

safely from the designs of his uncle. He invented a story of a conversation which had been overheard between Albany and a ruffian often employed by him to execute his purposes of revenge. The import of this conversation was, that Albany, having been superseded in his office of governor, had resolved upon acquiring it again, and that he could not succeed in that resolution so long as the Prince was alive—that he accordingly hinted to the ruffian that it would be pleasant to him if he heard that the Duke no longer lived—and that for such information a reward would be given sufficient to stimulate the most scrupulous executioner that ever aided an unhappy man across the Stygian stream. All this was communicated to Rothsay by Ramorgny in a whisper, and with an appearance, tone, and manner, suited to the awful nature of the intelligence. The Duke believed the story, and bursting forth into an extravagant rally of indignation, cried—

“It is time that Princes of the blood royal should exert the power in defence of themselves, which is entrusted to them for the defence of others, when villains, in broad day, lay schemes for their lives. I can plainly see, and have long seen, that this man and I cannot live in the same age. Scotland is too narrow for us—and the vice-royal chair must be polluted with blood! Yet shall age supplant youth? Is it meet that time should go backwards, and that by force and through blood, the order of nature should be changed? It shall not be so. If one is to fall, nature herself points out the victim—and that victim is Albany!”

These words, uttered in anger, and invented merely to indicate the injustice of Albany's scheme, and the necessity of self-defence, in the event of its being attempted to be carried in execution, were carefully noted by Ramorgny's creature, who was in hearing.—They were plainly capable, however, of another construction by a person who did not hear the rest of the conversation and understand their application. They might mean that Rothsay intended to get his uncle out of the way—a construction which did not ill accord with the feeling's which existed in the Prince's mind against the disturber of his peace, if these had been formed in another man, but unjustified by the Prince's noble disposition, which would have despised any underhand scheme to rid himself of his bit-

terest enemy. The words were, however, uttered, and noted, and remembered; and they were not uttered in vain.

Ramorgny having thus procured evidence of the Prince's designs against the life of his uncle, repaired to Albany, and narrated to him the statements made by the Duke, and referred him, for corroboration, to his servant—Albany wished nothing more ardently than this communication; and even without it, he would have been glad to have joined Ramorgny in any scheme for the removal of his rival. Other enemies were brought into action. Sir William Lindsay of Rosste, whose sister the Duke had loved and deserted, and Archibald Douglas, the brother of Elizabeth, piqued by some private feeling, were willing to aid in the death of one who had courted the relative of one of them to desert her, and married that of the other to treat her with neglect. That the Prince was unkind or unfaithful to his wife, who bore a reputation of being so fair and amiable, has been treated by some historians as a mere fable, resorted to by the unnatural Earl, her brother, as a palliative of conduct which it was not suited to render in the slightest degree less revolting. There is reason, however, to suppose that Lindsay had some cause for his resentment, in the desertion of his sister, who loved the Duke, and never recovered from the effects of his unfaithful conduct.

The first project of these conspirators, was worthy of the talents of the individuals who had determined to prostitute the best of the gifts of God to destroy one of his creatures.—It was resolved to work upon the King in such a way as to procure from him some token of his disapprobation of the conduct of his son. It is difficult now to ascertain how this was effected, as there is no doubt that Rothsay still held a strong claim on the affections of his father. The result, however, shews that the means must have been of an extraordinary nature—for King Robert was got to sign a writ for the confinement of the Prince.—It is very probable that nothing more was intended by this than to shew the King's displeasure, which would gradually relax as the slight punishment wrought the expected amendment. It has been doubted whether such writ was ever truly signed by the King—and surely it is not difficult to suppose that the men who, holding the gates of the palace in their hands, could admit or deny whom