

to compose * * histories concerning warriors and champions and Fingal the son of Cumhall with his heroes."

¹⁶Dunbar likewise makes reference to Fyn Makowll and Goro Mac-Morn.

The Dean of Lismore's Book contains a strong refutation of the objections which have been raised against Ossian. The contents of this book were published in 1861. The poems contained in it were gathered by James MacGregor, Dean of Lismore, who died about the year 1551. This book is, therefore, more than three hundred years old; and a great portion of it may be assigned to as early a date as 1512. It contains twenty-eight Ossianic poems, extending to two thousand five hundred lines. It is now in the Advocate's Library, Edinburgh. It was deciphered by the Rev. Dr. Mac-Lauchlin. In the interesting preface which he prepared, Mr. Skene remarks: "The Dean's MS. has a double value, philological and literary, and is calculated to throw light both on the language and the literature of the Highlands of Scotland. It has a philological value, because its peculiar orthography presents the language at the time in its aspect and character as a spoken language, and enables us to ascertain whether many of the peculiarities which now distinguish it were in existence three hundred years ago; and it has a literary value, because it contains poems attributed to Ossian, and to other poets prior to the sixteenth century, which are not to be found elsewhere; and thus presents to us specimens of the traditional poetry current in the Highlands prior to that period, which are above suspicion, having been collected upwards of three hundred years ago, and before any controversy on the subject had arisen."* It thus appears, that apart from the evidence furnished by MacPherson, other writers place the existence of poems belonging to the age of Ossian beyond a doubt.

It is perhaps difficult now to form an estimate of the retentiveness which, under particular cultivation, the memory is capable of acquiring. Classical writers relate how, in a manner which to us seems almost incredible, the memory has been known to possess an amazing power. We learn from Cæsar that the Druids of Britain obtained marvellous success in this respect. Owing to causes which to themselves were of great consequence, they preferred this very diligent exercise of the memory. The language of Cæsar not only indicates

* Dean of Lismore's book, p. 11: