

led him to the deep ravine, where the
ters seemed to sleep, and no sunbeam ever
—and, as she removed the earth and the
nes, with which she had blocked up the
outh of the cavity in the rock, he stood won-
ring. She entered the aperture, and rolled
h the firm mass of snow, which was yet
large to be lifted by hands. When Tho-
saw this, he smiled and wept at the same
tant, and he pressed his wife's cheek to
bosom, and said—

Great has been the care o' my poor Mar-
ret, but it is o' no avail—for though he hue
ved more than a match for the seasons,
proposal was but a jest o' Lauderdale.
What is a man but his word?" replied
Margaret, "and him a nobleman too."

Nobility are but men," answered Thomas,
d seldom better men than other folk. Be-
e me, if we were to gang before him wi'
wba' in our hands, we should only get
shed at for our pains.—"It was his own
ment," added she—"and, at ony rate,
can be nothing the worse for seeing if he
abide by it."

reaking the snowy mass, she rolled up a
ion of it in a napkin, and they went to-
ds Thirlestane together—though often
Thomas stop by the way and say—

Margaret, dear, I'm perfectly ashamed to
g upon this business—as sure as I am
ding here, as I have tauld ye, we will
get ourselves laughed at."

I would rather be laughed at, added she,
nd despised for breaking my word; and
r laird break his now, wha wadna des-
him?"

armonious as their wedded life had hi-
o been, there was what might well nigh
alled bickerings between them on the
, for Thomas felt or believed that she
leading him on a fool's errand. But they
ved at the Castle of Thirlestane, and
ushered into the mansion of his proud

la!" said the Earl, as they entered,
ny Midside Maggy, and her auld good-
l Well, what bring ye—the rents o'
hill, or the equivalent?" Thomas look-
his young wife, for he saw nothing to
him hope on the countenance of Lau-
le, and he thought that he pronounced
ord "equivalent" with a sneer.

"I bring ye snow in June, my Lord," re-
plied Margaret, "agreeably to the terms o'
your bargain, and am sorry, for your sake
and ours, that it has not yet been in our pow-
er to bring gowd instead o't."

Loud laughed the Earl, as Margaret un-
rolled the huge snow-hall before him, and
Thomas thought unto himself, "I said how
it would be." But Lauderdale, calling for his
writing materials, sat down and wrote, and
he placed in the hands of Thomas a discharge
not only for his back rent, but for all that
should otherwise be due at the ensuing Mar-
tinmas.

Thoms Hardie bowed, and bowed again
before the Earl, low and yet lower, awk-
wardly and still more awkwardly, and he
endeavoured to thank him, but his tongue
faltered in the performance of its office. He
could have taken his hand in his and wrung
it fervently, leaving his fingers to express
what his tongue could not—but his laird was
an Earl; and there was a necessary distance
to be observed between an Earl and a Lam-
mermoor farmer.

"Thank not me, goodman," said Lau-
dale, "but thank the modesty and discretion
o' your winsome wife."

Margaret was silent, but gratitude for the
kindness which the Earl had shewn unto her
husband and herself, took deep root in her
heart. Gratitude, indeed, formed the pre-
dominating principle in ner character, and
fitted her even for acts of heroism.

The unexpected and unwonted generosity
of the Earl had enabled Thomas Hardie to
overcome the losses with which the fury of
the seasons had overwhelmed him, and he
prospered beyond any farmer on the hills.—
But, while he prospered, the Earl of Lau-
derdale, in his turn, was overtaken by ad-
versity. The stormy times of the civil wars
raged, and it is well known with what de-
votedness Lauderdale followed the fortunes
of the king. When the Commonwealth be-
gan, he was made prisoner, conveyed to Lon-
don, and confined in the Tower. There nine
weary years of captivity crept slowly and
gloomily over him; but they neither taught
him mercy to others nor to moderate his am-
bition, as was manifested when power and
posterity again cast their beams upon him.—
But he now lingered in the Tower, without
prospect or hope of release, living upon the