

# GENERAL RULES

## FOR READING THE

## GAELIC LANGUAGE.

### OF THE LETTERS.

**I**N the Gaelic language there are eighteen letters, viz. *a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, l, m, n, o, p, r, s, t, u*; which are divided into vowels and consonants.

### OF THE VOWELS.

There are five vowels, *a, e, i, o, u*.

*A* is founded as in the English words *hall, halt*; but before *dh*, and *gh* it has often the sound of the diphthong *ao*, as in *lagh* law, *magh* a field.

*E* represents two different sounds: 1<sup>st</sup>, That of the Greek epsilon, or of *ea* in the English word *bear*; as in *ré* the moon, *an dé* yesterday: 2<sup>dly</sup>, That of *a* in *care*; as in *e* or *fé* he, *rè* during the time of.

*I* is founded like *ee* in English; *O*, as in the words *bone, morn, lot*; and *U* like *oo* in *moon, fool*.

The vowels are divided into BROAD and SMALL. *A, o, u*, are called broad vowels; and *e, i*, small.

In a word of two or more syllables, if the former ends with a broad vowel, the next syllable must begin with a broad vowel; if with a small vowel, with a small. Accordingly, it is reckoned false orthography to write *deanibh* do ye, and not *deanaibh*, though the last *a* is never founded. But in compound words this rule may often be properly dispensed with.

All the vowels are sometimes long, sometimes short. When long, they are generally marked with accents.

In all the syllables of polysyllables, except the first, the vowels have a short and obscure sound, as in the English words *fun, bird, mother*; and the broad, and sometimes the small, are used for one another.

### OF THE DIPHTHONGS.

There are thirteen diphthongs, viz. *ae, ai, ao, ea, ei, co, eu, ia, io, iu, oi, ua, ui*; which are either PROPER OR IMPROPER.

*Ao* and *eu* are improper diphthongs, representing simple sounds; the former of which is perhaps peculiar to this language, and only attainable by the ear: The latter is like that of the Greek epsilon, or the Latin *æ*.