

she feared the coming of June—for to raise the rent even then she well knew would be a thing impossible, and she thought also it would be equally so to preserve a snow-ball beneath the melting sun of June. 'Though young, she had too much prudence and honesty to keep a secret from her husband—it was her maxim, and it was a good one, that "there ought to be no secrets between a man and his wife which the one would conceal from the other." She therefore told him of her journey to Thirlestane, and of all that had passed between her and the Earl.—Thomas kissed her cheek, and called her his "bonny, artless Maggy;" but he had no more hope of seeing a snow-ball in June than she had, and he said "the bargain was like the bargain o' a crafty Lauderdale."

Again the winter storms howled upon the Lammermoors, and the snow lay deep upon the hills. Thomas and his herdsmen were busied in exertions to preserve the remainder of his flocks; but one day, when the westling winds breathed with a thawing influence upon the snow-clad hills, Margaret went forth to where there was a small, deep, and shadowed ravine by the side of the Leader. In it the rivulet formed a pool and seemed to sleep, and there the grey trout loved to lie at ease; for a high dark rock, over which the brushwood grew, overhung it, and the rays of the sun fell not upon it. In the rock, and near the side of the stream, was a deep cavity, and Margaret formed a snow-ball on the brae top, and she rolled it slowly down into the shadowed glen, till it attained the magnitude of an avalanche in miniature.—She trode upon it, and pressed it firmly together. She rolled it far into the cavity, and blocked up the mouth of the aperture, so that neither light nor air might penetrate the strange coffer in which she had deposited the equally strange rent of Tollishill. Verily, common as ice-houses are in our day, let not Midside Maggy be deprived of the merit of their invention.

I have said that it was her maxim to keep no secret from her husband; but, as it is said, there is no rule without an exception, even so it was in the case of Margaret, and there was one secret which she communicated not to Thomas, and that was—the secret of the hidden snow-ball.

But June came, and Thomas Hardie was a sorrowful man. He had in no measure

overcome the calamities of former years, and he was still unprepared with his rent. Margaret shared not his sorrow, but strove to cheer him, and said—

"We shall hae a snow-ball in June, though I climb to the top o' Cheviot for it."

"O my bonny lassie," replied he—and could see the summit of Cheviot from his farm—"dinna deceive yoursel' wi' words; could only be words spoken in jest—but, ony rate, I perceive there has been naesne on Cheviot for a month past."

Now, not a week had passed but Margaret had visited the aperture in the rock where the snow-ball was concealed, and through idle curiosity, to perceive whether had melted away, but more effectually stop up every crevice that might have been made in the materials with which she had blocked up the mouth of the cavity.

But the third day of the dreadful maelstrom had not passed, when a messenger arrived from Tollishill with the Earl's mandate—"June has come!"

"And we shall be at Thirlestane tomorrow," answered Margaret.

"O my doo," said Thomas, "what sense are ye talking!—that isna like ye, Margaret—I'll be in Greenlaw Jail the morn, and our bits o' things in the house, and our flocks will be seized by the harpies o' the law—and the only thing that distresses us, what is to come o' you, hinny."

"Dinna dree the death ye'll never see," said Margaret affectionately—"we shall, if we be spared, what the morn will bring."

"The fortitude o' your mind, Margaret," said Thomas, taking her hand—he intended to have said more, to have finished a sentence in admiration of her worth, but his heart filled, and he was silent.

On the following morning, Margaret went unto him—

"Now, Thomas, if ye are ready, we go to Thirlestane. It is always worse to expect or think o' an evil than to face it."

'Margaret, dear,' said he, 'I cannot apprehend ye—wherefore should I thrust my head into the lion's den? It will soon seek me in my path.'

Nevertheless, she said unto him "Go" and bade him to be of good heart—and he rose and accompanied her. But she