

ETHELINDE,  
OR THE  
RECLUSE OF THE LAKE.

BY  
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IN FIVE VOLUMES.

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### CHAPTER I.

SIR Edward Newenden and Montgomery journeyed rapidly towards London, but neither of them were inclined to conversation, and as they approached the town their mutual uneasiness and anxiety seemed to encrease: Sir Edward remembered the strange situation in which he had left his family; his wife absent, mourning over the effects of that vengeance which he

had been compelled to take on Lord Darnesforte, his children without their mother, his own actions perhaps misrepresented; while his conscience, unaccustomed hitherto to allow him any great latitude, represented to him in forcible colours the error he had committed in yielding to the first impulse of ungovernable affection, and hastening at such a time to Ethelinde. The reproaches he made himself on this head served however to strengthen the resolution he had made, not to conquer his passion for her, for that he felt to be out of his power, but to preclude the possibility of its doing her farther injury, by quitting the only satisfaction he ever promised himself, that of seeing her and loving her in silence, reserving only the right of a guardian to serve and befriend her by the interposition of others.

Montgomery, whose heart was agitated between faint hopes and tormenting apprehensions, was eager to get to his lodgings, where he expected to find letters from  
his

his mother, on the contents of which his fate depended. He leaped out of the chaise, therefore, the moment it stopped in Hanover Square; and hardly staying to take leave of his fellow traveller, he hurried to his lodgings in Portland Street, whither he had desired his letters to be directed.

Sir Edward, on entering his own house, learned of his servants that their lady had returned to it that morning, that her mother was with her, and that physicians had been sent for to attend her, as she was extremely ill. Numberless uneasy and distressing reflections now crowded on the mind of Sir Edward. He knew not how to refuse receiving his wife, for nothing on her part had occurred since their last meeting to make him wholly decline it; yet the contemptuous and disgraceful conversation repeated to him by Templeton; the speech Lord Danesfort had himself made on receiving his wound; her violent concern, and the general style of her con-

duct since their reconciliation ; all contributed to impress more deeply on his mind the suspicions before too strong of her misconduct. He had not time long to consider how he should act, before Mrs. Maltravers, hearing he was returned, sent to desire to speak with him ; and though he foresaw how disagreeable the interview would be, he could not refuse to admit her.

Her conversation, mingled with tears, lamentations, and reproaches, tended to persuade him that he had cruelly injured Lady Newenden, and most unjustly gratified, on Lord Danesforte, vengeance which he ought not to have conceived. She represented her daughter's situation as very dangerous ; and as being occasioned solely by her fears for her husband and for her own reputation.—“ And yet” cried she, “ you could be so hard hearted, so unfeeling as to leave her, and go out of town. Oh ! Sir Edward, who would have thought that you could use Maria so cruelly. I assure

assure you she feels it, though, poor soul, she is not surpris'd at it; if she had been dying, to be sure you must have gone to Brackwood on *such a pressing occasion*."

Sir Edward, vexed and confus'd to understand that the reason of his journey was known, was yet too ingenuous and spirited to deny it.—"Madam," answered he, with as much calmness as he could assume, "you will, I hope, allow me to be master of my own actions. Be assured that any such reflections as you have now thrown out are so far from being likely to produce the effect you seem to expect from them, that they can serve only to convince me of the badness of that cause which can be defended only by the despicable devices of malignity and falsehood. Let Lady Newenden convince me she has never forfeited her right to my exclusive affection; having done that, which, however open to conviction I am, she will, I fear, find very difficult, let her continue, by a very different conduct from what she

has lately assumed, to shew me that I have misunderstood her, and she will never find that my affection for her cousin is of a nature to give her any cause of complaint. To a candid, a generous, a liberal mind, it must ever have appeared what it really is; but I am sorry to say that your daughter possesses little of those qualities. I hope, however, that she judges not of my conduct, of my attachments, by her own; and in doing justice to her principles and passions, supposes her cousin equally culpable."

The calm severity of this retort seemed to be particularly cutting to Mrs. Maltravers; whose subsequent harangue on the virtues, beauty, and fortune of her daughter, and on her own consequence and perfections, was very loud and very long. Sir Edward, seeing it was not likely soon to conclude, was leaving her in possession of his apartment, when Maltravers himself entered the house, and having peevishly ordered his wife to leave them together, he

he with more coolness entered into conversation with Sir Edward ; and after discussing many points with more candour than he expected with him, (candour which originated in the dread he had lest his daughter's conduct should ill bear the investigation with which it was threatened if an absolute separation should happen) he agreed to enforce with all his power the plan which Sir Edward proposed—of immediately going with Lady Newenden and his family to Paris, and from thence to Italy, to remain at least a twelve month. Their going abroad together immediately after the duel would at least put an end to the report of its being occasioned solely by her Ladyship's attachment to Lord Danesforte : the reflections made on Sir Edward's partiality to Ethelinde would be forgotten ; and Maltravers saw so many advantages in it, that he warmly encouraged the proposal. It was only his authority that had compelled Lady Newenden to return to the house of her husband

a second time, though he carefully concealed that circumstance from Sir Edward; and he now, in pursuance of this arrangement between them, so effectually urged the necessity of immediate compliance, that Lady Newenden, who was in a few days tired of the farce of affecting to be sick when she was really in perfect health, dismissed her physicians; and no impediment remaining, the whole family, with Mr. and Mrs. Maltravers, set out for Dover in about a week after Sir Edward's visit to Brackwood, and proceeded directly to Paris. Lady Newenden, tho' she behaved with haughty and sullen coldness towards Sir Edward, yet seemed to have forgotten the violent friendship she had professed for Lord Danesforte, who was before their departure out of all danger, and gone to his Gloucestershire house. Neither Mrs. Maltravers or her daughter now ever named him, though he used to be the eternal theme of the former; and Sir Edward, though very miserable, endeavoured

deavoured in change of scene to find amusement, and in the tender careffes of his children consolation. The image of Ethelinde, however, pursued him every where; and hardly conscious of his motive, he lingered at Paris longer than he originally intended, because he there hoped to hear of her more quickly and more frequently than it was possible for him to do when he removed to a greater distance from England.

Montgomery, on arriving at his lodgings, found only one letter from his mother, which informed him merely of her arrival at Lyons, and that from the complicated nature of the engagements of that house to which her money had been lent, she had not yet been enabled to get information whether her money would or would not be safe. Montgomery thought the whole letter written in despondence which she seemed anxious to conceal; and the suspense in which it left him redoubled his wretchedness. Royston, having left two

or three messages at his lodgings during the last week of his absence, now called upon him to let him know that his appointment was made out; and that the vessel on which it was necessary for him to embark lay ready to sail, her departure from the river being absolutely fixed to happen in about ten days. Thus circumstanced, it became necessary for him to determine either to stay or go; and the contending passions with which he was agitated grew almost too painful to be endured without the deprivation of reason.

Sometimes he thought himself resolutely fixed to undertake a voyage which his courage, his honor, his reason, equally forbade his relinquishing; then the image of Ethelinde, in all its seducing charms, presented itself to him; he figured to himself all the happiness of living with her and his mother at Grasmere, and the enchanting picture of such society, their perfect confidence, their tender friendship, and their unbounded love for him: and he  
forgo

forgot for a moment that he had not the means of affording to these two beings, so tenderly beloved, the necessaries of life.

In the mean time, Royston, who was very proud of the service he had done him, and who had been complimented on the merit of his young relation by all those to whom he had presented him, bustled about in his service with a zeal for which Montgomery knew not how to account. He himself delayed from day to day to make the last preparations, still willing to hope that he might not be compelled to quit the country which contained all that gave value to his existence.

A week passed thus ; and at the end of that time Sir Edward took leave of him before his departure for the Continent. Sir Edward spoke but little to Montgomery of his voyage to India ; but seemed to consider it as fixed ; and of Ethelinde he only said that he had taken measures to have her supplied quarterly with the money he had named, and that he hoped she would

pass her time between the house of his sister and that of Mrs. Montgomery. At parting, however, he wrung the hand of Montgomery, and said with a deep sigh—“Farewell, dear Charles! your voyage, however long, your absence, however tedious, will, I doubt not, be fortunate. In me your situation excites envy; for if there is any thing more delightful than living with the object of our affection, it is living for them in the hope of being one day united, and in the consciousness of doing that which may promote that union. All these flattering prospects are your’s. See them in their true colours, and you will be comparatively happy.”

Montgomery could not reply; and tho’ he felt the force of Sir Edward’s observation, he could no where find any sensation in his own breast at all allied to happiness. He was glad, however, that Sir Edward Newenden was not to be in the same country with Ethelinde; and while hardly daring to own to himself the uneasy jealousy

lously he sometimes felt, he could never prevail upon himself to reflect, without uneasiness, on the friendship which Ethelinde so openly avowed for Sir Edward Newenden, or on that tender affection he had acknowledged himself sensible of for her.

While Montgomery remained in this torturing suspense, still eagerly clinging to an hope which grew every hour more feeble, Ethelinde passed the greatest part of her time alone; for Miss Newenden, as the hunting season drew near its close, pursued that amusement with increased avidity. Ethelinde, however, far from finding this solitude tedious, was extremely glad to be so little under the necessity of conversing; and as her thoughts dwelt on Montgomery, it was pleasant to have so little occasion to affect an interest for others. Miss Newenden, though still very civil to her, appeared more than usually occupied in affairs of her own; and Ethelinde observed that she often received and

answered

answered letters, a circumstance hitherto unusual with her; but this might in so many other ways be accounted for, that Ethelinde was far from suspecting they came from a favoured lover.

Sir Edward Newenden, however, being now in France, his sister, though determined to reject any advice he might give, was yet unwilling to hear it, and therefore prepared to execute her matrimonial project before her design could reach his ears. Some days, however, wore away; on the part of Miss Newenden in a sort of bustle which seemed to portend some change in the family; and in that of Ethelinde in deeply participating all the melancholy anxiety so forcibly expressed in the letters she received from Montgomery. Every post day this distress was renewed and encreased; and the terms in which he described the sufferings inflicted by this painful uncertainty were faithful pictures of her own anguish and regret. At length a heavy packet was delivered to her: with