

sions. Now, my brain being quite cool, and my heart safe in my own keeping, I would frame in a moment such a notable romance, that it should satisfy the lady, and meet with the entire approbation of his sly little godship."

Before the king could reply to this sally, the astrologer had finished his observations, and turning to Eleonora, said :

"Princess, the decrees of heaven are immutable, and admit of no variation. Fate, who has destined you to be the bride of a great and heroic prince, will give you a heart to love him."

The tears were streaming fast through the slender fingers of the princess—

"O, worldly grandeur," she said in a broken and hardly audible voice ; " how little art thou regarded where the heart is concerned."

She flung, as she ceased speaking, a purse heavy with gold pieces on the table, and beckoning to the countess, slowly withdrew ; while the king, overcome by a thousand delightful sensations, remained gazing on the spot she had occupied, in a sort of waking transport, from which he was only roused by the page hastily pulling his cloak.

"My liege, the coast is clear ! do not lose this favourable opportunity—I can perceive by the thoughtful look of the sage, that his familiar is at his elbow."

The king started into animation, and was on the point of emerging from his hiding place, when the post of enquiry was filled by a gay young cavalier, in whose bright complexion, blue eyes, and auburn ringlets, the page instantly recognized Prince George.

"Now by the shade of Woden ! I have heard that many fools make a fair—I wonder which will prove the greatest fool—the fair fool who wept at the idea of wearing a crown, or the gay fool her brother, who has left his warm bed, in the hope of being promised one ?"

"We have at least the satisfaction of finding folly not wholly confined to our own royal person," rejoined the king.

"Tis a growing evil," returned Eric ; "the older a man grows, the closer it clings to him ; and if he wear the cap and bells with becoming gravity, it is accounted by the world as wisdom."

"Before you proceed with your lecture on folly," said the king ; "mark well yon fair haired boy, the colour has receded from his face, and he stands before the awful messenger of fate, trembling like an aspen leaf."

"And so would the hero of the North, if he had stumbled as the prince did even now, against yon deathless emblem of mortality, who stretches forth his long bony arms, as if it were about to enclose his brethren of the dust, and hurry them off to the cold and silent grave. I feel as if my flesh was crawling off my bones, and I was about to be re-

duced to the same state, whenever my eyes encounter it."

The young prince seemed ill at ease, while the astrologer was consulting the planets ; he looked anxiously round him, and once or twice put his hand to his sword, and on seeing the sage about to commit his thoughts to paper, he said in an impatient tone :

"Answer me one simple question—shall I wear a crown ?"

"Never !" replied the astrologer emphatically ; "your fortune promises nothing great, and bears an equal proportion of good and evil."

A frown contracted the brow of the prince as he continued :

"Your dominions during your lifetime, will be harrassed by perpetual wars, and your reign will be short and unquiet. You will die in the meridian of life, and your son, a bold and ambitious spirit, will raise this noble province into a kingly state."

"Why did you not say that my father's son should do all this—what to me is kingly splendour, when my bones are mouldering in the dust !"

He turned scornfully away, and flinging at the astrologer's feet several broad pieces of gold, left the apartment, with an expression of mortification and displeasure strongly portrayed on his countenance. The king was surprised that ambition should be the leading trait in a character, which he had deemed incapable of forming a hope or wish beyond the pleasures which the court daily supplied.

"I who have heard the secret destinies of others," he said ; "will now step boldly forth and demand my own."

Hastily removing the arras, he approached the dreaded tribunal, with his usual firm step and fearless demeanour.

The astrologer was leaning on the table, his head supported by his hand, his eyes cast mournfully to the earth, and his whole deportment denouncing inward sorrow and weariness of spirit. At the sound of the king's step, he looked up—a transient glow of colour flushed his face, and his eye kindled with unusual brilliancy, as it fell on the fine person of the Swede.

"Your errand ?"

"It is not that of a wise man," returned the king ; "heaven has forbidden us to seek the knowledge of that which is wisely placed beyond our reach, or to dive into the hidden things of futurity, which time only can unveil. Yet if you can, by your wonderful and mysterious science, reveal the destinies of others—declare mine."

"It is beyond my power."

"How !" exclaimed the king ; "do you impose upon the ignorant and superstitious, by pretending to reveal what is placed beyond your power—do