

may have had a just cause of quarrel with the American colonists. And I regard it as a mark of their gratitude that they adhered to the royal cause, because the governors, acting in the king's name, had been their most constant friends; and the colonial subjects, possibly at times their treacherous invaders. I could say much of European injustice towards your tribes, but in spite of all that I could say, I must still deplore the event of Christians having adopted their mode of warfare, and, as circumstances then stood, of their having invoked their alliance. If the Indians thirsted for vengeance on the colonists, *that* should have been the very circumstance to deter us from blending their arms with ours. I trust you will understand this declaration to be made in the spirit of frankness, and not of mean and inhospitable arrogance. If I were to speak to you in that spirit, how easily and how truly could you tell me that the American Indians have departed faster from their old practices of warfare, than Christians have departed from their habits of religious persecution. If I were to preach to you about European humanity, you might ask me how long the ashes of the Inquisition have been cold, and whether the slave-trade be yet abolished? You might demand, how many—no, how few generations have elapsed since our old women were burnt for imaginary commerce with the devil, and whether the houses be not yet standing from which our great-grandmothers may have looked on the hurdles passing to the place of execution, whilst they blessed themselves that they were not witches! A horrible occurrence of this nature took place in Scotland during my own grandfather's life-time. As to warlike customs, I should be exceedingly sorry if you were to press me even on those of my brave old ancestors, the Scottish Highlanders. I can, nevertheless, recollect the energy, faith, and hospitality of those ancestors, and at the same time I am not forgetful of the simple virtues of yours.*

* Considering the filial motives of the young chief's appeal to me, I am not afraid that any part of this letter, immediately relating to him, will be thought ostentatious or prolix. And if charitably judged, I hope that what I have said of myself and of my poem will not be felt as offensive egotism. The public has never been troubled with any defences of mine against any attacks on my poetry that were mere literary: although I may have been as far as authors generally are from bowing to the justice of hostile criticism. To show that I have not been over-anxious about publicity, I must mention a misrepresentation respecting my poem on Wyoming which I have suffered to remain uncontradicted for ten years. Mr. Washington Irving, in a biographical sketch prefixed to it in an American edition, described me as having injured the composition of the poem by shewing it to friends who struck out its best passages. Now I read it to very few friends, and to none at whose suggestion I ever struck out a single line. Nor did I ever lean on the taste of others with that miserable distrust of my own judgment which the anecdote conveys. I knew that