

of the two." After still more of greeting and congratulation, the young man rose.

"The night is dark, mother," he said, "and the road to the clachan a rough one. Besides, you and your kinsman will have much to say to one another. I shall just slip out to the clachan for you; and you shall both tell me, on my return, whether I am not a prime judge of ale."

"The kindest heart, Matthew, that ever lived," said my relative, as he left the house. "Ever since he came to Kirkoswald he has been both son and daughter to me, and I shall feel twice a widow when he goes away."

"I am mistaken, aunt," I said, "if he be not the strongest-minded man I ever saw. Be assured he stands high among the aristocracy of nature, whatever may be thought of him in Kirkoswald. There is a robustness of intellect, joined to an overmastering force of character, about him, which I have never yet seen equalled, though I have been intimate with at least one very superior mind, and with hundreds of the class who pass for men of talent. I have been thinking, ever since I met with him, of the William Tells and William Wallaces of history, men who, in those times of trouble which unfix the foundations of society, step out from their obscurity to rule the destiny of nations."

"I was ill about a month ago," said my relative, — "so very ill that I thought I was to have done with the world altogether; and Robert was both nurse and physician to me. He kindled my fire, too, every morning, and sat up beside me sometimes for the greater part of the night. What wonder I should love him as my own child? Had your cousin Henry been spared to me, he would now have been much about Robert's age."