

be, unhappiness, for your proper sphere; but it is in obedience to a great though occult law of our nature, — a law general, as it affects the species, in its course of onward progression; particular, and infinitely more irresistible, as it operates on every truly superior intellect. There are men born to wield the destinies of nations; nay, more, to stamp the impression of their thoughts and feelings on the mind of the whole civilized world. And by what means do we often find them roused to accomplish their appointed work? At times hounded on by sorrow and suffering, and this, in the design of Providence, that there may be less of sorrow and suffering in the world ever after; at times roused by cruel and maddening oppression, that the oppressor may perish in his guilt, and a whole country enjoy the blessings of freedom. If Wallace had not suffered from tyranny, Scotland would not have been free.”

“But how apply the remark?” said my companion.

“Robert Burns,” I replied, again grasping his hand, “yours, I am convinced, is no vulgar destiny. Your griefs, your sufferings, your errors even, the oppressions you have seen and felt, the thoughts which have arisen in your mind, the feelings and sentiments of which it has been the subject, are, I am convinced, of infinitely more importance in their relation to your country than to yourself. You are, wisely and benevolently, placed far below your level, that thousands and ten thousands of your countrymen may be the better enabled to attain to theirs. Assert the dignity of manhood and of genius, and there will be less of wrong and oppression in the world ever after.”

I spent the remainder of the evening in the farm-house of Mossgiel, and took the coach next morning for Liverpool.