

LXI . The Massacre of Glencoe (A MacKay) see p. 105

1. Ground.

2. Thumb.

3, 4, 5, 6. Two Six D. Two Six D

The Massacre of Glencoe

This is another tune which one could not help picking up from hearing at the Games in the old days.

I always combated General Thomason's condemnation of A. MacKay's setting. I argued that the tune was presumably made to commemorate an extraordinary event and that there was nothing inartistic in the composer emphasising the nature of his subject by adopting an irregular and unusual form. I believe this was done also in Cille Chrìosd,¹ and personally I think that merit is added to both tunes by the process. The General did not agree with me so the matter remains there.

I always thought about him that he was too much of an engineer who likes a neat and thoroughly symmetrical job in his attitude towards piobaireachd and that a slightly wider view would sometimes have added to the value of his work.

At any rate all good pipers of my time have accepted and played the MacKay style. Furthermore if the last two bars of the ground and thumb be written and played as one bar, and I do not see why they should not, the metre of these parts is perfectly regular.

A. Cameron's directions for playing were not to hang on the last crotchet of the double echoes on E and F.

Later note (undated)

See No. Lxxix on p. 105.² This is the Campbell Canntaireachd style, and a very pleasing one. John Macdonald told me at Lochboisdale in August 1934 that A. Cameron used to play a thumb variation to Angus MacKay's ground in the same style, i.e. putting a high A in for the F double echoes and for the E double echo in line 2 bar 4. Cameron did not mention this to me. He did not, of course, have the Canntaireachd last halves of the last lines of the urlar and thumb.

The Taorluath and Crunluath are like Donald Macdonald's MS, with the great improvement of B instead of C for the last theme note of the first bar of each movement.

1. S.45

2. Here the author's MS Book records the setting published in Book 6 of the current Piobaireachd Society series.