AN ORIGINAL COLLECTION OF THE POEMS OF OSSIAN, ORRANN, ULIN, AND OTHER BARDS, WHO FLOURISHED IN THE SAME AGE

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An Original Collection of the Poems of Ossian, Orrann, Ulin, and Other Bards, Who Flourished in the Same Age by Hugh McCallum & John McCallum

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HUGH MCCALLUM & JOHN MCCALLUM

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COLLECTED AND EDITED BY

HUGH AND JOHN M'CALLUM.

MONTROSE:

Deinted at the Review Octobraper Office, FOR THE ROLLORS, By James Watt, Bookseller.

1816.



DEDICATED (BY PERMISSION),

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His Royal Dighness

THE DUKE OF YORK,

PRESIDENT,

AND

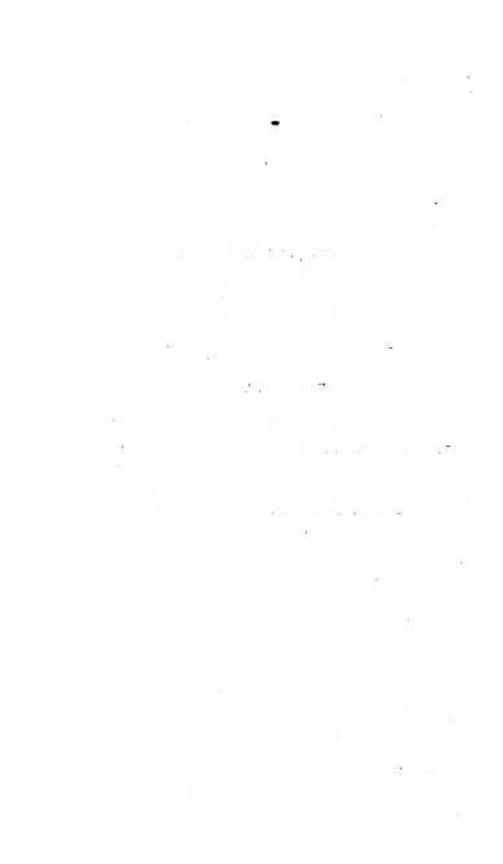
THE OTHER NOBLE AND ILLUSTRIOUS MEMBERS

OF.

THE HIGHLAND SOCIETY

OF:

London.



PREFACE.

AFTER the Editors devoted much of their time in compiling materials for an additional collection of Ossian's poems, and in comparing different editions collected from oral recitation; having also perused the controversy, written by men of highly respectable abilities, establishing the authenticity of the poems of Ossian; also, upon the other hand, considered what has been stated against the authenticity of these poems, by a few whose abilities are well known in other matters, though they have failed in this vain and frivolous attempt. Having contemplated both sides of the question, and weighed the balance with reason and justice; the Editors consulted with some of the first characters in the nation about the matter, who, after serious consideration, have granted their approbation for publishing the following sheets, and favoured the Editors, not only with

their wise and friendly instructions, but also with their liberal subscriptions and support to defray the expense of printing.

This work is much indebted to the royal family, nobility, ladies, and gentry of Britain at large, particularly to the right reverend bishops and clergy of every denomination, and to the respectable subscribers of every rank; the work is under double obligation to the benevolence of the people of England and lowlands of Scotland, although unacquainted with the original of these poems, who did not hesitate to give their generous assistance to prevent so ancient a monument of genius from being lost; and the Editors most respectfully and unfeignedly thank the public, for the more than ordinary encouragement given them for executing this work; the number of the subscribers does them honour; they can present to the public a considerable number of the first names in the nation; as more have come to their hands than have appeared before the works of authors of established reputation, which the list of subscribers annexed to the work will testify.

The novelty of cadence, in what is called prose version, though not destitute of harmony, will not to common readers supply the absence of the frequent returns of rhyme. It is, however, doubtful whether the harmony which poems might derive from rhyme, even in much better hands than that of the Editors, would atone for the simplicity and energy which they would lose. The determination of this point shall be left to our readers.

The language and the structure of these poems, like every other thing about them, bear the most striking characters of antiquity. The language is bold, animated, and metaphorical; such as it is found to be in all infant states, where the words, as well as the ideas and objects, must be few; and where the language, like the imagination, is strong and undisciplined. No abstract, and few general, terms occur in the poems of Ossian: of course the conversation is figurative and poetical; adorned with such tropes of rhetoric as a modern would scarce venture to use in the boldest flights of language. This character, therefore, so conspicuous in the poems of Ossian. could be impressed so deeply on them only by one who saw, and felt, and hore a part in the scenes he is describing. A poet, in his closet, could no more compose like Ossian, than he could act like him in the field or in the mountain.

The composition also, though it is, like the language, bold, nervous, and concise, is yet plain and artless; without any thing of that modern refinement, or elaborate decoration, which waits on the advancement of literature. No foreign ornament is hunted after. The poet is always content with those which his subject naturally suggests, or which lie within his view; farther than that tract of heavens, earth, air, and sea,