

**OSSIAN AND HIS SONGS.**

THE Rev. Mr. Carmichael, of King, lecturer on Apologetics, delivered a lecture on the above subject in Convocation Hall, on Tuesday evening, Nov. 20th. The lecturer was evidently himself in full harmony with the spirit of the poet whose words he was portraying, and the lecture in itself was a poem of great beauty. Of course, as the lecturer remarked, the English translations of the poems of Ossian fail in themselves to convey to the mind of the reader the more subtle shades of thought expressed therein, and to have a true appreciation of their beauty it is necessary to study them in their original Gaelic. No one, however, will ever have cause to regret having spent his leisure hours in the study of even the English translation of these poems.

Of the life of Ossian we know little. Neither he nor any contemporary writer furnishes us with any information on this point, and what we do know we must glean from random remarks let drop in his poems. He appears to have been brought up in the halls of Selma, a palace of his father, and here his soul was fired by the tales of battles, the war songs and the funereal wails of the bards. Over the hills of Morven he accompanied the hunters in their chase, and here, as well as at Fingal's Cave on the Isle of Schaffa, he was taught poetry by the rugged beauty of nature and the music of the waves. Apart from the teachings of nature and its surroundings, he had no education; probably in the whole course of his existence he never saw the inside of a school-house. Of a Supreme Being he knew nothing; he never makes mention of a Great Spirit or happy hunting grounds. It is possible, however, that he knew something of God, but was too canny to mention Him in his poems, but on this point we must remain uncertain. The antiquity of the writings of Ossian is also uncertain. Ossian himself never committed them to writing. The style and figures, however, are very primitive, and the words used are few, though bold and striking. The language is wild and ungrammatical, the composition bold and vigorous, and the imagination extremely vivid. He never descends to the amusing, his topics being serious and grave, his scenery wild and romantic. His chief hero, Fingal, is the noblest and best warrior in ancient or modern poetry. He is not only a warrior, but he maintains to the last a deep love for his wife and family, displaying great grief at the death of his son. The poems of Ossian were spontaneous utterances, gushing out in accord with his feelings at the time. His thoughts dwelt on the heroes and their deeds whom he had known in the long past, for, at the time of these utterances, he seems to have been poor, old and blind, living a Nestor among men of a new generation. He seems to have had some belief in a spirit world, but the spirits which he mentions are totally different from men. He is said to have been buried at Fingal's Knoll, in Perthshire. This is but the faintest sketch of a highly eloquent lecture, which we deeply regret that space will not allow us to publish in full.

**→ CORRESPONDENCE. ←**

\*. \*We wish it to be distinctly understood that the JOURNAL does not commit itself in any way to the sentiments which may be expressed in this department.

**OUR NEXT CHANCELLOR.**

*To the Editor of the Journal :*

SIR,—Who is to be our next Chancellor? It is high time that expressions of opinion should be given on the point. Candidates can be nominated only by the University Council, and the nominations can be made only at the special meeting, which is held on the 16th of next month. The members of the Council ought to have some light as to the wishes of members of the University, both in and outside Kingston. I know no better way of giving them such light than by letters to the next number of the JOURNAL. This is all the more necessary, because no one can vote on this occasion but registered Graduates and Alumni. It was intended some time ago to give students also the right to vote; and a by-law to that effect was passed by the Council. The by-law, however, has been found to be illegal. The statute constituting the University Council not only excludes students generally, but Graduates who are students in attendance at classes; and by-laws are intended to supplement, not to contravene, laws passed by Parliament.

The Chancellor is the highest officer of the University. He must be a man of mark, and one likely to interest himself in Queen's. We cannot hope to get a better Chancellor than Sandford Fleming has proved himself in a dozen ways to be. But we should try to get one as good, or, at any rate, nearly as good. Gentlemen, who is the right man? Give his name, and give your reasons.

A MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL.

Dec. 6th, 1882.

**MARMION AGAIN.**

*To the Editor of the Journal :*

THE letter of "Undergraduate" in your last issue, relative to the remarks of Principal Grant on "Marmion," naturally recalled to my mind the old French fable of the cat which asked to be allowed to carry the camel's burden, and whose expiring cry was, "*Je suis ecrase.*"

Without referring further to the temerity of the writer, I wish to make a few statements about the contents of his letter. Principal Grant is charged with 'illiberality,' 'arbitrariness,' 'narrowness,' 'attempting to gag,' &c., because he dared to express a decided opinion with regard to "Marmion," and those who have been discussing the question of its suitability for public schools. These epithets, I suppose, are almost as strong as 'stupid,' the adjective used by the Principal. Some might be disposed to enquire, "Who is Undergraduate, that he has a right to use such epithets, but denies Principal Grant a similar privilege?" for it is a 'matter of opinion' whether the latter said any more than was appropriate, just as truly as the "Marmion" question is a 'matter of opinion.' Indeed, I