

light glad on't--for I thought I had no choice the one being fair, the other ugly ; and to have been forced to marry one woman, to the exclusion of the darling liberty of selection, would, though she had been as fair as Venus have made her like the famed daughter of Phœbus, whose face was as beautiful as that of the sister of Apollo, but whose hair was biting serpents."

"Thy choice, I fear, is not extended by the beauty of Elizabeth of Dunbar," said Ramorgny ; "for what she has, Elizabeth Douglas wants. March's daughter is a dark beauty, but her colour is not derived from the fiery hues of earth ; it owes a higher origin than the beams of the son of Latona himself. Let the jet eyes from which she sends her predatory love-shafts, are the softest engines of death I have ever witnessed. The fire that steals from heaven, comes from her as it does from her cognate thief, Phoebe, as soft moonbeams. Her gentleness is that of the dove, and the tones of her voice are like the strains that come from an Æolian harp, making the heart chase them as they steal away into death-like silence."

"Bravo !" cried the Prince--"a right good word. I have ever admired softness in a woman ; and I still maintain that there is the same natural fitness in that ordination, as existed in the connection between heat and fire, light and flame, mirth and life, and death ! What sayest thou now to the other Bess ?"

"Hast thou ever read of Omphale," replied the knight, "who took from Hercules his club and gave him a spindle, and when he complained, chastised him with her slipper ? It was well for the hero that he did not live in Scotland in these days, when brogues, filled with nails, cover the soft feet of some of our nobles. Elizabeth Douglas would certainly imitate Omphale--but I fear her slipper would be a brogue--and she farther differeth from her, in being as ugly as she was fair--it seemeth to me to be a limb of the devil, which, in its hurry to escape from the region of fire and brimstone, carried along with it some of these elements of wrath, of which, I do not, she would make good use, if a man dared to say to her nay, in place of--Thou hast said that thou lovest softest woman ; but I have heard thee say, thy mad freaks, wherein, doubtless, reason had no part, that thou wouldst rejoice

in an opportunity of taming a shrew. Truly, thy wish, at least to the extent of making an attempt, may be gratified by marrying Bess Douglas ; but I would rede thee to consider, that she might tame thee. Dost thou observe the difference there ? Ha ! the noble and high-spirited Rothsay, pinned, like a silken nose-cloth, to the skirt of the linsey-wolsey tunic of a modern Xanti ; pe !"

"Never fear, Ramorgny," cried the Duke impatiently ; "thy efforts in my behalf will save me this degradation : I am obliged to thee for thy warning, and would repay thee, according to the measure of my gratitude and thy desert, by recommending to thee, as a wife, Elizabeth Douglas, while I wed her of Dunbar."

The art by which Ramorgny thus sustained, apparently with good humour, his conversations with the Duke, regarding subjects which lay very near his heart, and invested with serious import, was one of his cleverest but most deceitful qualities. The Duke himself treated every thing lightly ; the unresistible buoyancy of his mind, cast off with resilient power everything which partook of a sombre character ; but Ramorgny was naturally dark, gloomy, and thoughtful ; and his efforts at frolic, successful as they were, were resorted to only as a means to accomplish an end. In the present instance, he was necessitated, notwithstanding the intensity of his passion, his vexation, and disappointment to keep up his old manner ; for where truth was generally arrayed in the trappings of frivolity, deceit might have been suspected in an appearance of sincerity.

Fortunately, however, the Prince was not left altogether to the advice of Ramorgny ; but such is the fate of Princes, he got counsel otherwise, only in the suspicions he entertained of an enemy, his uncle of Albany :--having heard that he wished to marry Elizabeth Douglas, and to accompany him to Douglas Castle, to see the lady on a certain day, the Prince to escape the importunities of his uncle, and to gail him--a pastime in which he took some pleasure--rode off precipitately to March's Castle, to enjoy the society of Elizabeth, in whom he expected to find all the qualities described by his friend, who enjoyed his absolute confidence.

When Rothsay arrived at the Castle of March, the Earl was on the eve of setting out for Linlithgow, for the purpose of seeing,