"See, I am learning Milton ways, Mister Thornton."

John, for his part, is achingly aware that this is the first time they have clasped hands.

I just really have a weakness for *hand touching*, and I loved the scene where Margaret offers her hand to Mr. Thornton for the first time. My gosh.

His attention is first drawn to Margaret when a friend asks who she is, and somehow the description 'fine young lady' does not do her an ounce of justice, the way she looks this evening. When he crosses the room to greet her she holds her hand out to him naturally, and when he smiles and moves to take it her other comes up so that both of her soft, dainty palms envelope him.

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Margaret beams at him, seemingly delighted that she'd overcome whatever social quandary that had barred her from taking his hand in friendship when he'd offered it previously. She keeps a hold of him, looking so glad that she is becoming proficient in the ways of the North, and a small part of him adores her for taking such pleasure in familiarizing herself with their mannerisms.

He takes a moment to wonder, then, what her reaction would be if he lifted her hand up to press a kiss along the back of her knuckles. Would a rare flush creep up her cheeks while she demurely...
cast her eyes away, would her smile widen and her countenance gain a knowing air?

No, he muses as he takes in her smiling face leisurely, such an action would surely only make Margaret uncomfortable, and he would hate to put her on her guard around him when it finally seems as though she is warming up to him.

When she pulls away her fingers seem to linger, dragging over the entire length of his own as if to sustain the brief contact. John misses the warmth of her touch nearly as soon as it is withdrawn.

He is, regretfully, called away to speak with Slickson, and she is escorted deeper into the room by Mister Bell before he can return to her and offer to make introductions himself.

She casts a glance back at him over her shoulder as she goes, and he idly flexes his fingers, chasing the ghost of her touch.

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