

I had before entertained, that the strongly marked difference between the manners and conduct of the mountain clans and those of the Lowlanders, and of every other known country, originated in the patriarchal form of government, which differed widely from the feudal system of other countries. I, therefore, attempted to give a sketch of those manners and institutions by which this distinct character was formed; and, having delineated a hasty outline of the past state of manners and character, the transition to the changes that had been produced, and the present condition of the same people, was obvious and natural. Hence I have been led on, step by step, from one attempt to another, till the whole attained its present form.

A work thus undertaken, as it were by accident, and without any previous plan or design, one part of the subject naturally leading to the other, may claim some indulgence for a writer whose only qualification is a long and intimate knowledge of the subject, and of facts connected with it, conjoined with a great and earnest desire to do it justice. I trust, therefore, that, from the enlightened reader who takes these circumstances into account, and reflects on the difficulties which a plain soldier, unaccustomed to composition, had to encounter, in making such an attempt as that now respectfully, and with great diffidence, submitted to the Public, I shall meet with that liberal share of indulgence which I so much require, and which, all circumstances considered, will not, I trust, be denied me.

*Garth, 24th April 1821.*