

"She is already my friend," thought he. "If my schemes prosper, I shall be in a few years what her father is now; and may then ask her whether she will not be more. Till then, however, she shall be my friend, and my friend only. I find I love her too well to make her the wife of either a poor unsettled speculator, or still poorer laborer."

He renewed his visits to the farm-house, and saw, with a discernment quickened by his feelings, that his mistress had made a discovery with regard to her own affections somewhat similar to his, and at a somewhat earlier period. She herself could have perhaps fixed the date of it by referring to that of their acquaintance. He imparted to her his scheme, and the uncertainties which attended it, with his determination, were he unsuccessful in his designs, to do battle with the evils of penury and dependence without a companion; and, though she felt that she could deem it a happiness to make common cause with him even in such a contest, she knew how to appreciate his motives, and loved him all the more for them. Never, perhaps, in the whole history of the passion, were there two lovers happier in their hopes and each other. But there was a cloud gathering over them.

Thomson had never been an especial favorite with the step-mother of Lillias. She had formed plans of her own for the settlement of her daughter with which the attentions of the salmon-fisher threatened materially to interfere; and there was a total want of sympathy between them besides. Even William, though he still retained a sort of rough regard for him, had begun to look askance on his intimacy with Lillias. His avowed love, too, for the modern, gave no little offence. The farm of Meikle Farness was obsolete enough in its usages and mode of tillage to have formed no uninteresting study to the antiquary. To-