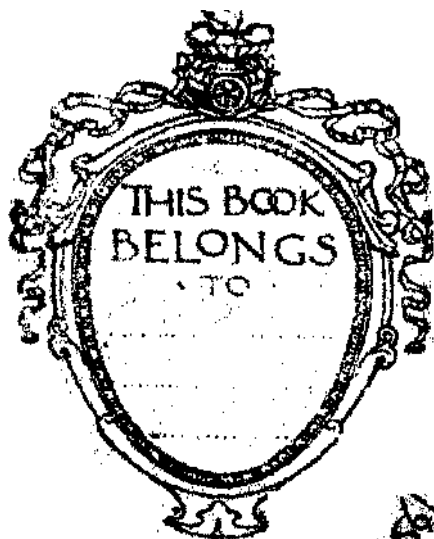


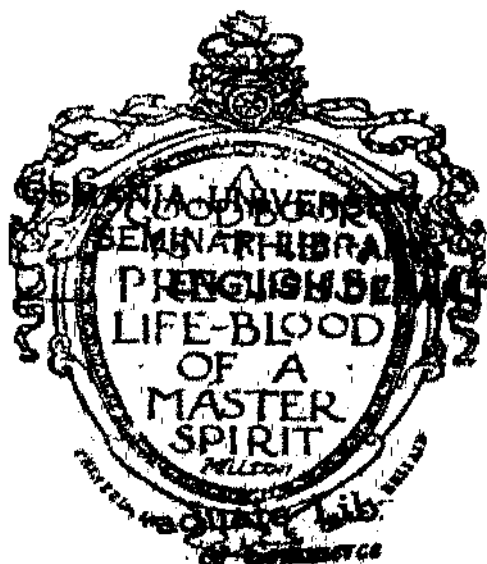
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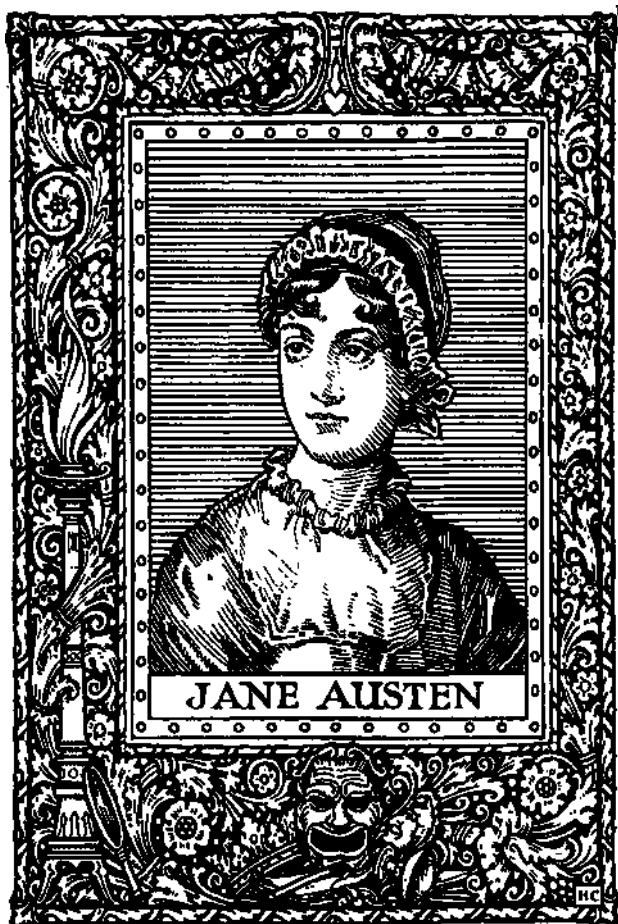




# The **KINGS TREASURIES** OF LITERATURE



**GENERAL EDITOR**  
**SIR A.T. QUILLER COUCH**



NEW YORK E.P.DUTTON AND COMPANY

DIALOGUES  
*from*  
JANE AUSTEN  
*adapted by*  
*ROSINA FILLIPI*



Introduction by  
JOAN SPEARING

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# CONTENTS

|                                                                                                                           | PAGE |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| INTRODUCTION . . . . .                                                                                                    | 7    |
| COSTUMES . . . . .                                                                                                        | 27   |
| I. LITERARY TASTES                                                                                                        |      |
| DUOLOGUE BETWEEN CATHERINE MORLAND AND<br>ISABELLA THORPE (IN THE PUMP ROOM, BATH)<br><i>(Northanger Abbey)</i> . . . . . | 32   |
| II. THE SETTLEMENT QUESTION                                                                                               |      |
| DUOLOGUE BETWEEN MR. AND MRS. JOHN DASHWOOD<br><i>(Sense and Sensibility)</i> . . . . .                                   | 47   |
| III. THE READING OF JANE FAIRFAX'S LETTER                                                                                 |      |
| DUOLOGUE BETWEEN MISS BATES AND EMMA <i>(Emma)</i> .                                                                      | 63   |
| IV. A STRAWBERRY PICNIC                                                                                                   |      |
| DUOLOGUE BETWEEN MRS. ELTON AND MR. KNIGHTLEY<br><i>(Emma)</i> . . . . .                                                  | 83   |
| V. THREE LOVES                                                                                                            |      |
| DUOLOGUES BETWEEN EMMA AND HARRIET, AND EMMA<br>AND MR. KNIGHTLEY <i>(Emma)</i> . . . . .                                 | 97   |
| VI. THE PROPOSAL OF MR. COLLINS                                                                                           |      |
| DIALOGUE BETWEEN MRS. BENNET, ELIZABETH BENNET,<br>AND MR. COLLINS <i>(Pride and Prejudice)</i>                           | 129  |
| VII. LADY CATHERINE'S VISIT                                                                                               |      |
| DUOLOGUE BETWEEN LADY CATHERINE AND ELIZABETH<br>BENNET <i>(Pride and Prejudice)</i> . . . . .                            | 149  |
| JANE AUSTEN, BY LUCY HARRISON                                                                                             | 166  |





## INTRODUCTION

TIMES AND MANNERS.—The novels of Jane Austen describe a life so quiet and uneventful, a society so leisured and undisturbed, that it is almost a shock to remember that when she was a girl the excesses that followed the French Revolution were being committed, and that when she was twenty-nine the Battle of Trafalgar was fought. Few echoes of the great events of the outside world are heard in her novels, and yet her own life was not as untouched by them as one might therefore suppose. The shadow of the French Revolution fell on her family, as the Comte de Feuillide, the husband of her cousin, died by the guillotine in 1794; and the Napoleonic wars affected her far more deeply, for her brother Frank, as flag-captain to Admiral Louis, Nelson's second-in-command, took part in the chase after Villeneuve, and though, to his

<sup>1</sup> For some of the remarks on "Times and Manners" I am indebted to the Appendices to Vols. III and IV of the *Novels of Jane Austen*, edited by R. W. Chapman (Oxford, Clarendon Press).

The whole Introduction owes much to the *Life and Letters of Jane Austen*, by W. and R. A. Austen-Leigh, and to the *Letters of Jane Austen*, selected by R. Brimley Johnson, from both of which quotations have been taken.

great disappointment, he just missed being present at the Battle of Trafalgar, he later took part in the victory at St. Domingo.

Though these stirring events have left so little mark on her work, the novels of Jane Austen give a most faithful picture of the small circle of English society of her time with which they are concerned. They tell us of the balls, the picnics, the amateur theatricals, the dinner-parties which that society enjoyed, and also of the times of meals, methods of travelling, and polite procedure in society.

Breakfast was usually at ten o'clock, but a good deal of business took place before then; and there was no regular meal between breakfast and dinner, though an informal meal was often taken. The whole of the day up to dinner-time was called *morning*. Dinner-time varied between four o'clock and half-past six, the more fashionable the household the later the hour; after dinner the ladies drank coffee, and later tea was brought in.

Most of the families in Jane Austen's novels kept their own carriages and did not travel in the public vehicles. The usual family carriage was a chaise, which would hold three persons, but larger families often kept a coach, which could hold six. Ladies, such as Miss de Bourgh,

drove a "low phaeton,"<sup>1</sup> and young men a gig or curricule. Those who did not own carriages travelled in the stage-coaches, and it is possible that, although she never describes them, Jane Austen had seen them "going down with victory," all decked with laurels, oak-leaves, and ribbons, as De Quincey has described them, dashing through the countryside, bringing the first news of victory to villages and towns.

During the eighteenth century certain watering-places had become extremely fashionable, and the most frequented for many years was Bath. Bath owed its popularity and social success almost entirely to Beau Nash, who in the early part of the century organised its amusements, and even drew up a code of manners which he put in the Pump Room. The reign of Beau Nash did not last beyond the first half of the eighteenth century, but, although other watering-places came into favour, Bath remained popular until the time of Jane Austen, and the life there is vividly described in *Northanger Abbey*. Catherine Morland and Mrs. Allen made their first appearance at a ball in the Upper Rooms, but as they knew no one there, Catherine found it a tedious affair. "Mrs. Allen was so long in dressing, that they did not enter the ballroom till late. The season was full, the room crowded, and the two

ladies squeezed in as well as they could. As for Mr. Allen, he repaired directly to the card-room, and left them to enjoy a mob by themselves." When at last they made their way through the crowds to the top of the room, "their situation was just the same; they saw nothing of the dancers, but the high feathers of some of the ladies." They moved on until at last they had a view of the vast assembly, and Catherine "began, for the first time that evening, to feel herself at a ball; she longed to dance, but she had not one acquaintance in the room." Still they had no peace, for "everybody was shortly in motion for tea, and they must squeeze out like the rest." More dancing followed the tea, and then the company dispersed.

They quickly learnt the regular routine of life in Bath. "Every morning now brought its regular duties;—shops were to be visited; some new part of the town to be looked at; and the Pump Room to be attended, where they paraded up and down for an hour, looking at everyone and speaking to no one." Fortunately for Catherine, when she appeared in the Lower Rooms she was introduced by the Master of the Ceremonies to "a very gentleman-like young man," and life in Bath then became much more interesting.

On the next day Mrs. Allen met an old friend,

a Mrs. Thorpe, with a daughter Isabella, who soon became the dearest friend of Catherine. In the mornings they shopped together or discussed novels, and in the evenings they sat together at the theatre or went together to the ball, where cotillions were danced first, followed by country dances.

YOUNG LADIES OF JANE AUSTEN'S DAY.—From a conversation in *Pride and Prejudice* we learn some of the different ideas current about the necessary accomplishments of young ladies. Mr. Bingley thinks they must all be accomplished, as "they all paint tables, cover screens, and net purses." His sister thinks that "a woman must have a thorough knowledge of music, singing, drawing, dancing, and the modern languages to deserve the word/" while Mr. Darcy is not content unless she adds "something more substantial in the improvement of her mind by extensive reading." The Miss Bertrams, aged twelve and thirteen, are righteously shocked that their cousin Fanny Price at ten years old "cannot put the map of Europe together . . . cannot tell the principal rivers in Russia . . . has never heard of Asia Minor . . . does not know the difference between water-colours and crayons." It is long since they "used to repeat the chronological order of the kings of England, with the dates

of their accession, and most of the principal events of their reigns," also "of the Roman emperors as low as Severus, besides a great deal of the heathen mythology, and all the metals, semi-metals, planets, and distinguished philosophers." One of the Miss Bertrams readily acknowledged that there was a great deal more to learn "till I am seventeen"; after that, presumably, the doors of learning closed.

Miss AUSTEN AS WRITER.—Interesting as Jane Austen's novels are as pictures of the life of her time, this is only a subsidiary interest. We do not read them to know at what hour families usually dined or how many people could comfortably travel in a chariot; we read them for their incomparable character-drawing, their delicate irony, and above all for the brilliance and skill of their dialogue. She knew her strength and her limitations, she deliberately chose a narrow field, and was not to be persuaded out of it by the suggestion that she should attempt an "historical romance illustrative of the august House of Coburg." She replied firmly, "I could no more write a romance than an epic poem. I could not sit seriously down to write a serious romance under any other motive than to save my life; and if it were indispensable for me to keep it up and never relax into laughter at

myself or at other people, I am sure I should be hung before I had finished the first chapter." From a letter to a niece who was writing a novel, we learn what was her favourite subject: "You are now collecting your people delightfully, getting them exactly into such a spot as is the delight of my life. Three or four families in a country village is the very thing to work on." Sir Walter Scott paid a handsome tribute in his diary to her skill: "That young lady has a talent for describing the involvements and feelings and characters of everyday life, which is to me the most wonderful I ever met with. The big Bow-wow strain I can do myself like anyone going; but the exquisite touch which renders ordinary commonplace things and characters interesting from the truth of the description and the sentiment is denied to me."

In a letter to a nephew, himself engaged in novel-writing, Jane Austen compares her work to that of a miniature-painter, and refers to "the little bit (two inches wide) of ivory on which I work with so fine a brush." No more apt comparison could be made.

HER CHARACTER-DRAWING. — She deliberately avoids all extremes of character and situation, everything wild and romantic in scenery, and lets her amused, detached, critical gaze rest on the country gentry, the pompous clergy, the match-

making mothers, the romantic young ladies, and the garrulous old maids with whom her daily life must have made her familiar. She never burns with righteous indignation, and she is always more amused than surprised at folly and stupidity. The foolish frivolity of an Isabella Thorpe, the petty meanness of a Mrs. John Dashwood, the empty-headed vulgarity of a Mrs. Elton, the sublime complacency and servility of a Mr. Collins, and the arrogant impertinence of a Lady Catherine, all delight her equally. It is tempting to think that she and Mr. Bennet share something of the same outlook on life; to Elizabeth's natural comment after hearing Mr. Collins's first letter, "Can he be a sensible man, sir?" Mr. Bennet replies, "No, my dear; I think not. I have great hopes of finding him quite the reverse." We learn that "Mr. Bennet's expectations were fully answered. His cousin was as absurd as he had hoped; and he listened to him with the keenest enjoyment."

The penetrating remarks which Jane Austen makes as she introduces her characters would often serve also as a final comment on them; all that follows afterwards merely illustrates the acuteness of her discernment and emphasises her skill in summarising a character in a few words: "Mr. Collins was not a sensible man, and the

deficiency of nature had been but little assisted by education and society. . . . The subjection in which his father had brought him up had given him originally great humility of manner; but now it was a great deal counteracted by the self-conceit of a weak head, living in retirement, and the consequential feelings of early and unexpected prosperity." After this we are not surprised at Mr. Collins's extraordinary proposal and his three excellent reasons for marrying, nor at his inability to believe that Elizabeth has really rejected him; he merely thinks her refusal is "the usual practice of elegant females." Mrs. Bennet, in her annoyance at Elizabeth's treatment of Mr. Collins merely fulfils our expectations, when we remember that "the business of her life was to get her daughters married; its solace was visiting and news."

Her power of humorous analysis of character is admirably illustrated by two remarks in *Sense and Sensibility*—one on Sir John Middleton, "Benevolent, philanthropic man! It was painful to him even to keep a third cousin to himself"; the other on his wife, "who was more agreeable than her mother only in being more silent."

"NORTHANGER ABBEY," "SENSE AND SENSIBILITY," "EMMA."—But though the characters may be sketched for us in a dispassionate manner

by their creator, they still reveal themselves in conversation. The difference between the simple, sincere, and earnest Catherine Morland and her sophisticated, empty-headed friend Isabella Thorpe is shown to perfection in the first dialogue given in this book. Catherine's mind is full of the "Mysteries of Udolpho" and the secret of the black veil, but though Isabella has read the novel she shows only a fleeting interest in it, and readily wanders to "a Miss Andrews, a sweet girl, one of the sweetest creatures in the world," but whom "the men" do not admire sufficiently. Once embarked on so enthralling a subject as "the men," there is no stopping her; she embarrasses Catherine by referring to "one gentleman who shall be nameless," and expresses her intention of being dressed exactly like Catherine that night, as "the men take notice of *that*, sometimes, you know." The slightly perplexed and innocent Catherine is the completely unromantic heroine who "never could learn or understand anything before she was taught, and sometimes not even then," whose "father was a clergyman, without being neglected, or poor, and a very respectable man, though his name was Richard." In her unromantic person dwells an incurably romantic soul, and Jane Austen makes amusing play with her hopes of Northanger

Abbey and the oak chest, and her terrible disillusionment over the laundry list.

The selfishness of Mrs. John Dashwood and the weakness of her husband are well shown in the second dialogue in this volume. Mrs. Dashwood gradually makes Mr. Dashwood reduce the gift which he intended to bestow on his relations from a thousand pounds to each of the girls to "looking out for a comfortable small house for them, helping to move their things, and sending them presents of fish and game, and so forth, whenever they are in season." She proves conclusively that, far from being in need, their relations will be "excessively comfortable," for "altogether, they will have five hundred a year amongst them; and what on earth can four women want for more than that? . . . Five hundred a year! I am sure I cannot imagine how they will spend half of it, and as to your giving them more, it is quite absurd to think of it. They will be much more able to *give you* something." Mr. Dashwood's easy acceptance of his wife's suggestions shows his cold-heartedness, and we are prepared for his decision at the end "that it would be absolutely unnecessary, if not highly indecorous, to do more for the widow and children of his father than such kind of neighbourly acts as his own wife had pointed out."

*Emma*, from which three of these dialogues are taken, contains many delightful characters. There is Mr. Woodhouse, who could never refer to Emma's old governess, now that she had left his service and was happily married, as anything but "poor Miss Taylor," and who took this lady into his confidence about Frank Churchill, saying, "Do not tell his father, but that young man is not quite the thing. He has been opening the doors very often this evening, and keeping them open very inconsiderately. He does not think of the draught. I do not mean to set you against him, but indeed he is not quite the thing." There is Mrs. Elton, with her perpetual reminiscences of the glories of Maple Grove and the pleasures of the barouche-landau, "which holds four perfectly/' And above all there is the voluble Miss Bates, who never stops falking and seldom finishes her sentences. "This is meeting quite in fairyland. Such a transformation. Must not compliment, I know (eyeing Emma most complacently)—that would be rude; but upon my word, Miss Woodhouse, you do look—how do you like Jane's hair? You are a judge. She did it all herself. Quite wonderful how she does her hair! No hairdresser from London, I think, could—Ah! Dr. Hughes, I declare—and Mrs. Hughes."

The last dialogue in the book, the battle between Elizabeth Bennet and Lady Catherine de Bourgh, is most spirited. Elizabeth had previously listened to Lady Catherine's impertinent questions, "how many sisters she had, whether they were older or younger than herself, whether any of them were likely to be married, whether they were handsome, where they had been educated, what carriage her father kept, and what had been her mother's maiden name," and had surprised her by parrying the question about her own age by replying, "With three younger sisters grown up, your Ladyship can hardly expect me to own it." We are delighted that Lady Catherine, after having commented so unfavourably on the house and grounds of Mrs. Bennet on whom she is calling, "You have a very small park here . . . this must be a most inconvenient sitting-room for the evening in summer," is completely routed by Elizabeth.

Miss AUSTEN HERSELF.—When we have read Jane Austen's novels we naturally speculate on what she herself was like, and perhaps wonder if she had other pleasures besides those of criticising her fellows. It is a relief to know from a niece that "she was singularly free from the habit \* . . of looking out for people's foibles for her own amusement, or the entertainment of her

hearers. . . . I do not suppose she ever in her life said a sharp thing."

If we want to know her for ourselves we should read her letters, especially those to her sister Cassandra. It is interesting to learn that, when they were all engaged on making shirts for her brother Edward, she was "the neatest worker of the party"; that she enjoyed housekeeping: "My mother desires me to tell you that I am a very good housekeeper, which I have no reluctance in doing, because I think it my peculiar excellence, and for this reason—I always take care to provide such things as please my own appetite, which I consider as the chief merit in housekeeping"; and that she showed a very healthy interest in dress: "My black cap was openly admired by Mrs. Lefroy, and secretly I imagine by everybody else in the room." "I am sorry to say that my new coloured gown is very much washed out, though I charged everyone to take great care of it." "My cloak is come home. I like it very much, and can now exclaim with delight, like J. Bond at hay-harvest, 'This is what I have been looking for these three years.'"

In her youth she had a considerable zest for balls and flirtations. Of one ball, she writes, "There were twenty dances, and I danced them all, and without any fatigue. . . . In cold

weather and with few couples I fancy I could just as well dance for a week together as for half an hour." After another ball, she writes to Cassandra, "I am almost afraid to tell you how my Irish friend and I behaved. Imagine to yourself everything most profligate and shocking in the way of dancing and sitting down together. I *can* expose myself, however, only *once more*, because he leaves the country soon after next Friday." The young man in question had one fault—"it is that his morning coat is a great deal too light." She looks forward with great impatience to a ball, "as I rather expect to receive an offer from my friend in the course of the evening. I shall refuse him, however, unless he promises to give away his white coat." In describing a less successful dance, she writes to Cassandra, "One of my gayest actions was sitting down two dances in preference to having Lord Bolton's eldest son for my partner, who danced too ill to be endured." When she heard in later life of the marriage of another admirer of hers, she writes of his wife, "I could wish Miss Lewis to be of a silent turn and rather ignorant, but naturally intelligent and wishing to learn, fond of cold veal-pies, green tea in the afternoon, and a green window-blind at night."

She could enjoy a quiet evening as well as a

ball, and describes how she and a sister-in-law were driven over to dinner at Ashe Park, where "we had a very quiet evening. I believe Mary found it dull, but I thought it very pleasant. To sit in idleness over a good fire in a well-proportioned room is a luxurious sensation. Sometimes we talked, and sometimes we were quite silent; I said two or three amusing things, and Mr. Holder made a few infamous puns."

Life was always of unfailing interest for her, and later when she found herself again in a room, in which she had danced fifteen years before, she was able to say, "I thought it all over, and in spite of the shame of being so much older, felt with thankfulness that I was quite as happy now as then." She says too with humour, "By the by, as I must leave off being young, I find many *douceurs* in being a sort of *chaperon*, for I am put on the sofa near the fire, and can drink as much wine as I like."

She was never one of those who regretted the superior manners of a past generation; instead she admired the lack of shyness of a small child and wrote, "She is a nice, natural, open-hearted, affectionate girl, with all the ready civility which one sees in the best children in the present day; so unlike anything that I was myself at her age, that I am often all astonishment and shame."

Her letters show the same cool judgment of people, the same delicate irony, and the same neatness of description which appear in her novels. Of a Mrs. Blount, "the only one much admired" at one dance she attended, she says, "She appeared exactly as she did in September, with the same broad face, diamond bandeau, white shoes, pink husband, and fat neck." "Miss H. is an elegant, pleasing, pretty-looking girl . . . with flowers in her head and music at her finger-ends." "My. B. seems nothing more than a tall young man." "Mary W.'s turn is actually come to be grown up, and have a fine complexion, and wear a great square muslin shawl." "Only think of Mrs. Holder's being dead! Poor woman, she has done the only thing in the world she could possibly do to make one cease to abuse her."

She did not suffer from a defect she noticed in a Mrs. A. of her acquaintance, who "seems to like people rather too easily." She had deep feelings and very strong affections, but she was very shy and critical of strangers. She writes of a lady whom she met while staying at Bath, "I respect Mrs. Chamberlayne for doing her hair well, but cannot feel a more tender sentiment," although a week later after a strenuous walk with the same lady she says, "After seeing what she is equal to,

I cannot help feeling a regard for her." It appears to have been a notable walk: "We went up by Sion Hill, and returned across the fields. In climbing a hill Mrs. Chamberlayne is very capital. I could with difficulty keep pace with her, yet would not flinch for the world. On plain ground I was quite her equal. And so we posted away under a fine hot sun, *she* without any parasol or any shade to her hat, stopping for nothing and crossing the churchyard at Weston with as much expedition as if we were afraid of being buried alive."

Jane Austen's appearance has been described by one of her nieces: "The figure tall and slight, but not drooping: well-balanced, as was proved by her quick, firm step. Her complexion of that rare sort which seems the particular property of light brunettes; a mottled skin, not fair, but perfectly clear and healthy; the fine naturally curling hair, neither light nor dark; the bright hazel eyes to match, and the rather small but well-shaped nose."

The facts of Jane Austen's quiet life can be stated very briefly.

She was one of a large family; she had one sister and six brothers, two of whom were in the Navy and rose to be Admirals. The first twenty-five years of her life were spent at Steventon in

Hampshire where her father was vicar; after his retirement the family moved to Bath; and when he died, her mother, her sister and she lived for a short time at Southampton, and later at Chawton in Hampshire in a cottage near the home of Edward, one of her married brothers. During her last illness she was taken to Winchester for further medical advice, and died there on July 18th, 1817, when she was forty-two years old.



# COSTUMES





## LADIES

**T H E** prevailing materials for the morning dresses of this period were cambrics, India muslins, clear muslins, usually white, and often spotted and sprigged with clear colours. The bodices were usually cut low with short sleeves, the neck being covered with an embroidered habit shirt or chemi-sette, often cut with very high collars coming up to the ears. The arms were covered with sleeves of rucked muslin or net. The walking dresses were worn to the ankle only, but the more graceful house dress was worn long. "Spencers," or short bodices, with sleeves made of silk or cloth, were often worn over the muslin dress out of doors; these were sometimes buttoned down the centre, sometimes double-breasted, sometimes left open. "Spanish vests," a sort of Spencer, with long-pointed ends in front, were often seen. Shawls, and long scarfs with embroidered ends, were almost invariable accompaniments of out-door dress, and were carried over the arm or worn

draped over one shoulder, or round the neck, with long ends hanging in front like a boa. The use of muslins, furs, China silks, sarsnets, satins, etc., indiscriminately, was characteristic of the period. A dress made of muslin and a fur muff and boa was not considered incongruous. Small hats and turban-shaped caps were as much worn as large; ostrich and herons' feathers, satins, velvets, velvet flowers, and even jewels were used for these. Gloves were usually of York tan or French kid, but sometimes were of *net*. Shoes were made of varying materials—coloured kid, often velvet or silk. The colours most in vogue were pinks, lilacs, violets, lavender, pale primrose, pale greens, scarlets often for pelisses, and all clear colours. Browns are described as "cinamon," chocolate, nut, "la boue de Paris/" Egyptian brown, etc. All muslin dresses were worn over "slips" of silk or cambric. In making the bodices, it should be borne in mind that of the many ways of cutting them, the least graceful is to have a straight line round the waist. The line should curve upwards from beneath the bosom in front and reach the highest point between the shoulder-blades at the back, as seen in the back view of Emma. A double curve, which rises slightly in front as well, as seen in one of the distant figures in the frontispiece, is very becoming.

## GENTLEMEN

The men's dress of this period had all the variety of a time of transition—cut-away and swallow-tail coats as well as riding coats and surtouts were worn, differing mainly from the garments of to-day in the height of the waist, and often extravagant height of the collar. The waistcoats were high-waisted, of the gayest colours and most varied materials, being ornamented with fantastic buttons. Pantaloons, either buttoned just above the ankle, or tied with a riband, were in almost universal use; these were supplemented out of doors by top-boots or gaiters. The pantaloons were usually of cloth, though occasionally knitted wool was worn. High stocks and frilled shirt-fronts were usual, but would not have reached an eccentric pitch among Miss Austen's quiet country folks. Hats were high-crowned, with curved brims of varying width, and were made of beaver, felt, or straw. Knee-breeches would be worn by the old-fashioned folk, and by clergymen. The colouring being centred in the waistcoat, the rest of the costume, though perhaps slightly gayer than that of the present day, would on the whole be sober in hue.



# L—LITERARY TASTES

DUOLOGUE BETWEEN CATHERINE MORLAND AND  
ISABELLA THORPE

*From "Northanger Abbey"*

## COSTUMES

*Isabella* is wearing a pelisse of lilac-coloured sar-sanet, trimmed with white swansdown; a French cambric frock fastened down the front with small round pearl buttons, and with a border of gold-coloured embroidery round the skirt, which is of walking length. The bodice is cut low, a muslin chemisette with high collar and frill being worn to cover the neck.

The hat of straw or white beaver is tied under the chin by a tan-coloured ribbon, which passes over the crown; a tuft of white ostrich feathers on the left side; tan gloves and tan shoes.

*Catherine* wears a large natural-coloured straw hat, with jonquil green ribbon and white feathers; a dress of cambric muslin spotted with pale yellow flowers, short full sleeves, and a primrose-coloured shawl; white or tan gloves.



ISABELLA THORPE AND CATHERINE MORLAND





## I.—LITERARY TASTES

CHARACTERS : *Isabella Thorpe and Catherine Morland.*

N.B. "The progress of the friendship between Catherine and Isabella was quick as its beginning had been warm; and they passed so rapidly through every gradation of increasing tenderness, that there was shortly no fresh proof of it to be given to their friends or themselves. They called each other by their Christian name, were always arm-in-arm when they walked, pinned up each other's train for the dance, and were not to be divided in the set; and, if a rainy morning deprived them of other enjoyments, they were still resolute in meeting, in defiance of wet and dirt, and shut themselves up to read novels. . . . The following conversation, which took place between the two friends in the Pump-room one morning, after an acquaintance of eight or nine days, is given as a specimen of their very warm attachment, and of the delicacy, discretion, originality of thought, and literary taste which marked the reasonableness of that attachment." — *Northanger Abbey*, chap. v. and vi.

SCENE: *Part of the Pump-room at Bath,*

*Properties required:—A sofa R.C.; a small table L., with the visitors' book upon it. Door L, A window up R.C.*

*Enter Isabella Thorpe, Having to wait a few moments, she shows every sign of impatience.*  
*Enter Catherine Morland.*

*Isabella, [Rising suddenly.]* My dearest creature! what can have made you so late? *[They embrace,]* I have been waiting for you at least this age.

*Catherine, [Surprised,]* Have you, indeed? I am very sorry for it, but really I thought I was in very good time. *[Pointing to her watch or a timepiece.]* It is but just one. I hope you have not been here long?

*Isabella, Oh!* these ten ages at least. I am sure I have been here this half-hour; but now, let us sit down and enjoy ourselves. *[They sit on the sofa,]* I have a hundred things to say to you. In the first place, I was so afraid it would rain this morning, just as I wanted to set off: it looked very showery, and that would have thrown me into agonies! Do you know, I saw the prettiest hat you can imagine in a shop-window in Milsom Street just now—very like

yours, only with coquelicot ribands instead of green; I quite longed for it. But, my dearest Catherine, what have you been doing with yourself this morning? Have you gone on with "Udolpho?"

*Catherine.* Yes, I have been reading it ever since I woke, and I am got to the black veil.

*Isabella.* Are you, indeed? How delightful! Oh!

I would not tell you what is behind the black veil for the world! Are you not wild to know?

*Catherine.* Oh! yes, quite, what can it be? But do not tell me—I would not be told upon any account. I know it must be a skeleton, I am sure it is *Laurentina's* skeleton. Oh! I am delighted with the book! I should like to spend my whole life in reading it, I assure you; if it had not been to meet you, I would not have come away from it for all the world.

*Isabella.* [*Embracing Catherine impulsively.*] Dear creature! how much I am obliged to you; and when you have finished "Udolpho" we will read the Italian together; and I have made out a list of ten or twelve more of the same kind for you

*Catherine.* Have you, indeed? How glad I am! What are they all?

*Isabella.* [*Rising.*] I will read you their names directly; here they are in my pocket-book—

*[Takes out a small pocket-book from her reticule and reads.]* "Castle of Walfenbach," "Clermont," "Mysterious Warnings," "Necromancer of the Black Forest," "Midnight Bell," "Orphan of the Rhine," and "Horrid Mysteries"—*[Shutting the book.]* There! those will last us some time.

*Catherine.* Yes — pretty well, but are they all horrid? are you sure that they are all horrid?

*Isabella.* *[Leaning on the sofa, R. end.]* Yes, quite sure; for a particular friend of mine—a Miss Andrews, a sweet girl, one of the sweetest creatures in the world, has read every one of them. I wish you knew Miss Andrews, you would be delighted with her. She is netting herself the sweetest cloak you can conceive. I think her as beautiful as an angel, and I am so vexed with the men for not admiring her I scold them all amazingly about it.

*Catherine.* Scold them! Do you scold them for not admiring her?

*Isabella.* Yes, that I do. There is nothing I would not do for those who are really my friends. I have no notion of loving people by halves; it is not my nature. My attachments are always excessively strong. I told Captain Hunt at one of our assemblies this winter, that if he was to tease me all night, I would not dance with him unless he would allow Miss Andrews to be as

beautiful as an angel. The men think us incapable of real friendship, you know, and I am determined to show them the difference. Now, if I were to hear anybody speak slightly of you—*[Embrace.]*—I should fire up in a moment; but that is not at all likely, for you are just the kind of girl to be a great favourite with the men.

*Catherine. [Hanging her head and turning away.]*

Oh! dear! how can you say so?

*Isabella.* Oh! I know you very well, you have so much animation, which is exactly what Miss Andrews wants; for I must confess there is something amazingly insipid about her. *[Sitting down again.]* Oh; I must tell you, that just after we parted yesterday I saw a young man looking at you so earnestly.

*[Catherine turning away still more.]*

*Isabella.* I am sure he is in love with you.

*Catherine.* Oh! Isabella!

*Isabella. [Laughing.]* It is very true, upon my honour. But I see how it is; you are indifferent to everybody's admiration except that of one gentleman, who shall be nameless. *[Suddenly serious.]* Nay, I cannot blame you, your feelings are easily understood. *[Rising.]* Where the heart is really attached, I know very well how little one can be pleased with the attentions of any-

body else—[*walking to R.*]; everything is so insipid, so uninteresting, that does not relate to the beloved object; I can perfectly comprehend your feelings.

*Catherine.* But you should not persuade me that I think so very much about Mr. Tilney, for perhaps I may never see him again.

*Isabella.* Not see him again! [*Embracing.*] My dearest creature, do not talk of it. I am sure you would be miserable if you thought so.

*Catherine.* [*Smiling.*] No, indeed, I should not. I do not pretend to say that I was not very much pleased with him; but while I have "Udolpho" to read, I feel as if nobody could make me miserable. Oh! the dreadful black veil; my dear Isabella, I am sure there must be Laurentina's skeleton behind it.

*Isabella.* [*Taking Catherine's arm and walking up and down.*] It is so odd to me that you should never have read "Udolpho" before; but I suppose Mrs. Morland objects to novels.

*Catherine.* No, she does not. She very often reads "Sir Charles Grandison" herself; but new books do not fall in our way.

*Isabella.* "Sir Charles Grandison"! that is an amazing horrid book, is it not? I remember Miss Andrews could not get through the first volume.

*Catherine.* It is not like "Udolpho" at all, but yet I think it is very entertaining.

*Isabella.* Do you, indeed? you surprise me; I thought it had not been readable. [*Stopping short.*] But, my dearest Catherine, have you settled what to wear on your head to-night? I am determined, at all events, to be dressed exactly like you. The men take notice of *that* sometimes, you know.

*Catherine.* [*Innocently.*] But it does not signify if they do.

*Isabella.* Signify! Oh! Heavens! I make it a rule never to mind what they say. They are very often amazingly impertinent if you do not treat them with spirit, and make them keep their distance.

*Catherine.* Are they? Well, I never observed *that*. They always behave very well to me.

*Isabella.* Oh! They give themselves such airs. They are the most conceited creatures in the world, and think themselves of so much importance. By the by, though I have thought of it a hundred times, I have always forgot to ask you what is your favourite complexion in a man. Do you like them best dark or fair?

*Catherine.* I hardly know. I never much thought about it. Something between both, I think; brown—not fair and not very dark.

*Isabella.* Very well, Catherine. That is exactly he. I have not forgot your description of Mr. Tilney—"A brown skin, with dark eyes and rather dark hair." Well, my taste is different; I prefer light eyes; and as to complexion—do you know—I like a sallow better than any other. But you must not betray me, if you should ever meet with one of your acquaintances answering that description.

*Catherine.* [*Impulsively,*] Betray you! what do you mean?

*Isabella.* Nay, do not distress me—I believe I have said too much already. Pray, let us drop the subject.

*Catherine.* My dearest Isabella, certainly, if you wish it. [*Aside as Isabella walks towards the door.*] I wonder if it is Laurentina's skeleton. Oh! it must be Laurentina's skeleton.

*Isabella.* [*Coming suddenly back to Catherine, but looking over her shoulder towards the door.*] For Heaven's sake let us move away from this end of the room. Do you know, there are two odious young men who have been staring at me this half hour? They really put me quite out of countenance. Let us go and look at the arrivals in the visiting book. They will hardly follow us there. [*They walk to the book. While Isabella examines the book, Catherine watches*

*the proceedings off*L. door.] They are not coming this way, are they? I hope they are not so impertinent as to follow us. Pray let me know if they are coming. I am determined I will not look up.

*Catherine.* [At door, with unaffected pleasure.] You need no longer be uneasy; the gentlemen have just left the Pump-room.

*Isabella.* [Turning hastily round.] And which way are they gone? One of them was a very good-looking young man.,

*Catherine.* [Going to the window.] They are going towards the Churchyard.

*Isabella.* [Hastily.] Well, I am amazingly glad I have got rid of them; and now, what say you to going to Edgar's Buildings with me and looking at my new hat? You said you should like to see it.

*Catherine.* With pleasure—only—perhaps we may overtake the two young men.

*Isabella.* Oh! never mind that. If we make haste, we shall pass by them presently, and I am dying to show you my hat.

[Taking Catherine's hand and drawing her towards the door.

*Catherine.* [Holding back.] But if we only wait a few minutes there will be no danger of our seeing them at all.

*Isabella.* [With great dignity, still holding Catherine's hand.] I shall not pay them any such compliment, I assure you. I have no notion of treating men with such respect. *That* is the way to spoil them. Come—and see my new hat.

[*Exeunt Catherine and Isabella, hurriedly, by the door.*]

CURTAIN



## II.-THE SETTLEMENT QUESTION

DUOLOGUE BETWEEN MR. AND MRS. JOHN  
DASHWOOD

*From "Sense mid Sensibility" Vol. I., chap. ii.*

## COSTUMES

*Mrs. D.* Black dress with a Spanish vest trimmed with narrow black velvet; pointed ends in front, finished with black tassels. Skirt trimmed with black ermine velvet to match white ermine opera tippet.

*Mr. D.* In grey and black.



MR. AND MRS JOHN DASHWOOD





## II.—THE SETTLEMENT QUESTION (A CONVERSATION)

CHARACTERS: *Mr. and Mrs. John Dashwood.*

SCENE: *The morning room at Norlands. It is a comfortably furnished room.*

*Properties required:—Door R. Window C. Tables R. and L. Chairs on either side. Books and a work-basket with household mending in it.*

N.B. "He (Mr. John Dashwood) was not an ill-disposed young man, unless to be rather cold-hearted, and rather selfish is to be ill-disposed; but he was, in general, well respected, for he conducted himself with propriety in the discharge of his ordinary duties. Had he married a more amiable woman, he might have been still more respectable than he was; he might even have been made amiable himself, for he was very young when he married, and very fond of his wife. But Mrs. Dashwood was a strong caricature of himself; more narrow-minded and selfish."—*Sense and Sensibility*, chap. i.

*Enter Mrs. John Dashwood, Door R. She is in mourning.*

*Mrs. D, [going to the window and arranging the curtains,]* A comfortably appointed house—a little shabby, perhaps—but with judicious alterations here and there, I do not doubt of making it very fit and habitable for Mr. Dashwood and myself. *[Sitting to her work.]* Yet I wish my father-in-law had not died here, and thus put me to the inconvenience of offering a home to his widow and three daughters till they have found a suitable house of their own. I think I made it palpably clear to them that their stay could only be considered in the light of a visit, by arriving with dear little Harry and our attendants as soon as the funeral was over. The house was my husband's from the moment of his father's decease, and no one could dispute my right to come. But such is the indelicacy and selfishness of our mother-in-law, that unless my husband finds her a home elsewhere, she and her daughters will consider they may remain here for ever. I hope Mr. Dashwood will see that they are soon settled, and then I can take up my proper position at Norlands.

*Enter Mr. John Dashwood. He, too, is in mourning.*  
*Mr. D.* My dear, if you are at leisure I should

like to speak with you about the promise I made to my late lamented father upon his death-bed respecting the future of my step-mother and three sisters.

*Mrs. D.* The very thing I was thinking of myself.

*Mr. D.* I am happy to see we are in such accord. The case is this. My present income, which is not inconsiderable, will now be increased by four thousand a-year, and the prospect has determined me to behave with generosity. I therefore propose to give them three thousand pounds.

*Mrs. D.* [*With horror.*] Three thousand pounds!

*Mr. D.* Yes. It will be liberal and handsome. I can spare so considerable a sum with little inconvenience, and it would be enough to make them completely easy.

*Mrs. D.* But, my dear Mr. Dashwood, pray consider. To take three thousands pounds from the fortune of our dear little boy would be impoverishing him to the most dreadful degree. I beg you to think again on the subject. How can you answer it to yourself to rob your child, your only child too, of so large a sum? and what possible claims can the Miss Dashwoods, who are related to you only by half blood, which I consider as no relationship at all, have on your generosity to so large an amount?

It is very well known that no affection is ever supposed to exist between the children of any man by different marriages; and why are you to ruin yourself and our poor little Harry, by giving away all your money to your half sisters?

*Mr. D.* It was my father's last request to me, that I should assist his widow and daughters.

*Mrs. D.* He did not know what he was talking of, I dare say. Ten to one but he was light-headed at the time. Had he been in his right senses, he could not have thought of such a thing as begging you to give away half your fortune from your own child.

*Mr. D.* He did not stipulate for any particular sum, my dear Fanny; he only requested me, in general terms, to assist them, and make their situation more comfortable than it was in his power to do. Perhaps it would have been as well if he had left it wholly to myself. He could hardly suppose I should neglect them. But—as he required the promise, I could not do less than give it—at least, I thought so at the time. The promise, therefore, was given, and must be performed. Something must be done for them whenever they leave Norland and settle in a new home.

*Mrs. D.* Well, then, let something be done for them; but *that* something need not be three thousand pounds. Consider, that when the

## THE SETTLEMENT QUESTION

money is once parted with, it never can return. Your sisters will marry, and it will be gone for ever,—if, indeed, it could ever be restored to our poor little boy.

*Mr. D.* [*Gravely,*] Why, to be sure, that would make a difference. The time may come when Harry will regret that so large a sum was parted with. If he should have a numerous family, for instance, it would be a very convenient addition.

*Mrs. D.* To be sure it would.

*Mr. D.* Perhaps, then, it would be better for all parties if the sum were diminished one half. Five hundred pounds would be a prodigious increase to their fortune.

*Mrs. D.* Oh! beyond anything great! What brother on earth would do half so much for his sisters, even if *really* his sisters! And as it is—only half blood! But you have such a generous spirit!

*Mr. D.* I would not wish to do anything mean; one had rather, on such occasions, do too much than too little. No one, at least, can think I have not done enough for them. Even themselves, they can hardly expect more.

*Mrs. D.* There is no knowing what *they* may expect. But we are not to think of their expectations; the question is, what you can afford to do.

*Mr. D.* Certainly; and I think I can afford to give them five hundred pounds a-piece. As it is, without any addition of mine, they will each have above three thousand pounds on their mother's death—a very comfortable fortune for any young woman.

*Mrs. D.* To be sure it is; and, indeed, it strikes me that they can want no addition at all. They will have ten thousand pounds divided amongst them. If they marry they will be sure of doing well, and if they do not, they will live very comfortably together on the interest of ten thousand pounds.

*Mr. D.* That is very true, and, therefore, I do not know whether, upon the whole, it would not be more advisable to do something for their mother while she lives, rather than for them—something of the annuity kind I mean. My sisters would feel the good effects of it as well as herself. A hundred a year would make them all perfectly comfortable.

*Mrs. D.* [*Hesitating,*] To be sure it is better than parting with fifteen hundred pounds at once; but then, if Mrs. Dashwood should live fifteen years, we shall be completely taken in.

*Mr. D.* Fifteen years! my dear Fanny, her life cannot be worth half that purchase.

*Mrs. D.* Certainly not, but if you observe, people

## THE SETTLEMENT QUESTION

always live for ever when there is any annuity to be paid them; and she is very stout, and healthy, and hardly forty. An annuity is a very serious business; it comes over and over every year, and there is no getting rid of it. You are not aware of what you are doing. I have known a great deal of the trouble of annuities, for my mother was clogged with the payment of three to old superannuated servants by my father's will, and it is amazing how disagreeable she found it. Twice every year these annuities were to be paid; and then there was the trouble of getting it to them: and then one of them was said to have died, and afterwards it turned out to be no such thing. My mother was quite sick of it. Her income was not her own she said, with such perpetual claims upon it; and it was the more unkind in my father, because otherwise, the money would have been entirely at my mother's disposal without any restriction whatever. It has given me such an abhorrence of annuities, that I am sure I would not pin myself down to the payment of one for all the world.

*Mr. D.* It is certainly an unpleasant thing to have those kind of yearly drains on one's income. One's fortune, as your mother justly says, is *not* one's own. To be tied down to the regular

payment of such a sum, on every rent day, is by no means desirable; it takes away one's independence.

*Mrs, D.* Undoubtedly; and, after all, you have no thanks for it, they think themselves secure; you do no more than what is expected, and it raises no gratitude at all. If I were you, whatever I did should be done at my own discretion entirely. I would not bind myself to allow them anything yearly. It may be very inconvenient some years to spare a hundred, or even fifty, pounds from our own expenses.

*Mr, D.* I believe you are right, my love; it will be better that there should be no annuity in the case. Whatever I may give them occasionally will be of far greater assistance than a yearly allowance, because they would only enlarge their style of living if they felt sure of a larger income, and would not be sixpence the richer for it at the end of the year. It will certainly be much the best way. A present of fifty pounds now and then will prevent their ever being distressed for money, and will, I think, be amply discharging my promise to my father.

*Mrs, D.* To be sure it will. Indeed, to say the truth, I am convinced within myself that your father had no idea of your giving them any

money at all. The assistance he thought of, I dare say, was only such as might be reasonably expected of you; for instance, such as looking out for a comfortable small house for them, helping them to move their things, and sending them presents of fish and game, and so forth, whenever they are in season. I'll lay my life that he meant nothing further; indeed, it would be very strange and unreasonable if he did. Do but consider, my dear Mr. Dashwood, how excessively comfortable your step-mother and her daughters may live on the interest of seven thousand pounds, besides the thousand pounds belonging to each of the girls, which brings them in fifty pounds a year apiece, and of course they will pay their mother for their board out of it. Altogether they will have five hundred a year amongst them; and what on earth can four women want for more than that? They will live so cheap! Their housekeeping will be nothing at all. They will have no carriage, no horses, and hardly any servants; they will keep no company, and can have no expenses of any kind! Only conceive how comfortable they will be! Five hundred a year! I am sure I cannot imagine how they will spend half of it; and as for your giving them more, it is quite absurd to think of it.

They will be much more able to give *you* something.

*Mr. D.* Upon my word, I beheve you are perfectly right. My father certainly could mean nothing more by his request to me than what you say. I clearly understand it now, and I will strictly fulfil my engagement by such acts of assistance and kindness to them as you have described. When my step-mother removes into another house my services shall readily be given to accommodate her as far as I can. Some little present of furniture, too, may be acceptable then.

*Mrs. D.* Certainly; but, however, *one* thing must be considered,—that though the furniture goes with this house, and is therefore our own, your father left *all* the china, linen, and plate to your step-mother. Her house will therefore be almost completely fitted up as soon as she takes it.

*Mr. D.* That is a material consideration, undoubtedly; a valuable legacy, indeed! And some of the plate would have been a very pleasant addition to our own stock here.

*Mrs. D.* Yes, and the set of breakfast china is twice as handsome as ours; a great deal too handsome, in my opinion, for any place *they* can ever afford to live in. But, however, so it is.

Your father thought only of *them*, and I must say this, that you owe no particular gratitude to him, nor attention to his wishes; for we very well know, that if he could he would have left almost everything in the world to them.

*Mr, D,* My love, I am convinced of the truth of what you say. It will not only be absolutely unnecessary, but highly indecorous to do more. [*Looking at his watch.*] Eleven o'clock; the carriage should be here. My step-mother has not been out of doors since my father's funeral, and I ordered the carriage to take her and my sisters for a drive.

*Mrs, D,* [*Rising and putting away her work,*] My dear Mr. Dashwood. No! Here I must be firm. It is quite an unnecessary luxury, which they must sooner or later relinquish; and if they are indulged in carriage exercise now, how can they ever be expected to conform to the new mode of life attendant on their reduced circumstances. It is a cruelty, not a kindness, on your part to suggest such a thing. However, rather than that Wilkins should have troubled to harness the horses in vain, I will take little Harry out with me. The air will do him all the good in the world, and you can easily explain to your mother and sisters that it is incumbent upon me to drive round the estate in order to

learn a little of its extent and capacity. You can tell them they shall go out another day.

*Mr. D.* My dear Fanny, you are right, your judgment of such matters can never be at fault. Perhaps I *was* over-hospitable.

*Mrs. D. [Emphatically.]* My dear Mr. Dashwood, of that there is no doubt.

*[Exeunt Mr. and Mrs. Dashwood.]*

END OF SCENE

### III.—THE READING OF JANE FAIRFAX'S LETTER

DUOLOGUE BETWEEN MISS BATES  
AND EMMA

*From "Emma," Vol I., chap. xix.*

## COSTUMES

*Emma.* Long curricie coat of jonquil green china silk, lined with fawn-coloured sarsanet: white cambric dress, the bodice with wrap fronts, crossing on the bosom and fastening at the middle of the back. Opera tippet (boa of white swansdown). A cap of "tiara" form of nut-brown silk, trimmed with pointed green leaves and tied under the chin with nut-brown ribbons; large muff of white swansdown.

*Miss Bates.* Dress of grey or dark brown silk striped with black; chemisette of thick white muslin; apron of black satin; broad ribbon of myrtle green tied round the head in a bow at the top, a black ostrich tip fastened in the ribbon with an antique pebble brooch; an eye-glass fastened round the neck by a long black ribbon.



MISS BATES AND EMMA



### III.—THE READING OF JANE FAIRFAX'S LETTER

CHARACTERS: *Miss Bates, Mrs. Bates, Emma Woodhouse*

N.B. "After these came a second set, among the most come-at-able of whom were Mrs. and Miss Bates . . . almost always at the service of an invitation from Hartfield, and who were fetched and carried home so often that Mr. Woodhouse thought it no hardship for either James or the horses. Had it taken place only once a year it would have been a grievance. *Mrs. Bates*, the widow of a former Vicar of Highbury, was a very old lady, almost past everything but tea and quadrille. She lived with her single daughter in a very small way, and was considered with all the regard and respect which a harmless old lady, under such untoward circumstances, can excite. *Her daughter* enjoyed a most uncommon degree of popularity for a woman neither young, handsome, rich, nor married. Miss Bates stood in the very worst predicament in the world for having much of the public favour, and she had no intellectual superiority to make

atonement to herself, or frighten those who might hate her, into outward respect. She had never boasted either beauty or cleverness. Her youth had passed without distinction, and her middle life was devoted to the care of a failing mother, and the endeavour to make a small income go as far as possible, and yet she was a happy woman and a woman whom no one named without good will. It was her own universal good will and contented temper which worked such wonders. She loved everybody, was interested in everybody's happiness, quick-sighted to everybody's merits, thought herself a most fortunate creature and surrounded with blessings in such an excellent mother, and so many good neighbours and friends, and a home that wanted for nothing. The simplicity and cheerfulness of her nature, her contented and grateful spirit, were a recommendation to everybody, and a mine of felicity to herself. She was a great talker upon little matters, full of trivial communications and harmless gossip. . . . These were the ladies whom *Emma* found herself very frequently able to collect; and happy was she, for her father's sake, in the power; though, as far as she herself was concerned, it was no remedy for the absence of Mrs. Weston (her former governess and best friend). The quiet gossipings of such women made

her feel that every evening so spent was indeed one of the long evenings she had fearfully anticipated."—*Emma*, chap. iii.

SCENE: *Mrs. Bates*<sup>3</sup> *Parlour.*

*Properties required:—One table L.C., with Jane Fairfax's letter on it under reticule; two chairs on either side of the table; another table up R., with a cake upon it, and a knife to cut it; another table up L.; in front of a cheerful fire, "a grandfather's chair" left of the table, with its back turned to the audience, in which Mrs. Bates is discovered sitting. In order to bring Mrs. Bates on the stage without being seen, a screen must be placed before the chair, and when Mrs. Bates is seated so as to be almost completely hidden from the audience during the whole of the scene, Miss Bates must enter, draw back the screen, and say in a loud voice to her mother.*

*Miss Bates.* So kind of Mrs. Cole to call upon us so early in the day, and so interested in Jane's letter. She was indeed, ma'am. How pleased you will be to see dear Jane again. You must not think anything more of her illness. There is nothing to be alarmed at in the least. She

says so herself in her letter; you remember, I read it to you—*Jane's* letter.

*[Miss Woodhouse's voice heard outside.*

*Emma.* *[Outside].* Are Mrs. and Miss Bates within this morning?

*Miss Bates.* Bless me, here is Miss Woodhouse.

*[Runs to door.]* Oh! come up, Miss Woodhouse, pray come up. *[Runs to Mrs Bates.]* Ma'am,

ma'am, Miss Woodhouse is so kind as to be calling on us. *[Runs to door.]* Oh, Miss Woodhouse, mind the step—so very treacherous.

*[Enter Emma, who curtseys first at the door, then to Mrs. Bates.]* And have you walked?

All the way? I trust your shoes are not wet or damp. *[Runs back to Mrs. Bates after offering chair R. of L.C. table, in which Emma sits.]*

Miss Woodhouse has walked, ma'am, *all* the way—so kind. And how is dear Mr. Woodhouse?

I trust he is well; my mother so enjoyed her evening with him when we were all away at Mrs. Weston's, a great deal of chat and backgammon. Tea was made downstairs—biscuits and baked apples; and wine before she came away; amazing luck in some of her throws. Are you seated comfortably? Pray is that chair quite?—yes? Let me offer you some sweet-cake *[Runs to table R. and cuts piece of cake.]* Mrs. Cole has just been here; just called

## JANE FAIRFAX'S LETTER

in for ten minutes, and was so good as to sit an hour with us. She is but just gone, and *she* took a piece of cake and was so kind as to say she liked it very much; therefore I hope, Miss Woodhouse, you will do me the favour to eat a piece too. [*Emma takes a piece of cake and eats.* Miss Bates, [*Raising her voice and going to her mother,*] Ma'am, Miss Woodhouse has taken a piece of sweet-cake—[*To Emma,*] Mrs. Cole was so kind as to sit some time with us, talking of my niece Jane; for as soon as she came in, she began inquiring after her—Jane is so very great a favourite there. Whenever she is with us, Mrs. Cole does not know how to show her kindness enough, and I must say that Jane deserves it as much as anybody can. And so she began inquiring after her directly, saying — " I know you cannot have heard from Jane lately, because it is not her time for writing." And when I immediately said—"But indeed we have, we had a letter this very morning/' I do not know that I ever saw<sup>r</sup> anybody more surprised. "Have you, upon your honour?" said she, "well, that is quite unexpected. Do let me hear what she says."

*Emma*, [*Politely,*] Have you heard from Miss Jane Fairfax so lately? I am extremely happy: I hope she is well?

*Miss Bates.* Thank you. You are so kind! [*Hunting about for the letter.*] Dear! dear! where can the letter be? I had it but a moment ago.

*Emma.* [*Aside.*] How provoking: I thought I had timed my visit so as to escape a letter from Jane Fairfax.

*Miss Bates.* Ah! here it is. I was sure it could not be far off; but I had put my huswife upon it, you see, without being aware, and so it was quite hid, but I had it in my hand so very lately that I was almost sure it must be on the table. I was reading it to Mrs. Cole, and, since she went away, I was reading it again to my mother, for it is such a pleasure to her—a letter from Jane—that she can never hear it often enough, so I knew it could not be far off; and here it is, only just under my huswife. And since you are so kind as to wish to hear what she says; but, first of all, I really must, in justice to Jane, apologise for her writing so short a letter, only two pages, you see, hardly two, and in general she fills the whole paper, and crosses half.

*Emma.* [*Aside.*] For that at least I am thankful.

*Miss Bates.* My mother often wonders that I can make it out so well. She often says, when the letter is first opened, "Well, Hetty, now I think you will be put to it to make out all that

checker-work," and then I tell her, I am sure she would contrive to make it out herself, if she had nobody to do it for her, every word of it—I am sure she would pore over it till she had made out every word. And indeed, though my mother's eyes are not so good as they were, she can see amazingly well still, thank God! with the help of spectacles. It is such a blessing! My mother's are really very good indeed. Jane often says, when she is here, "I am sure, grandmamma, you must have had very strong eyes to see as you do, and so much fine work as you have done too!—I only wish my eyes may last me as well."

*Emma*, Miss Fairfax writes such an excellent hand—it is in itself like fine embroidery.

*Miss Bates*. You are extremely kind, you who are such a judge, and write so beautifully yourself. I am sure there is nobody's praise that could give us so much pleasure as Miss Woodhouse's. My mother does not hear; she is a little deaf, you know. I must tell her—*[Speaking loudly,]*—Ma'am, do you hear what Miss Woodhouse is so obliging to say about Jane's handwriting?

*Mrs. Bates*, Eh?

*Miss Bates*, Miss Woodhouse says Jane's handwriting is like fine embroidery.

*Mrs. Bates.* What, my dear?

*Emma.* [Aside.] This is very trying.

*Miss Bates.* [Louder.] Miss Woodhouse is so very kind as to say that Jane's handwriting is like fine embroidery.

*Mrs. Bates.* Oh!

*Miss Bates.* [To Emma.] My mother's deafness is very trifling, you see, just nothing at all. By only raising my voice and saying anything, two or three times over, she is sure to hear; but then she is used to my voice. But it is remarkable that she should always hear Jane better than she does me; Jane speaks so distinct! However, she will not find her grandmamma at all deafer than she was two years ago, which is saying a great deal, at my mother's time of life, and it really is full two years, you know, since she was here. We never were so long without seeing her before, and as I was telling Mrs. Cole, we shall hardly know how to make enough of her now.

*Emma.* Are you expecting Miss Fairfax here soon?

*Miss Bates.* Oh, yes! next week!

*Emma.* Indeed! that must be a very great pleasure.

*Miss Bates.* Thank you. You are very kind. Yes, next week. Everybody is so surprised; and everybody says the same obliging things. I

am sure she will be as happy to see her friends at Highbury as they can be to see her. Yes, Friday or Saturday; she cannot say which, because Colonel Campbell will be wanting the carriage himself one of those days. So very good of them to send her the whole way! But they always do, you know. Oh, yes, Friday or Saturday next. That is what she writes about. That is the reason of her writing out of rule, as we call it; for, in the common course, we should not have heard from her before next Tuesday or Wednesday.

*Emma.* Yes, so I imagined—I was afraid there could be little chance of my hearing anything of Miss Fairfax to-day.

*Miss Bates.* So obliging of you! No, we should not have heard, if it had not been for this particular circumstance, of her being to come here so soon. My mother is so delighted! for she is to be three months with us at least. Three months, she says so, positively, as I am going to have the pleasure of reading to you. The case is, you see, the Campbells are going to Ireland. Mrs. Dixon (Colonel and Mrs. Campbell's daughter, to whom Jane was companion before her marriage), has persuaded her father and mother to come over and see her directly. They had not intended to go over till the

summer, but she is so impatient to see them again; for till she married, last October, she was never away from them as much as a week, which must make it very strange to be—in different kingdoms, I was going to say, but, however, different countries, and so she wrote a very urgent letter to her mother or her father—I declare I do not know which it was, but we shall see presently in Jane's letter—wrote in *Mr. Dixon's* name as well as her own, to press their coming over directly; and they would give them the meeting in Dublin, and take them back to their country seat, Bally-Craig—a beautiful place, I fancy. Jane has heard a great deal of its beauty—from *Mr. Dixon*, I mean—I do not know that she ever heard about it from anybody else,—but it was very natural, you know, that he should like to speak of his own place while he was paying his addresses,—and as Jane used to be very often walking out with them—for Colonel and Mrs. Campbell were very particular about their daughter's not walking out often with *only Mr. Dixon*, for which I do not at all blame them; of course she heard everything he might be telling Miss Campbell about his own home in Ireland; and I think she wrote us word that he had shown them some drawings of the place, views

that he had taken himself. He is a most amiable, charming young man, I believe. Jane was quite longing to go to Ireland from his account of things.

*Emma*, You must feel it very fortunate that Miss Fairfax should be allowed to come to you at such a time. Considering the very particular friendship between her and Mrs. Dixon, you could hardly have expected her to be excused from accompanying Colonel and Mrs. Campbell.

*Miss Bates*, Very true, very true indeed. The very thing we have always been rather afraid of; for we should not like to have her at such a distance from us, for months together, not able to come if anything was to happen; but you see everything turns out for the best. They want her (Mr. and Mrs. Dixon) excessively to come over with Colonel and Mrs. Campbell, quite depend upon it; nothing can be more kind or pressing than their *joint* invitation, Jane says, as you will hear presently. Mr. Dixon does not seem in the least backward in any attention. He is a most charming young man. Ever since the service he rendered Jane at Weymouth, when they were out in that party on the water, and she, by the sudden whirling round of something or other among

the sails, would have been dashed into the sea at once, and actually was all but gone, if he had not, with the greatest presence of mind, caught hold of her habit,—I can never think of it without trembling!—but ever since we had the history of that day, I have been so fond of Mr. Dixon.

*Emma.* But, in spite of all her friends' urgencies and her own wish to see Ireland, Miss Fairfax prefers devoting the time to you and Mrs. Bates.

*Miss Bates.* Yes, entirely her own doing, entirely her own choice; and Colonel and Mrs. Campbell think she does quite right—just what they should recommend; and, indeed, they particularly *wish* her to try her native air, as she has not been quite so well as usual lately.

*Emma.* I am concerned to hear of it. I think they judge wisely, but Mrs. Dixon must be very much disappointed. Mrs. Dixon, I understand, is very charming, but has no remarkable degree of personal beauty,—is not by any means to be compared to Miss Fairfax.

*Miss Bates.* Oh! Miss Woodhouse, how very kind! how very obliging! I must tell my mother. (*Turning towards Mrs. Bates, who is asleep.*) Ma'am, did you hear Miss Woodhouse's amiable compliments. [*Turning to Emma.*] Ah! she is

**asleep; never mind, I will** tell her when you **are** gone—Oh! no—Certainly not—there is no comparison between them—Miss Campbell always was absolutely plain, but extremely elegant and amiable.

*Emma*, Yes, that of course.

*Miss Bates*. Jane caught a bad cold, poor thing! so long ago as the 7th of November (as I am going to read to you), and has never been well since. A long time, is it not, for a cold to hang upon her? She never mentioned it before, because she would not alarm us. Just like her! So considerate! But, however, she is so far from well that her kind friends the Campbells think that she had better come home and try an air that always agrees with her, and they have no doubt that three or four months at Highbury will entirely cure her; and it is certainly a great deal better that she should come here than go to Ireland if she is unwell. Nobody could nurse her as we should do.

*Emma*. It appears to me the most desirable arrangement in the world.

*Miss Bates*, And so she is to come to us next Friday or Saturday, and the Campbells leave town on their way to Holyhead the Monday following, as you will find from Jane's letter. So sudden! you may guess, dear Miss Wood-

So

JANE AUSTEN

house, what a flurry it has thrown me in! If it was not for the drawback of her illness—but I am afraid we must expect to see her grown thin and looking very poorly. I must tell you what an unlucky thing happened to me as to that. I always make a point of reading Jane's letters through to myself first before I read them aloud to my mother, you know, for fear of there being anything in them to distress her. Jane desired me to do it, so I always do; and so I began to-day with my usual caution: but no sooner did I come to the mention of her being unwell, than I burst out, quite frightened, with "Bless me! poor Jane is ill"—which my mother, being on the watch heard distinctly, and was sadly alarmed at. However, when I read on, I found it was not near so bad as I fancied at first; and I make so light of it now to her, that she does not think much about it: but I cannot imagine how I could be so off my guard! If Jane does not get well soon, we will call in Mr. Perry. The expense shall not be thought of; and though he is so liberal and so fond of Jane, that I dare say he would not mean to charge anything for attendance, we would not suffer it to be so, you know. He has a wife and family to maintain, and is not to be *giving*

away his time. Well now, I have just given you a hint of what Jane writes about. We will turn to her letter, and I am sure she tells her own story a great deal better than I can tell it for her. [*Turning to the letter.*]

*Emma.* [*Rising abruptly.*] I am afraid I must be running away. My father will be expecting me. I had no intention, I thought I had no power, of staying more than five minutes when I first entered the house. I merely called, because I would not pass the door without inquiring after Mrs. Bates; but I have been so pleasantly detained! And not I must wish you and Mrs. Bates good morning. [*Curtsies and exit.*]

*Miss Bates.* [*During Miss Woodhouse's speech.*] Dear Miss Woodhouse, so soon—must you really go? So kind of you to come. Jane's letter so short, only two pages—will not take one minute to read—pray mind the step outside. Allow me.

[*Exeunt Miss Bates and Emma. Mrs. Bates coughs and picks up her ball of wool.*]

*Re-enter Miss Bates*

*Miss Bates.* Ma'am, Miss Woodhouse assures me it is quite dry under foot. I am sure you would enjoy a little walk up the road with me—

*[helping her mother up and leading her out of the room, talking all the time]*—and I will tell you what Miss Woodhouse was so obliging as to say about Jane's beauty as we go—though perhaps it is hardly the thing to repeat to everybody. She says that Mrs. Dixon—*[exeunt Mrs. and Miss Bates, Miss Bates' voice fading away little by little outside]*—has no remarkable degree of beauty, and is not by any means to be compared with our Jane—so kind of her, is it not? Ma'am, ma'am, mind that step—no, not by any means to be compared with our Jane.

END OF SCENE

## IV.—A STRAWBERRY PICNIC

DUOLOGUE BETWEEN MRS. ELTON AND MR.  
KNIGHTLEY

*From "Emma," Vol. II., chap. xliv.*

## COSTUMES

*Mrs. Elton.* A dress of dove-coloured sarsanet with a ruche of the same round the bottom of skirt; puffings of cream net round the neck; narrow cherry-coloured ribbon round the bodice and down the front of the skirt; fancy straw hat with cream feathers and cherry-coloured ribbons; pale pink shawl to harmonise with ribbons.

*Mr. Knightley.* Buff-coloured coat, with dark velvet collar, high stock; frilled shirt front; short waistcoat of deep blue; cream-coloured breeches.



MRS. ELTON AND MR. KNIGHTLEY





## IV.—A STRAWBERRY PICNIC

CHARACTERS : *Mrs. Elton and Mr. Knightley.*

N.B. "Mrs. Elton was first seen in church. . . . Emma had feelings, less of curiosity than of pride or propriety, to make her resolve on not being the last to pay her respects. . . . She (Emma) was almost sure that for a young woman, a stranger, a bride, there was too much ease. . . . and a quarter of an hour quite convinced her that Mrs. Elton was a vain woman, extremely well satisfied with herself and thinking much of her own importance. . . . Emma was not required, by any subsequent discovery, to retract her ill opinion of Mrs. Elton. Her observation had been pretty correct—such as Mrs. Elton appeared to her on this second interview, such she appeared whenever they met again—self-important, presuming, familiar, ignorant, and ill-bred."—*Emma*, Vol. I I . , chap, xxxii.

"You might not see one in a hundred, with *gentleman* so plainly written as in Mr. Knightley." . . . "Mr. Knightley's downright, decided, commanding sort of manner, though it suits *him* very

well: his figure, and look and situation in life seem to allow it; but if any young man were to set about copying him, he would not be sufferable."  
—*Emma*, Vol. I., chap. iv.

SCENE: *A parlour in Mrs. Weston's house.*

*Properties required:—A small table L.C; a chair L. of it; a writing-table in front of a window up R.; a door R.; other chairs and sofas; a general air of comfort and refinement. Enter Mrs. Elton—who soon sits with her back to the door.*

*Mrs. Elton.* Provoking! Everything contrives for my annoyance; first, I agree to meet Mr. Elton here, and Mrs. Weston is out, and I am forced to wait alone. Then this exploring party that I had set my heart upon is obliged to be put off through a lame horse, then——[*Enter Mr. Knightley.*] Ah! you have found me out at last in my seclusion? [*Turns and sees Knightley.*] Oh! Knightley, it is *you*. I have been waiting in this room this age for my lord and master, who promised to meet me here and pay his respects to Mrs. Weston, and as she was out, I was, of course, forced to wait alone. But now that you are come——

*Knightley.* [*Stiffly.*] I gathered from Mrs. Weston's excellent maid that she was from home, and

merely came in to write a note of importance. I did not know you were here, or should not have intruded myself upon you.

*Mrs. Elton*, Why do you speak of intrusion? I am delighted, and although I cannot approve of a husband keeping his wife waiting at any time, still I must make allowances for *Mr. Elton*; for he really is engaged from morning to night—there is no end of people's coming to him on some pretence or other. The magistrates and overseers and churchwardens are always wanting his opinion. They seem not able to do anything without him. "Upon my word, Mr. E.," I often say, "rather you than I. I do not know what would become of my crayons and my instrument if I had half so many applicants." Bad enough as it is, for I absolutely neglect them both to an unpardonable degree. But is it not most vexatious, Knightley? and such weather for exploring.

*Knightley*. Pardon me, I do not quite follow you.

*Mrs. Elton*. Oh! have you not heard of our lame carriage-horse? Everything has been put off,—the exploring party to Box Hill.

*Knightley*. Oh! yes; very annoying, to be sure; but these things will happen, you know, Mrs. Elton.

*Mrs. Elton*, I know; but when *the first* disappoint-

ment occurred, through Mr. and Mrs. Suckling not being able to visit Highbury until the autumn, I said, why should we not explore to Box Hill though the Sucklings did *not* come? We could *go* there *again* in the autumn with *them*. And so, as you know, my suggestion was immediately taken up; and everything was so charmingly arranged. Why, I had even settled with Mrs. Weston as to pigeon pies and cold lamb, when, all at once, everything is thrown into uncertainty. It may be weeks before the horse is usable, and, therefore, no preparations, can be ventured upon. What are we to do? The delays and disappointments are quite odious. The year will wear away at this rate, and nothing done. Before this time last year we had delightful exploring parties from Maple Grove to King's Weston, and——

*Knightley, [Lightly,]* You had better explore to Donwell. That may be done without horses. Come and eat my strawberries. They are ripening fast.

*Mrs. E. [Impulsively.]* Oh! I should like it of all things! Donwell, I know, is famous for its strawberry beds. You may depend upon me; I certainly will come; name your day, and I will come; you will allow me to bring Jane Fairfax.

*Knightley.* I cannot name a day, till I have spoken to some others whom I would wish to meet you.

*Mrs. Elton.* Oh! leave all that to me, only give me *carte blanche*—I am lady Patroness, you know—It is *my* party—I will bring friends with me.

*Knightley.* I hope you will bring Elton, but I will not trouble you to give any other invitations.

*Mrs. Elton.* Oh! now you are looking very sly—but consider—you need not be afraid of delegating power to me. Married women, you know, may be safely authorised. It is *my* party—leave it all to me. / will invite your guests.

*Knightley.* No, Mrs. Elton, no. There is but one married woman in the world whom I can ever allow to invite what guests she pleases to Donwell, and that one is——

*Mrs. Elton.* [*Mortified.*] Mrs. Weston, I suppose.

*Knightley.* No—Mrs. Knightley, and till *she* is in being, I will manage such matters myself.

*Mrs. Elton.* [*Satisfied to have no one preferred to herself*] Ah! you are an odd creature; you are a humorist, and may say what you like—quite a humorist. Well, I shall bring Jane with me—Jane Fairfax and her aunt—the rest I leave to you,—I have no objections at all to meeting the Hartfield family. Don't scruple—I know you are attached to them.

*Knightley.* You certainly *will* meet them if I can prevail; and I shall call on Miss Bates on my way home.

*Mrs. Elton.* That is quite unnecessary; I see Jane every day;—but, as you like. It is to be a morning scheme, you know, *Knightley*; quite a simple thing. I shall wear a large bonnet, and bring one of my little baskets hanging on my arm—here—probably this basket—with pink ribbons. Nothing can be more simple, you see. And Jane will have such another. There is to be no form or parade—a sort of gipsy party. We are to walk about your gardens and gather the strawberries ourselves, or sit under the trees; and whatever else you like to provide, it is to be all out of doors—a table spread in the shade, you know. Everything as natural and simple as possible. Is not that your idea?

*Knightley.* Not quite. My idea of the simple and the natural will be to have the table spread in the dining-room. The nature and simplicity of gentlemen and ladies with their servants and furniture, I think, is best observed by meals within doors. When you are tired of eating strawberries in the garden, there shall be cold meat in the house.

*Mrs. Elton.* Well, as you please; only don't have a great set-out—by the by, can I or my house-

keeper be of any use to you with our opinion? Pray be sincere, Knightley. If you wish me to talk to Mrs. Hodges or to inspect anything——  
*Knightley.* I have not the least wish for it, thank you.

*Mrs. Elton.* Well!—but if any difficulties should arise; my housekeeper is extremely clever——  
*Knightley.* I will answer for it, mine thinks herself full as clever, and would spurn anybody's assistance.

*Mrs. Elton.* I wish we had a donkey. The thing would be for us *all* to come on donkeys—Jane, Miss Bates, and me, and my *cara sposo* walking by my side. I really must talk to him about purchasing a donkey. In a country life I conceive it to be a sort of necessary; for, let a woman have ever so many resources, it is not possible for her to be always shut up at home; and very long walks you know—in summer there is dust, and in winter there is dirt——

*Knightley.* You will not find either between Donwell and Highbury.—Donwell Lane is never dusty, and now it is perfectly dry. Come on a donkey, however, if you prefer it—you can borrow Mrs. Cole's. I would wish everything to be as much to your taste as possible.

*Mrs. Elton.* That I am sure you would. Indeed, I do you justice, my good friend. Under that

peculiar sort of dry, blunt manner, I know you have the warmest heart. As I tell Mr. E.—you are a thorough humorist. Yes, believe me, Knightley, I am fully sensible of your attention to me in the whole of this scheme. You have hit upon the very thing to please me.

*Knightley.* Do not mention it, I pray; but, if you will allow me, I will now write my note to Mrs. Weston. It is of importance.

*[Bows and goes to writing-table.]*

*Mrs. Elton.* Oh! don't mind me. I have a thousand pleasant things to think of now. Oh! by the by, don't forget to include Mr. and Mrs. Weston in your invitations. Do not leave them out; that would be unpardonably amiss—and Mrs. Weston's step-son, Frank Churchill, you must invite him. *[Aside.]* All this is really most charming. Wright shall do my hair in the simplest fashion. She shall dress it like a shepherdess of the last century, and my gown shall be all white. I look well in white, at least that foolish Elton has often told me so; besides, it is so rural and simple. Nobody can think less of dress than I do; but upon such an occasion as this, when everybody's eyes will be upon me, and in compliment to Knightley, who is giving this picnic party chiefly to do me honour, I would not wish to be inferior to others.

*Knigtley.* [*Rising from the writing-table.*] And now, my letter written, I will bid you good day, and shall soon hope to settle the day for our strawberry feast.

*Mrs. Elton.* Must you be going, really? I cannot imagine what is become of Mr. Elton. He should have been here ages ago. He promised to come to me as soon as he could disengage himself from his appointment at "The Crown." They are all shut up with him at a meeting—a regular meeting, you know—Weston and Cole are there too; but one is apt to speak only of those who lead, and I fancy Mr. E. or yourself have everything your own way here. By the by, Knigtley, how is it you are not at the meeting?

*Knigtley.* For the simple reason that the meeting you speak of is not until to-morrow.

*Mrs. Elton.* Ah! surely you are mistaken—the meeting is certainly to-day. I do believe this is the most troublesome parish that ever was. We never heard of such things at Maple Grove. Mr. E. was certainly under the impression the meeting was to-day, and depend upon it, he was so vexed at finding out his mistake, that jhe had forgotten entirely his appointment with me here, and my conjugal obedience is merely time and patience thrown away. How provoking!

Knightley, you must offer me your arm and escort me some little way; as far as Miss Bates, and there we can settle the precise day our charming exploring party to Donwell shall take place.

*Knightley.* [*Offering his arm,*] With pleasure. I will ask Miss Bates if she and Miss Fairfax will be of the party, but the day must be fixed for the convenience of Mr. Woodhouse, whom I am most anxious to receive at my house.

*Mrs. Elton,* Oh! Out of the question. Mr. Woodhouse is far too great an invalid. You will not prevail upon him to come at all.

*Knightley.* I still hope to do so, with his daughter's assistance.

[*Exeunt Mr. Knightley and Mrs. Elton.*]

*Mrs. Elton,* [*Outside,*] Oh! if Emma Woodhouse wishes it, poor Mr. Woodhouse will *have* to come.

END OF SCENE



## V.—THREE LOVES

*From "Emma"*

## COSTUMES

*Emma.* Short dress of muslin, sprigged with a blue flower, trimmed with sapphire blue velvet, under-sleeves of ruched net, sapphire velvet in the hair.

*Harriet.* Black silk pelerine, with long ends; white cambric dress; bonnet of white sarsnet, tied with pale rose-coloured ribbons, coral necklace.

*Mr. Knightley.* Buff-coloured coat, with dark velvet collar, high stock; frilled shirt-front; short waistcoat of deep blue; cream-coloured breeches.



EMMA AND HARRIET





## V.—THREE LOVES

CHARACTERS: *Emma Woodhouse, Harriet Smith,  
Mr. Knightley*

N.B. "*Emma Woodhouse*, handsome, clever, and rich, with a comfortable home and happy disposition, seemed to unite some of the best blessings of existence, and had lived nearly twenty-one years in the world with very little to distress or vex her. She was the youngest of the two daughters of a most affectionate indulgent father; and had, in consequence of her sister's (Isabella) marriage, been mistress of his house from a very early period.

The real evils, indeed, of Emma's situation were the power of having rather too much her own way, and a disposition to think a little too well of herself."—*Emma*, chap. i.

"*Mr. Knightley*, a sensible man about seven-or eight-and-thirty, was not only a very old and intimate friend of the family, but particularly connected with it as the elder brother of Isabella's husband. He lived about a mile from Hartfield, was a frequent visitor, and always welcome. . . . *Mr. Knightley* had a cheerful manner, which

always did him (Mr. Woodhouse) good. . . . Mr. Knightley, in fact, was one of the few people who could see faults in Emma Woodhouse, and the only one who ever told her of them."—*Emma*, chap. i.

"*Harriet Smith* was the natural daughter of somebody. Somebody had placed her several years back at Mrs. Goddard's school, and somebody had lately raised her from the condition of scholar to that of parlour boarder. This was all that was generally known of her history. . . . She was a very pretty girl, and her beauty happened to be of a sort which Emma particularly admired. . . . She was short, plump, and fair, with a fine bloom, blue eyes, light hair, regular features, and a look of great sweetness. . . . She (Emma) was not struck by anything remarkably clever in Miss Smith's conversation, but she found her altogether engaging—not inconveniently shy, nor unwilling to talk—and yet so far from pushing, showing so proper and becoming a deference, seeming so pleasantly grateful for being admitted to Hartfield, and so artlessly impressed by the appearance of everything in so superior a style to what she had been used to, that she must have good sense and deserve encouragement. Encouragement should be given. . . . *She* would notice her. *She* would improve

her . . . and introduce her into good society; she would form her opinions and manners. . . . As a walking companion, Emma had very early foreseen how useful she might find her . . . and a Harriet Smith, therefore, one whom she could summon at any time to a walk, would be a valuable addition to her privileges. But in every respect, as she saw more of her, she approved her, and was confirmed in all her kind designs/'—*Emma*, chaps, iii. and iv.

SCENE: *The morning-room at Hartfield.*

*It is comfortably furnished. No special properties are required except a centre table with two chairs on either side of it; a work-frame near one of the chairs, a window at the back, and a fireplace with a lighted fire.*

*Enter Emma, with an open letter in her hand.*

*Emma.* I can scarcely believe it. Jane Fairfax engaged to Frank Churchill! Engaged to her all the winter—secretly engaged before either of them came to Highbury. And I have encouraged my poor friend, Harriet Smith, to think well of him, so she will be a second time the dupe of my misconceptions and flattery. It seems like a fatality. No sooner do I conceive

the idea of arranging a suitable marriage for her, than the man whom I choose deliberately engages himself to another. I ought to have felt only too thankful to have her forget the insufferable Mr. Elton so soon after his marriage, instead of trying to rouse her affections for Frank Churchill. But what right had he to come among us with affection and faith engaged, and with manners so very *disengaged*? How could he tell that he might not be making *me* in love with him? I cannot deny, indeed, that there was a time, in the early period of our acquaintance, when I was very much pleased with his attentions, when I was very much disposed to be attached to him—nay, was attached—and how it came to cease is perhaps the wonder.

*Harriet. [Outside.]* Miss Woodhouse, are you within, and will you see me?

*Emma. Harriet! [Folding the letter hastily and putting it away.]* Yes, yes, pray come in. *[Enter Harriet, who curtsies at the door.]* You know I am always glad to see you, Harriet. *[Aside.]* I wonder if she has heard the news. She looks dejected.

*Harriet. [With a small parcel in her hand.]* Miss Woodhouse, dear Miss Woodhouse, you are always good to me. A great deal too good—

but if you are at leisure, I have something that I should like to tell you; a sort of confession to make, and then, you know, it will be over.

*Emma.* [*Sighs, aside.*] Poor Harriet.

*Harriet.* It is my duty, and I am sure it is my wish, to have no reserves with you on this subject. As I am, happily, quite an altered creature in *one respect*, it is very fit that you should have the satisfaction of knowing it. I do not want to say more than is necessary. I am too much ashamed of having given way as I have done, and I dare say you understand me.

*Emma.* I think I do, my poor Harriet—I hope I do; but it is all my fault—all my fault.

*Harriet.* Oh! Miss Woodhouse, do not say such a thing! How could I so long a time be fancying myself——It seems like madness, I can see nothing at all extraordinary in him now.

*Emma.* [*Aside.*] To whom is she alluding—Mr. Elton or Frank Churchill? One never can tell.

*Harriet.* I do not care whether I meet him or not, except that of the two I had rather *not* see him; and, indeed, I would go any distance round to avoid him. But I do not envy *Mrs. Elton* in the least.

*Emma.* [*Aside.*] Ah! it's Mr. *Elton*, not Frank Churchill.

*Harriet*, She is very charming, I dare say, and all that, but I think her very ill-tempered and disagreeable. However, I assure you, Miss Woodhouse, I wish her no evil. No; let them be ever so happy together, it will not give me another moment's pang; and, to convince you that I have been speaking truth, I am now going to destroy—what I ought to have destroyed long ago—what I ought never to have kept: I know that very well.—However, now I will destroy it all; and it is my particular wish to do it in your presence, that you may see how rational I am grown. [*Sighs,*] Cannot you guess what this parcel holds?

*Emma*. Not the least in the world. Did he ever give you anything?

*Harriet*. No, I cannot call them *gifts*; but they are things that I have valued very much.

[*Holding out the parcel to Emma.*

*Emma*. [*Taking it and reading,*] "Most precious treasures." Harriet, are you sure you would wish me to see these treasures?

*Harriet*. Yes, please, dear Miss Woodhouse.

*Emma*. [*Undoing the parcel, which is wrapped up in several pieces of paper and lined with cotton wool.*] A piece of court plaster! ! I

*Harriet*. Now, you *must* recollect.

*Emma*. No, indeed, I do not.

*Harriet.* Dear me! I should not have thought it possible you could forget what passed in this very room about court plaster, one of the very last times we ever met in it. It was a very few days before I had my sore throat—I think the very evening before. Do not you remember his cutting his finger with your new penknife, and your recommending court plaster? But, as you had none about you, and knew I had, you desired me to supply him. So I took mine out and cut him a piece, but in my agitation I cut it a great deal too large, and he had to make it smaller, and kept playing some time with what was left before he gave it back to me. And so then, in my nonsense, I could not help making a treasure of it; so I put it by, never to be used, and looked at it now and then as a great treat.

*Emma.* [*Putting her hands before her face.*] My dearest Harriet! you make me more ashamed of myself than I can bear. Remember it? Aye, I remember it all now; all except your saving this relic; I knew nothing of that till this moment; but the cutting the finger, and my recommending court plaster and saying I had none about me—Oh! my sins! my sins!—And I had plenty all the while in my pocket! One of my senseless tricks! I deserve to be under

a continual blush all the rest of my life.—  
Well,—[*sitting down*—go on, what else?

*Harriet*, And had you really some at hand yourself? I am sure I never suspected it. You did it so naturally.

*Emma*. And so you actually put this peice of court plaster by for his sake. [*Aside.*] Lord bless me! when should I ever have thought of putting by in cotton a piece of court plaster that anybody had been fingering. I shall never be equal to this.

*Harriet*, There is something still more valuable—I mean that *has been* more valuable because it is what did really once belong to him, which the court plaster never did! It is in the same box wrapped up in another picee of silver paper.

*Emma*. [*Unfolding a very small roll.*] I am quite anxious to see this superior treasure, Harriet. What is it?—The end of an old pencil! the part without any lead! What is this, Harriet?

*Harriet*. That was really his. Do not you remember one morning?—No, I dare say you do not—but one morning—I forget exactly the day, but perhaps it was the Wednesday or Tuesday before *that evening*, he wanted to make a memorandum in his pocket-book; it was about spruce beer. Mr. Knightley—[*hanging her head*]—had been telling him something about brewing spruce

beer, and he wanted to put it down; but when he took out his pencil, there was so little lead that he soon cut it all away and it would not do, so you lent him another, and this was left upon the table as good for nothing. But I kept my eye upon it, and as soon as I dared, caught it up, and never parted with it again from that moment.

*Emma*, I do remember it. I perfectly remember it—talking of spruce beer. Oh! yes, Mr. Knightley and I both saying we liked it, and Mr. Elton's seeming resolved to learn to like it too. I perfectly remember it—Stop; Mr. Knightley was standing just here, was not he? I have an idea he was standing just here.

*Harriet*, [*Confused.*] I do not know. I cannot recollect. It is very odd—but I cannot recollect where Mr. Knightley was standing. Mr. *Elton* was sitting here, I remember, much about where I am.

*Emma*, Well, go on.

*Harriet*, Oh! that is all. I have nothing more to show you, or to say, except that I am now going to throw them both behind the fire, and I wish you to see me do it.

*Emma*, My poor dear Harriet! and have you actually found happiness in treasuring up these things?

*Harriet.* [*Sighing.*] Yes, simpleton as I was!—but I am quite ashamed of it now, and wish I could forget as easily as I can burn them. It was so wrong of me, you know, to keep any remembrance after he was married, and when I had conceived so deep, so reverential a regard for *another*. I knew it was, but I had not resolution enough to part with them.

*Emma.* But, Harriet, is it necessary to burn the court plaster? I have not a word to say for the bit of old pencil, but the court plaster might be useful.

*Harriet.* I shall be happier to burn it. It has a disagreeable look to me. I must get rid of *everything*. I must not keep it now. It is not right towards *him* who is so superior in every way, so infinitely superior. [*Emma groans.*] These are no longer treasures. There they go—[*throwing them into the fire*—and there is an end, thank Heaven! of Mr. Elton. [*Turning cheerfully to Emma.*] Ah! I feel happier now—much happier! But, oh! Miss Woodhouse, is not this the oddest news that ever was?

*Emma.* [*Perplexed.*] What news do you mean?

*Harriet.* Why, about Jane Fairfax. Did you ever hear anything so strange? Oh! you need not be afraid of owning it to me, for Mr. Weston has told me himself. I met him just now. He

### THREE LOVES

i n

told me it was to be a great secret; and therefore I should not think of mentioning it to anybody but you, but he said you knew it. *Emma*, [*Still perplexed,*] What did Mr. Weston tell you?

*Harriet* Oh! he told me all about it; that Jane Fairfax and Mr. Frank Churchill are to be married, and that they have been privately engaged to one another this long while. How very odd.

*Emma*.. [*Staring,*] You know all about it?

*Harriet*, Yes! Had you any idea of his being in love with her?—you perhaps might—[*hanging her head*]—you who can see into everybody's heart; but nobody else——

*Emma*. Upon my word, I begin to doubt my having any such talent. Can you seriously ask me, Harriet, whether I imagined him attached to another woman at the very time that I was—tacitly, if not openly—encouraging you to give way to your own feelings? I never had the slightest suspicion, till within the last hour, of Mr. Frank Churchill's having the least regard for Jane Fairfax. You may be very sure that, if I had, I should have cautioned you accordingly.

*Harriet*. [*In astonishment.*] Me! why should you caution me? You do not think I care about Mr. Frank Churchill?

*Emma.* [*Laughing uneasily.*] I am delighted to hear you speak so stoutly on the subject. But you do not mean to deny that there was a time—and not very distant either—when you gave me reason to understand that you did care about him.

*Harriet.* *Him!*—never, never. Dear Miss Woodhouse, how could you so mistake me?

*[Turning away distressed.]*

*Emma.* Harriet, what do you mean? [*A pause.*] Good heaven! what do you mean? Mistake you! am I to suppose——?

*Harriet.* [*With her back to Emma.*] I should not have thought it possible that *you* could have misunderstood me! I know we agreed never to name him—but, considering how infinitely superior he is to everybody else, I should not have thought it possible that I could be supposed to mean any other person. Mr. Frank Churchill, indeed! I do not know who would ever look at him in the company of the other. And that *you* should have been so mistaken is amazing.

*Emma.* [*Collecting herself resolutely.*] Harriet, let us understand each other now, without the possibility of further mistake. [*With great effort.*] Are you speaking—of Mr. Knightley?

*Harriet.* To be sure I am. I never could have

an idea of anybody else—and so I thought you knew. When we talked about him, it was as clear as possible.

*Emma.* [*With forced calmness.*] Not quite, for all that you then said appeared to me to relate to a different person. I could almost assert that you *named* Mr. Frank Churchill.

*Harriet.* Oh! Miss Woodhouse, never—never.

*Emma.* Well, I am sure the service Mr. Frank Churchill had rendered you, in protecting you from the gipsies, was spoken of.

*Harriet.* Miss Woodhouse! how you do forget!

*Emma.* My dear Harriet, I perfectly remember the substance of what I said on the occasion. I told you that I did not wonder at your attachment; that, considering the service he had rendered you, it was extremely natural:—and you agreed to it, expressing yourself very warmly as to your sense of that service, and mentioning even what your sensations had been in seeing him come forward to your rescue. The impression of it is strong on my memory.

*Harriet.* Oh! dear! now I recollect what you mean; but I was thinking of something very different at the time. It was not the gipsies.—It was not Mr. Frank Churchill that I meant. No—[*with some elevation*]—I was thinking of a much more precious circumstance — of Mr. Knightley's

coming and asking me to dance, when Mr. Elton would not stand up with me, and when there was no other partner in the room. That was the kind action; that was the noble benevolence and generosity; that was the service which made me begin to feel how superior he was to any other being upon earth.

*Emma*, [With emotion.] Good God! this has been a most unfortunate—most deplorable mistake! What is to be done?

*Harriet*, [Timidly,] You would not have encouraged me, then, if you had understood me. At least, however, I cannot be worse off than I should have been if Mr. Churchill had been the person; and now—it is possible—for you see, that supposing—that if—strange as it may appear—But you know they were your own words, that *more* wonderful things had happened; matches of *greater* disparity had taken place than between Mr. Frank Churchill and me; and, therefore, it seems as if such a thing even as this may have occurred before; and if I should be so fortunate, beyond expression, as to—if Mr. Knightley should really—if *he* does not mind the disparity, I hope, dear Miss Woodhouse, you will not set yourself against it, and try and put difficulties in the way. But you are too good for that, I am sure.

*Emma.* Have you any idea of Mr. Knightley's returning your affection?

*Harriet.* [*Modestly, but not fearfully.*] Yes, I must say I have.

*Emma.* [*Aside.*] Good God! is it possible—is it possible that I have been so blind even to the state of my own heart? I see it all now. Every moment of this day brings a fresh surprise, and every surprise is a matter of humiliation to me. How improperly have I been acting by Harriet! How inconsiderate, how irrational, how unfeeling has been my conduct. What blindness, what madness has led me on?

*Harriet.* Miss Woodhouse, speak to me. Why is it so much worse for me to be in love with Mr. Knightley than with Mr. Frank Churchill? Everyone thought *you* were in love with Mr. Churchill. I thought so too, but did not like to say it.

*Emma.* My dear Harriet—[*rousing herself*]*—it is the suddenness of this revelation which has bewildered me. But come, tell me all about it. What makes you so hopeful in the conviction of Mr. Knightley's regard for you?*

*Harriet.* Oh! it has been so marked. I have been conscious of a difference in his behaviour ever since that dance. Oh! Miss Woodhouse, how nobly he behaved to be when Mr. Elton *refused*

to stand up with me, and he spoke so beautifully that I was not afraid of him, and when I spoke to him he listened so attentively, as if he quite enjoyed what I said.

*Emma*, [Aside,] I remember he told me that on that occasion he had found her much superior to his expectation. [Aloud,] Well, Harriet, go on.

*Harriet*, From that evening, or at least from the time of your encouraging me to think of him (for though you meant Mr. Churchill, I always meant Mr. Knightley, and thought you meant him too), he has had quite a different manner towards me—a manner of kindness and sweetness. Latterly I have been more and more aware of it. When we have been all walking together, he has so often come and walked by me, and talked so very delightfully! He seemed to want to be acquainted with me.

*Emma*. Yes, Harriet, you are right; he has told me so himself.

*Harriet*, There you see! And he has praised me so kindly several times, I would rather not repeat what he said. But the two latest occurrences, the two of strongest promise to me—you witnessed yourself. The first was his walking with me apart from the others in the lime-walk at Donwell when he gave the strawberry party, and he took pains, I am convinced, to

draw me from the rest to himself, and at first he talked to me in a more particular way than he had ever done before—in a very particular way indeed. [*Hanging her head.*] He seemed to be almost asking me whether my affections were engaged. But as soon as you appeared likely to join us, he changed the subject, and began talking of farming. The second is his having sat talking with me here for nearly half an hour on the very last morning of his being at Hartfield—though, when he first came in, he had said that he could not stay five minutes, and he told me during our conversation that, though he must go to London, it was very much against his inclinations that he left home at all.

*Emma.* [*Aside.*] That is more than he acknowledged to me.

*Harriet.* Therefore, dear Miss Woodhouse, do you not think that I have some reason to hope? I never should have presumed to think of it at first, but for you—you told me to observe him carefully and let his behaviour be the rule of mine—and so I have.—But now I seem to feel that I may deserve him; and that if he *does* choose me, it will not be anything so very wonderful after all.

*Emma.* [*Turning away to hide her bitter feelings.*]

Harriet, I will only venture to declare that Mr. Knightley is the last man in the world who would intentionally give any woman the idea of his feeling for her more than he really does.

*Harriet. [Clasping her hands.]* Dear, dear Miss Woodhouse, I knew you would give me hope. You are always so good, so encouraging.

*Emma. [Bending over her work,]* Harriet, look out of the window;—is not that Mr. Knightley walking in the shrubbery with my father?

*Harriet.* It cannot be—for he was not to return for another week. *[Goes to window.]* Oh! Miss Woodhouse, you are right, it is Mr. Knightley, and he and Mr. Woodhouse are both entering the house. Oh! dear, I must go, I am too agitated to encounter him; I could not compose myself—I had better go.—May I go, Miss Woodhouse?

*Emma.* If you wish it, Harriet—go by all means. Good-bye.

*Harriet. [Curtseying hurriedly.]* Thank you, dear Miss Woodhouse, a thousand thousand times.

*[Exit,*

*Emma,* Oh! God! that I had never seen her! Mr. Knightley in love with Harriet Smith? Such an elevation on her side! such a debasement on his! Yet it is far, very far from impossible. Is it a new circumstance for a man

of first-rate abilities to be captivated by very inferior powers? Is it new for one, perhaps too busy to seek, to be the prize of a girl who would seek him? Is it new for anything in this world to be unequal, inconsistent, or incongruous. Mr. Knightley and Harriet Smith! Oh I that I had never brought her forward!—that I had left her where I ought, where he himself had once told me I ought!—Had I not, with a folly which no tongue can express, prevented her marrying the farmer, Mr. Martin, who would have made her happy and respectable in a line of life to which she ought to belong—all would be well—all would be safe.

*[Sitting to her work and bending down over it  
as Mr. Knightley enters.]*

*Knightley.* Emma, I have just met Harriet Smith, who told me you were alone, so I have left Mr. Woodhouse comfortably by the fire in the study, and I have ventured upstairs unannounced.

*Emma.* *[Rising and giving her hand,]* You are returned sooner than we hoped,—you bring good news from London?

*Knightley.* *[Sighs.]* My brother and his wife are well, so are the children.

*[Pause—he sits.]*

*Emma.* You had a pleasant ride, I trust?

*Knightley.* Very—————*[Pause.]*

*Emma.* [*Aside.*] He neither looks nor speaks cheerfully. Has he communicated his plans to his brother, and been pained by their reception? *Knightley.* Your father is looking well—better than when I left for London.

*Emma.* Yes. [*4 pause—she bends over her work, and he looks at her anxiously. She continues aside.*] Perhaps he wishes to speak to me of his attachment to Harriet, and is watching for encouragement to begin—but I am not equal to lead the way to such a subject—he must do it all himself—yet I cannot bear this silence,—with him, it is most unnatural. I must say something. [*Aloud with a smile.*] You have some news to hear, now you are come back, that will rather surprise you.

*Knightley.* [*Quietly, and looking at her.*] Have I? Of what nature?

*Emma.* Oh! the best nature in the world—a wedding.

*Knightley.* [*After waiting a moment as if to be sure she intended to say no more.*] If you mean Miss Fairfax and Frank Churchill, I have heard that already.

*Emma.* Why, how is it possible? Is everyone in this secret?

*Knightley.* I had a few lines on parish business from Mr. Weston this morning, and at the

end he gave me a brief account of what had happened. That news was the cause of my early return.

*Emma.* You probably have been less surprised than any of us, for you had your suspicions. I have not forgotten that you once tried to give me caution. I wish I had attended to it—but—*[with a sinking voice and a heavy sigh]*—I seemed to have been doomed to blindness——

*[A pause — Knightley then lays his hand on hers and takes it kindly. Emma looks at him in surprise.]*

*Knightley. [Speaking low.]* Time, my dearest Emma, time will heal the wound. Your own excellent sense; your exertions for your father's sake; I know you will not allow yourself—*[presses her hand]*—I speak from feelings of the warmest friendship——indignation. *[Rising suddenly.]* Abominable scoundrel! *[Returning and bending over the table.]* He will soon be gone. They will soon be in Yorkshire. I am sorry for *her*, for she deserves a better fate.

*Emma.* My dear friend, you are very kind, but you are mistaken, and I must set you right. I am not in want of that sort of compassion. My blindness to what was going on led me to act by them in a way that I must always be ashamed of, and I was very foolishly tempted

to say things of her to him which may well lay me open to unpleasant conjectures, but I have no other reason to regret that I was not in the secret earlier..

*Knightley.* [*Looking eagerly at her.*] Emma, are you indeed . . .? [*Checking himself.*] No, no, I understand you—forgive me—I am pleased that you can say even so much. He is no object of regret, indeed! and it will not be very long, I hope, before that becomes the acknowledgment of more than your reason. Fortunate that your affections were not further entangled! I could never, I confess, from your manners, assure myself as to the degree of what you felt. I could only be certain that there was a preference, and a preference which I never believed him to deserve. He is a disgrace to the name of man. And is he to be rewarded with that sweet young woman? Jane, Jane, you will be a miserable creature.

*Emma.* Mr. Knightley, I am in a very extraordinary situation. I cannot let you continue in your error; and yet, perhaps, since my manners gave such an impression, I have as much reason to be ashamed of confessing that I never have been at all attached to the person we are speaking of, as it might be natural for a woman to feel in confessing exactly the re-

verse. But I never have. [*A pause.*] I have very little to say for my own conduct. I was tempted by his attentions, and allowed myself to appear pleased—an old story, probably—a common case—and no more than has happened to hundreds of my sex before. Many circumstances assisted the temptation. But, let me swell out the causes ever so ingeniously, they all centre in this at last—my vanity was flattered and I allowed his attentions; but, in short, I was somehow- or other safe from him.

*Knightley.* Hm! well, I have never had a high opinion of Frank Churchill. I can suppose, however, that I may have underrated him; my acquaintance with him has been but trifling, and even if I have not underrated him hitherto, he may yet turn out well. With such a woman he has a chance. I have no motive for wishing him ill, and for her sake, whose happiness will be involved in his good character and conduct, I shall certainly wish him well.

*Emma.* I have no doubt of their being happy together. I believe them to be very mutually and very sincerely attached.

*Knightley.* [*With energy.*] He is a most fortunate man. So early in life—at three-and-twenty—a period when, if a man chooses a wife, he generally chooses ill. At three-and-twenty to

have drawn such a prize! what years of felicity that man, in all human calculation, has before him! Frank Churchill is, indeed, the favourite of fortune. He meets with a young woman at a watering-place, gains her affection, cannot even weary her by negligent treatment, and had he and all his family sought round the world for a perfect wife for him, they could not have found her superior. His aunt is in the way,—his aunt dies. He has only to speak. His friends are eager to promote his happiness. He has used everybody ill, and they are all delighted to forgive him. He is a fortunate man, indeed!

*Emma.* You speak as if you envied him.

*Knightley.* I do envy him, Emma. In one respect he is the object of my envy.

*Emma.* [*Aside.*] He means in the right to choose where he pleases. He compares Frank Churchill to himself, Jane Fairfax to Harriet.

*Knightley.* You will not ask me what is the point of envy. You are determined, I see, to have no curiosity. You are wise—but *I* cannot be wise. Emma, I must tell you what you will not ask, though I may wish it unsaid the next moment.

*Emma.* [*Eagerly.*] Oh! then, don't speak it, don't speak it—take a little time, consider, do not commit yourself.

*Knightley.* [*Stiffly.*] Thank you.

*Emma.* [*Aside.*] Oh! I have given him pain! He is wishing to confide in me, to consult me; perhaps I might assist his resolution, or reconcile him to it.

*Knightley.* I fear I must be going now; good-bye.  
[*Puts out his hand as he rises.*]

*Emma.* [*Detaining it.*] No—do not go—I stopped you ungraciously just now, Mr. Knightley, and, I am afraid, gave you pain. But if you have any wish to speak openly to me as a friend, or to ask my opinion of anything that you may have in contemplation—as a friend, indeed, you may command me. I will hear whatever you like. I will tell you exactly what I think.

*Knightley.* As a friend! Emma, that I fear is a word—No, I have no wish. Stay, yes, why should I hesitate? I have gone too far already for concealment. Emma, I accept your offer, extraordinary as it may seem, I accept it, and refer myself to you as a friend. [*Looking earnestly into her eyes.*] Tell me, then, have I no chance of ever succeeding?

*Emma.* [*Overcome.*] Good Heaven!

*Knightley.* My dearest Emma, for dearest you will always be, whatever the event of this hour's conversation, my dearest, most beloved

Emma—tell me at once. Say "No" if it is to be said. You are silent—*[With animation.]*—absolutely silent! at present I ask no more.

*[Emma sinks into a chair, covering up her face with her hands.]*

*Knightley.* I cannot make speeches, Emma. If I loved you less, I might be able to talk about it more. But you know what I am. You hear nothing but truth from me. I have blamed you and lectured you, and you have borne it as no other woman in England would have borne it. Bear with the truths I would tell you now, dearest Emma, as well as you have borne with them. God knows, I have been a very indifferent lover. Look up, Emma, my dearest, look at me——*[She does so.]* Say that you understand me.—Say you understand my feelings—and will return them if you can. At present I ask only to hear, once to hear your voice.

*Emma.* *[Faintly.]* Mr. Knightley, what can I say? How can I say it? When you first spoke, believe me, I had no idea, no thought of what you wished to say. How inconsistent must my conduct have appeared in refusing to hear you one moment, and soliciting your confidence the next—yet could I have dared to hope that you would speak to me as you have done, I

should through very shame have silenced you for ever.

*Knightley.* My dearest, best beloved Emma! I too had little thought when first I entered here to try my influence. Jealousy of Frank Churchill drove me from the country. I went to London to learn to be indifferent; but I had gone to the wrong place. There was too much domestic happiness in my brother's house; but I stayed on, however, vigorously, day after day, till this very morning's post conveyed the history of Jane Fairfax. Then, with the gladness which must be felt, nay, which I did not scruple to feel, was there so much fond solicitude, so much keen anxiety for you, that I could stay no longer. I rode home at once and walked up here to see how this sweetest and best of all creatures, faultless in spite of all her faults, bore the discovery. I found you agitated and low; Frank Churchill was a villain. I heard you declare that you had never loved him. Frank Churchill's character was not so desperate; and now, tell me that you are my own Emma by hand and word.

*Emma, [Putting her hands in his,]* Mr. Knightley, I am your own Emma, by word and hand.

*Knightley, [Bending over Emma's hands,]* "Mr. Knightley," you always called me "Mr. Knight-

ley," and from habit it has not so very formal a sound, and yet it is formal. I want you to call me something else, but I do not know what.

*Emma.* I remember once calling you "George" in one of my amiable fits, about ten years ago. I did it because I thought it might offend you; but, as you made no objection, I never did it again.

*Knightley.* And cannot you call me "George" now?

*Emma.* Impossible! I never can call you anything but "Mr. Knightley." I will not promise even to equal the elegant terseness of Mrs. Elton by calling you "Mr. K." But I will promise to call you once by your Christian name. I do not say when, but perhaps you may guess where;—in the building in which N. takes M. for better, for worse.

*Knightley.* [*With emotion.*] My Emma.

[*Exeunt.*]

END OF SCENE

## VI.—THE PROPOSAL OF MR. COLLINS

MRS. BENNET, ELIZABETH BENNET, MR. COLLINS

*From "Pride and Prejudice"*

## COSTUMES

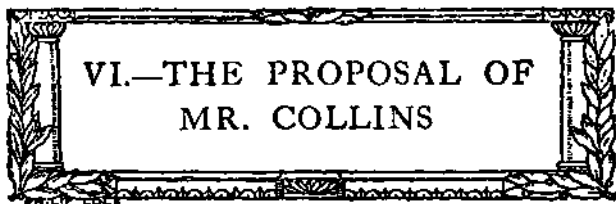
*Mr. Collins* in black, with a high choker and cravat tied in front.

*Elizabeth*. Pale primrose dress, the lappels of the bodice and the hem of the skirt embroidered in gold and white; clear muslin chemisette, rucked under-sleeves of the same.



ELIZABETH BENNET AND MR. COLLINS





## VI.—THE PROPOSAL OF MR. COLLINS

CHARACTERS: *Mrs. Bennet, Elizabeth Bennet,*  
*Mr. Collins.*

N.B. "*Her (Mrs. Bennet) mind was less difficult to develop. She was a woman of mean understanding, little information, and uncertain temper. When she was discontented, she fancied herself nervous. The business of her life was to get her daughters married; its solace was visiting and news.*"—*Pride and Prejudice*, chap i.

"The greatest part of his (*Mr. Collins*\*) life had been spent under the guidance of an illiterate and miserly father. . . . The subjection in which his father had brought him up had given him originally great humility of manner, but it was now a good deal counteracted by the self-conceit of a weak head, living in retirement, and the consequential feeling of early and unexpected prosperity. . . . Having now a good home and a very sufficient income, he intended to marry; and in seeking a reconciliation with the Longbourn

family (*the Bennets*) he had a wife in view, as he meant to choose one of the daughters, if he found them as handsome and amiable as they were represented by common report. This was his plan of amends—of atonement—for inheriting their father's estate, and he thought it an excellent one, full of eligibility and suitableness, and excessively generous and disinterested on his own part."—*Pride and Prejudice*, vol. i., chap. xv.

"The situation of your mother's family, though objectionable, was nothing in comparison of that total want of propriety so frequently, so almost uniformly betrayed by herself, by your three younger sisters, and occasionally even by your father,—pardon me—it pains me to offend you. But amidst your concern for the defects of your nearest relations, and your displeasure at this representation of them, let it give you consolation to consider that to have conducted yourselves so as to avoid any share of the like censure is praise no less generally bestowed on you and your eldest sister, than it is honourable to the sense and disposition of both."—*Quotation from Darcy's letter to Elizabeth Bennet*, vol. ii., chap. XXXV.

## THE PROPOSAL OF MR. COLLINS 135

SCENE : *The morning-room at Longbourn.*

*Properties required: There is a good-sized table L. Chairs, sofas, and other tables about the room. The furniture is good, but a little shabby and vulgar, and formal.*

*Door R. enter Elizabeth with household needlework. She walks to the table*

*Elizabeth.* Well! if my father was hopeful of finding our cousin, Mr. Collins, far from sensible, I cannot think he is disappointed, for the deficiencies of nature have been but little assisted by education, and though he has belonged to one of the Universities, he evidently merely kept the necessary terms without forming there any useful acquaintance.

*Enter Mrs. Bennet, going to her work*

*Mrs. Bennet.* Well, Lizzie, what do you think of your cousin, Mr. Collins? I am sure he is a very fine young man, in spite of his being next in the entail—though, to be sure, I cannot bear to hear that mentioned—and I do think it is the hardest thing in the world that your father's estate should be entailed away from his own children, and I am sure, if I had been him, I should have tried long ago to do something about it.

*Elizabeth.* My dear ma'am, let me try and explain again the nature of an entail.

*Mrs. Bennet.* Not one word, Eliza. It is trying enough to my nerves to know that we must submit to such a thing simply because of Mr. Bennet's indifference to what becomes of us all when he is dead, without having it all explained to me. However, I don't suppose Mr. Collins can help it, and as he had seemed, since the very first day we saw him, a week ago, willing to make amends by one or the other of you girls, I am not the person to discourage him.

*Elizabeth.* Certainly not, my dear ma'am.

*Mrs. Bennet.* Not but what at first I thought he wanted your sister Jane. It was quite right and proper, considering she was the eldest and by far the best-looking of you all. But when I found that he was thinking of her, I gave him a hint that she was not to be had for the asking. I don't want to spoil Jane's chance with Bingley, and so I just put it right, you know.

*Elizabeth.* I have no doubt you acted wisely, ma'am.

*Mrs. Bennet.* Well, Lizzie, I did for the best. When he told me his plans, and that he had come to Longbourn to choose a wife among

you, I said, "Mr. Collins, I cannot but be very gratified by your confidence, and as to my younger daughters, I cannot take upon myself to say—I could not positively answer/' for I did not want to appear *too* pleased with his attentions, "and I do not know of any prepossessions; but my *eldest* daughter, I must just mention—I feel it incumbent on me to hint—is likely to be very soon engaged,"—and it is marvellous how soon he abandoned all idea of Jane. But hush, here he comes.

*Enter Mr. Collins*

*Mr. Collins.* May I hope, madam, for your interest with your fair daughter Elizabeth, when I solicit for the honour of a private audience with her in the course of the morning.

*Mrs. Bennet.* [*Starting up.*] Oh! dear! yes—certainly. I am sure Lizzie will be very happy. I am sure she can have no objection.

*[Going.*

*Elizabeth.* Dear ma'am, do not go. I beg you will not go. Mr. Collins must excuse me. He can have nothing to say to me that anybody need not hear. I am going away myself.

*[Also going.*

*Mrs. Bennet.* No, no, nonsense, Lizzie. I desire you will stay where you are. [*Seeing that*

*Elizabeth is determined to go,]* "Lizzie, I insist upon your staying, and hearing Mr. Collins.

[Exit.

*Elizabeth, [Aside,]* Well! if it has to be—I may as well get it over as soon and as quietly as possible.

*Mr. Collins,* Believe me, my dear Miss Elizabeth, that your modesty, so far from doing you any disservice, rather adds to your other perfections. You would have been less amiable in my eyes had there *not* been this little unwillingness; but allow me to assure you that I have your respected mother's permission for this address. You can hardly doubt the purport of my discourse, however your natural delicacy may lead you to dissemble; my attentions have been too marked to be mistaken. Almost as soon as I entered the house, I singled you out as the companion of my future life. But, before I am run away with by my feelings on this subject, perhaps it would be advisable for me to state my reasons for marrying—and, moreover, for coming into Hertfordshire with the design of selecting a wife—as I certainly did.

*Elizabeth. [Aside.]* The idea of this man being run away with by his feelings!

*Mr. Collins,* My reasons for marrying are—first,

that I think it a right thing for every clergyman in easy circumstances (like myself) to set the example of matrimony in his parish; secondly, I am convinced it will add very greatly to my happiness; and thirdly, which perhaps I ought to have mentioned earlier, that it is the particular advice and recommendation of the very noble lady whom I have the honour of calling patroness. Twice has she condescended to give me her opinion (unasked too!) on this subject.; and it was but the very Saturday night before I left Hunsford, between our pools at quadrille, that she said, "Mr. Collins, you must marry—a clergyman like you must marry. Choose properly, choose a gentlewoman for *my* sake; and for your *own*, let her be an active, useful sort of person not brought up high, but able to make a small income go a good way. This is my advice. Find such a woman as soon as you can, bring her to Hunsford, and I will visit her." Allow me, by the way, to observe, my fair cousin, that I do not reckon the notice and kindness of Lady Catherine de Burgh as among the least of the advantages in my power to offer. You will find her manners beyond anything I can describe; and your wit and vivacity, I think, must be acceptable to her, especially when

tempered with the silence and respect which her rank will inevitably excite.

*Elizabeth.* [*Aside.*] How am I to stop the man?

*Mr. Collins.* This much for my general intention in favour of matrimony; it remains to be told why my views were directed to Longbourn instead of my own neighbourhood, where I assure you there are many amiable young women. But the fact is, that being, as I am, to inherit this estate after the death of your honoured father—[*reverentially*]—(who, however, may live many years longer) I could not satisfy myself without resolving to choose a wife from among his daughters, that the loss to them might be as little as possible when the melancholy event takes place, which, however, as I have already said, may not be for several years. This has been my motive, my fair cousin, and I flatter myself it will not sink me in your esteem. And now, nothing remains for me but to assure you, in the most animated language, of the violence of my affection. To fortune I am perfectly indifferent, and shall make no demand of that nature on your father, since I am well aware that it could not be complied with, and that one thousand pounds in the four per cents, which will not be yours till after your mother's decease, is all that you may

## THE PROPOSAL OF MR. COLLINS 141

ever be entitled to. On that head I shall, therefore, be uniformly silent; and you may assure yourself that no ungenerous reproach shall ever pass my lips when we are married.

*Elizabeth.* You are too hasty sir; you forget that I have made no answer. Let me do it without further loss of time. Accept my thanks for the compliment you are paying me. I am very sensible of the honour of your proposals, but it is impossible for me to do otherwise than decline them.

*Mr. Collins.* [*Waving his hand.*] I am not now to learn that it is usual with young ladies to reject the addresses of the man whom they secretly mean to accept, when he first applies for their favour; and that sometimes the refusal is repeated a second or even a third time. I am, therefore, by no means discouraged by what you have just said, and shall hope to lead you to the altar ere long.

*Elizabeth.* Upon my word, sir, your hope is rather an extraordinary one after my declaration. I do assure you that I am not one of those young ladies (if such young ladies there are) who are so daring as to risk their happiness on the chance of being asked a second time. I am perfectly serious in my refusal; you could not make me happy, and I am convinced that I

am the last woman in the world who could make you so. Nay, were your friend, Lady Catherine, to know me, I am persuaded she would find me in every respect ill qualified for the situation.

*Mr, Collins, [Gravely,]* Were it certain that Lady Catherine would think so—but I cannot imagine that her ladyship would at all disapprove of you. And, you may be certain that when I have the honour of seeing her again, I shall speak in the highest terms of your modesty, economy, and other amiable qualifications.

*Elizabeth,* Indeed, Mr. Collins, all praise of me will be unnecessary; you must give me leave to judge for myself, and pay me the compliment of believing what I say: I wish you very happy and very rich, and by refusing your hand, do all in my power to prevent your being otherwise. In making me the offer, you must have satisfied the delicacy of your feelings with regard to my family, and may take possession of Longbourn estate whenever it falls without any self-reproach. *[Rising,]* This matter may be considered, therefore, as finally settled.

*Mr. Collins,* When I do myself the honour of speaking to you next on the subject, I shall hope to receive a more favourable answer than you have now given me; though I am far

from accusing you of cruelty at present, because I know it to be an established custom of your sex to reject a man on the *firM* application, and perhaps you have even now said as much to encourage my suit as would be consistent with the true delicacy of the female character.

*Elizabeth, [Warmly,]* Really, Mr. Collins, you puzzle me exceedingly. If what I have hitherto said can appear to you in the form of encouragement, I know not how to express my refusal in such a way as may convince you of its being one.

*Mr. Collins, [Smiling,]* You must give me leave to flatter myself, my dear cousin, that your refusal of my addresses is merely words of course. My reasons for believing it are briefly these—It does not appear to me that my hand is unworthy your acceptance, or that the establishment I can offer would be other than highly desirable. My situation in life, my connections with the family of De Burgh, and my relationship to your own, are circumstances highly in my favour; and you should take it into further consideration, that in spite of your manifold attractions, it is by no means certain that another offer of marriage may ever be made you. Your portion is unhappily so small,

that it will in all likelihood undo the effects of your loveliness and amiable qualifications. As I must, therefore, conclude that you are not serious in your rejection of me, I shall choose to attribute it to your wish of increasing my love by suspense, according to the usual practice of elegant females.

*Elizabeth.* I do assure you, sir, that I have no pretension whatever of that kind of elegance which consists in tormenting a respectable man. I would rather be paid the compliment of being believed sincere. I thank you again and again for the honour you have done me in your proposals, but to accept them is absolutely impossible. My feelings in every respect forbid it. Can I speak plainer? Do not consider me now as an elegant female intending to plague you, but as a rational creature, speaking the truth from her heart.

*Mr. Collins.* [*With awkward gallantry.*] You are uniformly charming! and I am persuaded that when sanctioned by the express authority of both your excellent parents, my proposals will not fail of being acceptable.

*Elizabeth.* To such perseverance in wilful self-deception I can make no reply; but if you persist in considering my repeated refusals as flattering encouragement, I shall apply to my

father, whose negative will no doubt be uttered in such a manner as must be decisive, and whose behaviour at least will not be mistaken for the affectation and coquetry of an "elegant female."

*Enter Mrs. Bennet,*

*Mrs. Bennet.* Well, Mr. Collins, allow me to congratulate you—and myself.

*Mr. Collins.* [*Smiling complacently.*] I trust I have every reason to be satisfied with the result of our interview, since the refusal with which my fair cousin has replied to my proposals comes naturally from her bashful modesty and the delicacy of her character.

*Mrs. Bennet.* Her refusal? Why, Lizzie, what is the meaning of this—do you refuse Mr. Collins?

*Elizabeth.* I do indeed, ma'am.

*Mrs. Bennet.* Oh! Mr. Collins, do not pay any attention to her. Depend upon it, she shall be brought to reason. I will speak to her about it myself privately. She is a very headstrong, foolish girl, and does not know her own interest; but I will *make* her know it.

*Mr. Collins,* [*Gravely,*] Pardon me for interrupting you, madam. But if she is really headstrong and foolish, I know not whether she would altogether be a very desirable wife to a man

in my situation, who naturally looks for happiness in the marriage state. If, therefore, Miss Elizabeth actually persists in rejecting my suit, perhaps it were better not to force her into accepting me, because if liable to such defects of temper, she could not contribute much to my felicity.

*Elizabeth.* [*Interrupting.*] That is very true. Mr. Collins.

*Mrs. Bennet.* Sir, you quite misunderstand me. Lizzie is only headstrong in such matters as these. In everything else she is as good-natured a girl as ever lived. Yes, you are, Lizzie, and I insist on your accepting Mr. Collins.

*Elizabeth.* Ma'am, ma'am. I cannot, I do not care for him.

*Mrs. Bennet.* Now, I do insist upon it, Lizzie, that you hold your tongue and let Mr. Collins and me have a little conversation together.

*Mr. Collins.* [*Stiffly.*] My dear madam, let us be for ever silent on this point. Far be it from me to resent the behaviour of your daughter. Resignation to inevitable evil is the duty of us all. You will not, I hope, consider me as showing any disrespect to your family by now withdrawing all pretensions to your daughter's favour. My conduct may, I fear, be objectionable in accepting my dismissal from *her* lips

## THE PROPOSAL OF MR. COLLINS 147

instead of your own. But we are all liable to error—I have certainly meant well through the whole affair. My object has been to secure an amiable companion for myself, with due consideration for the advantage of all your family, and if my *manner* has been at all reprehensible, I beg here to apologise.

*[Exit, with a bow.]*

*Mrs. Bennet. [Calling after him.]* Oh! Mr. Collins —*[turning angrily to Elizabeth]*—and there you stand, looking as unconcerned as may be, and caring no more for us all than if you were at York—provided you can have your own way. But I will tell you what, Miss Lizzie, if you take it into your head to go on refusing every offer of marriage in this way, you will never get a husband at all; and I am sure I do not know who is to maintain you when your father is dead—/ shall not be able to keep you, and so I warn you. I have done with you from this very day. I shall never speak to you again, and you will find me as good as my word. I have no pleasure in talking to undutiful children. Not that I have much pleasure, indeed, in talking to anybody. People who suffer as I do from nervous complaints can have no great inclination for talking. Nobody can tell what I suffer! but it is always so, those who do

not complain are never pitied—and it is all owing to you—to your wilfulness and bad temper.

*Elizabeth.* [*Coaxingly.*] Ah, ma'am, do not be hard on me. Think of my sister Jane. How lovely she is. How much admired. How willing *she* will be to listen to Mr. Bingley. Let us go and tell her about it all. She will agree with **us both.**

*Mrs. Bennet.* [*Softened.*] Well, Lizzie, I suppose I must be content with *one* sensible girl among you all, but I should be thankful to have *you* off my hands.

*[Exeunt Mrs. Bennet and Elizabeth.]*

END OF SCENE



## VII.—LADY CATHERINE'S VISIT

*From "Pride and Prejudice."*

Vol. I . , chap. xxix.

## COSTUMES

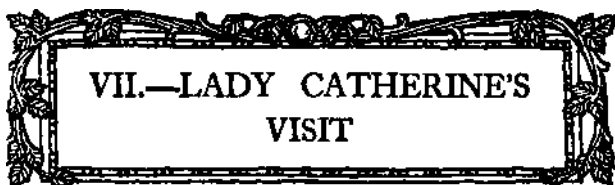
*Lady Catherine.* Large hat trimmed with white feathers, and violet silk handkerchief, worn over a ruched cap. Dress of cinnamon brown satin; the bodice cut V-shaped in front; a high ruche of white muslin round the neck; open front of bodice being frilled with white lace. PeUssé of deep violet cloth. Silver-headed black stick; long-handled eyeglass.

*Elizabeth.* Dress of white Indian muslin—the bodice made high in front and gathered in the centre of the bosom into a long gold brooch. A Spencer waist trimmed round back and down the sides with a frill of the muslin, sleeves tied with pale green ribbon. Pale green ribbon girdle.



LADY CATHERINE AND ELIZABETH BENNET





## VII.—LADY CATHERINE'S VISIT

CHARACTERS: *Lady Catherine de Burgh, Elizabeth Bennet.*

N.B. "Elizabeth's courage did not fail her. She had heard nothing of Lady Catherine that spoke her awful from any extraordinary talents or miraculous virtue, and the mere stateliness of money and rank she thought she could witness without trepidation. . . . Her air was not conciliating, nor was her manner of receiving them . . . such as to make her vistsors forget their inferior rank. She was not rendered formidable by silence; but whatever she said was spoken in so authoritative a tone as marked her self-importance . . . delivering her opinion on every subject in so decisive a manner as proved that she was not used to have her judgment controverted."—*Pride and Prejudice*, vol i., chap. xxix.

"There was a mixture of sweetness and archness in her {Elizabeth's} manner which made it difficult for her to affront anybody, and Darcy had never been so bewitched by any woman as he was by her."—Vol. i., chap. x.

(Elizabeth.) "There is a stubbornness about me that never can bear to be frightened at the will of others. My courage always rises with every attempt to intimidate me."—*Pride and Prejudice*, vol. L, chap. xxxi.

SCENE : *The morning-room at Longbourn.*

*The furniture is comfortable, but a little shabby; it also wears a faded look of gaudiness, and is arranged in a stiff and formal manner.*

*Properties required:—If possible, a long French window at the back through which Lady Catherine enters. If not practicable, a door to the L. with a screen in front of it, behind which the window must be imagined. Door R.*

*Elizabeth.* So all is settled peaceably and amicably in this turbulent family of ours. Dear Jane has attained her wish at last, and is engaged to Mr. Bingley, and Lydia is married. Lydia, who caused us so much unspeakable misery but a few weeks back, by eloping with Mr. Wickham, is married, and the Bennets are now acknowledged to be the luckiest family in the world, though only a little while before we were generally proved to be marked out by misfortune.

How quickly and easily all this has been arranged, and by whom? By Mr. Darcy, whose character I once so misjudged, whose proposal of marriage I treated with such scorn, but whom now my heart tells me I sincerely love and esteem. To-morrow he is to come to see us with Bingley. Bingley will have eyes for none but Jane. Will Mr. Darcy be satisfied to spend the time with me, or will he have too keen a remembrance of my refusal when he was staying with Lady Catherine at Rosings? Good Heaven! were she to know what passed between us, what would her feelings be.

*[Going to the window.]*

I thought I heard the sound of a carriage. Who can it be? It is too early for visitors, and, besides, I know neither the servant nor the livery. The horses are post, too. Good Heaven! it is Lady Catherine de Burgh. What can she want here? She has seen me, and evidently means to come in through the window.

*[Enter Lady Catherine de Burgh, C. through the French window or from behind the screen. She bows stiffly to Elizabeth, who curtsies.]*

*Lady C. [Sitting.]* I hope you are well, Miss Bennet.  
*Elizabeth.* Thank you, very well. Allow me to call my mother.

*Lady C.* No, I thank you. It is you I have come all this way to see.

*Elizabeth.* [*Surprised.*] I am greatly honoured.

*Lady C.* You have a very small park here.

*Elizabeth.* [*Smiling.*] It is certainly not to compare with Rosings, but, I assure you, it is quite large enough for our use.

*Lady C.* [*Sniffs.*] This must be a most inconvenient sitting-room for the evening in summer; the windows are full west.

*Elizabeth.* We only sit here in the morning.  
[*Aside.*] Heaven! how could I think her like her nephew.

*Lady C.* You can be at no loss, Miss Bennet, to understand the reason of my journey hither. Your own heart, your own conscience must tell you why I come.

*Elizabeth.* [*With unaffected astonishment.*] Indeed, you are mistaken, madam, I have not been at all able to account for the honour of seeing you here.

*Lady C.* [*Angrily.*] Miss Bennet, you ought to know I am not to be trifled with. But, however insincere *you* may choose to be, you shall not find *me* so. My character has ever been celebrated for its sincerity and frankness, and in a cause of such moment as this I shall certainly not depart from it. A report of a most

alarming nature reached me two days ago. I was told that not only your elder sister was on the point of being most advantageously married, but that *you*, that Miss Elizabeth Bennet, would, in all likelihood, be soon afterwards united to my nephew, my own nephew, Mr. Darcy. Though I *knew* it must be a scandalous falsehood, though I would not injure him so much as to suppose the truth of it possible, I instantly resolved on setting off for this place, that I might make my sentiments known to you.

*Elizabeth. [Surprised and angry.]* If you believed it impossible to be true, I wonder you took the trouble of coming so far. What could your ladyship propose by it?

*Lady C.* At once to insist upon having such a report universally contradicted.

*Elizabeth. [Coolly.]* Your coming to Longbourn to see me will be rather a confirmation of it; if, indeed, such a report is in existence.

*Lady C. If!* Do you then pretend to be ignorant of it? Has it not been industriously circulated by yourselves. Do you not know that such a report is spread abroad?

*Elizabeth.* I never heard that it was.

*Lady C.* And can you likewise declare that there is no *foundation* for it?

*Elizabeth.* I do not pretend to possess equal frankness with your ladyship. *You* may ask questions which I shall not choose to answer.

*Lady C.* This is not to be borne! Miss Bennet, I insist on being satisfied. Has he, has my nephew, made you an offer of marriage?

*Elizabeth.* Your ladyship has declared it to be impossible.

*Lady C.* It ought to be so; it must be so, while he retains the use of his reason. But your arts and allurements may, in a moment of infatuation, have made him forget what he owes to himself and to all his family. You may have drawn him in.

*Elizabeth.* If I have, I shall be the last person to confess it.

*Lady C.* Miss Bennet, do you know who I am? I have not been accustomed to such language as this. I am almost the nearest relation he has in the world, and am entitled to know all his dearest concerns.

*Elizabeth.* But you are not entitled to know *mine*; nor will such behaviour as this ever induce me to be explicit.

*Lady C.* Let me be rightly understood. This match, to which you have the presumption to aspire, can never take place. No, never;

Mr. Darcy is engaged to *my daughter*. Now what have you to say.

*Elizabeth.* [*Quietly.*] Only this, that if it is so, you can have no reason to suppose he will make an offer to me.

*Lady C.* The engagement between them is of a peculiar kind. From their infancy they have been intended for each other. It was the favourite wish of *his* mother as well as of hers. While in their cradles, we planned the union, and now, at the moment when the wishes of both sisters would be accomplished, is their marriage to be prevented by a young woman of inferior birth, of no importance in the world, and wholly unallied to the family? Do you pay no regard to the wishes of his friends—to his tacit engagement with Miss de Burgh? Are you lost to every feeling of propriety and delicacy? Have you not heard me say that from his earliest hours he was destined for his cousin?

*Elizabeth.* Yes! and I had heard it before. But what is that to me? If there is no other objection to my marrying your nephew, I shall certainly not be kept from it by knowing that his mother and aunt wished him to marry Miss de Burgh. You both did as much as you could, in planning the marriage; its completion depended on

others. If Mr. Darcy is neither by honour nor inclination confined to his cousin, why is not he to make another choice? And if I am that choice, why may not I accept him?

*Lady C.* Because honour, decorum, prudence—nay, *interest*, forbid it. Yes, Miss Bennet, *interest*; for do not expect to be noticed by any of his family or friends if you wilfully act against the inclinations of all. You will be censured, slighted, and despised by everyone connected with him. Your alliance will be a disgrace; your name will never be mentioned by any of us.

*Elizabeth.* These are heavy misfortunes indeed. But the wife of Mr. Darcy must have such extraordinary sources of happiness necessarily attached to her situation that she could, upon the whole, have no cause to repine.

*Lady C.* Obstinate, headstrong girl! I am ashamed of you!—But you are to understand me, Miss Bennet; I came here with the determined resolution of carrying my purpose, nor will I be dissuaded from it. I have not been used to submit to any person's whims. I have not been in the habit of brooking disappointment.

*Elizabeth.* That will make your ladyship's situation at present more pitiable, but it will have no effect on *me*.

*Lady C.* I will not be interrupted! Hear me in silence. My daughter and my nephew are formed for each other. They are descended, on the maternal side, from the same noble line; and on the father's, from respectable, honourable, and ancient, though untitled families. Their fortune on both sides is splendid. They are destined for each other by the voice of every member of their respective houses; and what is to divide them?—the upstart pretensions of a young woman without family, connections, or fortune! Is this to be endured? But it must not, shall not be! If you were sensible of your own good, you would not wish to quit the sphere in which you have been brought up.

*Elizabeth.* In marrying your nephew, I should not consider myself as quitting that sphere. He is a gentleman; I am a gentleman's daughter: so far we are equal.

*Lady C.* True, you are a gentleman's daughter; but who was your mother? Who are your uncles and aunts? Do not imagine me ignorant of their condition.

*Elizabeth.* Whatever my connections may be, if your nephew does not object to them, they can be nothing to you.

*Lady C.* Tell me, once for all, are you engaged to him?

*Elizabeth.* [After slight deliberation.] I am not.

*Lady C.* [Pleased.] Ah! and will you promise me never to enter into such an engagement?

*Elizabeth.* I will make no promise of the kind.

*Lady C.* Miss Bennet, I am shocked and astonished. I expected to find a more reasonable young woman. But do not deceive yourself into a belief that I will ever recede. I shall not go away till you have given me the assurance I require.

*Elizabeth.* And I certainly *never* shall give it. I am not to be intimidated into anything so wholly unreasonable. Your ladyship wants Mr. Darcy to marry your daughter; but would my giving you your wished-for promise make *their* marriage at all more probable? supposing him to be attached to me, would *my* refusing to accept his hand make him wish to bestow it on his cousin? Allow me to say, Lady Catherine, that the arguments with which you have supported this extraordinary application have been as frivolous as the application was ill-judged. You have widely mistaken my character if you think I can be worked on by such persuasions as these. How far your nephew might approve of your interference in *his* affairs I cannot tell, but you have certainly no right to concern yourself in mine. I must beg,

therefore, to be importuned no further on the subject.

*Lady C.* Not so hasty, if you please. I have by no means done. To all the objections I have already urged, I have still another to add. I am no stranger to the particulars of your youngest sister's infamous elopement. I know it all; that the young man's marrying her was a patched-up business—at the expense of your father and uncle. And is such a girl to be my nephew's sister? Heaven and Earth!—of what are you thinking?

*Elizabeth.* [*Rising angrily.*] You can now have nothing further to say. You have insulted me in every possible method. I must beg to be allowed to leave you.

[*Curtseys.*

*Lady C.* [*Rising highly incensed.*] Stay, Miss Bennet. You have no regard then for the honour and credit of my nephew! Unfeeling, selfish girl! do you not consider that a connection with you must disgrace him in the eyes of everybody?

*Elizabeth.* Lady Catherine, I have nothing further to say. You know my sentiments.

*Lady C.* You are then resolved to have him?

*Elizabeth.* I have said no such thing. I am only resolved to act in that manner which will, in

my own opinion, constitute my happiness, without reference to *you*, or to any person so wholly unconnected with me.

*Lady C.* It is well! You refuse, then, to oblige me. You refuse to obey the claims of duty, honour, and gratitude. You are determined to ruin him in the opinion of all his friends, and make him the contempt of the world.

*Elizabeth.* Neither duty, nor honour, nor gratitude, has any possible claim on me in the present instance. No principle of either would be violated by my marriage with Mr. Darcy. And with regard to the resentment of his family or the indignation of the world, if the former *were* excited by his marrying me, it would not give me one moment's concern—and the world in general would have too much sense to join in the scorn.

*Lady C.* And this is your real opinion! This is your final resolve! Very well, I shall now know how to act. Do not imagine, Miss Bennet, that your ambition will ever be gratified. I came to try you. I hoped to find you reasonable; but depend upon it, I will carry my point.

*Elizabeth.* Good day to you, Lady Catherine.

*Lady C.* [*At the window or screen.*] I take no leave of you, Miss Bennet. I send no compliments

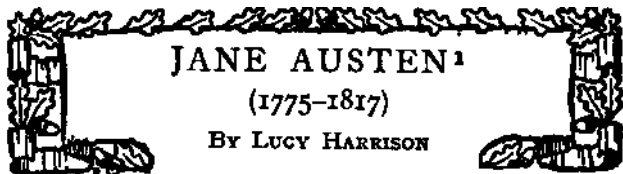
to your mother. You deserve no such attention.  
I am most seriously displeased.

*[Exit Lady Catherine.*

*Elizabeth.* I could tell her truthfully I am *not* engaged to Mr. Darcy, but she little guessed the rest. Yet I do not think he can be quite indifferent to me, or surely she would not have taken the trouble.—If he comes to-morrow with Bingley, as he arranged, I shall dare to hope—*[sighs happily]*—perhaps I, too, may learn to think the Bennet family lucky, in spite of Lady Catherine de Burgh.

*[Exit.*

END OF SCENE



JANE AUSTEN<sup>1</sup>

(1775-1817)

BY LUCY HARRISON

THE readers of fiction, and these, I take it, may be considered nowadays as the reading world, are divided into two great and distinct classes—the one that admires Jane Austen and worships at her shrine; the other who finds it impossible to read her, sees nothing in her and regards her devotees with pity if not contempt. There is no middle class—with Jane Austen it is "love her all in all or not at all," she cannot be regarded moderately. Now I may as well at the outset confess myself as belonging strictly and entirely, unreservedly to the first class of readers. I know no moderation in my love for Jane Austen and her immortal family of six. And that this is the case perhaps is not wonderful, for I believe Jane Austen was my first literary love, and I was introduced to her very early indeed and in circumstances the most favourable. One of my earliest recollections is of sitting on the stairs, the place of romance in many a child's life, with a satisfactory consciousness of combed hair, recent washing, and spotless pinafore; with the pleasant

sense of tea to come, stimulated by fumes of hot cakes and new-baked bread issuing from the kitchen, the fire from which sent its flickering rays through the open door, giving the group on the stairs just light enough to be cheerful without dispelling the pleasing feeling of mystery. And for an enchanted half-hour I sat many a time at the side of an elder sister, who with unusual vividness and power of narration told me the story of *Mansfield Park*. I knew the history of Fanny Price and her early troubles; I had my picture of Sir Thomas Bertram, of Edmund, of Mrs. Norris, and of all the characters of that marvellous story long before I had seen the book or heard of Jane Austen. The very title *Mansfield Park* has a talismanic charm for my ear to this day, and though the tale is not now my chief favourite amongst Miss Austen's books, from these associations it holds a unique place in my affections.

Miss Austen has written only six completed novels. The scene of these novels never shifts from England, hardly ever passes out of English country life; Miss Austen deals strictly with one single class of people, the upper middle class; the special interest in each story centres in the heroine; the aid of the mysterious is never invoked, unless indeed for purposes of quiet and kindly ridicule.. ..

Jane Austen performed a feat in literary work

which has seldom been equalled; I think, in its way, never excelled. She is a shining example of what reserve and moderation may do in literature. When we study her innate truthfulness, her fidelity to detail, her never faltering loyalty to nature, we are not surprised to hear that she said she *thought* she could have married Crabbe.

Her originality is shown, too, in the fact that she refused to follow the established rule as to novels in her day, viz. that a novel to be justified at all in existing must carry with it a most determined and unquestionable moral purpose. No one could offer us such revelations of character, could give us such pictures of life as Miss Austen has done *without* conveying lessons of a true and wholesome kind; but her moral is not insisted upon, nor obtruded as in the stories of so many of her contemporaries, and for that very reason is the more telling and incisive. "A moral," says Charles Lamb, "should slide into the mind of the reader while he is imagining no such matter/" And so it is with Jane Austen's *morals*. "In all her stories there is never one slip in the *moral sequence* of things, and if there is no stated moral purpose there is a moral effect; this moral effect is interwoven into the very fabric of her tales, and no sentiment, no sense of pity or sympathy, blinds her to the rights of Truth."

It was also held in her day that interspersed with the lighter parts of the novel must be passages something of the nature of essays on subjects more or less irrelevant. To this notion Jane Austen refers in one of her letters in a playful and ironical manner. In writing to her sister about *Pride and Prejudice* (her first work finished before she was twenty-one), she says: "The work is rather too light and bright and sparkling; it wants shade; it needs to be stretched out here and there with a long chapter of sense, if it could be had; if not, of solemn specious nonsense, about something unconnected with the story; an essay on writing, a critique on Walter Scott, or the history of Bonaparte!"

Miss Austen wrote for her heroines. They are her chief, her engrossing interest; they are indeed her *raison d'Stre*; it is in her heroine that all her works centre and upon whom all turns. She never leaves her heroine; where the heroine is, there is the story and the action; if the heroine goes to some special spot, we go there too; if for any reason she is unable to go, we are unavoidably prevented from going also. We hear of Maple Grove, of Brunswick Square, but Emma in the course of the story never visits there, nor do we. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Jane, the secondary heroine, leaves the central spot, but we do

not visit her until in the company of Elizabeth, the true heroine, who has to nurse her sister in illness. In *Sense and Sensibility* the doubt might possibly arise as to whether Eleanor or Marianne is the heroine *par excellence*. Eleanor, I suppose, must be looked upon as such, but I have always a fancy that Miss Austen, like her readers, found Marianne so charming that she had difficulty in assigning to her the second place, and so never throughout the tale allowed the sisters to be separated. In Miss Austen's novels we are never teased and worried with long episodes and digressions, torn from the company of those we are most interested in, and who may be, in a critical condition, compelled to start afresh amongst new people and new scenes. No, like Miss Isabella Thorp at Bath, we are constantly on the arm of Catherine Morland.

Miss Austen's women are not *modern* women, much less "new women" (whatever they may be); they are of an old-fashioned type who consider "Matrimony" as the proper aim of female living. But her *nice* women never "stoop to conquer," even to acquire the best of husbands or the greatest worldly position. Not one of them condescends to fibs or to the sneaking deceptions practised so constantly, for instance, by Thackeray's women. Miss Austen is no advocate

for imprudent love matches; but nothing could be more stern than her denunciation of a worldly marriage without love, as the story of Maria Bertram only too clearly shows.

Miss Austen is not fond of sudden and wonderful unexpected changes in her characters. On the contrary, she is as faithful as Shakespeare himself in carrying out the promise given in the first lines of description of the character or in the first sentence pronounced by the person in whom she wishes to interest you. Fanny Price is said to be timid, retiring, humble-minded, and high-principled. Throughout and to the last moment she remains true to this description. Indeed, the whole story of *Mansfield Park* goes to show the gradual development of character in the person of Fanny Price, and the whole book is a magnificent tribute to *character*—a timid, quiet, unobtrusive girl becoming the centre of influence. There are moments certainly when we are tempted to rebel against Fanny's persistence, when our sympathies are with Henry Crawford, and we wish she could be a little more pliant; but in the end we see that Jane Austen and Fanny are right and that we are wrong.

Fanny comes from an unpromising home; she is forced into circumstances which might have been quite crushing; she becomes neither an

upstart, nor a sycophant, nor a nonentity, but by the most subtle yet natural process she ends in being the central stay and prop of the family which in the first instance seems to have all to give and nothing to receive. The magisterial Sir Thomas himself comes under her influence; Edmund, though apparently leading and guiding, is himself reliant upon Fanny, and falls into error when he detaches himself from her; Lady Bertram at a crisis in the fate of the family can do no more than welcome Fanny back after absence with the heart-felt and characteristic words, "Now I shall be comfortable." There is hardly anything finer in fiction in its way, I think, than this extraordinary, quiet, persistent power of Fanny Price. The man and woman of the world, Henry and Mary Crawford, feel and acknowledge her power. It is only the hide-bound selfishness and narrow-minded meanness of Mrs. Norris, the arrogant vulgarity of Maria Bertram that are untouched by the finer spirit, just as the empty-headed, silly girls in *Pippa Passes*, and the hopelessly coarse students are those alone uninfluenced by the little maiden in Mr. Browning's exquisite drama. We see Fanny go into the unspeakable confusion called a home at Portsmouth; and even from this she contrives to snatch a brand from the burning, and by her patient sympathy and the maintenance

of what she feels to be right, she rescues her sister for better things. We may sigh for a touch of humour in Fanny, and no one could have supplied this qualification more easily than Jane Austen—but was she not right in denying Fanny this one gift?

Jane Austen is sometimes called "common-place/" but no one who could draw Fanny Price can fairly be so styled. In drawing this character alone she must for ever rank with the great interpreters of human character; with the great moralists who teach us by their figments to recognise the true in human life and in the characters of those about us. Fanny, of course, goes to happiness in the end; but I for one do not think Edmund worthy of her. He will to the last probably think, and his wife assuredly will, that he has moulded and perfected her character, formed her mind, and established her principles; I do not know that Jane Austen does not agree with them! So do not I! But how strange it is that so true to life and nature are Jane Austen's creations that we feel they have an individuality beyond the power even of their creator's hand, and that we can disagree with Miss Austen's own estimate of her own creatures. This is the true dramatic genius. This is why, I suppose, it has not been felt to be exaggerated to say that Jane

Austen came near in some degree to the greatest of our dramatists and why Macaulay couples her name with that of Shakespeare. The true dramatist—he may be dramatist in the accepted sense or only novelist—has this power of so placing his characters, so setting them going, as it were, so surrounding them with fit conditions that they work out their own destiny.

The same quality may be observed in the working out of the events of the story, in her plots. There is no forcing of circumstances; event follows event with unerring inevitability; no detail is overlooked or considered unimportant. It may seem perhaps extravagant to make such a comparison, but the development and evolution of Jane Austen's stories is, to my mind, like the quiet progress of the dawn, working on to complete light; there is no hurry, no retracing of steps, no digression, no teasing and unnecessary interruptions; all moves on with steady unobtrusive power. To *scamp* or to fight shy of the position she has taken up; to leave unexplained or unaccounted for any detail of her story was impossible to her. Her work is the work of a truthful, self-respecting woman, a woman of high principle in action and in thought. This high principle she brings to bear on her work as inevitably as one knows she did upon the little

daily duties of her short and beautiful life. There is an integrity and an uprightness in her art which act like a moral tonic: all she did was well done. We hear of her exquisite sewing, specimens of which are still piously kept by members of her family; we can see her refined and legible handwriting, each letter as perfect as she could make it; the whole pleasing to look at. Above all else we have an infallible test of clear and straightforward thought in her inimitable style. "One of the greatest artists, and one of the writers with the nicest sense of means to an end, that ever lived." It is a style the characteristic of which is, I think, lucidity. What she has to say she can say with absolute clearness; it is simple and direct; it has no pretension to be fine or grand—it is the medium of clear and truthful thought—there is no confusion, no obscurity, not the shadow of ambiguity; and for the very good reason that the fountain of thought from which it comes is clear and limpid, and the heart from whence it springs is unaffected and sincere.

You may perhaps say that Jane Austen touched only upon the easily describable things of life, and therefore her style must naturally be clear. In answer to that, I would ask any candid reader, anyone who has honestly tried to put down plain facts in writing so that they may be interesting

as well as clear, to read, for instance, the opening paragraphs of any one of the novels, where the statements made are of the simplest and most direct nature, and see whether it would be possible to *approach*, much less *improve*, the manner. (See especially the opening of *Northanger Abbey*.) There is not in all her books a slipshod or carelessly written sentence: her composition is a perfect model of simple direct narrative-prose, yet it has a brilliancy and sparkle which illuminate every statement and give distinction to every sentence. As to *padding*, it never entered into her calculations. Her style, though so excellent, conveys the impression of spontaneousness; and the appropriateness of the diction to the matter is very noticeable. There is little description of scenery, but every now and then we are out of doors and find ourselves in a pleasant English garden. Miss Bronte complained that with Miss Austen there was "no open country, no fresh air, no blue hill, no bonny beck." This is true; but who has failed to feel the delicious smell of earth after rain, as given in the shrubbery scene, when Emma's spirits dance within her and she knows that all is right between her and Mr. Knightley? And have we not a very clear idea indeed of Mr. Collins's "humble abode." What descriptions there are are all given with very few strokes, but

the effect is produced, and there are one or two appreciative descriptions of the sea.

To speak of Jane Austen's stories in detail would indeed be too long and certainly is uncalled for, so well known are they. But I cannot leave *Persuasion* without a word of comment. To my mind, it is the most perfect, the most satisfying of all her works, not less in execution than in feeling, and in exquisite and delicate character drawing. It has not the wit and sparkle of *Pride and Prejudice*, nor the incisive vigour of *Sense and Sensibility*, nor the joyous buoyancy of *Emma*, nor the fun and frolic of *Northanger Abbey*, nor the constructive completeness of *Mansfield Park*, but it has a charm all its own. There is a sweetness and gentleness, a quiet, subdued pathos pervading the whole book, given by the character of Anne Elliot, "who spreads purification and perfume all the way," which place *Persuasion* quite by itself amongst Jane Austen's works. It is the only story of hers which in places brings tears into our eyes; there is no cynicism, no jarring line in it; the eye is as keen as ever to detect folly and heartlessness, but we see it all through the tender forbearance of Anne; it is worthy of being written by a refined and high-minded woman when she knew her days were numbered. As we lay it down we sigh with Sir Walter Scott, "What

a pity so gifted a creature died so early." The shadowy, ghostly figures that *might* have been, phantom offspring of that fertile brain, hover near us as we read the closing pages and we think of the baseless fabric of some dream buried for ever with the Enchantress's wand. What other bright creatures might not have been illuminating our imaginary world had Jane Austen lived another ten years! But it is foolish to repine for what is not, when we have so much. And let us be thankful that Jane Austen's excellent good sense and her inextinguishable genius did not allow her to be trammelled, as she might have been, by the silly cant in vogue in her time (and not, I grieve to say, quite extinct even in these enlightened times), the foolish jargon of woman's sphere interfering with her right to exercise for the good of mankind Heaven-given gifts.

As an author Jane Austen recognised very clearly what she could do; and it is well for us in reading her not to ask or expect more than she pretends to give. As we have already seen, upon the most magnificent sides of art—the terrible and the tragic; upon the philosophic and scientific; even upon the historical, she had no intention of trying her hand. What Sir Walter Scott said is true: "That young lady has a talent for describing the involutions of feelings and

characters of ordinary life which is to me the most wonderful I ever met with. The big bow-wow strain I can do myself like any going, but the exquisite touch which renders ordinary commonplace things and characters interesting from the truth of her descriptions and the sentiments is denied to me."

Jane Austen's literary sanity prevented her from undertaking things beyond her power. It is told in her *Life* that the Regent, afterwards George IV, greatly admired her books (surely one of the best things we know of that gentleman), and that his secretary in writing to Miss Austen to tell her of the pleasure the Prince Regent took in her stories suggested to her that "an historical romance illustrative of the august House of Coburg [save the mark] would just now [upon the marriage of Prince Leopold with Princess Charlotte] be very interesting," and he also intimated that she might even dedicate such a book to the royal bridegroom! The letter reminds one a little of Mr. Collins. In her reply, in which she must have found gravity rather difficult to maintain, but in which we may recognise absolute truthfulness with perfect courtesy she says: "You are very kind in your hints as to the sort of composition which might recommend me at present, and I am fully sensible that

an historical romance founded on the House of Coburg might be much more to the purpose of profit and popularity than such pictures of domestic life in country villages as I deal in, but I could no more write a romance than an epic poem. I could not sit down to write a serious romance under any other motive than to save my life; and if it were indispensable for me to keep it up and never relax into laughing at myself or at other people, I am sure I should be hung before I had finished the first chapter. No. I must keep my own style and my own ways, and though I may never succeed again in that, I am convinced that I should fail in any other." Miss Bronte recognised the fine power of reserve in Jane Austen when she said: "I think I will endeavour to follow the counsel which shines out of Miss Austen's mild eyes, to finish more and to be more subdued." In one of her letters Jane Austen says: "Such a spot is the delight of my life! Three or four families in a country village is the very thing to work on." And again: "A little bit, two inches wide, of ivory on which I work with so fine a brush as produces little effect after much labour!" How little the casual, careless reader recognises this "much labour"! All seems so easy, so delightfully without effort, and so indeed it is—to the *reader* \

To ask one working in this way for high effects and striking incidents and large canvas, is to be unreasonable, insensible to the gifts the gods do give us; and we can only fully enjoy Jane Austen when we thoroughly recognise her limits as she herself so frankly did. We must not go to her for what in present-day parlance we are pleased to call "modern thought"; we shall not find theology and psychology, the latest scientific discovery, or the last revelations in physiology, politics, and sociology bandied about as topics of conversation at her tea-tables. There is a sad lack of scientific phraseology in her books—evolution is not, I believe, mentioned by her, nor are the laws of health discussed scientifically by any of her characters, unless we take Mr. Woodhouse's recommendation of baked apples for supper as such! But let me say that I believe no author has a more real and intimate knowledge of the true working of the great natural laws. Where will you find a more delicate working out of the laws of heredity or recognition of the strength of family traits, for instance, than in Jane Austen's novels? It is so delicate that the careless reader may not notice it; it is not obtruded, discussed, and pointed out; nor are you called upon to acknowledge how clever the author is in the matter. No. It comes like

everything else in her work, as a piece of nature. Look for a moment at Mrs. Price and Lady Bertram: like in character, in person, and in voice, merely differentiated by means of circumstances. Give him time and Edmund will be another Sir Thomas. In *Pride and Prejudice* does not the peculiarly shy disposition of Georgiana suggest that some of the hauteur, if not rudeness, of her brother Darcy has the same origin? And is there not a most subtle likeness between Elizabeth Bennet and her father? If one might hint a blemish in *Pride and Prejudice*, it might, I think, be found in the fact that for once Miss Austen seems to have neglected this point, in that it is almost impossible for us to believe that Mrs. Bennet could be own mother to the two elder Bennet girls and that they could have such a sister as Lydia.

All creators of characters must have, to be thoroughly successful in the truest sense, humour, and Jane Austen surely has her full share of this great quality. Men have a delightful way of generalising as to women, and one of their generalisations is that women have no sense of humour. This is untrue; and like many generalisations will be found to be based on narrow and personal experience. A man marries a woman with no sense of humour (and I am quite prepared to acknow-

ledge that that may happen), and henceforth he declares all women to be deficient in that particular. No one, however, can read Jane Austen and maintain that she, at any rate, had no sense of humour. The touches of humour in her books are innumerable; and they are often most delicate and of the keenest kind. Perhaps no character, with the exception of Mr. Collins, shows Miss Austen's style of humour more markedly than Mrs. Norris in *Mansfield Park*. She is an unpleasant person, and Jane Austen does not spare her. The account of her relations with Dr. Grant is one of the best things in the story. On the death of the Rev. Norris, Dr. and Mrs. Grant come to live in the vicarage, the former home of Mrs. Norris, and the relations, as the diplomatists say, are somewhat "strained," for Mrs. Norris's leading characteristic is meanness; her whole intellect, which is narrow, but sharp, goes out in bargaining; the Reverend Doctor loves the good things of this world, values comfort very highly, but likes to get his indulgences at a reasonable rate; and in the inevitable transactions which take place between him and Mrs. Norris he does not by any means come off conqueror, as, in dealing with a woman, becomes a man and a cleric. The standing grievance of the dining-table and the episode of the Moor Park apricots are known

to all readers of *Mansfield Park*, and nothing could be better than the few words in which Jane Austen manages to convey to her readers the irreconcilable nature of Mrs. Norris and Dr. Grant's relationship. "Dr. Grant and Mrs. Norris," she tells us, "were seldom good friends; their acquaintance had begun in dilapidations, and their habits were dissimilar." Of course, to know Mrs. Norris, we must read the book. She is one of the most telling of the secondary characters, and the minute, almost cruelly keen strokes which reveal her, show Miss Austen at her cleverest. Meanness was evidently a thing Miss Austen could not away with; and if to read of that vice, portrayed in the most consummate manner in the person of Mrs. Norris, and still more in Mr. and Mrs. Dashwood, would diminish that ugly quality, *Mansfield Park* and *Sense and Sensibility* should commend themselves to all moralists. To live with Mrs. Norris would indeed be a pain; but in the hands of Jane Austen we find her wonderfully interesting; her convolutions of meanness are so subtle and yet so true to the nature of the woman that one's admiration of the creator's skill over-balances one's detestation of her puppet. This is art, pure and simple, inimitable, incommunicable. Look, again, at Mary Musgrove, a woman absolutely wearisome, selfish,

narrow, strictly speaking a fool. To be shut up with her for a day, as was often enough the fate of poor Anne Elliot, would be like a nightmare, and yet the transactions at the cottage where Mary lounges away what she calls her life, the relationship between her and the great house are fascinating to read of. It is so with the vulgar, flashy, affected, insincere Isabella Thorp; so with her intolerable brother; so with the shallow, snobbish Mrs. Elton; so also with the exquisite goose Mr. Collins. How is it that we care to hear of such people?

There are creatures ugly, uninteresting, annoying in their ordinary sphere; when, however, these are put upon the stage of the microscope or thrown on the lantern screen, the revelation of the secrets of their being, of their processes and manners invests them with a strange interest and fascination. So it is with the characters laid ready for us to examine at our leisure through the keen eye of Jane Austen, all their movements registered with scientific accuracy by her unerring pen! It would however, be a great mistake to suppose that all the fun-provoking characters in these works are objects of ridicule. This is far from being the case; though it is clear enough that Miss Austen had a sharp eye for the foolish and absurd in character, her humour can be kind as well as

sharp. Take one who, though far from wise, is made attractive through his gentle kindness, and rescued from anything like ridicule by the watchful tact and loving respect of his clever daughter. Mr. Woodhouse is a valetudinarian; he is weak and nervous; he values a servant on her being able to turn the handle of a door properly and to shut it quietly; he is haunted with fears not only for his own but his friends' digestions, and is in continual terror of damp shoes; he so strongly advises against the delicacies at his own table that his lady friends have to let the good things provided by Emma pass by with a sigh, and content themselves with the more wholesome and less tempting fare recommended by their anxious host. He has a rooted aversion to any change, and the greatest tragedy of Mr. Woodhouse's life is the marriage of his daughter to the man of her choice; and he continues to the end to deplore the fate of Emma's governess, "poor Miss Taylor," who has made a most happy marriage and has settled near him in comfort and affluence. But in spite of all this we love the old gentleman. There is nothing really ill-natured in him, and we are made to sympathise with him and his innocent little foibles. He likes his gruel thin, but not too thin, and we are as anxious as Emma herself that he should have it to his mind. Again, though **very slight**, the **pic-**

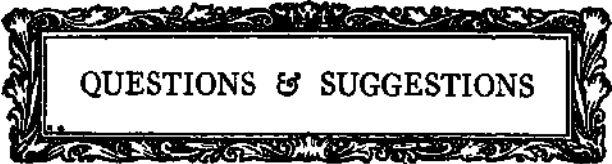
ture of the happy married life of Admiral and Mrs. Croft in *Persuasion* is nowhere, I think, excelled in English fiction. Miss Austen's whole heart went out in sympathy and admiration for the members of the naval profession, and Admiral and Mrs. Croft are drawn with a loving hand indeed. They are inseparable. Mrs. Croft has accompanied the Admiral in almost all his voyages, and she even goes so far as to commit her bodily safety to his keeping when driving about the country in their pony carriage. "My dear Admiral, that post! we shall certainly take that post!" But by coolly giving the reins a better direction herself, they happily passed the danger; and by once afterwards judiciously putting out her hand, they neither fell into a rut, or ran foul of a dung cart; and Anne, with some amusement at their style of driving, which she imagined no bad representation of the general guidance of their affairs, found herself safely deposited by them at the 'Cottage.'"

Miss Austen had herself two brothers in the navy, and in her picture of William Price she must have drawn on her own experience of the midshipman character. Young Price is a noble fellow, a thorough sailor, who will make his way through pure love of his profession, and uprightness of purpose. He is often called upon by Sir

Thomas Bertram to tell of his adventures, and the effect that the bright unaffected story of his life has upon the jaded, blasé heart of the man of the world, Henry Crawford, is a curiously delicate bit of moral teaching. After hearing the stories of his adventures, Lady Bertram remarks, "Dear me! how disagreeable! I wonder anybody can ever go to sea!" "To Henry Crawford they gave a different feeling. He longed to have been at sea, and seen and done and suffered as much. His heart was warmed, his fancy fired, and he felt the highest respect for a lad who, before he was twenty, had gone through such bodily hardships, and given such proofs of mind. The glory of heroism, of usefulness, of exertion, of endurance made his own habits of selfish indulgence appear in shameful contrast; and he wished he had been a William Price, distinguishing himself and working his way to fortune and consequence with so much self-respect and happy ardour, instead of what he was!"

Of Miss Austen's heroes I have not said much. Edmund Bertram, Henry Tilney, Captain Wentworth, Edward Ferrars, Mr. Darcy, and Mr. Knightley, they are a goodly company. Darcy I imagine is the favourite, and certainly, though sometimes almost overstepping the bounds of what one might consider good breeding, he is a

fine fellow. The man, however, who seems to me to have the greatest individuality and who is most original is Mr. Knightley; he is a man of sterling worth, one as it would seem, exactly after Jane Austen's own heart—sensible, kind, truthful, able; a man whom his friends would seek in time of trouble, and who would never disappoint them. He runs Captain Wentworth very close. A friend of Miss Bronte's never could make up her mind which she would have married had they both proposed to her—Mr. Knightley or Paul Emanuel. I must confess that the creature who, in the majority of women's novels, goes by the name of hero is hard to put up with. Miss Bronte's heroes—always excepting Paul Emanuel, who is charming—leave very much indeed to be desired. Rochester is almost intolerable, and Louis Moore is quite so. As a rule the woman-novelist's hero is either a monster of rudeness and masculine arrogance or a prig. With Miss Austen we have neither of these types, and if we have nothing superbly romantic and heroic, we have at least sane gentlemen.



## QUESTIONS & SUGGESTIONS

1. What does Catherine mean by the word "horrid" as applied to novels?
2. Find out who wrote *Udolpho*, and anything else you can about it and the other "horrid" romances mentioned by Isabella and Catherine.
3. Write a short character study of Isabella.
4. Write a letter from Isabella to Miss Andrews describing some of her experiences at Bath.
5. Who wrote *Sir Charles Grandison*? Find out all you can about the author.
6. Notice how Mr. John Dashwood, urged on by his wife, gradually reduces his offers of assistance to his step-mother and step-sisters. What was his original proposal?
7. What is an annuity?
8. How old was the elder Mrs. Dashwood?
9. Write a paragraph giving your idea of Harry Dashwood.
10. What compliment did Emma pay to Jane Fairfax's handwriting?
11. What was the name of the family in which Jane Fairfax had been companion?
12. What was the married name of the daughter? Where did she live after her marriage?
13. What service had Mr. Dixon once performed for Jane Fairfax?
14. Who was Mr. Perry?

## QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS 191

15. What was Mrs. Elton's idea of a strawberry picnic at Donwell ? How did it differ from Mr. Knightley's ?

16. Whom had Emma previously chosen as a husband for Harriet Smith ?

17. What was in Harriet Smith's parcel of "most precious treasures?" Give their history.

18. On what grounds did Harriet base her conviction that Mr. Knightley felt a regard for her?

19. Find out what is meant by an "entail."

20. What was the name of the eldest Miss Bennet? To whom did Mrs. Bennet hope to marry her?

21. How many reasons had Mr. Collins for marrying? What were they?

22. Why did Mr. Collins think it unlikely that Elizabeth meant to refuse him ?

23. Write a letter from Elizabeth Bennet describing Mr. Collins's proposal.

24. Write a short character study of Lady Catherine.

25. Why did Lady Catherine come to see Elizabeth ?

26. What relationship existed between Mr. Darcy and Lady Catherine's daughter?

27. Explain and illustrate the meaning of the following words: tacit, disparity, irrational, incongruous, ingeniously, negligent, solicitude, propriety, deficiencies, incumbent, sanctioned, trepidation, felicity, pretensions, allurements, induce, censured, importuned.

28. Which of the dialogues given here do you like best? Give some idea of the characters concerned, and try to explain why you like this dialogue.

29. The first dialogue takes place in the Pump Room at Bath. Find out all you can about Bath at this time.

30. Write extracts from Catherine Morland's diary during her first week at Bath..

## 192 QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

31. Give the exact occasion on which each of the following passages was spoken and name the speaker:

- (a) The idea of this man being run away with by his feelings.
- (b) My character has ever been celebrated for its sincerity and frankness.
- (c) People always live for ever when there is an annuity to be paid them.
- (d) I really must talk to him about purchasing a donkey. In a country life I conceive it to be a sort of necessity.
- (e) Do you like them best dark or fair?
- (f) Three-and-twenty—a period when, if a man chooses a wife, he generally chooses ill.

32. Find out all you can about furniture in Jane Austen's time.

33. Take any two of the dialogues and show the different types of characters which Jane Austen describes in them. Show how she makes them reveal themselves by what they say.

34. Find out all you can about: (a) travelling; (b) the postal service in Jane Austen's time.

35. Write a conversation between Lady Catherine and Miss Bates.

36. Notice Jane Austen's description of the characters which are given before each dialogue. Then describe two imaginary characters in the same way.

37. Write a conversation between your imaginary characters.

38. Find out the chief historical events which occurred during Jane Austen's life time.

39. Write a short chapter for a "horrid" romance.

40. Find out what you can about social conditions in England in the time of Jane Austen.







