

TO THE
HIGHLAND SOCIETY
OF
SCOTLAND.

THE
REPORT, &c.

IN execution of the business assigned it, your Committee conceived it to be foreign to its duty to enter into any elaborate argument or discussion on the authenticity of those poems, or to examine, with critical or historical labour, the opinions of different writers who have made this matter a subject of controversy. It conceived the purpose of its nomination to be, to employ the influence of the Society, and the extensive communication which it possesses with every part of the Highlands, in collecting what materials or information it was still practicable to collect, regarding the authenticity and nature of the poems ascribed to Ossian, and particularly of that celebrated collection published by Mr James Macpherson.

For the purpose above mentioned, the Committee, soon after its appointment, circulated the following set of Queries, through such parts of the Highlands and Islands, and among such persons resident there, as seemed most likely to afford the information required.

Q U E R I E S.

I. HAVE you ever heard repeated or sung, any of the poems ascribed to Ossian, translated and published by Mr Macpherson? By whom have you heard them so repeated, and at what time or times? Did you ever commit any of them to writing, or can you remember them so well as now to set them down? In either of these cases, be so good to send the Gaelic original to the Committee.

II. The same answer is requested concerning any other ancient poems of the same kind, and relating to the same traditionary persons or stories with those in Mr Macpherson's collection.

III. Are any of the persons, from whom you heard any such poems, now alive? Or are there, in your part of the country, any persons who remember and can repeat or recite such poems? If there are, be so good to examine them as to the manner of their getting or learning such compositions; and set down, as accurately as possible, such as they can now repeat or recite; and transmit such their account, and such compositions as they repeat, to the Committee.

IV.

IV. If there are, in your neighbourhood, any persons from whom Mr Macpherson received any poems, inquire particularly what the poems were which he so received, the manner in which he received them, and how he wrote them down; shew those persons, if you have an opportunity, his translation of such poems, and desire them to say if the translation is exact and literal; or, if it differs, in what it differs from the poems, as they repeated them to Mr Macpherson, and can now recollect them.

V. Be so good to procure every information you conveniently can, with regard to the traditionary belief, in the country in which you live, concerning the history of Fingal and his followers, and that of Ossian and his poems; particularly concerning those stories and poems published by Mr Macpherson, and the heroes mentioned in them. Transmit any such account, and any proverbial or traditionary expression in the original Gaelic, relating to the subject, to the Committee.

VI. In all the above inquiries, or any that may occur to _____ in elucidation of this subject, he is requested by the Committee to make the inquiry, and to take down the answers, with as much impartiality and precision as possible, in the same manner as if it were a legal question, and the proof to be investigated with a legal strictness.