme as set forth in modern English grammars, and compare the jejune tone scheme of the modern scale with the riches of those I shall unfold below.

17. Our present duty is not to enter into competition with foreigners in the production of oratorios, but rather with all meek-

ness of spirit to apply ourselves to the grand, the sublime, study of Irish music. Let us first of all try to preserve it, and to this end let us cause the do, re, mi, fa, to be stopped as we should cause National schools to be stopped in Irish-speaking districts. Let us take our music from the people and strive to deduce the rules that govern it. Then when learned, when known, and when perpetuated, let whoso has the stomach for it expand so as to cover the domain of modern music. And if any such be then found who can beat one of our old classic tunes he is the man we waited for, let him do our expansion. But in the meantime, a little common sense, that prime characteristic of our Gaelic-speaking ancestors, now with the rest almost a lost art, would be very becoming.

18. A passage from Keating's preface to his History on the question of Irish music is as luminous to-day as the day it was written. I translate from the Irish Texts Society's edition, p. 38. In the course of his refutation of Stanihurst's calumnies he says: "He furthermore finds fault with Irish harpers, calling them no musicians. The chances are that he was no judge of music at all and especially of Irish music, seeing that he was ignorant of the rules concerning it. I fear that Stanihurst did not understand the status of Ireland, which was that of an isolated nation like a microcosm, and that the nobility and professors who inhabited it in ancient times established Jurisprudence, Medicine, Poetry and Music, and instituted certain rules for each. And therefore it was not fair for him to pass rash judgment on the music of Ireland and then find fault with it. I am astonished that he had not read the XIX Chapter of Cambrensis, where he praises Irish music, unless it was that he had determined to surpass Cambrensis in dispraising the Irish. For there is nothing else for which Cambrensis so lauds the Irish as for their music. Thus he says in the same chapter, 'In musical instruments alone do I find the diligence of this people commendable, for in those things they incomparably surpass any other nation that I have seen.' And he furthermore says in the same chapter, in giving his testimony in praise of Irish music, 'The melody is rendered consonant and complete through the use of such sweet rapidity, such uneven evenness and such discordant concord.' Hence it is evident that Stanihurst was lying when he said Irish playing was no music. Neither was he accurate in asserting that Irish performers were blind for the most part, for it is clear that when he wrote his History the number of players having their sight exceeded the number of the blind, and so it was from that day to this. And let the people of our own time be my proof for that." It is probable that the *dispari paritate* and the *discordi concordia* of Cambrensis quoted above refer to his appreciation of the sweetness of the Irish system of harmony. (See § 41.) Keating's protest was vehement in his time and so must mine, and for the same reasons. But there is a difference. He refuted the bigoted and prejudiced foreigner, I am entirely heedless of the foreigner's opinion of me or mine. My task is more to refute those of my own nation and blood who have been so unnaturally de-educated out of their own dear traditions. I know modern music in the sense that my ear can appreciate fully anything it has to present to me. I also know Irish music in the same way. Those

who do not know Irish music in that way are tone deaf, be the cause what it may. And as "a blind man is no judge of colours," they should not venture upon the dispraise of Irish music much less make ill-informed and disparaging comparisons between it and the vulgar music. They should remember they are in Stanihurst's condition, "ignorant of the rules" concerning Irish music. My own knowledge of both systems of music is about the same. I use the word "knowledge" with no detriment to the wide bounds of my ignorance, which is great, and I suppose about equal as far as the same two systems are concerned. But I know both to some extent, and anybody who would traverse my conclusions must, of course, know both also. Then, I say it, that in matter of motive alone Irish is so superior to the vulgar music that there are no grounds for comparison. Unerring truth is its characteristic, the truth of the Kelt (if I make myself intelligible, as I fear I do not). When one knows its voice and understands its burthen, the babbling of the vulgar music is the veriest and most puerile triviality. And so on for the other characteristics. And with all this in our blood, how can we turn to gain a competence through the means of modern music? I omit the incident that the more we foster modern music the more we help to silence our own. Neither have we gained a place in English literature. From the great excellence of native musical and literary classics one might expect better, but for people of our history the intellectual wrench necessary in order to write or play as the English do, is enough to produce that mental shortsightedness and wryneckedness from which the Irish while recreants must ever suffer. We should try, then, to rehabilitate our music as soon as may be, for we are trampling in the clay a jewel of great price; though I fear my word will not be taken for it.



CHAPTER II.

OF THE HISTORY OF SCALES, MODES AND KEYS IN IRISH MUSIC.

THE FIRST SCALE.

19. In the course of this chapter constant reference must be made to the diagrams of the fiddle finger-board at § 57. The reader will do well, therefore, to become minutely acquainted with them.

20. Those who learn to fiddle Irish music traditionally will remark that the permitted finals of tunes are D, E, G, A, B, and their octaves. F and C as endings are unknown. (See § 13.)

21. When playing tunes ending, say, on D or G, one will notice if he knows modern fingering, that some of the fingers must stop the strings at unusual places in order to make the tone. On the other hand, a tune played on correct modern fingering loses all colour, becomes characterless, and has very little title to be equated with its pure form. This phenomenon is so well known to the people, that it has become a proverb to say that players who learn by air are better than those who learn by note. It will further be observed that no real Irish tune will play to any system of fingering drawn from the modern chromatic or diatonic scale. Hence Irish music is constructed on a tone scheme differing fundamentally from the corresponding basis of vulgar music, or there is no Irish tune having the do, re, mi, fa scale as underlying structure.

22. In attempting to play Irish tunes on the tin whistle or fife one cannot fail to observe that the C produced by raising all fingers is too sharp, and that the natural C produced by stopping with all fingers, except the first and third of the left hand, is far better suited to the purpose. The consciousness of this produced the axiom that Irish music has a flat seventh, or that the Do—Si interval was equal to D—C. The next tritest saying was that certain notes were wanting in certain tunes, and that this fact pointed to the use of a gapped scale of great antiquity. On this supposition a system of relative dating for Irish tunes has been adopted. That was practically the whole current theory of Irish music. Now the question of the gapped scale is one of the fascinating studies connected with Irish music, and an honest statistical report of all available material would set the question at rest. However, such an undertaking is outside the province of the present study. But whatever may be said for that, it is certain that the contention Do—Si equals D—C was wrong. The interval in question was not D—C, but from D to C sharpened a quarter of a tone.

23. On taking closer note of the fiddle fingering of a tune, say, ending in Gg, a modern player will find something to puzzle him in the positions of F on the third and first strings, and C on the second and fourth. He will become conscious of the same difficulty

in the case of tunes ending in Dd. He will discover that in order to give roundness, fullness and truth to the tone, the F \sharp , as he supposed it, must be played a quarter tone flat. This improvement he will find not only affects that note, but also colours those surrounding it. Indeed, its octave on the first string, when so treated, will give a dulcet shading to the whole high or second strain of a tune. Again, C will give some trouble. Somehow, neither modern C natural nor its sharp will answer. Very probably in trying to play some old air, the middle finger on the second string will wander, searching all over the space between B and D, and finally, as by accident, the tone will ring out with a round and full wail, in a position about equally separated from these notes. That is the Irish C natural, three-quarters of a tone above B, and three-quarters below D. He will notice that several tunes, reels, doubles, jigs, hornpipes, long dance tunes, and airs, require that fingering of C and F. And finally, he will notice that all such tunes end in D, G, or A. This gives us the first scale of Irish music with its modes. Writing, then, the notes that diverge from the modern norm in Irish lettering, we have the following scale:

D, E, f \sharp , G, A, B, C, d.

The C of this scale has been sufficiently described.

24. f \sharp is a quarter tone lower than F \sharp modern. f natural is a perfect fifth below C, in other words, it occupies the same relative position on the third string that C does on the second. f \sharp is but a quarter tone higher than its natural and is a quarter tone flatter than modern F \sharp . In this way f and C both natural and sharp lie between the positions of modern F and C natural and sharp. Their naturals are a quarter tone higher than the modern notes and their sharps a quarter tone flatter. (See the diagrams for their positions).

25. Seeing there are only two notes in the difference it would appear that this scale very much resembles the modern. But the change of two notes means a difference of four intervals in their present position. For, if lying side by side their shifting would mean only a three-interval difference. Hence this scale has three interval coincidences with the modern and four disagreements. (§ 9). Of course the fact that the chromatic semi-tones of those two notes also differ from the modern further complicates the discords. In fact, owing to those differences, the whole scale is out of joint and gear with the modern. This will be seen clearer when its modes come to be considered. Writing in, therefore, the semi-tones above mentioned, we have the chromatic scale:

D E f f \sharp G A B C C \sharp d.

26. Now, outside of the two sharps marked above there are no chromatic semi-tones in this scale. And, as most Irish tunes are composed upon it, the habit so often indulged in of writing them in fanciful keys and endings will appear sufficiently fond and vain. The disturbed notes f and C have each two values, the natural and the sharp. In the above scale, where f \sharp and C are the normal, the use

of C \sharp is almost limited to glide or passing notes. \sharp is sometimes used as an accidental when the note is accented. (§ 40.) But, in all Irish music the second value of a note is used only in the unaccented position as a general rule. In some tunes both values alternate, and so close to each other, that it is hard to think how harpers could play them, unless they had separate strings for the secondary values, that is, unless their harps were strung to sound the chromatic scale. In tuning the harp for this scale, the notes D, E, G, B, A, d, e, g, b, a, are a constant, are always the same as the corresponding notes of the modern scale, and have no semi-tones. And they retain those characteristics whenever this scale is played. In fact, the notes D, E, G, A, d, e, g, a, are a constant throughout the whole course of Irish music, and have no chromatic alteration. In defiance of all this, some new Irish harps strung with gut, which I have seen, had a peg-device for the production of semi-tones for every note. The knowledge of the requirements of Irish music evidenced by such a proceeding I will leave to the estimation of the reader.

OF THE MODES IN THIS SCALE.

27. It has been said already (§ 23) that there are three modes in this scale, viz., D, G, and A. It has also been remarked (§ 13) that those endings balance each other, or have each the value of a full tonic, and leave no sense of want whatever on the ear. It must be premised, however, that for this effect the fiddle must be fingered properly. This quality of the freedom of the tonic shows that the scale differs fundamentally from the modern. It need not be pointed out that this peculiarity gives a richness to Irish music which is totally wanting in the modern system. It is as if there were three scales instead of one. The reason for this will lie in the peculiar mathematical values of the intervals which enable the notes of the scale to stand in certain relations to each other. Indeed, from the premises afforded by this modal system, it should be easy for a trained musical scholar to evolve the exact values of interval which could make such a condition of things possible. As none of those endings enjoys the commanding position of a tonic above the others, in fact as it is impossible for me to say which is the Doh of the scale, I propose to write those three modal scales thus:

D E \sharp G A B C d.
 G A B C d e \sharp g.
 A B C d e \sharp g a.

It will be seen that the order of intervals in each of those scales is different. Their tonics are also in the relation of a fifth to each other. In fact the fifth appears to be the dominating interval in all Irish music, as may be seen by the number of notes in the diagram that occupy corresponding places on adjacent strings. The matter should be thoroughly examined to discover what part the fifth plays in filling in the octave interval of Irish scales. Even if I were equipped for such a task it would be beside my present purpose, which is to present a practical conspectus of the scale and

modal peculiarities of our music for the instruction of our collectors and musicians.

28. Numberless tunes are written in the D and G modes, those belonging to A are far less numerous. Fiddlers can easily recall many in their repertoire having such endings. It may be necessary to say, though, that all tunes ending in the notes named, as the fiddle is now played, are not by any means to be certainly considered as in that particular mode. In fact, the mistaking of keys for modes is a fruitful source of indifferent fiddling, and as the matter has never, to my knowledge, been considered before, I shall treat of it with some fullness here.

OF FIDDLERS' KEYS IN THIS SCALE.

29. With the exception of Bunting's collection, practically all the musical tradition we possess in print has been taken off the fiddle, or flute, or bag-pipes. And in many instances, when taken directly from whistlers or singers, as it always should be if one cannot find a good fiddler or piper, the work has been done through the mediation of the fiddle. Indeed, to judge from the collections, the piano appears to have contributed its own share to the task, for many collectors thought an Irish tune was unfit to be seen without a piano accompaniment. But the influence of the fiddle is the strongest marked, to the further very great entanglement of our written scores. Even the piano would not have induced this additional vice, for in that the octave is the obvious musical unit. But, owing to the tuning of the fiddle, there was a great temptation to play tunes a fifth higher if they would fit, *i.e.*, if they would not go beyond *b* on the first string, first position. In this way the fingering of the fourth string would be transferred to the third, that of the third to the second, and so on. In some cases the fingering of the fourth string was transferred to the second, and that of the third to the first, when the tune was raised two intervals of a fifth in pitch. (See Tune No. 6, § 63.) If a fiddler knew his business, naturally he would transfer the fingering correctly, or his ear would make him finger with exactness in the new positions. But a collector might mistake *C* which is played with the third finger a quarter tone sharp on the fourth string, for *G*, when it happens to be played by the same finger on the third string. As a matter of fact, there is reason to suspect that he always did. He then wrote down *G*, which, as a reference to the diagrams will show, was a quarter tone too flat. And so on for all the other notes of the octave. Thus, with the misunderstandings of the key system piled on top of the misunderstandings of scales and modes, the intricacies of the resulting conglomerate misunderstanding, most mistakenly labelled Irish Music, are too awful to contemplate. And, as fiddlers were not all gifted with exact ears, and as many of the younger generation acquired their stock from printed and MS. scores, it came about that debased versions of tunes, having intervals snipped here and there, got into currency. Wherefore, if Irish music is to have a chance, it must be relieved from all clogs as soon as possible, and hence it was high time to direct attention to this internal and, as it were, inherent vice. It has quite enough

of enemies on the outside. For, with all the educational forces of the country marshalled against it in magnificently stern array, and not only against it, but against our language, our literature, our civilisation, our inherited traditions, and our Nationality, and with all the dogs of war of foreignism hounded upon it and upon them by those who should be our leaders out of the land of bondage, but who are notoriously traitors to their trust, it is a duty and a charity for every educated, right-thinking and self-respecting Irishman to stand up for it, to fight for it.

30. It has been said already (§§ 13, 20,) that the permitted finals of Irish tunes are D, E, G, A, B, and their octaves, and that C and F as endings are unknown. This would seem a generous sufficiency of modes, for, outside the changed and changeable notes, **f**, C, and B, all the others of the scale could become tonic in turn. O'Sullivan seems to have thought, as well as I recollect, that such was the case. And it is quite conceivable that slovenly fiddling or piping, and the habit of playing Irish music on such impossible instruments as the piano or flute, might have brought about such an opinion. However, upon careful examination of the fingering, it will appear that the D ending on the 2nd string is merely a fiddler's key of G on the 3rd, that E on the 3rd is a key of A on the 4th, that A of the 2nd string is often a key of D on the 3rd, and that B on the 2nd is a key of A on the 4th. Consult the diagrams, § 57, and it will appear that no two strings show the same fingering. Therefore, playing a tune a fifth higher without transferring the fingering means making a number of mistakes exactly equal to the number of differences in the fingering of the strings between which the change of pitch has taken place. It is then absolutely necessary to know whether we are playing in a mode or a key for exact fingering. If we are playing in a mode, all the fingering as marked on the diagram will sound sweet, true and in tune, and the strain has been fitted properly on the fiddle. If, however, we find that **f** on the first string must be sharpened to equal **f**, then we may suspect that we are really playing B on the second string raised a fifth. Similarly, if we find **g** on the 1st string not equal modern **g**, but a quarter tone higher, it is merely the imitation of Irish C natural on the 2nd string played a fifth higher. Also, if the second and third fingers on the 3rd string imitate the fingering of those same fingers on the 4th, it is a sign of a fifth or fiddlers' key. The B tunes mentioned above are played two fifths higher, and B is merely the imitation of A on the 4th string. (See No. 6, § 63.) Such tunes can be played one tone lower, to end on A of the 2nd string, when they will be found to play in perfect tune to the diagram fingering. So there are several checks by means of which everybody can determine whether a given tune is written properly in a mode, or in a key of that mode. Fiddlers will easily discover others for themselves. In playing a tune off the music, it is always necessary to find the mode. Play the tune as written if it ends in a permitted final. If not, play it in one. Then the modes are D, G, and A. E and B must necessarily be keys of the A mode, and so that is determined. But D might be a key of G and even G of D; A might easily be a key of D. For a known tune it will be easy to detect irregularities of fingering. For a tune otherwise

unknown to the player, his ear must tell him whether \sharp or \flat is required on the first string, and so on for the other notes. And to anybody acquainted with Irish music it will be an easy task to do this. His unconscious sense of propriety, collected from hearing many tunes, and, as it were, his grasp of the whole system, will never fail him.

31. It goes without saying that one can play an Irish tune in a fiddlers' key as well as in its mode. And, as it is often advisable to play a fifth higher, the only condition to be observed is to transfer the fingering with the pitch.

OF THE SECOND SCALE IN IRISH MUSIC.

32. Besides those tunes ending in D, G, and A, belonging to the first scale, there is a set of others ending in G (see § 13) entirely different in tone and colour. All classes of tunes are found in this tone scheme, just as in the other scale. But here the airs are of a piercing clang that is ineffable. They reveal a closeness of suggestion and an almost awful directness of appeal, with a complaining reproachful calling to mind of something we never knew or remembered. For instance, that terrible revelation, though sad and sweet enough made in $\Delta\tau\acute{\alpha}\mu\text{-}\rho\epsilon\ \text{im}\ \acute{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\lambda\acute{\alpha}\theta\ \text{ir}\ \acute{n}\acute{\alpha}\ \text{o}\acute{\iota}\rho\iota\grave{\varsigma}\ \acute{m}\acute{e}$ is delivered in this scale. And so for a good many others. But I know at least one reel in it, and I have seen others in print in the great O'Neill Collection of Irish Music. (See § 54, seqq). And the familiar double, "Strop the Razor," a flawless piece of music, belongs to it also. This tune has an unaccented ending like "The Rocky Road to Dublin"; but, though unaccented, they, and others of a similar kind, are true tonic endings. (Compare the rhyming of an unaccented with an accented element in the *debide* scheme of Prosody.)

33. The characteristics of this scale are \mathfrak{f} and C natural and \flat . The two former have been sufficiently described above (§ 23, 24); it only remains to say that \flat is a fifth above \mathfrak{f} .; if \mathfrak{f} be played on the 1st string, \flat will be stopped in the corresponding position on the 2nd. See diagrams. The scale is therefore:

G, A \flat C d e \mathfrak{f} g

34. The notes, as will be seen, are the same as in the modern scale, with the exception of \flat , C, and \mathfrak{f} . If we add the semi-tones, as in the former scale, the chromatic scheme will be:

G, A, \flat , B, C, C \sharp , d, e, \mathfrak{f} , $\mathfrak{f}\sharp$, g.

35. As before, it is remarkable that the notes which diverge from the modern norm are the only ones that have two values. The other intervals have no semi-tones. In fact, as the above scale includes the chromatic scheme of both, and as there is no other scale, so far as I know, this is the full chromatic scheme for all Irish music, and there are no semi-tones beyond those registered above. (See § 26.) The expression, semi-tone, used here and elsewhere has a loose application, which will be strictly defined by a reference

to the diagrams of fingering. As in the former scale, the secondary values, B, \sharp , and sometimes C \sharp , are used as glide or unaccented notes, the positions reverting to \flat , C and \sharp , with the accent.

36. In constitution it will be observed that this scale has five interval discords from the modern and only two agreements. The music constructed upon it will, it is needless to say, differ from the modern in the same proportion.

37. The modern collector, moved, no doubt, by a confused consciousness that something was the matter with B and F, assigned a signature of one, two, or three, or even more, flats to tunes in this scale, and volunteered the information that they were composed in a minor mode. The endeavour to express such interval values started the fashion of writing Irish tunes in flat signatures, and developed the aphorism that Irish music goes best on the black keys of the piano. I have seen, in the recently-published musical MSS. of Petrie, as many as four or five flats to a signature. As far as I know modern music, we have only the do, re, mi, fa scale (omitting the few so-called minor variants), and the addition or subtraction of sharps or flats in the signature only alters the pitch of the tune without interfering with the internal structure of the scale at all. If we examine the second scale given above, there are five structural differences (to say nothing of the differences induced by semi-tones) separating it from the modern scale. It must be left to the determination of subtler judgments than mine how the manipulating of the pitch of an entirely incommensurable scale like the do, re, mi, fa, will ever alter its relation to the second or first Irish scale. Indeed the question might be pertinent.—What was the use of printing at such expense a very poor collection of Irish music already safe in MS. anyway for a few years more, the work of one entirely unconscious of the rules that govern the art, and motivated by rules that govern a totally different art, viz., modern music, whose ear mistook the nearest modern note for the Irish, and who was assisted by an equally nescient set of amateurs, at this time of day when almost every funeral of an old woman of eighty means the loss for ever of an uncollected treasure of far greater worth, and especially when the supply of such old women is running so fearfully short? I do not blame poor Petrie, who did the best he could at great expense, and toil, and trouble, not only for music, but for other departments of Irish tradition. But is it not time for us to be getting on? Petrie or Bunting inaugurated the slipshod method of collecting and reporting Irish music which seems to paralyse every effort down to our own day. Instead of a brilliant modern musical dilettante writing how the abnormalities of Irish music struck him, and serving us samples as he appreciated them, we want at once some common people, who will not disdain at least a little knowledge of Irish music, to go amongst our old women, our fiddlers and pipers, and collect for us that glorious body of music still surviving on such a fearfully precarious tenure. We want common labour done by persons having a grasp of the main principles that regulate all science, the chiefest of which is a proper respect for the majesty of plain fact.

38. As far as I can recall, there are more airs than dance tunes to this scale. Of course a good deal of our dance tunes are derived from motives furnished by airs. Everybody is familiar with the singing and dancing versions of "The Blackbird." Three of the former and one of the latter are given in O'Neill's Collection. The same collection has both versions of "Rodney's Glory," and the first hornpipe, a magnificent piece of music, given under that heading, is palpably built on an old air. So evidently is the reel, "The Morning Star," not to mention many others in and outside that collection.

OF THE MODES OF THIS SCALE.

39. So far as I have been able to discover, this scale has only itself for mode. At least I find no tune written to it having any ending other than G. I must admit that I made no special examination of the written music, and depend entirely on my recollection of fiddling. Still, if the modal system of this scale had anything like the extension of that of the other, it is highly probable that I should be able to call to mind some example in a different ending. So that, even if a search were made, I doubt very much whether anything could be found. The very irregular and doubtless exceeding archaic strains called ploughman's whistles and death laments would be worth looking into for the purpose. Unfortunately I do not know enough of the science of music to be able to say whether the very internal structure of the scale would admit of modes or no.

40. Bringing the two diatonic scales together, then, we have :

1st—G A B C d e \sharp g,

2nd—G A \flat C d e f g.

The Chromatic :

1st—G A B C \sharp C \sharp d e f \sharp g.

2nd—G A \flat B C \sharp d e f \sharp g.

\sharp is very rarely used in any scale, and f occurs in the 1st only as an accented accidental in some tunes. Perhaps this would indicate that f was the original note in the 1st scale, but became sharp from its use as a glide.

OF HARMONISATION.

41. In harmonising, care must be taken to remember that the rules governing this art in music composed on the modern scale will not hold at all for Irish music. Again, I have been assured by Father Jung, S.J., of the Jesuits' House, 16th Street, New York City (an Alsatian, a trained musician, and one well acquainted with the peculiarities of Irish music), that the Irish harmonised not the note but the musical phrase as a whole. In view of those two facts it will be evident that those who promote choral singing on modern lines at Feis meetings are not by any means furthering the cause of Irish music. The melody was supreme in Irish music, whereas in the case of modern harmony won the upper hand. The

modern scale suffered by this, for I have been told that it was in obedience to the demand for a more florid accompaniment that Mi and Si of the vulgar scale were made to assume their present unnatural positions. The materials to hand now for reconstructing the whole scheme of Irish harmony are, I fear, rather meagre. Bunting is said to supply a little, and I notice that O'Neill gives the *crónán* of a tune or two. Also there may be a good deal yet unnoticed in the possession of singers, fiddlers and pipers. Until, however, the system is rediscovered, or as much of it as may be, it is too soon to begin the practice of choral singing.

OF THE TEACHING OF IRISH MUSIC.

42. As regards the teaching of Irish music, the apparently ridiculously obvious truth must be borne in mind that it can be taught only by those who have it, and that it can be learned from nobody else. If we consider that the present living Irish music is the result of a limitless tradition where transmission was assured naturally by the contact of ever succeeding generations, it will give us an insight into the proper method of perpetuating the same tradition in our own day. People will infallibly sing and play, and they will inevitably sing and play what they hear. Stop, then, the teaching of the do, re, mi, fa scale, and the braying of brass bands, and the noise of tin whistles, flutes, concertinas and pianos, and the singing of coons and circus clowns, and the thing is done. It is with the music as it is with the language. And even as children from the prevalence of "National" schools are not by any means taking with them the whole of Irish traditions, idioms or phonology, so from contact with the do, re, mi, fa scale do they fail to catch the corresponding niceties of Irish music. Indeed I have noticed some young people at language festivals who, though once in the possession of Irish music, have since become tainted, or "poisoned" as the bird-fanciers say, by modern teaching. For, having acquired some fame by good singing in public, they endeavoured to perfect themselves, as they thought, by the help of teachers of music in towns. It need not be said what a havoc those latter would make of the seven delicate peculiarities enumerated in § 14. It is no wonder if the rich and mellow timbre of the Irish voice, with all its indescribable sweetness, is exchanged for the white and vulgar tone of the modern opera singer. The present study will enable us to teach merely the mechanical matter of scales, modes and keys to our children, including our young fiddlers and pipers. But the finer nuances, many of which I do not know, others I do not understand, and none of which may be put on paper, must be added from another source. Wherefore the teaching of the scales must be supplemented by the example of correct traditional singing, and the disturbing influences of all modern music must be scrupulously kept at a distance.

ON THE REVIVAL OF HARPING.

43. In the effort to revive this art in Ireland various questions have to be considered. There are, for example, the technique, the harp itself, and its tuning. It is very much to be feared that the technique of the old harpers is irrevocably lost. When one recalls

the description of the marvellous technique exhibited by Hempson in Bunting's book, and reflects that he had possession of the accumulated tradition of centuries, it will be seen how much we have lost and how hard it will be to recover it. Still we have some sources whence we may deduce a deal of this traditional technique. All material of value given by Bunting and others must be carefully collected. Then the pipes subsisted from time immemorial side by side with the harp, and the fiddle succeeded it. There is no doubt but these instruments have yet a good deal of technique which could be re-applied to the harp. Especially singers are to be taken into account. The harper who succeeds best in reproducing an air as sung, or a dance tune as jigged, by an old woman, will have rediscovered much of the technique of harping. For this purpose it would be better to give the harp into the hands of one who knows absolutely nothing of the fingering of the modern harp; for all knowledge of that kind would be seriously in the way. It would be best to make trial of a set of boys showing musical talent, in a district having a good untainted singing and fiddling tradition. And it would be useful if they were first made acquainted with the intricacies of handling the bag-pipes and of bowing and fingering the fiddle in the Irish manner. And the harp strings must be of brass, and struck or pinched with the finger nails. It should be easy to make up a set of harp strings from the metallic harp, banjo and fiddle strings now available.

44. The harp itself must be made strictly on the model of those we still fortunately possess. Any handy-man should be able to make a copy. The so-called Brian Boromhe's harp in Trinity Library appeared to me to be the best. The Irish harp had attained to a high state of perfection probably in pre-historic times; it is therefore fair to presume that it was the very best for its own purposes, and it is simply vain to try to improve on it now by the addition of so-called improvements borrowed from the modern harp, and motivated by the needs, feelings and ideas of modern music. The modern or Italian harp has developed to its present state in accordance with the requirements of modern music. It is simply a piano set up on end, and that has no more title to influence the construction of the Irish harp than has any other modern musical instrument.

45. The Irish harp must be tuned to one or both of the Irish scales. That is a prime and obvious requisite. Yet all the round-backed "Irish" harps I examined since returning to Ireland were tuned to the do, re, mi, fa, without exception. There are two possibilities of tuning. Either use only eight strings to the octave, or make it eleven to correspond with the full chromatic scale, which includes all possible Irish tones, as it is set forth in § 40. In case the former expedient were employed, it would be necessary to re-tune the harp for tunes in the second scale by lowering $f\sharp$ to f and B to $B\flat$. And, curiously enough, Bunting mentions somewhere that the harpers did actually re-tune their harps for certain tunes, though I do not remember the particulars. Unfortunately I have not his book, nor any other for that matter, by me except the O'Neill collection. It would be a singular confirmation of the

accuracy of my results deduced from direct examination of the fiddle if they were found to coincide with the actual practice of harpers as reported by him. It would also imply that Irish music for purposes of study is still practically intact. But as regards the two systems of tuning we are between two difficulties. On the one hand the eleven-string octave may be too long for convenience of playing, and on the other the short octave could not render the double values of *f*, *B*, or *C*, when they occur in the same tune without the use of keys in the harmonic curve or some hand-trick of playing by which an Irish sharp or flat could be momentarily made in the act of performing. A key for each octave covering the *f*, *C*, and *B* strings set to make an exact cut-off, and having a spring release, might meet the case. However, any knowledge of the old system of tuning and playing that can now be gleaned must first be brought into requisition.

46. It will be at once evident that the piano can be tuned so as to sound exactly all the tones of the full Irish chromatic scale. This will make only eleven notes to the octave, for the semi-tones between *D*—*E* and *G*—*A* are not required in Irish music. Perhaps, though, some use might be found for them in devising a method by which the piano could play keys of a fifth accurately. An examination of the diagrams (§ 57) will show the difficulties in the case. For the present one could tune the piano to the Irish chromatic scale, neglecting the two notes mentioned. But there is no reason why a piano should not be specially constructed to play Irish music, as the advantage of an octave shorter by two notes is not to be despised in playing. Of course the accompaniment played by the left hand must be in accordance with the usage of the art of harmony in Irish music. For one thing, the Irish piano cannot be tempered to suit harmony, as such a proceeding would destroy the sharp definition of the tones, and render the instrument useless for the purposes of Irish music.

OF THE WRITING OF IRISH MUSIC.

47. The modern system of writing Irish music errs in frankly subjecting the tune to all the rules that govern the reporting and playing of the vulgar system. In the absence of any sign or knowledge to the contrary, it is assumed, as a matter of course, that the tonic scheme is the usual *do, re, mi, fa* scale. Again, the system leads one to believe that the tricks of rendering, the technique, the phrasing, and all that goes to the production of a piece of music from the written page are the usual concomitants of the vulgar style. But notwithstanding if the same piece of music be given to a traditional fiddler, he will instinctively make Irish music out of it. His great musical experience will help him with the phrasing, his sense of accent will enable him to bow, and if, perchance, as is often the case, the tune be written out of its mode, his sense of propriety in endings will enable him to fit it in its proper place, or to transfer his fingering accurately. Hence, if our system be described and known, there is nothing to prevent it being represented graphically. And the present system of staff notation, with a few necessary corrections, will be as perfect a method of committing a tune to paper as one can devise.

48. In writing Irish music the present style of signature must be discarded entirely. For, as the Irish and modern scales are incommensurable no matter what key we pitch the latter, a reference to the diagrams will show the exact number of errors that must occur in a given tune. And for the present, or until we shall have rediscovered the rules of Irish harmony, the treble clef is unnecessary. Then, as the notes in an Irish tune are modified according to scale, mode and key, it will be sufficient for all purposes, when those have been properly described, as I have endeavoured to do here, to insert such signs in the Irish signature as will indicate which are to be used in rendering. Then, having omitted the treble clef, I propose to use the Roman numeral I written across the stave from the middle of the F to the middle of the E space for the first scale. In like manner I would use the Roman numeral II similarly written to denote the second scale. Then for the modes I would write a semibreve on the line or space of the ending. And if the piece were written out of its mode, for instance, in a fiddlers' key of a fifth higher, I would designate the new ending by a crotchet on its proper line or space. In that way a fixed-key instrument such as the harp or Irish piano could play the tune down to its mode, and a fiddler could tell at a glance how the fingering should be transferred. For instance, "Tatther Jack Walsh" is usually written to end on d of the second string. It will be remarked, however, that as so written the first note of the second bar, which, of course is accented, is C#. It has been observed that real C# accidentals, that is, accented and not glide notes, are very rare (§ 40). Also it will be remarked that G, f, G, on the third string, the last group of the third bar, require such fingering as to identify them with the notes of the same fingers on the fourth string. Then it will be seen that the tune is written a fifth higher in a fiddler's key, and that the C# mentioned above is really f# transferred to the second string. Hence it should end in G instead of d, and as it belongs to the first scale (as we know from its B and f#), its full signature would be (the semibreve and crotchet being joined for convenience):



and the double called "Strop the Razor," already mentioned (see No. 10, § 63) should have for signature:



49. Of course the accidental use of sharps, flats and naturals throughout the piece will be the same as in modern music, with the exception that those signs must have Irish values. If such a tune was written a fifth higher, it should have a crochet on the d line, as in the first instance. Irish music can also be reported in the tonic sol-fa notation by using Irish lettering. I or II according to scale, and the capitals O or S or A for the modes, would be sufficient for signature.

OF THE BAG-PIPES AND FIDDLE.

50. The chanter of the Irish bag-pipes, I have been told, will return every note of the Irish scale in the hands of a competent performer who knows its powers and can use it properly. But I am not sure that it can manage fiddlers' keys so well. The fact that some chanters are provided with a host of key-stops in addition to the plain finger holes seems to tell a tale of effort to meet the difficulty of accompanying the fiddle a fifth higher. Of course the pipes, like the harp and piano, has the octave for unit, and can make transfers of a fifth only by the use of keys. It is a pity that this really splendid instrument is falling into disuse. Of late, interest in it has been reawakened, and some young men can already do very creditable piping. For reels it easily beats the fiddle, and it has peculiarities of tone and percussion that eminently suit Irish music. Fortunately very true chanters can yet be bored and holed, for the old boring instruments have the positions for the finger-holes marked across them. Some firm of enterprise should be able to turn out a small learner's set at a reasonable figure, say £1 or £2, so as to enable our boys to be taught. But they should be made on correct models. And all ornament could be omitted in order to be able to devote as much care as possible to the essentials of chanter, drones, regulators, bag and bellows. The stock and all pipes could be turned out of box or any such close-grained wood, and when the parts were once normalised they could be produced in great quantities. Failing that, however, boys can be taught with an old set, using a short chanter. It is essential that all the traditional style and technique be acquired, especially as regards the regulators which are played by the wrist, and the chanter. Also the various little tricks of making reeds and keeping the instrument in order. Thus the whole of the traditional management must be taught, for in the hands of a good performer it can render airs with an incomparable wail, and it can put that dash and finish into a reel with the sense of sweeping hurry and ceaseless energy, and the wonderful cry of the recurrence that may not be put into words.

51. To those intending to learn the Irish fiddle it may be necessary to address a few cautions. Let them hear the best Irish fiddlers they can, and let them copy their mannerisms exactly. In the matter of bowing two things must be observed. 1. The system of accent and the alternating of staccato and slurred bowing, so wonderfully effective in reels, and 2. the action of bowing as developed by the wrist and forearm. The first quality can be learned from observation, and the second will be largely acquired in attempting to play reels. An extraordinary suppleness of wrist is necessary for the proper bowing of Irish music and it must be acquired early. Compared with the stiff wrist used in modern playing, it is as a ball-and-socket universal joint compared to a hinge. Above all, learners should avoid the sight or sound of modern fiddling, as all that would irreparably spoil their style.

52. The subjoined diagrams showing the Irish fingering of the fiddle were taken by actual measurement from two examples having each an open string of twelve and seven-eighths inches long. I have added such of the modern notes as seemed necessary to define the

position of the Irish. Black lines mark Irish notes, alternate dots and dashes show where Irish and modern notes coincide, and dotted lines denote modern notes that are never played in Irish music. For beginners it will be well to take accurate measurements of the intervals on this diagram with a pair of compasses, and prick them with the same instrument on the finger-boards of their own fiddles. All measurements should be taken from the nut downwards. Of course for a fiddle having a shorter length of vibrating string this diagram must be shortened to scale. Then, having determined the scale and key of a tune, the notes of that scale or its key should be played accurately by stopping them exactly where they had been pricked upon the finger-board. Even if I have not determined the exact value of the notes, and if they have been subjected to further slight error in transferring them from my fiddle to the learner's, still he should be assured that if a note is not exactly at the mark it is very near thereabouts, and his ear will tell him when he has struck it. For, given some knowledge of Irish whistling, humming, singing or playing, a beginner will infallibly strike the right note, and so my diagrams, though possibly defective in the matter of rigid accuracy, can be the means of teaching those whose ears have been even a little accustomed to Irish music. And that is practically the case with everybody in Ireland except the worst kind of town people.

53. None of the flute tribe, as at present holed, can return Irish music. But it should be very easy to hole a flute correctly for the purpose. A four-keyed flute could be holed to give the scale D, E_\flat , F_\sharp , G, A, B, C, d, which is that used for the great body of Irish music; and three keys could be made to sound F , D_\flat , and C_\sharp respectively. The fourth key could be used as in the one-keyed fife. In this way it would be possible to produce an inexpensive instrument which, if accurately made and played with the chanter fingering, using trebling, cranning, etc., would give very sweet Irish music.

OF THE LATEST ACCESSION TO IRISH PRINTED MUSIC.

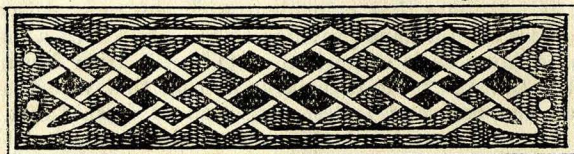
54. It is fortunate that coincident with the revived interest in Irish music we should have provided to our hand such a mammoth collection of tunes as is comprised in O'Neill's Irish Music, lately published in Chicago.* It is remarkable that this, which is beyond comparison the best and fullest collection of Irish tunes, should come to us from America. Just as remarkable is the fact that Mr. Francis O'Neill, the editor and compiler, is General Superintendent of Police in Chicago, a man who has to guard the peace of nearly three million souls. At the end of the 18th century an Indian prince was, I believe, the most lavish patron of Irish music; at the end of the 19th the same office is filled by the Chief of Police in Chicago. Mr. O'Neill is President of the Pipers' Club in that city, and a musician from his youth. He is a native of Bantry, and it is said that his private collection of music includes as many as 400

* O'Neill's Music of Ireland, 1,850 melodies, collected from all available sources and edited by Captain Francis O'Neill, arranged by James O'Neill. Chicago: Lyon and Healy. 1903.

tunes reported from his mother alone. The present volume contains the cream of all that body of melody in possession of the various members of the Pipers' Club, all traditional musicians and natives of different parts of Ireland. It is intended as a practical work for the use of Irish musicians.

55. It comprises in all 1850 tunes. Those are distributed each under its proper head, thus: Airs 625, Carolan's pieces 75, Doubles 415, Jigs 60, Reels 380, Hornpipes 225, Long Dances 20, Marches, etc., 50. This book supplies a great mass of material for the study of Irish music, and should be in the possession of every fiddler and piper. It is invaluable for its wealth of music, and for that it is the first great compilation made by Irish players themselves who had the actual music, and were not distracted by prepossessions or theories. The thanks of all Irish musicians are due in a notable manner to Chief O'Neill for this magnificent compilation. As there is very little likelihood that it will be superseded, it must ever remain the great Thesaurus of Irish music and repertoire of every musician, as it must also constitute the basis of every rational study in Irish tonality. But this book, great as it is, does not exhaust the material. There are yet abundant gleanings if only the collector be quick and diligent to forestall the undertaker.

56. Seeing the admitted relationship between Irish music and Gregorian chant, it is quite possible that this examination may throw some light on the latter system.

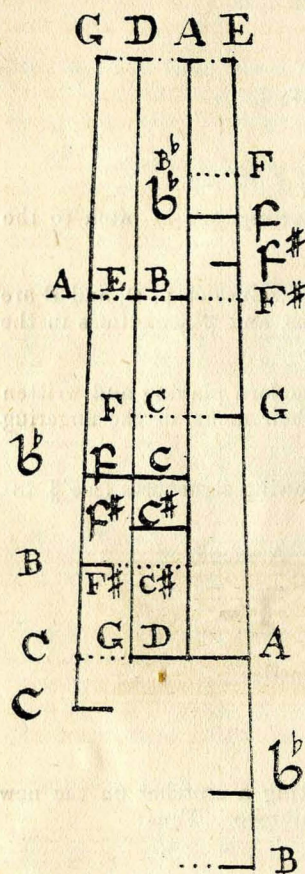


CHAPTER III.

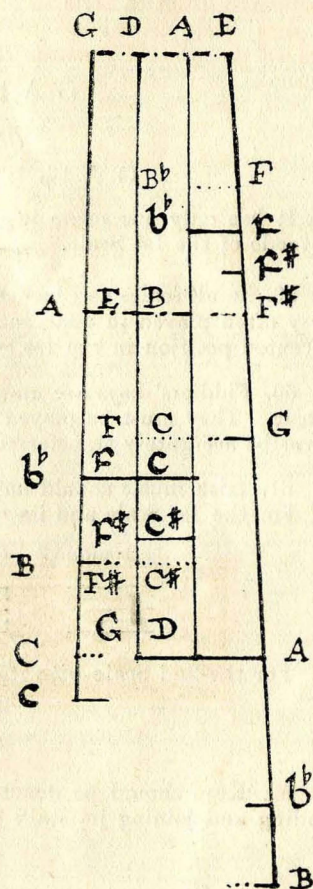
A PRACTICAL COMPENDIUM FOR MUSICIANS.

57. The annexed diagrams have been prepared from measurements taken from two fiddles. The values of \sharp , C and B, unknown to modern music, should be measured off and nicked on the finger-board as explained above (§ 52) and then played according to the necessities of scale and key. I give two diagrams, in order that the divergencies might be used to attain to some mean of truth, but the ear must be the guide for all exactness of fingering. I regard No. 1 as the more accurate diagram. \sharp on the 4th string has not been marked as its occurrence is so rare.

NO. 1.



NO. 2.



58. It will be convenient to give a conspectus of the Irish scales and modes here, so that they may be picked off the diagrams:

1ST SCALE.

*Diatonic:*D E \sharp G A B c d*Chromatic:*D E \flat \sharp G A B c \sharp d

This scale has three modes or endings, the D, the G, and the A, thus:

D E \sharp G A B c d
 G A B c d e \sharp g
 A B c d e \sharp g a

2ND SCALE.

*Diatonic:*G A \flat c d e \flat g*Chromatic:*G A \flat \flat c \sharp d e \flat \sharp g

It has only one mode in G. This corresponds in pitch to the G mode of the 1st Scale.

59. In all scales and modes the second values of \flat , c, and B are very often played in unaccented positions, and \flat sometimes in the accented position in the 1st Scale.

60. Fiddlers' keys are numerous in modern playing and written music. They must be played down to their mode, or the fingering must be accurately transferred.

61. Irish music should have the following signatures (see § 48). For the 1st Scale and its modes:

D mode, G mode, A mode,



For the 2nd Scale with its single G mode:



62. Keys should be denoted by writing a crotchet on the new ending and joining its stalk to the semibreve. Thus:



would mean that a tune in the D mode of the first scale has been raised a fifth higher, and so the fingering of the 4th string must be transferred to the 3rd, and so on.



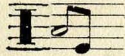
denotes a G mode of the first scale raised a fifth; and:



or



an A mode raised two intervals of a fifth, or the 4th string transferred to the 2nd, and so on. Such tunes can be very conveniently played a note lower to end in A, as in the first of this pair of signatures.



or



denotes an A tune raised to E. Perhaps in this and the foregoing examples the second signature is the better of each pair, as it shows at a glance how the fingering has been transferred.

63. I append a few examples of tunes to serve as illustrations to the foregoing. I indicate the source of each where it is known. My mother has contributed those airs marked with her name, Eiblin ní Caisín.

No 1.—“Sean máire ní Eacáizgearn.”

Played Universally.



This tune is known to every Irish musician. As a version it has only my authority, being the way I play it for dancers. For tunes are often so changed a little according to the fancy of the player. It is in the D mode of the 1st Scale, as denoted by its signature. The occurrences of C# in the unaccented positions will be noticed.

No. 2.—“A Cacti na gcumann ná dhéiz mé.”

eiblin ní Caisín.





This tune is in the G mode of the same Scale. Outside the source indicated it is unknown to me.

No. 3.—“*ἡδαιρ το εἰαυτοῦ παρτί ἀν Ρόμῃ.*”

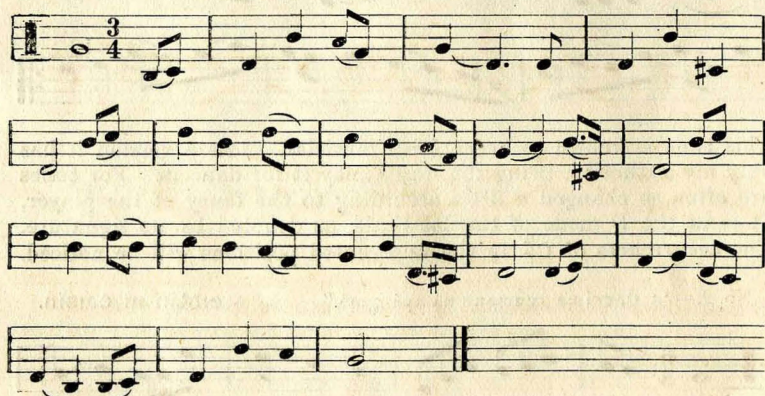
eiblin ní éaisín.



The above air is in the same mode and scale, and otherwise unknown to me. It is an extremely beautiful tune, and for some reason said by my mother to be *anceot ἡ ῥεαῖρ ἀτά διαι.* *f#*, *g*, *a*, of 2nd bar, 2nd strain, though played with the same bow, are well marked by equal individual accent, and are longer than usual. To be sung slowly.

No. 4.—“*ἡδαιρ το εἰαυτοῦ παρτί ἀν Μῆρῃ.*”

eiblin ní éaisín.



The same applies to this tune. It must be sung slowly. The ending is remarkable.

The following pair of tunes are in the A mode:

No. 5.—A Reel.

JOHN GRANDON.



This is a type of a number of tunes ending in E₁ on the 3rd string. That is simply A on the 4th, and so the fingering must be transferred up a fifth.

No. 6.—A Double.

Source unknown.



This tune has been raised two intervals of a fifth, or 4th string fingering has been transferred to the 2nd, and 3rd to 1st. It can be played one note lower so as to end on A with very great advantage. It is really a fine Double. Where I acquired it I do not now remember.

The following four tunes are composed on the second scale. I have printed so many in order to show the scope of this tonic scheme. Tunes to this scale are comparatively rare, and dance tunes rarer than airs.

No. 7.—"A Cumainn gíl Sárpa."

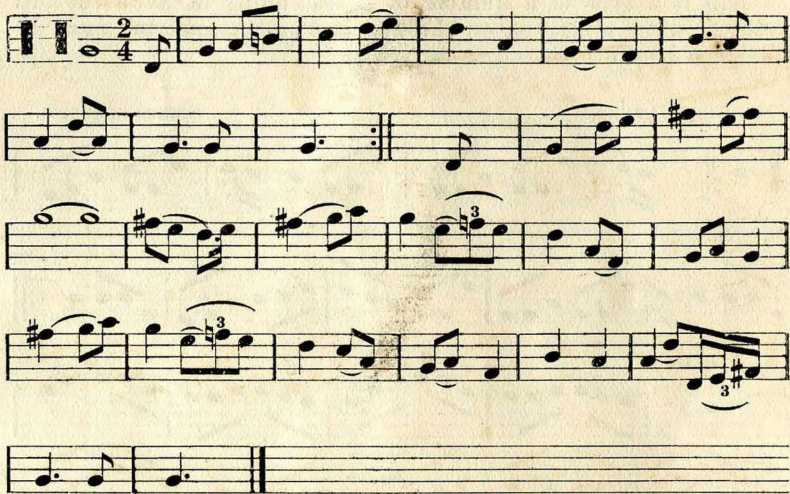
eibhlín ní éaisín.



This tune is known to me only from this source. It must be sung moderately slow.

No. 8.—"Atáim-pé im éoltaó ir ná dúirig mé."

eibhlín ní éaisín.



This air has doubtless been published before, but I do not recall where. I am sorry that I have not been able to do justice to this, the Queen of Irish music. I am doubtful if this air can be strictly confined by bars. At least in one place, in the third bar of the second strain, there occurs a long g, treated I do not know how, which I have endeavoured to express by two semibreves. This, or a like note in singing Irish airs, I have known treated in a similar manner, often shading into beautiful graces or turns. The question of this long note deserves examination. It will be observed that $\text{F}\sharp$ occurs in the accented position in the higher octave of the second strain, the f on the scale being only found in the triplets of the 6th and 10th bars of that octave.

No. 9.—A Reel.

Cair De henebrie.



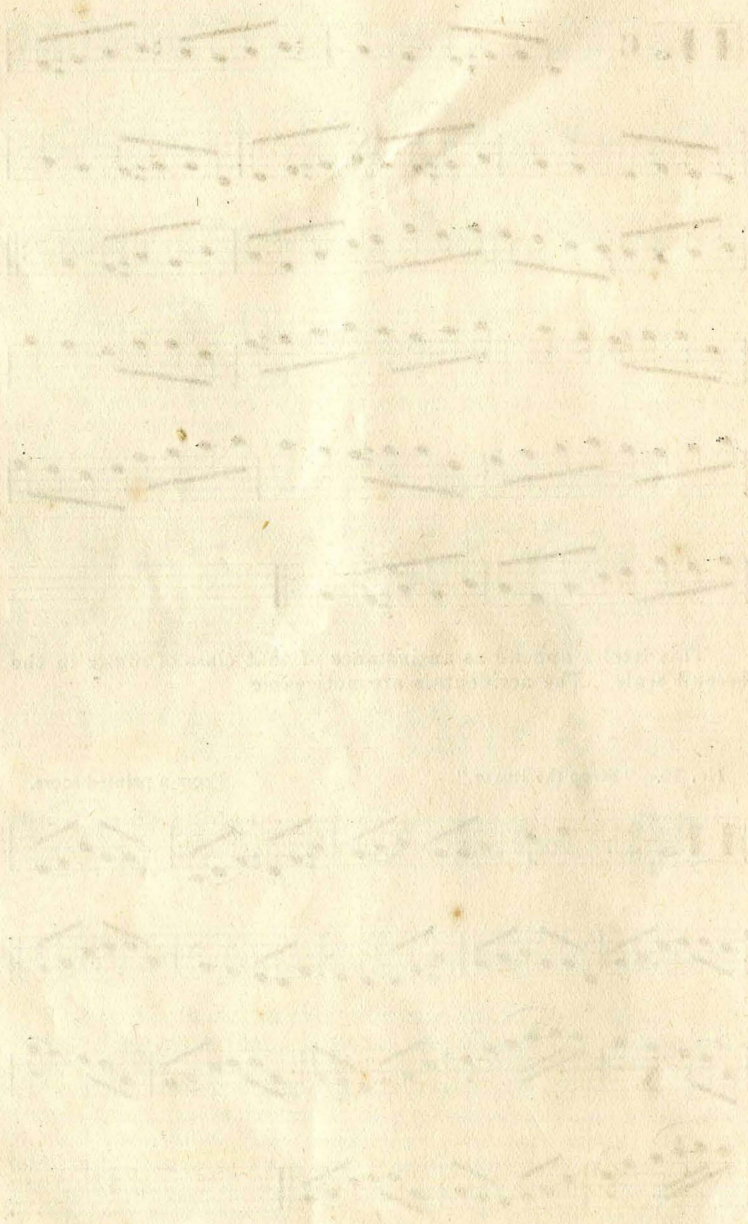
This Reel I append as an instance of that class of music in the second scale. The accidentals are noticeable.

No. 10.—“Strop the Razor.”

From a printed score.





This Double I give for the same reason. It is a really fine piece of music. The bowing and accidentals indicated are my own.



RESERVE

8563-BK(1)

——
an cló-*cumann*, (teóiranta),
clóoíróí Gaeilge,
baile áta cliaí

——

