The Works of Charlotte Smith

Ethelinde, or the Recluse of the Lake (1789)

Edited by
Stuart Curran

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THE WORKS OF CHARLOTTE SMITH
VOLUME 3

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CONTENTS

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INTRODUCTION

Published in 1789 in five volumes and over 1,500 pages, *Ethelinde, or the Recluse of the Lake* is Charlotte Smith's longest novel. It could be thought that Smith's imagination simply ran away with her. When she first conceived the work in mid-December 1788, she intended it to be shorter than her first novel, *Emmeline*, and run to only three volumes.[1] By May she was nearly finished with the third volume and was certain she needed another to resolve the extended lines of plot.[2] By late June she realized that even this plan was insufficient and started on a fifth volume. At this point she also wrote to another publisher George Robinson, who would later publish *Desmond*, to inquire whether he was interested in taking over her novel from Thomas Cadell.[3] This suggests a quarrel perhaps either stemming from what would become a customary issue with Cadell, advancing Smith sums on writing that had not yet been delivered, or indicating her publisher's hesitation over the length to which her novel was proceeding. Whatever the case, on 1 August, sixty pages from the end of the fifth volume and with the quarrel patched up, she announced to Cadell that she actually had enough material to fill out a sixth volume.[4] From the evidence of the finished work, it is hard to imagine what more could have been wrung from this plot, and it may be that Cadell's own professional sense of the market forced curtailment of Smith's plans for further expansion. Whatever the case, it took a further two-and-a-half months for Smith to bring the novel to a conclusion within the five-volume format.[5] *Ethelinde* was published after the middle of November 1789, a full eleven months after Smith began writing it.

It is very useful to have this timeline in mind as one approaches the novel. It reminds us that Smith, flushed with the great success of

[1] Charlotte Smith to Thomas Cadell, Charles Thomas-Stanford archive, Royal Pavilion, Libraries and Museums, Brighton & Hove, on deposit in the East Sussex Record Office (L/AE/15 – 17 December 1788).

[2] Charlotte Smith to Thomas Cadell (L/AE/22 – 9 May 1789).

[3] Judith Phillips Stanton (ed.), *The Collected Letters of Charlotte Smith* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 2003), pp. 20–1.

[4] Charlotte Smith to Thomas Cadell (L/AE/31 – 1 August 1789).

[5] Charlotte Smith to Thomas Cadell L/AE/34 – 13 October 1789).

Emmeline, had already achieved self-assurance as a novelist and possessed sufficient faith in her own powers immediately to begin challenging them within a larger compass. If the novel is remarkable for its length, it is also carefully crafted. One can, for instance, observe an almost symmetrical nature to its extended plot, which moves us from the rural peace of Grasmere to London high society in volume I; from there to the spa culture of Bristol Hot Wells and the scrounging commercial ethos practised in the port of Bristol in volume II; then comes a return to a wholly different London scene in the middle volume, centred on the wrong side of the Thames in the King's Bench prison and accompanied by the inexorable pall of death; in volume IV, within a pervasive sense of calamity, accumulating financial distresses afflict all the young characters at the novel's center; and in volume V what promises relief to them instead precipitates all the major characters into further tests of their moral values so that in this final volume the rural peace of Grasmere becomes a refuge from every other scene in the novel. Even in that haven there is no prospect of happiness or self-fulfilment until extraordinarily late in its course. Smith's sense that her plot contained the seeds of a sixth volume suggests that she saw the potential for a further protraction of its darkening entropy, of a kind we might associate a century later with the fiction of Thomas Hardy. Convention dictated that *Ethelinde* would eke out a happy ending, but tragedy shadows the novel down to its last chapters.

Along with the symmetries of setting we can discern a remarkable balancing of characters and their situations that works not so much to inform a consistent thematic moral patterning as to forestall our deriving any facile coherence from it. The hero, Charles Montgomery, has an aristocratic lineage, but as there is no money accompanying it he might as well be a commoner. The Chestervilles likewise have pretensions to high society, but only the elder son, Lord Hawkhurst, inherits the wealth that allows his family to thrive in that world. The remainder of the family scarcely possesses the means of subsistence. For all Montgomery's noble lineage, his maternal grandmother was the mistress of a lord, and her two children as they set out in life lack either legitimacy or fortune, though it is one of these, Harcourt, who ends up with the immense wealth that he will share with his own surviving daughter, who is also herself illegitimate. The question, then, is not who has the right to inherit what as much as it is how arbitrary and finally absurd are the social codes that confer legitimacy and the wealth that accompanies it.

The wealth that does not arise from inheritance is sorely tainted in this novel. What is stable stems from imperial exploitation. Montgomery's decision to make his fortune in India, though he cannot in good conscience descend to the level of inhumanity necessary to that end, suggests how compromised is everyone who must resort to commerce in this soci-

ety. The alternative to the East Indies is the West Indies. Maltravers's great fortune stems from that trade, as does the lesser, but still significant, establishment of the upstart Ludfords. Harcourt appears to show that it is still possible to keep one's heart pure in such a commercial atmosphere, but how can one even talk about purity in a commerce dependent on a slave economy? In the end it is the spreading about of the Harcourt and Maltravers fortunes that relieves the financial distresses that frustrate the young lovers at the centre of the novel; so all of them are finally dependent upon the slave economy of islands half a world away to allow them to exist in the serene rural reclusion that is the ideal celebrated by this novel.

The other sources of wealth in *Ethelinde* are even more pernicious and amount to different variations on a common element of greed: that is to say, fortune hunting and gambling. The extended Chesterville family is involved in deep play on both fronts. What is ruinous in Colonel Chesterville and his son is likewise the addiction of the Hawkhursts, whether in frequenting the nightly table of cards or scheming to ensnare Harcourt. Yet what is represented as vicious behaviour among the very rich is an essential necessity of life among the very poor. The trip to the West Indies undertaken by Harry Chesterville and his bride Victorine has the sole purpose of tapping into her father's prosperity. That she has a claim on it despite her illegitimacy does not alter the inherent venality of her husband's expectations. But then, again, Montgomery's trip to the east is essentially for the same aims, though he is unsure of whom he must exploit to earn the income essential to insure his marriage and, in the end, cannot compel himself to make his fortune by the underhanded means widely practised by his countrymen. Typical of Smith's sprawling plots, the margins of her fiction present further variations on the central themes. The horseman Woolaston lives off shady gambling and is the novel's major success as a fortune hunter. The wealthy fool Davenant systematically has his pockets picked by Lord Danesforte. Royston, whose wife gambles on money and romance, aimlessly seeks his fortune through government toadying, which, though he does it very poorly, sustains for him and his family a grand home in the most fashionable part of London. Across the Thames lies the novel's true metaphorical centre, the King's Bench prison, where are confined those who can't pay the bills to stay afloat in this sordid economy.

Charlotte Smith knew a great deal about how to make money in the West Indies, since she kept her father-in-law's books on his plantations there, and she knew a great deal as well about gambling, since her feckless husband did a lot of it. She especially knew about the King's Bench prison since he and she and their large brood of children landed there in 1783. Indeed, it seems highly likely that she is repeating the contours of her experience there in her conception of the novel, whose opening chapter

takes place during the summer of the next year, 1784. That date helps to determine the ages of the central chartacters. Charles Montgomery is an infant at the time of the Battle of Minden in August 1759, having been born in the middle of June of that year. In 1784, then, he would have been in his mid-twenties, half-way between the ages of Ethelinde, who is not yet eighteen at the novel's beginning, and Sir Edward Newenden who is thirty-one. Sir Edward's sister, Eleanor Newenden, in turn is her brother's junior by four years.

That balancing of ages again indicates Smith's care with the essential components of her plot, as she reinforces the tensions of a conventional romantic triangle with her customary attention to emotional realism. Sir Edward's dismal marriage leaves him open to romantic entanglement, and he is both young enough to feel the irresistible force of a serious infatuation and sufficiently mature to know it must be repressed. '[H]is life a perpetual conflict of contending passions' (p. 140), he exists in a state of totalized frustration. Lacking Sir Edward's fortune and more successful than he in love, Montgomery yet inhabits the same emotional state, 'torn with those contending passions, which he was from his disposition accustomed to feel in all their violence' (p. 120). Smith's skill in depicting the two young men as both admiring and resentful of each other is, perhaps, the signal accomplishment of *Ethelinde*. Its tensions slowly increase through the course of the novel, culminating in the powerful scene in volume IV, chapter X, in which at the point of their eruption into a violent confrontation Sir Edward unburdens his heart to Montgomery and they achieve a sense of fraternity in their suffering. That the refined emotional delicacy of this scene is played out between men is as new to the subgenre of the courtship novel as, on a more personal plane, it represents a clear advance in Smith's artistry. Here she enters into the first lists of fiction.

As sympathetic as she is to the plight of two exemplary men, however, Charlotte Smith is well aware that, in her society, women bear the heavy burden of male contentions. Ethelinde herself, whom the *Monthly Review* represented as, like Richardon's Sir Charles Grandison, simply too perfect a protagonist,[1] has no other choice but perfection if she is going to maintain her equilibrium in the emotional whirlwinds generated by Montgomery and Sir Edward, and then exacerbated by her father and brother. With her small fortune essentially squandered by the two latter, she has no expectations, and, when she finds herself alone, she is without protection in a world in which any young woman of personal beauty is under constant threat. Her enforced passivity at the centre of male rivalries generates its own intensity of frustration, as she herself falls prey to

[1] *Monthly Review* ns 2 (1790), p. 162.

'that romantic infatuation which she had so often condemned as weakness when it had occurred in real life' (p. 81), without possessing any means of escaping its misfortunes or acting to assure its promises. Indeed, within this entropic energy field grinding its way towards inanition, by the late chapters of the novel Ethelinde is reconciling herself to a life without emotional or physical fulfilment as seemingly the natural destiny of a woman.

Even for a novel of sensibility *Ethelinde* is astonishingly lachrymose. Working from the supposition of her cultural moment that repressed feelings must be vented or they would occasion serious physical malady, Smith enforces the sense of endemic frustration of her novel by continually opening the floodgates of tears. This may be the oddest feature of her novel, and, more than two centuries after its publication, a reader could be forgiven for thinking it a mere stylistic eccentricity that more realistic fiction in a new century would outgrow. But Smith is here negotiating between the novel of sensibility – and here, more precisely, fiction of continually frustrated sensibility – and the romance of real life. Countering the emotional hysteria of her principal figures, she presents a veritable array of characters whose inability to weep we can easily understand as a sign of moral inadequacy or even turpitude. But even among these figures there are gradations, so that Smith can, by forcing her two subgenres into contention, at once enforce and deconstruct the ethos of sensibility. Ethelinde's fear that she is enacting the heroine of a novel rather than living within a realistic appraisal of her prospects, as cited above, is balanced by the satiric portrait of the affected Clarinthia Ludford who is deeply unhappy because she 'had not been able to secure one of those attachments, at once violent and hopeless, of which she had read so much' (p. 419). As we smile at the excess of this characterization, we assuredly recognize in it a summation of the emotional dynamics of the love triangle at the novel's centre. Similarly, Ellen Newenden's impatience with the emotional whirlwinds of the protagonists strikes a common chord with the reader. Although her knowledge of real life, which seems mainly confined to foxhounds and horses, is too limited to allow her to avoid her own impending disaster, given the circle in which she lives she is not exactly a fool to complain: 'Do have done with these perpetual lachrymals; really it hurts even my spirits to hear of nothing but squabbling and sorrowing' (p. 291). And though Ethelinde's brother is crass, a reader may also half agree with his issuing this injunction to Ethelinde: 'Upon my life, Ethy, I wish you happy, and therefore wish you would get this whining romantic nonsense out of your head about inviolable friendship and everlasting love: stuff that you have picked up from the novels and story books you are eternally reading. In real life such *things are not*' (pp. 453–4).

None of the reviews, however, reacts adversely to the charged emotional hothouse at the centre of this novel, which should indicate that the ethos of the novel of sensibility has been so honed over a generation as to create a culture of expectations among its readers. Mary Wollstonecraft, writing in the *Analytical Review*, does iterate her usual worry about young women being presented with an overly delicate heroine as a model.[1] But, except for the model of perfection exemplified by the eponymous heroine, the reviews universally praise the variety and shading of the characterizations. The *Critical Review* finds the work less compelling than *Emmeline* mainly on the basis of its 'improper length: it fatigues from its expansion … and … would have been found more interesting … if the whole had been comprized in three volumes'.[2] Both the *Monthly* and *Critical Reviews*, thus, seem to wish for a more conventional novel, perhaps even a more conventionally lady-like novel. The *Monthly* characterizes the style as lacking 'that boldness of figure, that warmth of colouring, that thorough knowledge of men and manners, which can alone give the stamp of *superior excellence* to a novel' and patronizingly settles for the lesser satisfaction of 'that gentleness, that lovely simplicity, that nice sensibility, that truly feminine beauty' it thought to be Smith's natural *métier*.[3] None of the critical notices seems aware of the implications, not just personal but social and political, of a novel so concentrated on a universal frustration of expectations. In this characteristic *Ethelinde* seems most to distinguish itself from *Emmeline*, its predecessor, and to look forward far into the ensuing century.

Perhaps the most interesting feature of the critical reaction is its conspicuous attention to the natural description of Smith's landscapes. Wollstonecraft praises her for looking 'at nature with a poet's eye', adding that the 'same quick sensibility which enabled her to produce such apt similes in her sonnets, led her to catch all those alluring charms of nature, which form such enchanting back grounds to the historical part of the pictures she displays in these volumes, and gives them sentiment and interest'.[4] Similarly, though in rather fulsome rhetoric, the *Monthly Review* represents itself as 'so much pleased … with the *ruralities*, with the pages descriptive of the more beautiful scenes in nature, that we cannot but wish that the fair authoress had more frequently indulged her talent in the same way. As her imagination is really poetical, she sometimes considerably

[1] *Analytical Review* 5 (1789), p. 485; reprinted in *The Works of Mary Wollstonecraft*, ed. by Janet Todd and Marilyn Butler, 7 vols (New York: New York University Press, 1978; rpt London: Pickering & Chatto, 1989), vol. vii, p. 189.

[2] *Critical Review* ns 3 (1791), p. 58.

[3] *Monthly Review* ns 2 (1790), p. 162.

[4] *Analytical Review* 5 (1789), p. 484; reprinted in Todd and Butler (eds), *The Works*, vol. vii, p. 188.

heightens our British scenery, and almost brings the Thessalian Tempe to our view.'[1] What is most intriguing about this reaction is less its accuracy or its characterization of Smith as a poet within her novels than its topical resonance. Within the decade another poet who was something of a disciple to Smith and learned greatly from her, William Wordsworth, would return to the Lake District and settle not in his native locale, but rather in the village where *Ethelinde, or the Recluse of the Lake* is centred. And finding, as he titled his great poem of rural celebration, his 'Home at Grasmere', Wordsworth would then plan to undertake a major epic effort, conceived as the capstone of his career, a life-work that would carry his name through the annals of British literature. Surely, it cannot be merely coincidental that his title – *The Recluse* – would directly reflect Smith's own. In this respect, though never finished, this project is the most enduring critical notice of *Ethelinde*.

[1] *Monthly Review* ns 2 (1790), p. 165.

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ETHELINDE,

OR THE

RECLUSE OF THE LAKE.

BY

CHARLOTTE SMITH.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

THE SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR T. CADELL, IN THE STRAND.
M.DCC.XC.

TO HER ROYAL HIGHNESS

THE

DUCHESS OF CUMBERLAND.[1]

MADAM,

As Dedications have been too frequently disgusting to the Patron, and disgraceful to the Author, it is my Ambition, in dedicating these little Volumes to your Royal Highness, to express only the Dictates of Gratitude in the Language of Respect.

My own Heart would reproach me should I fail to declare my deep Sense of that gracious Condescension with which you deigned to interest yourself in the Situation of my Children, whose opulent Relations and future Prospects prevent them not from being at present wholly dependent on their mother.

While the Motive that induced your Royal Highness to allow me the Honour of prefixing your name to this Work has evinced the Goodness of your Heart, I must confess that the Distinction so graciously conferred upon my Book has considerably increased the Diffidence and Apprehension of its Author. It is impossible for me to present to the Public a second Novel, under Circumstances so flattering, without fearing that any little Merit it may have must appear inadequate to the Favour it has received.

I have the Honor to be,
MADAM,
Your Royal Highness's
most obliged and devoted Servant,
CHARLOTTE SMITH.

ETHELINDE,
OR THE
RECLUSE OF THE LAKE.

CHAPTER I.

ON the borders of the small but beautiful lake called Grasmere Water,[2] in the country of Cumberland, is Grasmere Abbey, an old seat belonging to the family of Newenden. The abbey, founded by Ranulph Earl of Chester,[3] for forty Cistersian monks, was among those dissolved by Henry the Eighth; by whom it was given, with its extensive royalties, to the family of Brandon; from whence it descended by a female to Sir Edward Newenden, its present possessor.

His father, a man of boundless profusion, had at his death left every part of his property deeply mortgaged: but Sir Edward, on succeeding to it, had married the heiress of Mr. Maltravers (a gentleman who had acquired an immense fortune in the East Indies); and he had retrieved the fortune of his house, and disembarrassed his estates, by this opulent alliance.

Though much attached to Grasmere Abbey, which he venerated as the abode of his ancestors, and loved as the scene of his early pleasures, Sir Edward had not seen it for above four years. Lady Newenden had never been farther from the metropolis than to some of those places of public resort where all its conveniences and amusements are to be enjoyed; and her Ladyship had conceived a dread of a journey into Cumberland, which Sir Edward, to whom her slightest wish was a law, had never earnestly pressed her to conquer: but in the summer of 1784, as his presence there was absolutely necessary, he besought her, as a favour, to accompany him thither; and as a favour, granted with the most prefect consciousness of its value, she at length deigned to consent.

It was however almost the end of July before her Ladyship gave this reluctant acquiescence: and then, as she persuaded herself that she was to be condemned for two months to a desart, she had accepted the offer of Miss Newenden, the sister of Sir Edward, to accompany her; and she had invited her cousin Ethelinde Chesterville, and Mr. Davenant, a young man

not yet of age, who was distantly related to Sir Edward, and was also his ward, to be of her party.

This gentleman, who was still at Oxford, arrived from thence at the house of Sir Edward, near Windsor, the evening preceding the day on which they were to set out from thence to London, on their way to the North. About twelve the next morning, therefore, he handed Lady Newenden to her coach, after she had taken leave of her three beautiful children. But Sir Edward lingered behind: he kissed repeatedly each of the lovely little creatures, earnestly recommended them to the care of their attendants; and when on the point of quitting them, again returned, renewed his caresses, and repeated his entreaties that they might have every attention shewn them during the absence of their mother. Then reluctantly tearing himself from them, he proceeded with his wife and Mr. Davenant to the house of Mr. Maltravers, her father, where they dined; and in the evening arrived at their house in Hanover Square, where they were to meet Miss Newenden and Ethelinde Chesterville.

They found Miss Newenden already there. As no great affection had ever subsisted between her and Lady Newenden, they met without any warm expressions of pleasure. Their characters and manners were indeed wholly dissimilar. But though there was little friendship between them, there was less rivalry: the indolent apathy of Lady Newenden was not disturbed by the boisterous vivacity of her sister-in-law; who, occupied almost entirely by the stable or the kennel, considered her Ladyship as a pretty, insipid doll, whose mind was a mere blank, and whose person was fitted only to exhibit to advantage the feminine fineries which she herself despised – her own dress being usually such as was distinguished from that of a man only by the petticoat.

The first short compliments had no sooner passed, than Miss Newenden, addressing herself to her brother and Mr. Davenant, lamented that she had been prevented sending forward her horses the day before, as she had intended. 'That devilish fellow, Jack Wildman's groom,' said she, 'put a confounded kicking horse into the stable with Meteor, the day before yesterday; and the dear soul, in kicking at him in his turn, has got a strain in the back sinews. I am wretched about it; for I am sure he must be fired.[4] He'll be of no use to me all the summer, and I question if I shall get him sound by next season.' – Sir Edward heard her with more civility than interest; but Davenant, listening more attentively to her distress, they immediately began to consult on the probable advantages of a cold charge;[5] and it was agreed that, as soon as a celebrated farrier arrived, who was to be consulted, they would go together to the stable to inspect with him the condition of Meteor.

Their discourse was interrupted, but not broken off, by the entrance of Colonel Chesterville and his daughter, neither of whom Mr. Davenant had

ever seen before. Sir Edward introduced him to both. He bowed slightly to each; and then turning immediately to Miss Newenden, he continued with her a dissertation on the nature and consequences of a strain in the back sinews.

Colonel Chesterville, now near fifty, had been a remarkably handsome man. Military service in various countries, and sorrows suffered in his own, had had more share than time in making the strong lines of his sensible and manly countenance with something of peculiar dejection. His manners, though perfectly those of a man of fashion, had yet a too visible coldness towards persons for whom he felt no particular esteem; but when he conversed with those for whom his heart owned an interest, especially when he spoke to or of his daughter, all that fire and energy, which had been the leading feature of his character in the younger part of his life, seemed to return. His affections were almost entirely centered in his children. His son, who had entered early into the army, and was now with his regiment at Gibraltar, had by some youthful indiscretions taught the Colonel the anxieties of a father: but Ethelinde was in his opinion the most perfect of human beings; yet those who knew her best found but little partiality or exaggeration in the exalted opinion he entertained of her.

Few girls of her age, for Ethelinde was not yet eighteen, can be said to have any decided character at all; but the circumstances of her life had taught her to think and to feel. In her twelfth year she had lost her mother by a lingering decline: and the deep melancholy into which her surviving parent had fallen in consequence of that event, the thoughtless conduct of her brother, and the increasing anxiety which her father felt either from that or some other cause, had obscured her natural vivacity, without diminishing her personal charms; and had given her a taste for solitude and reflection, without lessening the natural sweetness of her temper. Her father's sorrows had redoubled her attachment towards him; her affection for her brother was increased rather than diminished, since his imprudence had made him unhappy. To her he had disclosed his entangled circumstances, even before he dared make them known to his father: and it was by her intercession that the Colonel had so easily pardoned him a second time; and had parted from him, when he went to his regiment, without any marks of displeasure.

Ethelinde however saw, with great concern, that since that period her father had been more than usually unhappy; and that, though he was less at home than was his general custom, he could with difficulty conceal, when they were together, the anguish that preyed on his heart.

Conscious of his own dejection, and fearing for the health and spirits of his daughter, which were evidently affected by it, he had, however unwilling to part with her, promoted her going to Grasmere Abbey with her cousin Lady Newenden; and when she objected to it, because she was

unwilling to leave him alone, he told her that he should take the opportunity of her absence to pay a visit of some months to his friend General Sandys, in the neighbourhood of Bath. Ethelinde and her father were now to part, for a few months only; but even so short a separation, at the moment it was to take place, appeared so terrible to Colonel Chesterville, that he lost all his fortitude when it arrived. He had continued a very insipid conversation with Lady Newenden till a late hour, because he had not resolution enough to bid adieu to his daughter; but finding that the longer he delayed it the more painful it became, he at length arose, and approaching her, he kissed her, and bade her hastily farewell. He trembled while he spoke; and Ethelinde, who felt and shared his emotion, found her eyes fill with tears, and her hand involuntarily clasped in his, as if to detain him; while he, turning to Lady Newenden, said – 'To you, Madam, and to Sir Edward, I confide almost the only good I have on earth.' – Lady Newenden, curtseying, said something in a low voice; but Sir Edward, advancing, cried with mingled politeness and tenderness – 'We accept the trust, my dear Colonel, with the utmost pleasure; and we consider it as an high honor and happiness that we are thought worthy of a charge so precious.'

Ethelinde held out her hand to her father; he pressed it to his heart; and then bowing to Miss Newenden and Mr. Davenant (who gazed at him with an unmeaning stare), he hurried down stairs, and left the house.

Ehelinde finding it impossible to stifle her concern, or stop her tears, hastily left the room. She was no sooner gone than Lady Newenden, who had thrown herself on a sopha, from which she had arisen on the Colonel's departure, cried, in her indolent way – 'I wonder now what occasion Colonel Chesterville has to make such a fuss about parting from Ethy, as if she was never to come back again; it is really almost alarming to undertake the care of a person who is made of so much consequence.'

'Surely, my love,' said Sir Edward, mildly, 'it is very natural to be attached to such a daughter, who is not only so extremely amiable and interesting, but is, as he told you, almost the only good he has on earth.'

'Lord, brother!' exclaimed Miss Newenden, 'it is amazing to me that you can think her so handsome: I don't know whether it is quite civil to dispute the beauty of Lady Newenden's relation, but really now I have wondered an hundred times what you can possibly find in her; and I am surprised,' added she, turning to Lady Newenden, 'that your Ladyship allows Sir Edward to express these violent partialities.'

'It is quite indifferent to me,' answered she, with a sort of languid haughtiness. 'For my own part, Ethy seems to me to be just like other misses: I see nothing extraordinary in her, either one way or the other; though her father has always made such a racket with her, that it is surprising she is not more pert and vain than girls generally are. If she had been

entitled to a great fortune, he could not have lavished more expence upon her, nor could there have been more rout about her beauty and her wit.'

'Has she no fortune, than?' said Davenant, who had been drumming on the arm of the sopha, and whistling a few bars of an hunting song. – This question, by his turning half round towards Miss Newenden, seemed to be addressed to her.

'Upon my soul I don't know. Lady Newenden, what is Miss Chesterville's fortune? Here is Tom Davenant enquiring; perhaps he is smitten, and means to make proposals.'

'Indeed,' said Lady Newenden, 'I cannot inform him: her mother was my father's sister; and I have heard that she and Chesterville ran away together, when he was an ensign, a great many years ago. She was dead before we came to England, and I never enquired much about them.'

'Colonel Chesterville,' said Sir Edward, who seemed very little pleased with the conversation, 'is a younger brother of a noble house. While yet very young, he married one of the sisters of my wife's father, against the wishes of his own family, and indeed of hers; for he had only an ensigncy[6] in a marching regiment: all his hopes of promotion depended on the interest of his father; and there was reason to fear that those prospects would be blasted by his marriage. His father, however, though he never was thoroughly reconciled, failed not to promote his interest in the army; and gave him at his death the same portion as he left to his other younger children: since which, some of his brothers are dead, and of their shares he participates; so that, besides his regiment, he has an handsome income. Were however his circumstances such as you, Nelly (turning to his sister), seem fond of representing them, he might still claim the respect and veneration of the world for the goodness of his heart, as well as for his long military services.'

'Dear Sir Edward,' cried Miss Newenden, 'I don't want, I am sure, to represent him as being in bad circumstances; only you know that he has had the character of playing monstrous deep.'

'I own I have heard that he plays; but I never saw any reason to believe, since I have known him, that he indulges that propensity to the prejudice of his fortune; and I know him to be so passionately fond of his children, particularly of Ethelinde, that I am persuaded he gratifies himself in nothing that is likely to be prejudicial to them.'

Supper being now announced, Sir Edward sent a servant to summon Ethelinde, who instantly attended the table; her eyes were red and swollen, and frequent sighs stole from her bosom; but she struggled to conquer the pain she felt, and would have taken some share in the conversation, had not Miss Newenden and Mr. Davenant almost entirely engrossed it, and talked on subjects quite unknown to her – such as racing and hunting. Sometimes Davenant looked for a moment at her, as if

trying to discover the beauty in whose praise Sir Edward had spoken; but he otherwise noticed her very little. Miss Newenden seemed not to know that such a person was in the room; and Lady Newenden, who never spoke much, did not appear to consider herself obliged to make any unusual exertions for the entertainment of her own relation; and feeling less and less contented with her northern journey as it more nearly approached, she sat in an indolent yet somewhat sullen way, till the cloth was removed, and then retired to her own apartment.

The easy and affectionate attention which Ethelinde ever found in the behaviour of Sir Edward, made her more than amends for the indifference of the rest. He had now however some business to settle with his steward, before he went into the North, which obliged him to leave the room immediately after supper. Ethelinde soon retired to her chamber; and Miss Newenden and Mr. Davenant went together to the stable, where they remained in conference with the grooms till it was time to separate for the night.

The next morning they began their journey; during the first two days of which, nothing remarkable passed. Lady Newenden, in proportion as she left London more distant, seemed to leave her good humour also; and she failed not to express her dislike of the roads, the country, and the inns, as if to remind her husband at every stage of the greatness of the sacrifice she was making – while he endeavoured, by the most attentive and tender manners, to oblige and entertain her; and with the most patient endurance of her pettish arrogance, and childish caprice, tried to convince her that he was sensible of her condescension in undertaking the journey. But he too often found that all his endeavours served only to increase her discontent; and that the more earnestly he attempted to please her, the more difficult she became to please.

Her Ladyship, whose delicate frame and irritable nerves suffered extremely from the fatigue of travelling, usually retired to her bed as soon as they arrived at the inn where they rested for the night: Miss Newenden and Davenant then sat down to piquet; and Sir Edward and Ethelinde were left to entertain each other with a book, or such conversation as the occurrences or remarks of the day afforded them.

CHAPTER II.

A FEW of these conversations convinced Sir Edward that the winning manners and lovely person of Ethelinda were her least perfections. The solidity of her understanding, the gentleness of her temper, and the softness of her heart, interested, while the vivacity of her conversation entertained him; and as she every day gained on his good opinion, he could not help reflecting with some concern[a] on her situation. He had heard, in general conversation, that Colonel Chesterville had only a very small fortune; and from some circumstances which had occurred, he feared that his son's extravagance, if not his own propensity to gaming, had considerably diminished it: and Sir Edward could not without great pain represent to himself the probability there was that this young woman, so lovely in mind and person, might be left a necessitous dependant on the family of Maltravers; while all his tenderness for Lady Newenden prevented him not from feeling that she had not that temper which was likely to soften or diminish the miseries of such dependance.

Mr. Maltravers, like most men who accumulate sudden and opulent fortunes, was wrapped up in the contemplation of his own consequence, and in the project he was ever forming to aggrandize his family by procuring an higher title for Sir Edward Newenden. Mrs. Maltravers had been a celebrated beauty; but of an obscure family, and destitute of fortune: she had therefore gone to the East Indies early in life, where those personal advantages had induced Mr. Maltravers to marry her, though he was many years older than she was. At the age of forty-two or three, she still retained much of her beauty; and, though a grandmother, was extremely unwilling to believe that she must relinquish all pretensions to admiration. This disposition did not greatly tend to enlarge her heart towards the young and beautiful: those indeed who have so great a partiality to their own perfections, being rarely found capable of doing justice to the perfection of others.

The other relations of Ethelinde were an uncle, who inherited the small paternal estate of his ancestors in the West of England; and[b] who, retaining the rustic simplicity of an English yeoman, had brought up a numerous family to rural œconomy. Her only surviving aunt was the wife of a rich merchant at Bristol.

Of these relations, Mr. Maltravers, since his return from the East Indies, had taken little and reluctant notice; Ethelinde herself owing the preference which had been shewn her to her alliance with a noble family on the side of her father.

Colonel Chesterville's elder brother, now a peer, had married an extravagant woman of fashion. Embarrassed in his circumstances, and supporting his rank with difficulty, he had little power, and less inclination, to interest himself for the family of his brother; and his wife, having several daughters whose establishment depended entirely on their personal attractions, could not help seeing how much Ethelinde excelled them, and therefore she gave little encouragement to her to be often with them. Thus, in the midst of numerous relations on both sides, Ethelinde, amiable as she was, had few friends; and though she complained not of the little affection she found from them, Sir Edward saw that she felt and lamented it.

The gentle sensibility of her heart, thus forbidden to extend itself towards her relations, centered more warmly in her father and brother. Next to them, she had learned to love Sir Edward Newenden, from whom she always received attention, tenderness, and respect. She considered him as an elder brother, and was always happy in his company, and delighted with his praises; while, in cultivating so fine an understanding, Sir Edward found a new source of pleasure and gratification. During the journey, they read together in Italian and Spanish; in the first of which Ethelinde was a tolerable proficient, and in the latter he had been her instructor. Lady Newenden, on whose education great sums had been lavished, had learned every thing, but could do nothing; nor had she the least ambition to be any thing but a very pretty woman. As long, therefore, as Ethelinde disputed not with her the palm of beauty, she was content to leave her all the praise that should be due to knowledge; and her Ladyship beheld with great apparent indifference the preference which Sir Edward sometimes too evidently gave to the society of Ethelinde.

Davenant had a mind which, resembling the imaginary qualities of the cameleon, received its predominant colour from the object which was most immediately near it. Deficient in that strength of intellect which gives determinate character, he was

'Every thing by turns, and nothing long.'[7]

At Oxford, he drank, without loving wine; and kept hunters, without loving violent exercise. In town, he sauntered about all the morning, without pleasure or pursuit; and went to a gaming table at night, though he always lost his money – an operation to which he had a very great aversion.

He was the mere creature of the day: his dress, his expences, his pleasures, his sentiments, being regulated by the opinion of others, rather than by his own inclinations.

From that facility of temper, which at an early period had been remarked in him, Sir Edward had been taught to hope that he might be rendered a useful, if not a brilliant member of society. But his guardian soon found, that the same easiness of disposition which would, if he had fallen into good company only, have rendered him respectable, now laid him open to the influence of numberless debauched and dissipated young men, who, without having more sense, had more vivacity than himself. Of these he became the copyist; and committed folly with no other hope, and to no other end, than to obtain the suffrage of fools.

His fortune however was not yet hurt; and Sir Edward, who had seen but little of him since the preceding year (because he had passed the last vacation in another part of England), still hoped that, by detaching him from the society which had misled him, and opening to him new pursuits of domestic comfort and literary amusements, he might give new energy to his mind, and greater rectitude to his morals. Davenant however had not been three days with Sir Edward, before he saw the fallacy of this hope, and of that which had for a moment led him to suppose that his ward might become worthy of the honor of being the lover and the husband of Ethelinde Chesterville.

Occupied entirely by Miss Newenden, Davenant noticed her very little. Yet neither the person or manners of Miss Newenden were calculated to attract esteem or admiration: her person, without being tall, was hard and masculine; her features, though not large, were sharp and harsh; and, from being constantly exposed to the air, her complexion had contracted an unpleasant redness, particularly about her nose and forehead, and[a] gave it a certain coarseness, which, without adding to the general spirit of her face, certainly increased the fire, or rather the fierceness, of her quick grey eyes. She had lost her mother when she was not more than ten years old; and from that period had been left entirely to the care of a governess, who found it more to her own interest to gratify than to contradict her. Her father, himself a keen sportsman, was pleased with the courage and agility she shewed on horseback; and had been accustomed to indulge her in following the hounds, while yet a child. Animated by the praises that were then bestowed upon her, she had imbibed a notion, that to possess a good horse was the first point requisite to human happiness; and to be able to ride well, the first of human perfections. Her father dying when she was about sixteen, she became entitled to the whole of what was at his death to descend to younger children; as she was an only daughter, and had no brother but Sir Edward. This sum amounted to about sixteen thousand pounds; a fortune which would probably have procured her a respectable

establishment:[8] but Miss Newenden, far from having any views of that sort, immediately on becoming of age,[a] furnished her stables with valuable hunters, doubled her number of grooms, and took a small hunting seat in Dorsetshire; where, though she sometimes prevailed on a maiden aunt to reside with her, she oftener passed whole winters alone. Sir Edward, who would have loved her extremely if he had met with any affection in return, often pressed her to take up her abode part of the year with him; but she seldom accepted his invitations, unless for a few weeks at a time, either during an hard frost, or some capital sale at Tattersall's.[9] As she advanced in life (and she was now near eight-and-twenty) her passion for field sports, for the stable, and the kennel, increased rather than diminished. Many who knew that her fortune would be convenient to them, had, during the first years of her being mistress of her actions, addressed her with offers of marriage: but she had without hesitation dismissed them all; and though she still suffered some of them to attend on her in her favourite amusement, and shewed frequent preference to those who best understood the merits of an horse, or who displayed the most judgment in the hunt, she never thought of marrying, and soon ceased to be considered as an object of pursuit. Nothing indeed but her fortune had ever made her appear so; and the gentlemen who had with that view addressed her, were easily repulsed; and desisted, without any great pain, from addressing a young woman who had little other merit, and no other language and manners, than those of stable boy.

The vapid and vacant mind of Davenant, ever open to momentary impressions, was amused with her singularity, and he fancied himself instructed by her skill in horse flesh. To keep up a conversation with Sir Edward, demanded more knowledge than he had acquired, and more attention than he was willing to exert: from him therefore he generally tried to escape. Yet in despite of that imbecillity of mind, which ever required that he should be told what he was to like or dislike, he was often struck with the animated beauty of Ethelinde; and as she conversed with Sir Edward by the table where he was at cards with Miss Newenden, he insensibly neglected his game while he gazed at her. But from these short fits of absence he was generally recalled by Miss Newenden, with 'Come, Tom! what the devil are you thinking of? If you cannot attend, I'll play no more.' Startled by this reproof, Davenant again attended to his cards, and seemed to have forgotten the object that had thus momentarily drawn his attention from them.

As they travelled very slowly, lest Lady Newenden should be too much fatigued, it was not till the afternoon of the sixth day after quitting London that they arrived within a few miles of Grasmere Abbey. As soon as the tall blue heads of the fells were very distinctly seen, Sir Edward, who was then in the coach with Lady Newenden, his sister, and Ethelinde,

expressed forcibly the pleasure he felt in seeing them. 'They are,' said he, delighted at the view,[a] 'as the sight of old friends; and bring back to my mind the pleasant days I used to pass when, at the holidays, I went down to Grasmere Abbey with my father. On that towering hill to the left, which at this distance seems an immense pile of purple rock, the first grouse fell by my gun. I was not more than ten years old; and the delight with which I saw Humphrey, my old servant, put it in the net – the triumph with which I shewed it, on my return to my father – I shall never forget. Look, my love,' continued he, 'at the wild grandeur of that varied and bold outline; observe the effect of the sun's rays on the summits of the craggs, while the large and swelling clouds that pass over seem almost to touch them, and give them numberless shades in their progress.'

'I see but little beauty in those dreary looking mountains,' answered Lady Newenden, with a cold and disdainful smile. 'Perhaps you had better apply to Ethelinde. You may teach *her,* as she is a young lady of *sublime taste,* you know, to admire what I, who am a creature without any, really want faculties to enjoy.'

There was something in this speech more disobliging than usual; but Sir Edward, turning to Ethelinde, said, with assumed gaiety, 'Well then, my fair cousin, I must have *you* for my pupil; and you most learn to admire my country, for admired it must positively be. And you, Ellen,' addressing himself to his sister, 'have you acquired, by absence and refinement, a dislike to the scenes where you passed your early life? and do you prefer the flat uninteresting country round London?'

'No,' answered she, 'not exactly the country round London: but I like many countries[10] better than I do this, to be sure. Great part of Dorsetshire, for example, and Hampshire; where one may gallop upon turf for ten or twelve miles an end, without check or leap. This is well enough for the eye; but I own, for myself, I cannot think it very desirable otherwise.'

Sir Edward, smiling at an objection so strongly in character, then dropped the conversation, and soon after got on horse-back. Miss Newenden, however, who sometimes rode with him, now remained in the coach; where, as they advanced among the fells, a deeper gloom fell on the countenance of Lady Newenden: Miss Newenden took out of the coach pocket the Sporting Calendar, where she was endeavouring to trace the pedigree of an horse, about which she held an argument with Davenant the evening before: and, as neither of them spoke to Ethelinde, she contemplated without interruption the novelty and grandeur of the scenery around her.

She had been much accustomed to travel with her father; who, having himself an elegant and enlightened understanding, had improved that turn for observation which genius had given to the mind of his daughter; and she had learned to see the face of nature with the taste of a painter, and the

enthusiasm of a poet: while to Lady Newenden all was a blank, which offered nothing to gratify either her personal vanity, or the consequence she assumed from her splendid fortune.

Their road became now more slow by the necessity of winding among the hills; and every mile presented some new beauty, affording to Ethelinde the purest and most exquisite delight. At length they came within view of Grasmere Water, and passing between two enormous fells – one of which descended, clothed with wood, almost perpendicularly to the lake; while the other hung over it, in bold masses of staring rock – they turned round a sharp point formed by the root of the latter; and entering a lawn, the abbey, embosomed among the hills, and half concealed by old elms which seemed coeval with the building, appeared with its gothic windows, and long pointed roof of a pale grey stone, bearing every where the marks of great antiquity. The great projecting buttrasses were covered with old fruit trees, which from their knotted trunks seemed to have been planted by the first inhabitants of the mansion. In some of the windows the heavy stone work still remained, and they were totally darkened at the top by stained glass: in others; sashes had been substituted; and the windows had been contracted by brick work, to make them appear square within: but, even in these, the stained glass had been replaced, which generally represented the arms of Newenden surcharged with those of Brandon.

When the coach stopped, Sir Edward appeared at the door of it; and taking the hand of Lady Newenden, he led her into an hall, saluted her tenderly, and bade her welcome to Grasmere Abbey.

Instead, however, of attempting to gratify him by expressing any pleasure at that which evidently gave him so much, she turned abruptly away, and exclaimed – 'Don't keep me, Sir Edward, in this great cold place; it strikes as damp as a family vault. I hope you have ordered fires. I assure you that my departure will be a much fitter subject of congratulation than my arrival.'

Sir Edward, a good deal hurt, led her without speaking into a long and old-fashioned, but well-furnished parlour, where he left her, and returned towards Ethelinde and his sister. He met Ethelinde in the hall; but Miss Newenden was gone with Davenant to the stables, to chuse which she would have for her own horses.

A settee of rich cut velvet, with massy gilt feet, was in the room; which seemed to have in its time supported many of the venerable figures, and fair but faded forms, which were represented in the great portraits that covered the wainscot. On this settee or sopha Lady Newenden sat down; and, wrapping her cloak round her, complained of the excessive coldness of the house. By this time an old house-keeper, who had lived many years

in the family, appeared, and in the broad dialect of the northern country, enquired – 'Wat my lady wad please to have aufter her journey?'

'Have!' exclaimed her Ladyship, with evident marks of disgust; 'why I would have a little warmth, good woman, if it is possible in these rooms. Do make a fire instantly; and, if my own people are come, send Powell to me.'

'Your servants,' said Sir Edward, 'are yet at some distance; one of the post horses of the chaise lost a shoe about two miles from hence, which had detained them. Dickenson however will execute any orders you may have to give her.'

'She can do nothing for *me*,' sullenly replied his wife. 'I should be glad indeed to have my own bed made up; but I must wait, I see, till Powell comes.'

Mrs. Dickenson, who had long served the mother of Sir Edward, one of the best tempered and mildest of women,[a] began to find herself extremely hurt at the haughtiness of her new lady; and spreading our her clean white cloth apron, she with a sort of half curtsey approached nearer, saying – 'Indeed, my Lady, I shud ha ben glad to ha known as your Ladyshep weshed for to have fires, and then sure they shud ha ben leeted all aboot the hoose; bot my leet lady she niver hud fires tull aboot the eend of Siptimber ur begennen of Ooctoober; an I cud na knaw your Ladyshep wud leek of um, for my leet lady she –'

'Tell me not of thy late lady, Mrs. Nicholson,' said Lady Newenden, wilfully mistaking the name; but since I am condemned to remain in this comfortless and dreary place, do prithee bestir thyself, to save me, if possible, from dying of an ague.'

'Go, Dickenson,' said Sir Edward, 'and send in the housemaid to make a fire here; while you yourself see that others are made immediately in Lady Newenden's dressing and bed rooms.'

The house-keeper immediately obeyed. Sir Edward, more vexed with his wife than he desired to appear, walked about the room in silence: and Ethelinde, depressed by the ill humour of her cousin, and concerned at the effect it had on Sir Edward, seated herself in the window; and looking at the surrounding hills, recollected how very far she now was from her father; and in that recollection felt deserted and forlorn.

By this time Miss Newenden joined them; and being better satisfied with the stable than her sister was with the house, she came gaily into the room with Davenant, who enquired of Lady Newenden how she found herself?

'More than half dead, I assure you, Davenant,' said she, with her usual languor; 'and all that amazes me is, how any creature can take such a journey as this for pleasure.'

'I am very sorry, Lady Newenden,' said Sir Edward, unable any longer to conceal his chagrin, 'that *you* have undertaken it at all.'

'Indeed, Sir Edward, so am I,' answered she.

'I can't imagine why,' cried Miss Newenden, with quickness; 'for I am sure you are no worse for it.'

'Not the worse, Ma'am? Why I am shaken to death, dislocated in all my joints, and after having been martyred the whole way with jolting in extreme heat, I come into this cold, damp, desolate place, which really is fit only for the nuns and friars that you told me, I think, used to inhabit it.'

'Its inhabitants since that, Madam,' said her sister-in-law with increased tartness, 'were persons, of whom I may venture to say, that few of our present nobility are so *well,* certainly none *better* born. They were of a family with which at least *mere modern opulence* may be proud to boast its alliance.'

'Dear Miss Newenden,' answered her Ladyship contemptuously, 'nobody disputes it; I only wish that the last and present possessors of the place had been contented to remain as quiet here as the owners did who lived at it two or three hundred years ago; then I suppose they would not have spent so much money as has obliged them to have recourse to *modern opulence* to prevent these dreary rooms from being made into barns or granaries, or tumbling quite down.'

'My dear cousin!' exclaimed Ethelinde, unable to repress her astonishment at this speech.

Sir Edward, finding that all his tenderness for Lady Newenden could not check the anger which this proud and contemptuous spirit provoked, now hastily left the room. Davenant, always an indifferent spectator of scenes where no kind of dissipation bore a part, strolled into the garden; but Miss Newenden, whose family pride (the only pride she had) was now roused, returned to the charge.

'Most women, let me assure your Ladyship, whatever may be their fortune, would think themselves too happy to share it with such a man as *my* brother.'

'Not *too* happy surely,' with a malicious smile, answered Lady Newenden, 'if part of their lives was to wear away in banishment in the nunnery of Grasmere.'

'But let me inform you, Lady Newenden –

'Not to-night, dear Ma'am – do not inform me to-night; for I am really fatigued to death, and cannot keep myself awake to hear any more about your ancestors. Doubtless they were all knights and esquires of high degree; only I wish their old-fashioned nunnery had fallen into the lake, before I had been dragged a thousand miles to catch my death in it.'

At this moment her woman Mrs. Powell, and her Indian servant, entered the room.

'Ah! Powell,' exclaimed she, 'it is comfortable to see you. Get my drops[11] and my chocolate. I shall go instantly to bed. Why, what a while you have been coming!'

'Good Heaven! my dear Lady,' drawled out her attendant, 'I thof that to have got here at all was a thing impossible. Gracious me! I thof of all things we should have been killed by one of them there great large *ills;* and then squish squash through such a deal of water! I am sure your Ladyship must be quite tired out of your life.'

'Tired indeed! I hope every thing is ready for me?'

'Oh yes! I got every thing ready, as soon as I came in, for your Ladyship.'

'Help me then,' cried she, with redoubled languor, 'help me to my bed. Good night, Ethy. Your humble servant, Miss Newenden. I congratulate you both on being so very robust, that even the fatigue of *such* a journey does not disable *you* from taking a pleasant rural walk, or an evening ride perhaps, over those sweet hills, to see prospects. You cannot fail of entertainment; so I shall make no apology for leaving you.'

She then, leaning on her two attendants, left the room.

CHAPTER III.

MISS Newenden, who, with some asperity of temper, had much of the pride of ancestry about her, now expressed to Ethelinde, in very bitter terms, the displeasure she had conceived against her sister-in-law for her ill breeding and haughtiness.

Ethelinde attempted to soften her, by reminding her that something should be allowed to health generally very delicate, and to present fatigue. 'My cousin,' said she, 'has never been contradicted in what she desired to do, or desired to do any thing to which she expressed the least dislike. Even Sir Edward, till this journey became necessary, has never requested any thing of her but what he knew to be her own inclination.'

'Hang such whimsical nonsense!' exclaimed Miss Newenden; 'it puts me past all patience. My brother is a fool to give way to it as he does; for the more he humours her ridiculous affectation, the more insupportably tiresome she becomes. Oh! if I was a man, and plagued with a whining, conceited, capricious wife, I would run away to the end of the world to avoid her.'

'You mean ride away,' said Ethelinde, smiling.

'Aye, that I would indeed,' answered Miss Newenden, taking good-humouredly this little stroke at her own hobby horse. 'I wish Ned had any spirit; I am sure I could put him in a way to cure her Ladyship of these insolent airs.' Then seeing Davenant looking at her brother's brood mares, which were grazing in the park, she ran away to join him; and Ethelinde wandered out towards the plantation which fringed the feet of the hills that surrounded it. She was no sooner alone, than losing the impression of the unpleasing conversation she had heard, she gave way to the solemn but melancholy species of pleasure inspired by the scene around her. It was now evening: the last rays of the sun gave a dull purple hue to the points of the fells which rose above the water and the park; while the rest, all in deep shadow, looked gloomily sublime. Just above the tallest, which was rendered yet more dark by the wood that covered its side, the evening star arose; and was reflected on the bosom of the lake, now perfectly still and unruffled. Not a breeze sighed among the hills; and nothing was heard but the low murmur of two or three distant waterfalls, and at intervals the short soft notes of the woodlark, the only bird that sings at this season in an evening (it was the middle of August). Ethelinde having tra-

versed a considerable part of the plantation, principally among tall firs, planted by the grandfather of Sir Edward, now stopped to observe the river, which flows from the lake in a deep and smooth current, and keeping its way under the foot of an enormous mass of rock, suddenly crosses the park, and takes its course near the abbey, where it once filled what is now a fosse of turf, but was formerly a moat; from which being diverted, it wanders away through green inclosures, till other hills conceal its further progress.

A rude stone bridge crosses the stream; and Ethelinde, leaning over the wall, looked pensively at the water, and listened to the rippling current, which was in unison with other soothing and agreeable sounds; while by this time innumerable stars were reflected on the lake.

Qui, se spiega la notte il fosco velo
Nel mare emulo al cielo
Piu lucide, piu belle
Moltiplicar le stelle.

METASTASIO.[12]

While she remained here, Sir Edward, who to dissipate his vexation had rambled round his plantations, overtook her. 'Whither wanders my lovely cousin?' said he, in the pleasant accents of affection, and taking her arm within his; 'and why stays she out thus late?' – 'I have not the least inclination to return to the house,' replied Ethelinde: 'the evening is uncommonly mild; and I have been admiring the beauty of the lake, and of those wild rocks which form its bason. How calm, how beautiful is its surface, spangled with stars, and deeply contrasted by those dark tufts of evergreens which crowd over it!'

'Those trees,' said sir Edward, 'were planted by my father when I was a boy. You like the scenery then, Ethelinde? and see nothing so terrible in passing a few weeks at Grasmere Abbey?' – He sighed, and, as if waiting for Ethelinde's reply, was silent a moment: then making an effort to conquer the pain which the recollection of Lady Newenden's different taste impressed, he added – 'Where did you leave Lady Newenden?'

'Her Ladyship retired to her own room with her servants before I came out to walk; and Miss Newenden went with Mr. Davenant to look at some of your horses.'

'It is well,' said Sir Edward, still trying to shake off his concern, 'that Nelly has found in Davenant a companion who can participate her pleasures; and it is not less lucky for me, that Davenant's happy facility of temper, ever falling into the whim of those he is with, serves to keep *her* at least in good humour.' – Unable to help adverting thus to the petulance of his wife, he yet tried to drive it from him by other topics. 'How do you like Davenant?' continued he.

Ethelinde, who had thought very little of him, and without any degree of good opinion, answered, with some hesitation, 'Very well.'

'He has,' said Sir Edward, 'great good nature, and is not without understanding.'

'Not absolutely without.'

Sir Edward, smiling at the archness with which she delivered these words, said, 'But you think that he has not much?'

'Certainly, Sir Edward, you must be a far better judge than I am; and as I always wish to discover the good qualities of those I am with, I wish you to point out those of Mr. Davenant.'

'You are satirical, Ethelinde.'

'I hope not; but I own I have observed some features in his character that by no means impress me with a favourable idea of his heart or his understanding.'

'You surprise me! What have you observed?'

'First, that though he knows not what in the world to do with his time, and is ever in an evident dearth of ideas, he never takes up a book, or enters with any kind of interest into the most instructive conversation.'

'Allowed. But what have you to say of his heart?'

'I have only to say of it, that it seems to me deficient in feeling, in generosity, in tenderness. He acknowledges that he has a widowed aunt, his mother's sister, old, indigent, and deprived by death of her children, whom he has never noticed since he became old enough to assist her. And did I not observe that, when at the inn at Boroughbridge your acquaintance in that town introduced to your pity a poor woman with five infant children, whom an horrid accident had robbed of their laborious father, Davenant, far from attending to her distress, went to the window, and looked out of it till she was about to withdraw, as if to avoid the necessity of taking out his purse? And when you reminded him of it, and desired him to give the little boy a guinea, he gave it indeed, but not like one who loves to give. Ah, Sir Edward! If a man so young – a man abounding in money, which all his superfluous expences hardly diminishes, is thus deaf to the voice of misery, and wants to be reminded of the assistance he owes his fellow-creatures, what shall he be, when time, which blunts even the keenest sensibilities, shall have rendered him yet more insensible and unfeeling of every thing but the gratification of his own narrow and selfish tastes?'

'Indeed,' said Sir Edward, 'I did not know what a severe observer you are, Ethy, or I should have taken care of myself.'

'Ah, no, Sir Edward! the less your actions are guarded, the more you must be beloved: they arise from the noblest impulses of the soul. Believe me, an heart like yours cannot be too much seen, and seen as it really is.'

This artless but warm praise gave to Sir Edward a sensation of delight more exquisite than he had ever before felt. His voice trembled as he attempted laughingly to answer what he termed an extravagant compliment: then, as they walked towards the house together, he became quite silent. On entering the eating parlour, they found Miss Newenden and Davenant waiting supper: during which repast Sir Edward continued pensive, answering he knew not what to the questions Miss Newenden asked him about the horses she had seen; and as soon as the cloth was removed, they all separated.

Ethelinde, with a bosom unruffled by any uneasy passion, soon tasted the calm slumber of the innocent. But Sir Edward carried to his pillow thoughts and reflections that suffered him not to sleep. He had for many days learned, that, should he lose the conversation of Ethelinde, he should be deprived of that which in the absence of his children was the greatest pleasure of his life. But he had to-day caught himself making involuntary comparisons between her and his wife; and felt all the ill-humour and pride of the latter aggravated, while the sweetness, the spirit, the sense of Ethelinde proportionably rose in his mind. Then blaming himself for indulging an idea to the disadvantage of his wife – of the mother of his children, he fancied that he must himself have been in the wrong, and had not sufficiently allowed for the fatigue of body and mind Lady Newenden had suffered, nor for the little capricious humours to which the best women are subject; and he determined to think of it no more. With equal sincerity did he resolve to think less of Ethelinde; but, as that was very difficult to accomplish, he persuaded himself that he thought of her only as a fond brother thinks of an amiable and beloved sister.

Every day, however, of the first three of four they passed at Grasmere Abbey, brought with it some new instance of Lady Newenden's uneasy and perverse spirit; and driven from her by haughty reserve, or petulant retort, he was compelled to resort for consolation to the mild and reasonable conversation of Ethelinde. An hour's reading with her, a walk with her, or some little poem repeated by memory as they rambled together on the banks of the lake, restored to his wounded spirit its wonted composure; yet instilled into his heart a slow and secret poison, which he detected not till it was no longer in his power to expel it.

Ethelinde, perfectly unconscious of the effect of that tender and innocent familiarity in which she lived with him, thought only how to soothe and amuse him in the many hours which they passed almost entirely alone. Lady Newenden, because she knew that it mortified Sir Edward, frequently dined in her own apartment, under pretence that the lower part of the house gave her cold; while he was continually harassed by the complaints and murmurs of her London servants, who regretted the luxuries they had left behind them, and hoped by their own discontent to irritate

that of their lady. The women quarrelled with the old housekeeper, and saw ghosts in every passage of the abbey; the men bewildered the steward by their London assurance, and distracted him by their extravagance. Every appeal was made to my Lady; and every attempt of Sir Edward to check their impertinence was sure to be resented by her Ladyship, and to be followed by reproaches, complainings, tears, and fits. Miss Newenden, never without resource in fine weather, amused herself tolerably well by riding out, and renewing her acquaintance with those families within ten miles of the abbey whom she had formerly known. At one of those visits she met a party of six of her London friends, who had come down on a tour of pleasure to visit the lakes. She eagerly invited them to Grasmere Abbey; they accepted the proposal, and two days afterwards arrived; fortunately for Sir Edward, who, though his business was by no means finished, would not on other terms have been able to have detained Lady Newenden another week.

The acquisition of such a party restored to her Ladyship some degree of good humour. She again heard the soothing voice of adulation, and again felt the consequence given her by fortune. Cards were introduced of an evening, and *ennui* was for the present forgotten.

Ethelinde too felt greatly relieved by their arrival; for she was now no longer expected to listen to Lady Newenden's complaints, to bear her ill humour, or to labour in the vain attempt of amusing her. Happy to be thus restored to some degree of liberty, she took immediate advantage of it; and the first day, as soon as dinner was over, and the ladies withdrawn, she went out unperceived; and taking with her that volume of the works of Gray, in which he with the clearest simplicity describes this small lake, she pursued her way, now over 'eminences covered with turf, now among broken rock,' till she reached the village which stands on a low promontory projecting far into the lake.[13]

In this hamlet, the abode of cheerful labour and contented poverty, she observed one house distinguished from the rest by a small sash window at the end of it, looking into a little court and garden, surrounded with a quick hedge, and filled with flowers. The whole cottage, for it was still merely a cottage, had about it a look of neatness and comfort, which convinced Ethelinde it belonged not to a labourer: but nobody appeared about it; and as dark clouds gathering on the tops of the hills, and a ruffling wind arising, made her apprehend a storm, she returned immediately by the path she came. Having however passed much more time than she was aware of, and the sky being extremely overcast with dark red clouds, which scowling over the lake, gave to that and the surrounding rocks a peculiar gloom, she was afraid of being entirely benighted, and quickened her pace as much as possible. But the increasing obscurity, and the unevenness of the way, made her progress slow; and she had yet a quarter of a

mile to the abbey, when a scattering shower was followed by several loud claps of thunder, which, echoing among the fells, were returned again and again in repeated vibrations. Ethelinde, not without some degree of fear, walked on, keeping on her hat with difficulty; when her eyes, which were fixed on the ground, that she might discern her way, were quickly raised by the sudden appearance of a tall young man with a fishing net on his shoulder, and a boat hook in his hand, who coming from the water, met her in a path so narrow that they both stopped. The stranger, who though in a dress calculated for the amusement he had been pursuing, had the air and look of a gentleman, seemed extremely surprised at meeting a young person of Ethelinde's appearance at such an hour, and in such a place; yet immediately recollecting that she must come from Grasmere Abbey, and seeing that she stepped on fearfully, while the storm continued to increase, he followed her, a moment after he had passed her, and said – 'You will not I hope think it impertinent, Madam, if I enquire whether I can be of any use to you? The storm is likely to be violent. Will you allow me to wait on you to the abbey? I fear you find it very difficult walking.'

Ethelinde, who had been a good deal alarmed at his turning to follow her, was convinced the moment he spoke that he was a gentleman; and answered without hesitation, though in a voice that yet trembled with fear, 'that she was much obliged to him; but that, as she was very near the abbey, she could not think of giving him the trouble of going out of his way in such a night.'

'My way,' answered he 'is any in which I can be of the least service to you; I beg you will allow me at least to see you safe to the gate.'

At this moment a tremendous burst of thunder made the rocks tremble to their base: Ethelinde started, and almost fell, from the suddenness and violence of the shock.

'I must hope,' said the stranger, perceiving her terror, 'that you will take my arm, without being deterred by the dirt of my dress, in which indeed I have been fishing since morning.'

Ethelinde, who was almost unable to walk, now accepted his offer; and with his assistance soon reached the gate of the lawn; where the moment they arrived, Sir Edward and a servant appeared; though it was by this time so nearly dark, that Ethelinde only knew it was the former by his calling aloud, the moment he perceived somebody approach – 'Is that Miss Chesterville? Is it Ethelinde?'

'It is, Sir Edward,' answered she, as she held out her hand to him.

'Where have you been?' cried he, with great agitation. 'I have been – we have extremely terrified on your account.'

'I merely walked farther than I intended, and was overtaken by the thunder before I could get back. This gentleman has been so obliging as to take care of me part of the way.'

'I thank him,' said Sir Edward, with some degree of reserve. 'Sir, will you do me the honour to walk into the house?'

'I am obliged to you, Sir,' replied the stranger; 'but it is late, and I live at some distance.'

Then, without waiting for farther invitation, seeing Ethelinde safe, he disappeared in a moment.

At the wind continued extremely high, and the thunder yet muttered among the hills, Sir Edward, with his arm round her waist, hurried Ethelinde into the house as quick as possible. When they got thither, he enquired if she was much terrified, or if her clothes were wet. The rain however had been slight, and her terror was almost subsided; declining therefore any assistance, she went immediately into the room, where they were all at cards, and where she found that the party had been that evening still farther augmented by the arrival of Lord Danesforte; a nobleman who, having been on a visit in Scotland, had heard that Sir Edward and Lady Newenden were at the abbey, and had unexpectedly paid them a visit.

The curiosity of Lord Danesforte had been strongly excited, to know who Miss Chesterville was, about whom Sir Edward had been the whole evening so restless, that he had with visible constraint acquitted himself of the honours of his house; and, after sending four or five servants different ways, he had at length left his company, and gone out himself in search of her.

This Ethelinde, the object of so much anxiety, now appeared before him in a blaze of beauty which turned his Lordship's curiosity into admiration. Her complexion, which was frequently too pale, was raised to a deep blush. Her fear had given way to pleasure at the kindness and attention of Sir Edward, and her whole countenance was animated by good humour; while the disorder of her hat, and her dark auburne hair, set off her face to more advantage than could have been done by the exactest arrangement or most studied ornament.

Sir Edward led her towards the table where Lady Newenden and Lord Danesforte were at cards, saying – 'Help me, Maria, to quarrel with your cousin, and prevent her in future from rambling about of an evening, to the alarm of all her friends.'

'Settle it with her yourself, Sir Edward,' answered her Ladyship, coldly. 'I never take upon me to argue with romantic young ladies on the peculiarity of their taste.'

Ethelinde, accustomed to these sort of repulsive speeches from her cousin, now went towards the next table; while Lord Danesforte, who followed her with his eyes, said to Lady Newenden –

'Miss Chesterville is then your Ladyship's cousin?'

'Yes, my Lord.'

'I should have guessed so. She possesses a portion of the family beauty, so very conspicuous in Lady Newenden.'

'Do you think so?' replied she, with a forced smile; 'I really cannot think there is much resemblance. Not that I disclaim it on account of any compliment it conveys, for in my mind Ethelinde is any thing but handsome.'

Lord Danesforte, finding that to praise one lady was to offend the other, turned the discourse by some delicate and well-pointed compliment; but however he affected by words to give the preference to her Ladyship, his looks were again in quest of Ethelinde, who had sat down alone in a corner of the room. Sir Edward, disengaging himself from cards as quickly as he could, soon after joined her, and talked to her till supper was announced. He enquired who the person was who had taken care of her home? – Ethelinde related simply how and where she had met him; while Sir Edward, gently chiding her for venturing so far as the village alone, made her promise that she would never again alarm him by the same kind of indiscretion.

During supper the discourse took a turn in which Ethelinde could bear very little part. Lord Danesforte had no opportunity of knowing whether her conversation and understanding answered to the spirit and intelligence which flashed from her eyes: his Lordship, seated near Lady Newenden, had not even an opportunity of addressing himself to her, who was next to Sir Edward, at the bottom of the table. But as the latter frequently spoke to her, he saw a variety of expression in her face, which increased his inclination to be more acquainted with her. He could not but observe the marked attention of Sir Edward; which, in addition to the extraordinary anxiety he had shewn while he believed her exposed to the thunder storm, put some notions into the head of Lord Danesforte not very favourable to that uniform and tender attachment which Sir Edward had always professed and supported towards his wife – As his Lordship was upon the turf,[14] and had several horses with him, hunters and poneys, with which Miss Newenden was well acquainted, the conversation during supper ran principally on their various merits; and a match was made, at her desire, between him and Mr. Davenant, who were each to ride their own horses in the park the next day; and, on the day following, a party on the lake was proposed, which Lady Newenden consented to join, and the earnest entreaty of Lord Danesforte; but she declared that, if the day was not perfectly warm, and the water perfectly calm, nothing should induce her to venture.

CHAPTER IV.

LORD Danesforte inherited from his ancestors an immense fortune; and was one of those who seem, by the consent of their cotemporaries, to be the acknowledged leaders of fashion, and arbiters of taste. His houses, his equipages, his horses, his mistresses, his dinners, were the theme of the day; and had for some years made a conspicuous figure in those fleeting annals, which give, in the eyes of trifling imbecillity, a temporary consequence to dissipation and vice. He had received from nature a good understanding, and an handsome person: but he sacrificed the former in becoming the slave of opinion; and his intemperance had at the age of seven-and-twenty robbed his person of all the lightness, grace, and activity of youth, while his constitution was proportionably impaired. He plunged early into every species of debauchery, to shew his spirit; and it was now become an invincible habit. But that facility of gratification which his great fortune gave him, made even his pleasures satiate and disgust him; and amid the luxuries with which he was surrounded, some new pursuit, some project which might pique and animate by the difficulty of success, was ever become necessary to his existence. When he had no such scheme before him, he hurried from place to place, weary of himself; and was now very slightly gratified by that species of fame, which his morals, his health, and much of his fortune, had been sacrificed to obtain.

Sir Edward Newenden, whose temper, morals, and conduct were exactly the reverse of his Lordship's, had first known him at Eton, where the difference of their characters and ages (for Lord Danesforte was four years his junior) had prevented any intimacy between them. The met afterwards abroad, where their acquaintance was renewed; and they had since occasionally visited, but without any particular friendship. The present visit of Lord Danesforte was paid rather because he knew not what else to do with himself, than from any regard for his hosts; and it was received by Sir Edward with more politeness than pleasure.

Lord Danesforte however found more attraction at the abbey than he expected, and determined to remain there for some days. Davenant, fitted by his vanity for a pupil, and by his ignorance for a dupe; Lady Newenden, lovely in her person, and vain in her disposition, with a mind open to the insinuations of flattery, and an heart insensible to every thing but the impression received through that medium; were subjects fitted at once

to entertain him at present, and promise him those pursuits in future in which he most delighted to engage. Flattered as he was by the silly imitation of weak and unexperienced young men; and eager after that sort of fashion which arises from supposed intrigue.

His Lordship however no sooner saw Ethelinde, than every other motive was forgotten which had on his first arrival recommended Grasmere Abbey. Youth, beauty, spirit, sweetness, understanding – every charm which could attract admiration, he found in her; but marriage was no part of his scheme of life: and as soon as he knew who she was, he knew also that she was too well protected by her father, her brother, and Sir Edward, to give him much chance of getting her into his power. But the difficulty of carrying any favourite point was never an inducement with him to relinquish it; and he was seldom so happy as when engaged in some project which occupied those talents that were given him for very different and more worthy purposes.

Notwithstanding the attention he was obliged to pay to Lady Newenden, he found several opportunities of conversing with Ethelinde, and was convinced that her understanding was at least equal to her personal charms: the pensive softness which at first appeared the leading feature in her character, frequently yielded to the most animated vivacity; and her manners and conversation soon made indelible the impression which had been received from her captivating form. In making these observations, it was impossible to help remarking that Sir Edward Newenden had made them before. Lord Danesforte indeed immediately saw that he was much more strongly attached to her that their alliance by his marriage with her cousin authorised; and he fancied that Ethelinde knew and was not insensible of his partiality. A mind like his was incapable of feeling the variety and innocence of those affections towards an amiable man, which might have place in a bosom so ingenuous and untainted as hers. Esteem for his character, gratitude for his kindness, and the tenderness of a sister for his person, were blended in her heart; and she loved and preferred him to all other men (after her father and her brother), with the same purity as an angel might have loved him. Far from attempting to conceal this affection, she spoke of him on all occasions as the first to men; delighted in calling him her dear friend, and in repeating how well and how fortunately her cousin had chosen, when she rejected higher titles and more splendid fortunes for happiness and Sir Edward Newenden.

Alas! of this happiness her cousin was entirely insensible. Her ample fortune had drawn around her a number of lovers, among whom were three noblemen, whose rank was their only recommendation. At the same time Sir Edward Newenden being obliged to sell two of his estates immediately on the death of his father, entered into treaty with Mr. Maltravers, who was then making considerable purchases in the neighbourhood; and

by that means was introduced to his daughter, then about seventeen. However embarrassed his father has left him, he had determined never to attempt retrieving his affairs by a marriage made merely with that view; but when he saw in Miss Maltravers a person and a face which would have attracted his notice, had their possessor been destitute of fortune, he could not help reflecting on the great advantage which would arise from a union where his interest and his taste would at once be consulted. With diffidence however he made his proposals, apprehending that the disarranged state of his fortune would be an insurmountable objection; but Miss Maltravers, who thought him infinitely the handsomest man she had ever seen, accepted him without hesitation: and her father, who had no will but hers, immediately complied; gratified perhaps with the power of restoring an ancient family to its original splendour; and more flattered by the prospect of raising the rank of him to whom he married his daughter, by the power and influence his fortune gave him, than by uniting her with a man already of a superior rank. Mrs. Maltravers, glad to have her daughter disposed of, that she might herself be under less restraint, acquiesced willingly; and after a very short courtship Sir Edward carried off the opulent heiress from his numerous rivals.

Lady Newenden entering on a world of which till then she had seen very little, found herself every where the object of admiration of envy. Her vanity alone was more powerful than the habitual indolence of her temper; and the only thing which did not fatigue her, was flattery. Dissipation soon became necessary to her vacant mind; and estranged her from that domestic style of life in which only Sir Edward was happy. He saw with pain that even his children failed of detaching her from those frivolous pursuits which were to him not only uninteresting, but disagreeable: yet he continued to gratify her in every wish she formed; and, though he was himself unhappy, relinquished his own satisfaction to her content. This painful sacrifice she considered as no more than what she had a right to exact; and Sir Edward, who really loved her, forbore to complain even to her father, though compelled to pass every winter in London in a perpetual hurry of engagements, and the summer at some of the various places of public resort, instead of being suffered to enjoy the company of his children at one of his own houses. His love however was long proof against these differences of taste; the children, of whom he was passionately fond, endeared their mother to him; and though his plan of happiness was destroyed, his tenderness had survived almost undiminished, till the observations he was forced to make during this journey; when repeated malignity towards Ethelinde, and attempts to inflict pain on himself, had shewn such a general deficiency in those feelings which only can secure either love or esteem, as obliged him internally to acknowledge, though still reluctantly he acknowledged it, that his Maria had no heart.

Conscious of this decrease of his affection, and almost fearing to ask himself whether the attractions of another object had not too much contributed to it, while every principle of honour reproached him for indulging the partiality he felt, he determined not only to attempt conquering his fondness for the company of Ethelinde, but most carefully to avoid every occasion of shewing it had ever existed. He had been so much off his guard on the evening when he apprehended she was exposed to the thunder storm, that Lady Newenden had remarked it with some asperity; and he now wished to appear as indifferent about her as about the most uninteresting person of the party: but he succeeded so ill, at least before the penetrating eyes of Lord Danesforte; that his Lordship was only amazed Lady Newenden noticed it so little. The trembling sensibility with which he heard her praises; the expression of his eyes whenever they were turned towards Ethelinde; all testified how deep and tender an interest he felt in whatever related to her.

The gaiety, the assiduity, and adulation of Lord Danesforte, had not only restored Lady Newenden to her good humour, but engaged her to enter into the amusements which the neighbourhood of Grasmere Abbey afforded; and the party made for going in boats on the lake remained fixed. The day was extremely favourable; a gentle wind, sufficient only to fill the sails, fluttered on the surface of the water. In one of the boats Lord Danesforte's servants formed a concert: in the other the ladies sung; while the gentlemen sometimes joined them, and sometimes interrupted them with fine speeches. Laughter seemed more the object, than the pleasure arising from surveying the surrounding scenery; and, after remaining about an hour, Lady Newenden complained that the wind was cold, and desired to be put on shore. Sir Edward, one of the gentlemen, and two of the ladies, accompanied her: Miss Newenden, Mr. Davenant, with Lord Danesforte and the rest of the London party, remained in the boat, into which two of the servants were taken, who were directed to put the boat back into the middle of the lake, it being the purpose of the gentlemen to fish.

The servant, however, who managed the boat was inexpert; and Lord Danesforte, particularly impatient in trifles, seized the boat-hook, and swearing furiously at his people, pushed it off with such violence that the sail was entangled in the boughs of a tree which grew over the creek where they landed; and he continuing to force the boat on, the sail was suddenly disentangled with such a shock, that Ethelinde, who had involuntarily arisen, was dashed instantly into the water.

Sir Edward, as he saw her fall, was about to rush in after her; but recollecting that with boots on he could not save her, he called to the servants who were on shore to tear them off, while he disengaged himself from his coat. In the mean time Lord Danesforte, with a torrent of oaths, ordered his servants to save her, as they valued their own lives. The men however hesi-

tated; and Sir Edward had already thrown himself in, when a person was seen to approach the landing place, swimming with one arm, while with the other he bore Ethelinde, to all appearance dead. Sir Edward assisted him in bringing her on shore, where the stranger seated himself on the grass, and supported her. Though she had been hardly five minutes in the water, she was quite insensible; and Sir Edward, concluding she was dead, forbore with the utmost difficulty to express the violence of his grief and despair.

Lord Danesforte and his servants were by this time landed, and surrounding her; while the stranger, seated on the grass, supported her in arms; and Sir Edward collected presence of mind enough to give orders for a chair to be brought, that she might be conveyed into the house. The ladies of the party, affecting great terror, thought more of expressing it in the most becoming manner, than of assisting her who had occasioned it. Lady Newenden insisted upon fainting; but as nobody seemed disposed to attend to her, she very prudently contented herself with the appearance of it only. Miss Newenden, who on most occasions preserved her composure, collected from the rest their smelling bottles, which she never carried herself, and applied them to the temples and nose of Ethelinde, who, 'like a fair lily over-charged with rain,'[15] reclined her lovely head on the shoulder of the stranger, while Sir Edward continued chafing her hands, and giving a thousand orders in a moment.

In a short time several servants arrived from the abbey. Lady Newenden's women attended on her; but Mrs. Dickenson, the housekeeper, applied herself to have Ethelinde conveyed to the house, which by means of an armed chair was easily accomplished; and the motion, together with the application which had been used, restored her to some degree of sensibility. She opened her eyes, but seemed unconscious of the surrounding objects, and immediately closed them. Sir Edward, satisfied that she yet lived, recovered some degree of recollection, and enquired after Lady Newenden, who was however so much offended with the solicitude he had shewn about Ethelinde, and the risk he had incurred by his attempt to save her, that she deigned not to answer his questions; but bidding him go to those whose life was of more consequence than hers, haughtily retired to her own apartment. Sir Edward then recollected the young man who had shewn so much courage and activity; who, unnoticed and uninvited, had followed the chair into the house, and now waited in the hall to hear the event of an accident, which but for him would probably have been fatal. Sir Edward (who, as well as the gallant stranger, remained trembling in wet clothes) now went in search of him; and, taking his hand, expressed in the warmest terms his gratitude and esteem.

'Allow me to ask, Sir,' said he, 'the name of the gentleman to whom we are so much obliged, and where I may offer him my repeated thanks?'

'My name is Montgomery, Sir. I live at the village on the lake.'

The young stranger, bowing, was then about to depart; but Sir Edward pressed him to come into the house, change his clothes, and take some refreshment; adding that he could not think of parting so early with a person to whom he was so much obliged.

'Pardon me, Sir,' replied Mr. Montgomery, 'if I now decline staying. As to my clothes, their condition is of little consequence; I am almost an amphibious animal. But my mother will perhaps hear some indistinct account of the disaster, and may be alarmed: I dare not therefore stay, to hazard giving her that pain. Any other time I shall consider myself highly honoured in being allowed to pay my respects at Grasmere Abbey.'

He then enquired into the situation of Ethelinde; and hearing she was much restored, he expressed his pleasure at so favourable an account, bowed, and disappeared across the lawn.

Sir Edward then again went to the door of Ethelinde's apartment; and hearing she was in bed, much recovered and tranquillized, he became more easy; and, having changed his clothes, prepared with some degree of calmness and resolution to meet the reproaches and ill humours of Lady Newenden. She received him with mingled contempt and anger; reproached him, in the bitterest terms, for his rashness in attempting to save Ethelinde, and for his disregard of herself; and concluded with accusing herself of extreme folly in having encumbered herself with Ethelinde, who was accustomed, she said, to be made of so much consequence by her infatuated father, that she was become troublesome to every body else, and spoiled every party into which she was admitted.

Sir Edward was not less astonished at the violence than at the unfeeling injustice of this accusation: but, to avoid any argument on a subject which he feared he might not discuss with temper, he withdrew; only desiring her to compose her spirits, and dismiss her terror. The truth was, that Lady Newenden, sufficiently piqued at the attention Sir Edward gave to her cousin, which her pride prevented her from noticing to him, was yet more displeased at observing, that, though Lord Danesforte affected to be very assiduous in his attendance on her, he extremely admired the beauty of Ethelinde; and though her Ladyship would not then have cared, had she been assured that she should never have seen him again, yet could she not endure that a connoisseur in beauty should find charms in another while she was present; and irritated against Ethelinde, whom she had never loved, by her thus monopolizing admiration, she could no longer prevail upon herself to treat her with even the slight share of civility she had hitherto shewn her.

At the time of the hazardous accident that had befallen Ethelinde, Davenant had been so far from shewing any lover-like solicitude, that his whole attention had been occupied by the care of avoiding any disafter himself; for making his way on shore with as much care as expedition, he

buttoned up his coat, tied another handkerchief over his immense neck-cloth, and walked about, with his teeth chattering and his hands in his pockets, without any attempt to assist the terrified party around him; till Miss Newenden, perfectly mistress of herself, gave him a smart blow on the shoulder with her open hand, crying, 'Why, Tom! are you petrified, man? Come, come, prithee do something for these poor drowned wretches. Do run to the house, and hasten the people out with assistance.' Willing to make his escape, Davenant gladly obeyed her.

The feelings of Lord Danesforte took quite another turn. As soon as he was convinced Ethelinde was not dead, his rage against his servants, for an accident owing wholly to his own unguarded violence, broke out anew. He loaded them with abuse; uttered against them the most horrid imprecations; particularly vented his wrath against his own gentleman, on whom he threw the blame of what had happened; and, having sworn at him for above half an hour, he went to his apartment to dress.

Lady Newenden however appeared not that evening. The others, who, except Miss Newenden, were of that class of women who have no peculiar lines of character, but who dress fashionably, talk fashionably, and fill up public places, had each of them displayed her elegant attitudes and fine feelings, and now renewed their solicitude about the fair sufferer; though, had they been assured of the impossibility of her recovery, not one of them would have felt the least concern.

Not so Sir Edward. – The accident had served to shew him all the violence of that attachment of Ethelinde, which he had so long and so vainly attempted to stifle. Thrown entirely off his guard by her danger, he feared he had betrayed to others the sensations he had felt with so much violence: but he could now only determine anew to check, if it was yet possible, this dangerous passion; or, if that was no longer in his power, to conceal it for ever from those whose peace it might so irreparably injure.

He was struck with the extraordinary coincidence of accident, which had twice thrown Montgomery in the way of Ethelinde; as he immediately knew him to be the same young man who had attended her home in the evening of the storm. Whence he came, or to whom he belonged, Sir Edward was yet to learn; but it was impossible to see him without wishing to know more of him.

Ethelinde being the next day tolerably recovered by the care of Mrs. Dickenson, was able to sit up, but not to leave her room. Lady Newenden enquired after her only by a cold message; and Sir Edward, however desirous of seeing her, determined to deny himself that gratification; and to obliterate the memory of his past extravagant transports, by behaving now with as much calm civility as if Ethelinde had only on his heart the claim of a relation of his wife; and in this resolution he had the forbearance to remain for four-and-twenty hours.

CHAPTER V.

DAVENANT had heard Lord Danesforte repeatedly declare, that of all the women he had ever seen, Ethelinde was the loveliest. 'And if,' said his Lordship, 'I was a *marrying* man, I should prefer her to all others for a wife.' These sort of speeches from a man whose taste was universally acknowledged, and whose manners and opinions were the objects of Davenant's imitation, had a great effect on him; and he began to consider whether he might not himself obtain Ethelinde, whose beauty his eyes had acknowledged, though he was insensible of her superior attractions. In consequence of this idea, he became suddenly very solicitous about her health; and heard, with great apparent concern, that in consequence of her accident she had a cold, attended with a great degree of fever. Sir Edward, whom these symptoms threw into real agonies, had on their first appearance sent for the best advice the country afforded; but Ethelinde, who by no means believed herself so ill as his fears made him imagine, was notwithstanding glad of an opportunity to remain a few days in her own room, where she was plentifully supplied with books; and where Sir Edward, unable to resist the pleasure of being with her, and fancying that Lady Newenden noticed it not, sat with her sometimes for an hour, and renewed those conversations which she so much preferred to the mixed, desultory, and uninstructive trifling of the large party below. On the accident she reflected with no other sensation than that of gratitude to her gallant deliverer, and concern for the terror her friends had on her account suffered. Her acknowledgments to Heaven were rather for the preservation of a life dear and necessary to her father, than because it appeared to her to be of great value. The quickness of her feelings had already taught her, that its pains were greater than its pleasures; and, naturally cheerful as her temper was, a sort of presentiment of future misfortune frequently gave a cast of sadness to her mind, and oppressed a heart hitherto unconscious of those passions which prey so forcibly on acute sensibility. This disposition she had made it a point of duty to check in the presence of her father; but now she yielded to it almost imperceptibly; and the moments she passed with Sir Edward were particularly tinctured with this tender melancholy – which, delicious as it was to both, was full of danger to him; who, escaping from vapid and irksome company, found it doubly delightful to lay out his whole soul in the soft and sensible society of Ethelinde.

On the fourth day, however, she found herself well enough to quit her room. Lady Newenden received her with her usual haughty indifference; Miss Newenden, wholly engrossed by other matters, hardly recollected that she was among them; while Lord Danesforte, in her delicate and interesting languor, in the glow which some remains of fever gave to her cheeks, and in the subdued brilliancy of her eyes, had subjects of increased admiration, which he as much as possible concealed. Davenant, as if to make her forget the little attention he had formerly shewn her, was now officiously polite, and entered in form on all the assiduity of a professed lover. Lord Danesforte, who piqued himself on the deepest politics, had by this time persuaded him, that he had been long and violently in love with Miss Chesterville, and that he ought immediately to attempt securing an interest in her heart. His Lordship saw that she had conceived no favourable opinion of Davenant; but, as he heard of no attachment to any other person, he doubted not but the splendour of such a fortune as he would now in a few months be possessed of, would obviate every other objection; and that, when she was the wife of such a man, she would of course be introduced into societies where she would soon be taught, that to love or respect him was by no means necessary: and, no longer under the protection of her father, of her brother, or Sir Edward, he had little doubt of being able to avail himself of the interest which he concluded he might then make in her heart.

While all he saw of Ethelinde increased the impatience with which he desired the accomplishment of this plan, she was solicitous for an opportunity of thanking Mr. Montgomery for the timely assistance he had afforded her. She had yet hardly seen him. On the night they had first met, it was almost dark; on their second meeting she saw nothing; and though the following day he had been at the Abbey to make enquiry after her, she was not then visible. The ladies, however, who had seen him, and particularly Miss Newenden (though much more conversant in the perfection of an horse, than in human beauty), had been warm in praise of his figure. One compared it to that of the Apollo Belvedere; a second to a young Mercury; Miss Newenden wished to see him on horseback, adding that she never saw so tall a man so perfectly graceful; and another lady, who was the best read and most romantic among them, repeated –

> 'His eyes are like the eagle's, yet sometimes
> Liker the dove's; and, as he pleases, win
> All hearts with softness, or with spirit awe.'[16]

It was impossible for Ethelinde to hear all this, and repress her curiosity, which now became even painful to her. Four days had passed since she left her chamber, and in every one of them she had flattered herself she should see him: but still he came not; and all the information she could gain about him was, that he lived with his mother at the pleasant cottage

she had remarked in the village; that they were believed to be natives of Scotland; but were known to hardly any person in the neighbourhood of Grasmere, which however they never left but once a year, when they went for a few weeks to visit some relations in the Highlands. Ethelinde at length began to despair of seeing him, as the whole party were to go in three days, and Lady Newenden had determined to accompany them as far as Scarborough,[17] where they proposed remaining some weeks. Her cold, which was accompanied by a troublesome cough, had detained her from her usual walks for the first four or five days; but at the end of that time she determined to renew them, not without a latent hope, that, if she went towards the lake, chance might again throw him in her way. Davenant now took it into his head to be her constant attendant; Lord Danesforte, though he greatly wished it, dared not hazard losing his favour with Lady Newenden; and Sir Edward was compelled to be more than ever attentive to his wife, least he should betray the real situation of his heart, and confirm the suspicions she had proudly and darkly hinted.

Ethelinde, with Davenant for her attendant, had advanced on a fine evening to the village; but no Montgomery appeared. As she came within sight of the cottage, she felt an irresistible inclination to enter it. 'And why should I not?' said she, arguing it with herself; 'ought I to quit the country without acknowledging the obligation I owe to Mr. Montgomery? Surely no. There can be no impropriety in my waiting on his mother; there will be an apparent want of gratitude, if, without expressing it, I go where I shall never have an opportunity of saying that I am sensible of the obligation.' In a few moments she had argued herself into the most perfect conviction of the propriety of what she was desirous to do, and pursued the path which led to the cottage. Entering the little wicket in the fence which divided the garden from the village street, she tapped gently at the door.

The moment they waited for admittance was employed by Davenant in remonstrating against this visit. 'Why should you visit this young man?' said he. 'I do not believe he is a person of consequence enough to make it necessary. Besides, I should think it not quite correct: had you not better write to thank him, and all that sort of thing?'

'That sort of thing,' answered Ethelinde, smiling, 'is not the sort of thing that appears sufficiently expressive of my gratitude towards the man who has saved my life.' The argument was put an end to by the appearance of a maid servant, who to Ethelinde's enquiries answered that Mr. Montgomery was not in the house, but that her mistress was in the parlour; the door of which she immediately opened, and a lady very plainly dressed, yet elegantly neat, rose at their entrance.

Ethelinde, with the grace and sweetness peculiar to her, approached, and desired she might have the honour of leaving with her the thanks she