

away. Miss Lucas is married and settled. And one of my own daughters. I suppose you have heard of it; indeed, you must have seen it in the papers. It was in *The Times* and *The Courier*, I know; though it was not put in as it ought to be. It was only said, ‘Lately, George Wickham, Esq. to Miss Lydia Bennet,’ without there being a syllable said of her father, or the place where she lived, or anything. It was my brother Gardiner’s drawing up too, and I wonder how he came to make such an awkward business of it. Did you see it?”

Bingley replied that he did, and made his congratulations. Elizabeth dared not lift up her eyes. How Mr. Darcy looked, therefore, she could not tell.

“It is a delightful thing, to be sure, to have a daughter well married,” continued her mother, “but at the same time, Mr. Bingley, it is very hard to have her taken such a way from me. They are gone down to Newcastle, a place quite northward, it seems, and there they are to stay I do not know how long. His regiment is there; for I suppose you have heard of his leaving the ——shire, and of his being gone into the regulars. Thank Heaven! he has *some* friends, though perhaps not so many as he deserves.”

Elizabeth, who knew this to be levelled at Mr. Darcy, was in such misery of shame, that she could hardly keep her seat. It drew from her, however, the exertion of speaking, which nothing else had so effectually done before; and she asked Bingley whether he meant to make any stay in the country at present. A few weeks, he believed.

“When you have killed all your own birds, Mr. Bingley,” said her mother, “I beg you will come here, and shoot as many as you please on Mr. Bennet’s manor. I am sure he will be vastly happy to oblige you, and will save all the best of the covies for you.”

Elizabeth’s misery increased, at such unnecessary, such officious attention! Were the same fair prospect to arise at present as had flattered them a year ago, every thing, she was persuaded, would be hastening to the same vexatious conclusion. At that instant, she felt that years of happiness could not make Jane or herself amends for moments of such painful confusion.

“The first wish of my heart,” said she to herself, “is never more to be in company with either of them. Their society can afford no pleasure that will atone for such wretchedness as this! Let me never see either one or the other again!”

Yet the misery, for which years of happiness were to offer no compensation, received soon afterwards material relief, from observing how much the beauty of her sister re-kindled the admiration of her former lover. When first he came in, he had spoken to her but little; but every five minutes seemed to be giving her