

bare sustenance of a prisoner, while his tenants dwelt on his estates, and did as they pleased with his rents, as though they should never again behold the face of a landlord.

But Midside Maggy grieved for the fate of him whose generosity had brought prosperity, such as they had never known before, to herself and to her husband, and in the fullness of her gratitude she was ever planning schemes for his deliverance; and she urged upon her husband that it was their duty to attempt to deliver their benefactor from captivity, as he had delivered them from the iron grasp of ruin, when misfortune lay heavily on them. Now, as duly as the rent-day came, from the Martinmas to which the snow-ball had been his discharge, Thomas Hardie faithfully and punctually locked away his rent to the last farthing, that he might deliver it into the hands of his laird, should he again be permitted to claim his own; but he saw not in what way they could attempt his deliverance, as his wife proposed.

"Thomas," said she, "there are ten long years of rent due, and we have the siller locked away. It is of nae use to us, for it is nae ours, but it may be of use to him. It would enable him to fare better in his prison, and maybe to put a handfu' o' gowd into the hands o' his keepers, and thereby to escape abroad, and it would furnish him wi' the means o' living when he was abroad. Remember his kindness to us, and think that there is no sin equal to the sin of ingratitude."

"But," added Thomas, "in what way could we get the money to him, for if we were to send it, it would never reach him, and as a prisoner he wouldna be allowed to receive it."

"Let us take it to him ourself, then," said Margaret.

"Take it ourself!" exclaimed Thomas, in amazement, "a' the way to London! It is out o' the question altogether, Margaret.—We would be robbed o' every plack before we got half way—or, if we were even there, how in a' the world do ye think we could get it to him, or that we would be allowed to see him?"

"Leave that to me," was her reply; "only say ye will gang, and a' that shall be accomplished. There is nae obstacle in the way but the want o' your consent. But the debt,

and the ingratitude o' it together, hang heavy upon my heart."

Thomas at length yielded to the importunities of his wife, and agreed that they should make a pilgrimage to London, to pay rent to his captive laird; though how they were to carry the gold in safety, through an unsettled country, a distance of more than three hundred miles, was a difficulty he could not overcome. But Margaret removed her fears; she desired him to count out the gold and place it before her, and when he had done so, she went to the meal-tub and took out a quantity of pease and of barley mixed, sufficiently to knead a goodly loaf or bannock; and when she had kneaded and rolled it out, she took the golden pease and pressed them into the paste of the unbaked bannock, and again she doubled it together, and again rolled it out, and kneaded into it the remainder of the gold. She then fashioned it into a thick bannock, and placing it on the hearth, covered it with the ashes of the peats.

Thomas sat marvelling, as the formation of the singular purse proceeded, and when he beheld the operation completed, and the bannock placed upon the hearth to bake, he only exclaimed—"Well, woman's ingenuity dings a'! I wouldna hae thocht o' the like o' that, had I lived a thousand years! Margaret, hinny, but ye are a strange an-

"Hoots," replied she, "I'm sure ye can easily hae imagined that it was the simplest plan we could hae thought upon to carry the siller in safety; for I am sure there is a thief between the Tweed and Leith town, that would covet or carry away a' the bannock." "Troth, my doo, and I believe ye're right," replied Thomas; "but I could have thought o' sic an expedient. Sure there never was a bannock baked like the bannock o' Tollishill."

On the third day after this, an old man, a fair lad, before the sun had yet risen, was observed crossing the English Border. He alternately carried a wallet across his shoulders, which contained a few articles of apparel and a bannock. They were dressed as shepherds, and passengers turned and gazed on them as they passed along, for the beauty of the youth's countenance excited their admiration. Never had lowland been so covered so fair a brow. The elder of