

whom I have also seen, and can well appreciate. Art thou quite sure thy advice is purer, sounder, truer, and wiser, than that of my council?"

This question produced an evident effect upon Ramorgny. He endeavoured to escape the Prince's eye; but he found that no easy matter. Rothsay kept looking at him intensely, and plainly shewed that he was master of the secret purpose for which he had endeavoured to precipitate him into a connection that would have made him miserable for life. It was now, however, too late for Ramorgny to retreat; and, boldly facing his danger, he replied—

"Thy question carries with it more than meets the ear. If I deprecated Elizabeth Douglas, and overrated Elizabeth of Dunbar, a spirit of liberal construction would give me credit for having been myself deceived."

"Stop," said the Prince, interrupting him; "I did not say that thou didst deprecate the one and overrate the other. Why take guilt to thyself?"

"By St. Duthos," cried Ramorgny, who saw he was caught, resolved upon another tack, "it is time now to be grave. Will that cursed spirit of devilish frolic which I learned from thee, cling to me, even after the dreadful apparition of the first grey hair, which this morning appeared to me in my glass!—But thou art thyself to blame. A master of mirth, thyself—the prime minister of Momus, as well as of King Robert—and my professor in the science of fun—wert thou unable to discover, in my outrageous and elaborate description of the two damsels, the traces of the pencil—for Momus could paint—of the laughing god? If thou wert not, dost thou not deserve the harmless deception? Say now, good Prince, condemn if thou darest, the scholar of a proficiency which thou hast taught. Struck by thy own sword of truth, wilt thou amputate the offending hand? Say, and if thou wilt, strike. A philosopher would laugh—what shall the merry-making Rothsay do?"

The bold, dashing, laughing manner in which Ramorgny delivered this speech, joined, to a recollection of the high-flown and serious account he had given of the two damsels, drove out of the Duke's mind the suspicions roused by the communications

of the Earl Douglas, and with it his anger. The boisterous good humour of his friend carried him along with him; and, answering the knight in his own way, he cried—

"Why, laugh too, perhaps, good Ramorgny. Thou hast certainly defeated me in the first instance; but I have conquered thee in the second, I found in the women what thou hast described them; only, I was obliged to substitute the name of Elizabeth Douglas for Bess of Dunbar. That descendant of old Agnes is most certainly the devil, or at least his vicegerent. What dost thou think she recommended to me, to increase the powers of my manhood? 'Why milk and pimento! The only woman, she thought, I would be safe in the keeping of, was my mother Anaberga; the age, of which she considered me a fair example, had retrograded from the days of the sacking of Roxburgh, by her father, into a state of mature infancy; and, as for our talents in war, she would scarcely allow us the mighty power of infanticide. In short, thy description of Elizabeth Douglas applied to her; and, when I say thy description of her applied to the other, why should I say that I was charmed with the fair Douglas? Thou hast painted her better than I can. She must be my wife; and I am glad that my council, my mother, and myself, thus agree on a point which they believe concerns the nation, but which I opine concerns only myself."

Ramorgny was at the moment well pleased to perceive that he had thus got out of the scrape; but to have his snare twisted round his own limbs—to have his description of his own lover adopted by a rival, in describing her perfection—and thus to have, in a manner, precipitated his own ruin; for he could not survive the marriage of Elizabeth Douglas with another—touched him, as an accomplished intriguer, on the tenderest parts of his nature. A second time deprived of the object of his affections by his own disciple in the art of love, he determined that, at least, there should never be a third opportunity for inflicting on him such a degradation. His revenge deepened, but his smiles and apparent good humour quadrated with the increased necessity of concealing his designs. These and their fatal issue are unfortunately but too well known.

Unknown to Rothsay, certain schemes had, in the mean time, been in agitation, by