

MIDSIDE MAGGY—OR THE BANNOCK O' TOLLISHILL.

"Every bannock had its maik, but the bannock o' Tollishill."

Belike, gentle reader, thou hast often heard the proverb quoted above, that "Every bannock had its maik, but the bannock o' Tollishill." The saying hath its origin in a romantic tradition of the Lammermoors, which shall relate to thee. Tollishill is the name of a sheep farm in Berwickshire, situated in the parish of Lauder. Formerly it was divided into three farms, which were occupied by different tenants; and, by way of distinguishing it from the others, that in which dwelt the subjects of our present story was generally called Midside, and our heroine obtained the appellation of Midside Maggy.—Tollishill was the property of John, second Earl, and afterwards Duke of Lauderdale—a personage whom I shall more than once, in these tales, have occasion to bring before the readers, and whose character posterity will ascribe a small cause to hold in veneration. Yet this is a black character, indeed, in which there is not to be found one streak of sunshine; and the story of the "Bannock of Tollishill" referreth to such a streak in the history of John, the Lord of Thirlestane.

Time hath numbered somewhat more than hundred and ninety years since Thomas Hardie became tenant of the principal farm of Tollishill. Now, that the reader may picture Thomas Hardie as he was, and as tradition hath described him, he or she must imagine a tall, strong, and fresh-coloured man of fifty, a few hairs of grey mingling with his own locks; a countenance expressive of such good nature and some intelligence; while a Lowland bonnet was drawn over his brow. The other parts of his dress were of coarse, grey, home-spun cloth, manufactured at Earlston; and across his shoulders, in summer as well as in winter, he wore the mountain plaid. His principles assimilated those held by the men of the Covenant; and Andrew, though a native of the hills, was not without the worldly prudence which is considered as being more immediately the characteristic of the buying and selling class of society. His landlord was no favourer of the Covenant, and, though Andrew wished well to the cause, he did not see the necessity of making his laird, the Lord of Lauderdale, his enemy for its sake. He, therefore, judged it wise to remain a neutral spec-

tator of the religious and political struggles of the period.

But Andrew was a bachelor. Half a century had he been in the world, and the eyes of no woman had had power to throw a spark into his heart. In his single, solitary state he was happy, or he thought himself happy, and that is much the same thing. But an accident occurred which led him, first to believe, and eventually to feel, that he was but a solitary and comfortless moorland farmer, toiling for he knew not what, and laying up treasure he knew not for whom. Yea, and while others had their wives spinning, carding, knitting, and smiling before them, and their bairns running laughing and sporting round about them, he was but a poor deserted creature, with nobody to speak to, nobody to care for, or to care for him. Every person had some object to strive for and to make them strive, but Thomas Hardie; or, to use his own words, "he was just in the situation o' a tewhit that had lost its mate—"te-wheet! te-wheet!" it cried, flapping its wings impatiently and forlornly—and "te-wheet! te-wheet!" answered vacant echo frae the dreary giens."

Thomas had been to Morpeth disposing of a part of his hirsels, and he had found a much better market for them than he anticipated. He returned, therefore, with a heavy purse, which generally hath a tendency to create a light and merry heart, and he arrived at Westruther, and went into a hotel, where, three or four times in the year, he was in the habit of spending a cheerful evening with his friends. He had called for a quegh of the landlady's best, and he sat down at his ease with the liquor before him, for he had but a short way to travel. He also pulled out his tobacco-box and his pipe, and began to inhale the fumes of what, up to that period, was almost a forbidden weed. But we question much, if the royal book of James the Sixth of Scotland and First of England, which he published against the use of tobacco, ever found its way into the Lammermoors, though the Indian weed did; therefore Thomas Hardie sat enjoying his glass and his pipe, unconscious or regardless of the fulminations which he who was king in his boyhood, had published against the latter. But he