

writer goes on to say, at least in substance, that having lived for a considerable time in that part of Ireland where he could best acquire a knowledge of her history and traditions—the county of Limerick, Macpherson ruthlessly seized upon her romantic splendor and jumbled together the majesty of several originals, to form a contrivance of his own to which he appended the name of Ossian. No effort is made to conceal the utter contempt in which O'Flanagan held Macpherson, and consequently those who think with him, that Ossian was a Scottish and not an Irish Celt. It might be said in reply, if other proof were wanting, that a naked asseveration of questionable premises, can lead only to questionable conclusions, but as it is a historical fact, that Macpherson never was in Ireland, and had apparently no communication with Irishmen, or access to their manuscripts, the theory that the poems were taken directly from there, is obviously untenable.

Nor does the contention that Macpherson founded his poems upon Irish history, bear the strain of careful investigation. Though the scene of Fingal and Temora, is laid to a great extent in Ireland, and though occurrences on Irish soil frequently find their embodiment therein, even the casual reader will readily perceive that Fingal and Temora and their heroes, preserve throughout and invariably, their distinctive existence as the king and heroes of Morven in Scotland. The thoughts of the heroes and the ideas of the poet, during their temporary residence in Ireland wander to Morven and dwell with rapturous delight on Selma, and the Halls of the fathers of Fingal. Irish history and romance evidently was not plundered of any of its gems on the occasion of the construction of Fingal and Temora.

Quite as zealous as O'Flanagan in his advocacy of the claims of Ireland, to Ossian and his productions, was Mr. Eugene O'Curry. In a lecture, while occupying the chair of Irish history and archaeology in Dublin University, the latter gentleman is credited with having said "I cannot but observe, that of all Macpherson's translations, in no single instance has a genuine Scottish original been found, and that none will ever be found I am certain." A few years after these words had been uttered, there appeared the Dean of Lis-

more's Book, which bears materially upon the Ossianic controversy, and the conjecture may be hazarded, that had O'Curry possessed the information which the Dean of Lismore's Book can supply, he would have modified his utterances and softened his censures upon the poems of Ossian as given to the world by Macpherson. There is still extant, what purports to be the original of the poems of Ossian, in the ancient Irish tongue, but the publication of this little volume, by no means answered to the expectations of our Irish brethren or satisfied an exacting public. Apart from the fact that the poems were published in the original, after Macpherson had given us his translation, the collection is incomplete, and carries with it no information whatsoever, as to the source from which the compilers drew their inspiration. In this respect the Irish are in no better position than their Scottish brethren.

Valuable information, however, may be gleaned as to the origin of these poems from the customs, names and places of Scotland. In the topography of the Highlands and, in fact of the whole country, there is an unwritten, yet powerful testimony to be found, that Fingal and his heroes once inhabited the country. There are a hundred places in the Highlands and in the neighboring Isles, which derive their names and anything which is of interest concerning them, from circumstances connected with and alluded to, in the poems of Ossian. It is true that among later Irish productions, and even in the native ballads of an earlier era, the names of Finn, Fergus, Oscar and Ossian are frequently met with, names about which the whole plot of the Scottish ballads is woven. The employment of these names while in no way aiding to establish the Irish origin of the poems, goes far in proving a unity of descent among the Gaels of Scotland and Ireland. The inhabitants of the North coast of Ireland have, even to this day, much that is peculiar to the Western Highlanders, and it is but reasonable to suppose, that in the days of Finn and Ossian, the narrow strip of sea which divides the two countries, served not as a wall of separation, but rather as a convenient mode of communication between the respective peoples.

It is necessary to again refer to the Dean of Lismore's Book, in order to es-