

their minds than the complexion of their circumstances; and this ploughman and laborer of the north was by no means a very common man. For the latter half of his life he had pursued, in all his undertakings, one main design. He saw his brother rustics tied down by circumstance — that destiny of vulgar minds — to a youth of toil and dependence, and an old age of destitution and wretchedness; and, with a force of character which, had he been placed at his outset on what may be termed the table-land of fortune, would have raised him to her higher pinnacles, he persisted in adding shilling to shilling and pound to pound, not in the sordid spirit of the miser, but in the hope that his little hoard might yet serve him as a kind of stepping-stone in rising to a more comfortable place in society. Nor were his desires fixed very high; for, convinced that independence and the happiness which springs from situation in life lie within the reach of the frugal farmer of sixty or eighty years, he moulded his ambition on the conviction, and scarcely looked beyond the period at which he anticipated his savings would enable him to take his place among the humbler tenantry of the country.

Our friths and estuaries at this period abounded with salmon, one of the earliest exports of the kingdom; but from the low state into which commerce had sunk in the northern districts, and the irregularity of the communication kept up between them and the sister kingdom, by far the greater part caught on our shores were consumed by the inhabitants. And so little were they deemed a luxury, that it was by no means uncommon, it is said, for servants to stipulate with their masters that they should not have to diet on salmon oftener than thrice a week. Thomson, however, had seen quite enough, when in England, to convince him that, meanly as they were esteemed by his