

and confusion, inquired—"Wherefore do ye come—and why do ye seek me?" "I brought ye a snow-ball before," said she, "for your rent—I bring ye a bannock now;" and she took the bannock from the basket and placed it before him. "Woman," added he, "are ye really as dementit as I thought ye but feigned to be when ye sang before the window?" "The proof o' the bannock," replied Margaret, "will be in the breaking of it."

"Then, goodwife, it will not be easily proved," said he—and he took the bannock and with some difficulty broke it over his knee;—but when he beheld the golden coins that were kneaded through it, for the first, perhaps the last and only time in his existence, the Earl of Lauderdale burst into tears and exclaimed—"Well, every bannock has its maik, but the bannock o' Tollishill! Yet, kind as ye hae been, the gold is useless to ane that groans in hopeless captivity."

"Yours has been a long captivity," said Margaret, "but it is not hopeless; and if honest General Monk is to be trusted, from what he tauld me not three days by-gane, before a week go round ye will be at liberty to go abroad, and there the bannock o' Tollishill may be of use."

The wonder of Lauderdale increased, and he replied—

"Monk will keep his word—but what mean ye of him?"

And she related to him the interview they had had with the General by the way.—Lauderdale took her hand, a ray of joy and hope spread over his face, and he added—

"Never shall ye rue the baking o' the bannock, if auld times comes back again."

Margaret left the Tower, singing as she had entered it, and joined her husband, whom she found leaning over the railing around the moat, and anxiously waiting her return.—They spent a few days more in London, to

rest and to gaze upon its wonders, and again set out upon their journey to Tollishill.—General Monk remembered his promise;—within a week the Earl of Lauderdale was liberated, with permission to go abroad, and there, as Margaret had intimated, he found the bannock of Tollishill of service.

A few more years passed round, during which old Thomas Hardie still prospered, but during those years the Commonwealth came to an end, the King was recalled, and with him, as one of his chief favourites, returned the Earl of Lauderdale. And when he arrived in Scotland, clothed with power, whatever else he forgot, he remembered the bannock of Tollishill. Arrayed in what might have passed as royal state, and attended by fifty of his followers, he rode in princely pomp to the dwelling of Thomas Hardie and Midside Maggy, and when they came forth to meet him, he dismounted, and drew forth a costly silver girdle of strange workmanship, and fastened it round her jimp waist, saying

"Wear this, for now it is my turn to be grateful, and for your husband's life, and your life, and the life of the generation after ye," (for they had children) "ye shall sit rent free on the lands ye now farm. For, truly, every bannock had its maik but the bannock o' Tollishill."

Thomas and Margaret felt their hearts full to express their thanks, and ere they could speak, the Earl, mounting his horse, rode towards Thirlestane, and his followers, waving their bonnets, shouted—"Long live Midside Maggy, queen of Tollishill."

Such is the story of the bannock o' Tollishill; and it is only necessary to add, for the information of the curious, that I believe the silver girdle may be seen until this day in the neighbourhood of Tollishill, and in the possession of a descendant of Midside Maggy, to whom it was given.