

MANSFIELD PARK

CHAPTER I

FANNY had by no means forgotten Mr. Crawford, when she awoke the next morning; but she remembered the purport of her note, and was not less sanguine, as to its effect, than she had been the night before. If Mr. Crawford would but go away!—That was what she most earnestly desired;—go and take his sister with him, as he was to do, and as he returned to Mansfield on purpose to do. And why it was not done already, she could not devise, for Miss Crawford certainly wanted no delay. — Fanny had hoped, in the course of his yesterday's visit, to hear the day named; but he had only spoken of their journey as what would take place ere long.

Having so satisfactorily settled the conviction her note would convey, she could not but be astonished to see Mr. Crawford, as she accidentally did, coming up to the house again, and at an hour as early as the day before. —His coming might have nothing to do with her, but she must avoid seeing him if possible; and being then in her way up stairs, she resolved there to remain, during the whole of his visit, unless actually sent for; and as Mrs. Norris was still in the house, there seemed little danger of her being wanted.

She sat some time in a good deal of agitation, listening, trembling, and fearing to be sent for every moment; but as no footsteps approached the east

room, she grew gradually composed, could sit down, and be able to employ herself, and able to hope that Mr. Crawford had come, and would go without her being obliged to know any thing of the matter.

5 Nearly half an hour had passed, and she was growing very comfortable, when suddenly the sound of a step in regular approach was heard—a heavy step, an unusual step in that part of the house; it was her uncle's; she knew it as well as his voice; she
10 had trembled at it as often, and began to tremble again, at the idea of his coming up to speak to her, whatever might be the subject.—It was indeed Sir Thomas, who opened the door, and asked if she were there, and if he might come in. The terror of
15 his former occasional visits to that room seemed all renewed, and she felt as if he were going to examine her again in French and English.

She was all attention, however, in placing a chair for him, and trying to appear honoured; and in her
20 agitation, had quite overlooked the deficiencies of her apartment, till he, stopping short as he entered, said, with much surprise, “Why have you no fire to-day?”

There was snow on the ground, and she was sitting in a shawl. She hesitated.

25 “I am not cold, Sir—I never sit here long at this time of year.”

“But,—you have a fire in general?”

“No, Sir.”

“How comes this about; here must be some mis-
30 take. I understood that you had the use of this room by way of making you perfectly comfortable.—In your bed-chamber I know you *cannot* have a fire.

Here is some great misapprehension which must be rectified. It is highly unfit for you to sit—be it only half an hour a day, without a fire. You are not strong. You are chilly. Your aunt cannot be aware of this.”

Fanny would rather have been silent, but being obliged to speak, she could not forbear, in justice to the aunt she loved best, from saying something in which the words “my aunt Norris” were distinguishable.

“I understand,” cried her uncle recollecting himself, and not wanting to hear more—“I understand. Your aunt Norris has always been an advocate, and very judiciously, for young people’s being brought up without unnecessary indulgences; but there should be moderation in every thing.—She is also very hardy herself, which of course will influence her in her opinion of the wants of others. And on another account too, I can perfectly comprehend.—I know what her sentiments have always been. The principle was good in itself, but it may have been, and I believe *has been* carried too far in your case.—I am aware that there has been sometimes, in some points, a misplaced distinction; but I think too well of you, Fanny, to suppose you will ever harbour resentment on that account.—You have an understanding, which will prevent you from receiving things only in part, and judging partially by the event.—You will take in the whole of the past, you will consider times, persons, and probabilities, and you will feel that *they* were not least your friends who were educating and preparing you for that

mediocrity of condition which *seemed* to be your lot. —Though their caution may prove eventually unnecessary, it was kindly meant; and of this you may be assured, that every advantage of affluence will
5 be doubled by the little privations and restrictions that may have been imposed. I am sure you will not disappoint my opinion of you, by failing at any time to treat your aunt Norris with the respect and attention that are due to her.—But enough of this.
10 Sit down, my dear. I must speak to you for a few minutes, but I will not detain you long.”

Fanny obeyed, with eyes cast down and colour rising.—After a moment’s pause, Sir Thomas, trying to suppress a smile, went on.

15 “You are not aware, perhaps, that I have had a visitor this morning.—I had not been long in my own room, after breakfast, when Mr. Crawford was shewn in.—His errand you may probably conjecture.”

Fanny’s colour grew deeper and deeper; and her
20 uncle perceiving that she was embarrassed to a degree that made either speaking or looking up quite impossible, turned away his own eyes, and without any farther pause, proceeded in his account of Mr. Crawford’s visit.

25 Mr. Crawford’s business had been to declare himself the lover of Fanny, make decided proposals for her, and intreat the sanction of the uncle, who seemed to stand in the place of her parents; and he had done it all so well, so openly, so liberally, so
30 properly, that Sir Thomas, feeling, moreover, his own replies, and his own remarks to have been very much to the purpose—was exceedingly happy to give

the particulars of their conversation—and, little aware of what was passing in his niece's mind, conceived that by such details he must be gratifying her far more than himself. He talked therefore for several minutes without Fanny's daring to interrupt him.—She had hardly even attained the wish to do it. Her mind was in too much confusion. She had changed her position, and with her eyes fixed intently on one of the windows, was listening to her uncle, in the utmost perturbation and dismay.—For a moment he ceased, but she had barely become conscious of it, when, rising from his chair, he said, “And now, Fanny, having performed one part of my commission, and shewn you every thing placed on a basis the most assured and satisfactory, I may execute the remainder by prevailing on you to accompany me down stairs, where—though I cannot but presume on having been no unacceptable companion myself, I must submit to your finding one still better worth listening to.—Mr. Crawford, as you have perhaps foreseen, is yet in the house. He is in my room, and hoping to see you there.”

There was a look, a start, an exclamation, on hearing this, which astonished Sir Thomas; but what was his increase of astonishment on hearing her exclaim—“Oh! no, Sir, I cannot, indeed I cannot go down to him. Mr. Crawford ought to know—he must know that—I told him enough yesterday to convince him—he spoke to me on this subject yesterday—and I told him without disguise that it was very disagreeable to me, and quite out of my power to return his good opinion.”

"I do not catch your meaning," said Sir Thomas, sitting down again.—"Out of your power to return his good opinion! what is all this? I know he spoke to you yesterday, and (as far as I understand), received as much encouragement to proceed as a well-judging young woman could permit herself to give. I was very much pleased with what I collected to have been your behaviour on the occasion; it shewed a discretion highly to be commended. But now, when he has made his overtures so properly, and honourably—what are your scruples *now*?"

"You are mistaken, Sir,"—cried Fanny, forced by the anxiety of the moment even to tell her uncle that he was wrong—"You are quite mistaken. How could Mr. Crawford say such a thing? I gave him no encouragement yesterday—On the contrary, I told him—I cannot recollect my exact words—but I am sure I told him that I would not listen to him, that it was very unpleasant to me in every respect, and that I begged him never to talk to me in that manner again.—I am sure I said as much as that and more; and I should have said still more,—if I had been quite certain of his meaning any thing seriously, but I did not like to be—I could not bear to be—imputing more than might be intended. I thought it might all pass for nothing with *him*."

She could say no more; her breath was almost gone.

"Am I to understand," said Sir Thomas, after a few moments silence, "that you mean to *refuse* Mr. Crawford?"

"Yes, Sir."

"Refuse him?"

"Yes, Sir."

"Refuse Mr. Crawford! Upon what plea? For what reason?"

"I—I cannot like him, Sir, well enough to marry 5 him."

"This is very strange!" said Sir Thomas, in a voice of calm displeasure. "There is something in this which my comprehension does not reach. Here is a young man wishing to pay his addresses to 10 you, with every thing to recommend him; not merely situation in life, fortune, and character, but with more than common agreeableness, with address and conversation pleasing to every body. And he is not an acquaintance of to-day, you have now known him 15 some time. His sister, moreover, is your intimate friend, and he has been doing *that* for your brother, which I should suppose would have been almost sufficient recommendation to you, had there been no other. It is very uncertain when my interest 20 might have got William on. He has done it already."

"Yes," said Fanny, in a faint voice, and looking down with fresh shame; and she did feel almost ashamed of herself, after such a picture as her uncle had drawn, for not liking Mr. Crawford. 25

"You must have been aware," continued Sir Thomas, presently, "you must have been some time aware of a particularity in Mr. Crawford's manners to you. This cannot have taken you by surprise. You must have observed his attentions; and though 30 you always received them very properly, (I have no accusation to make on that head,) I never perceived

them to be unpleasant to you. I am half inclined to think, Fanny, that you do not quite know your own feelings."

"Oh! yes, Sir, indeed I do. His attentions were
5 always—what I did not like."

Sir Thomas looked at her with deeper surprise. "This is beyond me," said he. "This requires explanation. Young as you are, and having seen scarcely any one, it is hardly possible that your affections——"
10 He paused and eyed her fixedly. He saw her lips formed into a *no*, though the sound was inarticulate, but her face was like scarlet. That, however, in so modest a girl might be very compatible with innocence; and chusing at least to appear satisfied, he
15 quickly added, "No, no, I know *that* is quite out of the question—quite impossible. Well, there is nothing more to be said."

And for a few minutes he did say nothing. He was deep in thought. His niece was deep in thought
20 likewise, trying to harden and prepare herself against farther questioning. She would rather die than own the truth, and she hoped by a little reflection to fortify herself beyond betraying it.

"Independently of the interest which Mr. Crawford's *choice* seemed to justify," said Sir Thomas,
25 beginning again, and very composedly, "his wishing to marry at all so early is commendatory to me. I am an advocate for early marriages, where there are means in proportion, and would have every young
30 man, with a sufficient income, settle as soon after four and twenty as he can. This is so much my opinion, that I am sorry to think how little likely

my own eldest son, your cousin, Mr. Bertram, is to marry early ; but at present, as far as I can judge, matrimony makes no part of his plans or thoughts. I wish he were more likely to fix." Here was a glance at Fanny. "Edmund I consider from his disposition and habits as much more likely to marry early than his brother. *He*, indeed, I have lately thought has seen the woman he could love, which, I am convinced, my eldest son has not. Am I right ? Do you agree with me, my dear ?" 5
10

"Yes, Sir."

It was gently, but it was calmly said, and Sir Thomas was easy on the score of the cousins. But the removal of his alarm did his niece no service ; as her unaccountableness was confirmed, his displeasure increased ; and getting up and walking about the room, with a frown, which Fanny could picture to herself, though she dared not lift up her eyes, he shortly afterwards, and in a voice of authority, said, "Have you any reason, child, to think ill of Mr. Crawford's temper ?" 15
20

"No, Sir."

She longed to add, "but of his principles I have ;" but her heart sunk under the appalling prospect of discussion, explanation, and probably non-conviction. Her ill opinion of him was founded chiefly on observations, which, for her cousins' sake, she could scarcely dare mention to their father. Maria and Julia—and especially Maria, were so closely implicated in Mr. Crawford's misconduct, that she could not give his character, such as she believed it, without betraying them. She had hoped that to a man like 25
30

her uncle, so discerning, so honourable, so good, the simple acknowledgment of settled *dislike* on her side, would have been sufficient. To her infinite grief she found it was not.

5 Sir Thomas came towards the table where she sat in trembling wretchedness, and with a good deal of cold sternness, said, "It is of no use, I perceive, to talk to you. We had better put an end to this most mortifying conference. Mr. Crawford must not be
10 kept longer waiting. I will, therefore, only add, as thinking it my duty to mark my opinion of your conduct—that you have disappointed every expectation I had formed, and proved yourself of a character the very reverse of what I had supposed. For
15 I *had*, Fanny, as I think my behaviour must have shewn, formed a very favourable opinion of you from the period of my return to England. I had thought you peculiarly free from wilfulness of temper, self-conceit, and every tendency to that inde-
20 pendence of spirit, which prevails so much in modern days, even in young women, and which in young women is offensive and disgusting beyond all common offence. But you have now shewn me that you can be wilful and perverse, that you can and
25 will decide for yourself, without any consideration or deference for those who have surely some right to guide you—without even asking their advice. You have shewn yourself very, very different from any thing that I had imagined. The advantage or dis-
30 advantage of your family—of your parents—your brothers and sisters—never seems to have had a moment's share in your thoughts on this occasion.

How *they* might be benefited, how *they* must rejoice in such an establishment for you—is nothing to *you*. You think only of yourself; and because you do not feel for Mr. Crawford exactly what a young, heated fancy imagines to be necessary for happiness, you resolve to refuse him at once, without wishing even for a little time to consider of it—a little more time for cool consideration, and for really examining your own inclinations—and are, in a wild fit of folly, throwing away from you such an opportunity of being settled in life, eligibly, honourably, nobly settled, as will, probably, never occur to you again. Here is a young man of sense, of character, of temper, of manners, and of fortune, exceedingly attached to you, and seeking your hand in the most handsome and disinterested way; and let me tell you, Fanny, that you may live eighteen years longer in the world, without being addressed by a man of half Mr. Crawford's estate, or a tenth part of his merits. Gladly would I have bestowed either of my own daughters on him. Maria is nobly married—but had Mr. Crawford sought Julia's hand, I should have given it to him with superior and more heartfelt satisfaction than I gave Maria's to Mr. Rushworth." After half a moment's pause—"And I should have been very much surprised had either of my daughters, on receiving a proposal of marriage at any time, which might carry with it only *half* the eligibility of *this*, immediately and peremptorily, and without paying my opinion or my regard the compliment of any consultation, put a decided negative on it. I should have been much surprised, and much

hurt, by such a proceeding. I should have thought it a gross violation of duty and respect. *You* are not to be judged by the same rule. You do not owe me the duty of a child. But, Fanny, if your heart
5 can acquit you of *ingratitude*—”

He ceased. Fanny was by this time crying so bitterly, that angry as he was, he would not press that article farther. Her heart was almost broke by such a picture of what she appeared to him; by
10 such accusations, so heavy, so multiplied, so rising in dreadful gradation! Self-willed, obstinate, selfish, and ungrateful. He thought her all this. She had deceived his expectations; she had lost his good opinion. What was to become of her?

15 “I am very sorry,” said she inarticularly through her tears, “I am very sorry indeed.”

“Sorry! yes, I hope you are sorry; and you will probably have reason to be long sorry for this day’s transactions.”

20 “If it were possible for me to do otherwise,” said she with another strong effort, “but I am so perfectly convinced that I could never make him happy, and that I should be miserable myself.”

Another burst of tears; but in spite of that burst,
25 and in spite of that great black word *miserable*, which served to introduce it, Sir Thomas began to think a little relenting, a little change of inclination, might have something to do with it; and to augur favourably from the personal intreaty of the young man
30 himself. He knew her to be very timid, and exceedingly nervous; and thought it not improbable that her mind might be in such a state, as a little time,

a little pressing, a little patience, and a little impatience, a judicious mixture of all on the lover's side, might work their usual effect on. If the gentleman would but persevere, if he had but love enough to persevere—Sir Thomas began to have hopes; and these reflections having passed across his mind and cheered it, "Well," said he, in a tone of becoming gravity, but of less anger, "well, child, dry up your tears. There is no use in these tears; they can do no good. You must now come down stairs with me. Mr. Crawford has been kept waiting too long already. You must give him your own answer; we cannot expect him to be satisfied with less; and you only can explain to him the grounds of that misconception of your sentiments, which, unfortunately for himself, he certainly has imbibed. I am totally unequal to it."

But Fanny shewed such reluctance, such misery, at the idea of going down to him, that Sir Thomas, after a little consideration, judged it better to indulge her. His hopes from both gentleman and lady suffered a small depression in consequence; but when he looked at his niece, and saw the state of feature and complexion which her crying had brought her into, he thought there might be as much lost as gained by an immediate interview. With a few words, therefore, of no particular meaning, he walked off by himself, leaving his poor niece to sit and cry over what had passed, with very wretched feelings.

Her mind was all disorder. The past, present, future, every thing was terrible. But her uncle's

anger gave her the severest pain of all. Selfish and ungrateful! to have appeared so to him! She was miserable for ever. She had no one to take her part, to counsel, or speak for her. Her only friend
5 was absent. He might have softened his father; but all, perhaps all, would think her selfish and ungrateful. She might have to endure the reproach again and again; she might hear it, or see it, or know it to exist for ever in every connection about
10 her. She could not but feel some resentment against Mr. Crawford; yet, if he really loved her, and were unhappy too!—it was all wretchedness together.

In about a quarter of an hour her uncle returned; she was almost ready to faint at the sight of him.
15 He spoke calmly, however, without austerity, without reproach, and she revived a little. There was comfort too in his words, as well as his manner, for he began with, "Mr. Crawford is gone; he has just left me. I need not repeat what has passed. I do
20 not want to add to any thing you may now be feeling, by an account of what he has felt. Suffice it, that he has behaved in the most gentleman-like and generous manner; and has confirmed me in a most favourable opinion of his understanding, heart, and
25 temper. Upon my representation of what you were suffering, he immediately, and with the greatest delicacy, ceased to urge to see you for the present."

Here Fanny, who had looked up, looked down again. "Of course," continued her uncle, "it cannot
30 be supposed but that he should request to speak with you alone, be it only for five minutes; a request too natural, a claim too just to be denied. But there

is no time fixed, perhaps to-morrow, or whenever your spirits are composed enough. For the present you have only to tranquillize yourself. Check these tears; they do but exhaust you. If, as I am willing to suppose, you wish to shew me any observance,⁵ you will not give way to these emotions, but endeavour to reason yourself into a stronger frame of mind. I advise you to go out, the air will do you good; go out for an hour on the gravel, you will have the shrubbery to yourself, and will be the better for air and exercise. And, Fanny, (turning back again for a moment) I shall make no mention below of what has passed; I shall not even tell your aunt Bertram. There is no occasion for spreading the disappointment; say nothing about it yourself.”¹⁵

This was an order to be most joyfully obeyed; this was an act of kindness which Fanny felt at her heart. To be spared from her aunt Norris's interminable reproaches!—he left her in a glow of gratitude. Any thing might be bearable rather than such²⁰ reproaches. Even to see Mr. Crawford would be less overpowering.

She walked out directly as her uncle recommended, and followed his advice throughout, as far as she could; did check her tears, did earnestly try to compose her spirits, and strengthen her mind.²⁵ She wished to prove to him that she did desire his comfort, and sought to regain his favour; and he had given her another strong motive for exertion, in keeping the whole affair from the knowledge of³⁰ her aunts. Not to excite suspicion by her look or manner was now an object worth attaining; and she

felt equal to almost any thing that might save her from her aunt Norris.

She was struck, quite struck, when on returning from her walk, and going into the east room again, 5 the first thing which caught her eye was a fire lighted and burning. A fire! it seemed too much; just at that time to be giving her such an indulgence, was exciting even painful gratitude. She wondered that Sir Thomas could have leisure to 10 think of such a trifle again; but she soon found, from the voluntary information of the housemaid, who came in to attend it, that so it was to be every day. Sir Thomas had given orders for it.

“I must be a brute indeed, if I can be really un- 15 grateful!” said she in soliloquy; “Heaven defend me from being ungrateful!”

She saw nothing more of her uncle, nor of her aunt Norris, till they met at dinner. Her uncle’s behaviour to her was then as nearly as possible 20 what it had been before; she was sure he did not mean there should be any change, and that it was only her own conscience that could fancy any; but her aunt was soon quarrelling with her: and when she found how much and how unpleasantly her hav- 25 ing only walked out without her aunt’s knowledge could be dwelt on, she felt all the reason she had to bless the kindness which saved her from the same spirit of reproach, exerted on a more momentous subject.

30 “If I had known you were going out, I should have got you just to go as far as my house with some orders for Nanny,” said she, “which I have

since, to my very great inconvenience, been obliged to go and carry myself. I could very ill spare the time, and you might have saved me the trouble, if you would only have been so good as to let us know you were going out. It would have made no dif-⁵ference to you, I suppose, whether you had walked in the shrubbery, or gone to my house."

"I recommended the shrubbery to Fanny as the driest place," said Sir Thomas.

"Oh!" said Mrs. Norris with a moment's check,¹⁰ "that was very kind of you, Sir Thomas; but you do not know how dry the path is to my house. Fanny would have had quite as good a walk there, I assure you; with the advantage of being of some use, and obliging her aunt: it is all her fault. If¹⁵ she would but have let us know she was going out—but there is a something about Fanny, I have often observed it before,—she likes to go her own way to work; she does not like to be dictated to; she takes her own independent walk whenever she²⁰ can; she certainly has a little spirit of secrecy, and independence, and nonsense, about her, which I would advise her to get the better of."

As a general reflection on Fanny, Sir Thomas. thought nothing could be more unjust, though he²⁵ had been so lately expressing the same sentiments himself, and he tried to turn the conversation; tried repeatedly before he could succeed; for Mrs. Norris had not discernment enough to perceive, either now, or at any other time, to what degree he thought³⁰ well of his niece, or how very far he was from wishing to have his own children's merits set off by the

depreciation of hers. She was talking *at* Fanny, and resenting this private walk half through the dinner.

It was over, however, at last; and the evening
5 set in with more composure to Fanny, and more cheerfulness of spirits than she could have hoped for after so stormy a morning; but she trusted, in the first place, that she had done right, that her judgment had not misled her; for the purity of her
10 intentions she could answer; and she was willing to hope, secondly, that her uncle's displeasure was abating, and would abate farther as he considered the matter with more impartiality, and felt, as a good man must feel, how wretched, and how unpardonable, how hopeless and how wicked it was, to
15 marry without affection.

When the meeting with which she was threatened for the morrow was past, she could not but flatter herself that the subject would be finally concluded,
20 and Mr. Crawford once gone from Mansfield, that every thing would soon be as if no such subject had existed. She would not, could not believe, that Mr. Crawford's affection for her could distress him long; his mind was not of that sort. London would
25 soon bring its cure. In London he would soon learn to wonder at his infatuation, and be thankful for the right reason in her, which had saved him from its evil consequences.

While Fanny's mind was engaged in these sort of
30 hopes, her uncle was soon after tea called out of the room; an occurrence too common to strike her, and she thought nothing of it till the butler re-appeared

ten minutes afterwards, and advancing decidedly towards herself, said, "Sir Thomas wishes to speak with you, Ma'am, in his own room." Then it occurred to her what might be going on; a suspicion rushed over her mind which drove the colour from her cheeks; but instantly rising, she was preparing to obey, when Mrs. Norris called out, "Stay, stay, Fanny! what are you about?—where are you going?—don't be in such a hurry. Depend upon it, it is not you that are wanted; depend upon it it is me; (looking at the butler) but you are so very eager to put yourself forward. What should Sir Thomas want you for? It is me, Baddeley, you mean; I am coming this moment. You mean me, Baddeley, I am sure; Sir Thomas wants me, not Miss Price." 5 10 15

But Baddeley was stout. "No, Ma'am, it is Miss Price, I am certain of its being Miss Price." And there was a half smile with the words which meant, "I do not think *you* would answer the purpose at all." 20

Mrs. Norris, much discontented, was obliged to compose herself to work again; and Fanny, walking off in agitating consciousness, found herself, as she anticipated, in another minute alone with Mr. Crawford. 25

CHAPTER II

THE conference was neither so short, nor so conclusive, as the lady had designed. The gentleman was not so easily satisfied. He had all the disposition to persevere that Sir Thomas could wish him. 5 He had vanity, which strongly inclined him, in the first place, to think she did love him, though she might not know it herself; and which, secondly, when constrained at last to admit that she did know her own present feelings, convinced him that he 10 should be able in time to make those feelings what he wished.

He was in love, very much in love; and it was a love which, operating on an active, sanguine spirit, of more warmth than delicacy, made her affection 15 appear of greater consequence, because it was withheld, and determined him to have the glory, as well as the felicity, of forcing her to love him.

He would not despair: he would not desist. He had every well-grounded reason for solid attachment; he knew her to have all the worth that could 20 justify the warmest hopes of lasting happiness with her; her conduct at this very time, by speaking the disinterestedness and delicacy of her character (qualities which he believed most rare indeed), was of 25 a sort to heighten all his wishes, and confirm all his resolutions. He knew not that he had a pre-engaged heart to attack. Of *that*, he had no suspicion. He

considered her rather as one who had never thought on the subject enough to be in danger; who had been guarded by youth, a youth of mind as lovely as of person; whose modesty had prevented her from understanding his attentions, and who was still over-⁵powered by the suddenness of addresses so wholly unexpected, and the novelty of a situation which her fancy had never taken into account.

Must it not follow of course, that when he was understood, he should succeed?—he believed it fully.¹⁰ Love such as his, in a man like himself, must with perseverance secure a return, and at no great distance; and he had so much delight in the idea of obliging her to love him in a very short time, that her not loving him now was scarcely regretted. A¹⁵ little difficulty to be overcome, was no evil to Henry Crawford. He rather derived spirits from it. He had been apt to gain hearts too easily. His situation was new and animating.

To Fanny, however, who had known too much²⁰ opposition all her life, to find any charm in it, all this was unintelligible. She found that he did mean to persevere; but how he could, after such language from her as she felt herself obliged to use, was not to be understood. She told him, that she did not²⁵ love him, could not love him, was sure she never should love him: that such a change was quite impossible, that the subject was most painful to her, that she must intreat him never to mention it again, to allow her to leave him at once, and let it be con-³⁰sidered as concluded for ever. And when farther pressed, had added, that in her opinion their disposi-

tions were so totally dissimilar, as to make mutual affection incompatible; and that they were unfitted for each other by nature, education, and habit. All this she had said, and with the earnestness of sincerity; yet this was not enough, for he immediately denied there being anything uncongenial in their characters, or anything unfriendly in their situations; and positively declared, that he would still love, and still hope!

10 Fanny knew her own meaning, but was no judge of her own manner. Her manner was incurably gentle, and she was not aware how much it concealed the sternness of her purpose. Her diffidence, gratitude, and softness, made every expression of indifference seem almost an effort of self-denial; seem at
15 least, to be giving nearly as much pain to herself as to him. Mr. Crawford was no longer the Mr. Crawford who, as the clandestine, insidious, treacherous admirer of Maria Bertram, had been her abhorrence, whom she had hated to see or to speak to,
20 in whom she could believe no good quality to exist, and whose power, even of being agreeable, she had barely acknowledged. He was now the Mr. Crawford who was addressing herself with ardent, disinterested, love; whose feelings were apparently become all that was honourable and upright, whose
25 views of happiness were all fixed on a marriage of attachment; who was pouring out his sense of her merits, describing and describing again his affection, proving, as far as words could prove it, and in the
30 language, tone, and spirit of a man of talent too, that he sought her for her gentleness, and her good-

ness ; and to complete the whole, he was now the Mr. Crawford who had procured William's promotion !

Here was a change ! and here were claims which could not but operate. She might have disdained him in all the dignity of angry virtue, in the grounds of Sotherton, or the theatre at Mansfield Park ; but he approached her now with rights that demanded different treatment. She must be courteous, and she must be compassionate. She must have a sensation of being honoured, and whether thinking of herself or her brother, she must have a strong feeling of gratitude. The effect of the whole was a manner so pitying and agitated, and words intermingled with her refusal so expressive of obligation and concern, that to a temper of vanity and hope like Crawford's, the truth, or at least the strength of her indifference, might well be questionable ; and he was not so irrational as Fanny considered him, in the professions of persevering, assiduous, and not desponding attachment which closed the interview.

It was with reluctance that he suffered her to go, but there was no look of despair in parting to bely his words, or give her hopes of his being less unreasonable than he professed himself.

Now she was angry. Some resentment did arise at a perseverance so selfish and ungenerous. Here was again a want of delicacy and regard for others which had formerly so struck and disgusted her. Here was again a something of the same Mr. Crawford whom she had so reprobated before. How evidently was there a gross want of feeling and humanity where his own pleasure was concerned—And,

alas! how always known no principle to supply as a duty what the heart was deficient in. Had her own affections been as free—as perhaps they ought to have been—he never could have engaged them.

5 So thought Fanny in good truth and sober sadness, as she sat musing over that too great indulgence and luxury of a fire upstairs—wondering at the past and present, wondering at what was yet to come, and in a nervous agitation which made nothing clear
10 to her but the persuasion of her being never under any circumstances able to love Mr. Crawford, and the felicity of having a fire to sit over and think of it.

Sir Thomas was obliged or obliged himself to wait
15 till the morrow for a knowledge of what had passed between the young people. He then saw Mr. Crawford, and received his account.—The first feeling was disappointment; he had hoped better things; he had thought that an hour's intreaty from a young man
20 like Crawford could not have worked so little change on a gentle tempered girl like Fanny; but there was speedy comfort in the determined views and sanguine perseverance of the lover; and when seeing such confidence of success in the principal, Sir
25 Thomas was soon able to depend on it himself.

Nothing was omitted, on his side, of civility, compliment, or kindness, that might assist the plan. Mr. Crawford's steadiness was honoured, and Fanny was praised, and the connection was still the most desirable in the world. At Mansfield Park Mr. Crawford
30 would always be welcome; he had only to consult his own judgment and feelings as to the fre-

quency of his visits, at present or in future. In all his niece's family and friends there could be but one opinion, one wish on the subject; the influence of all who loved her must incline one way.

Every thing was said that could encourage, every⁵ encouragement received with grateful joy, and the gentlemen parted the best of friends.

Satisfied that the cause was now on a footing the most proper and hopeful, Sir Thomas resolved to abstain from all farther importunity with his niece,¹⁰ and to shew no open interference. Upon her disposition he believed kindness might be the best way of working. Intreaty should be from one quarter only. The forbearance of her family on a point, respecting which she could be in no doubt of their¹⁵ wishes, might be their surest means of forwarding it. Accordingly, on this principle Sir Thomas took the first opportunity of saying to her, with a mild gravity, intended to be overcoming, "Well, Fanny, I have seen Mr. Crawford again, and learn from him²⁰ exactly how matters stand between you. He is a most extraordinary young man, and whatever be the event, you must feel that you have created an attachment of no common character; though, young as you are, and little acquainted with the transient, varying,²⁵ unsteady nature of love, as it generally exists, you cannot be struck as I am with all that is wonderful in a perseverance of this sort, against discouragement. With him, it is entirely a matter of feeling; he claims no merit in it, perhaps is entitled to none.³⁰ Yet, having chosen so well, his constancy has a respectable stamp. Had his choice been less unexcep-

tionable, I should have condemned his persevering."

"Indeed, Sir," said Fanny, "I am very sorry that Mr. Crawford should continue to—I know that it is paying me a very great compliment, and I feel
5 most undeservedly honoured, but I am so perfectly convinced, and I have told him so, that it never will be in my power—"

"My dear," interrupted Sir Thomas, "there is no occasion for this. Your feelings are as well known
10 to me, as my wishes and regrets must be to you. There is nothing more to be said or done. From this hour, the subject is never to be revived between us. You will have nothing to fear, or to be agitated about. You cannot suppose me capable of trying
15 to persuade you to marry against your inclinations. Your happiness and advantage are all that I have in view, and nothing is required of you but to bear with Mr. Crawford's endeavours to convince you, that they may not be incompatible with his. He proceeds at his own risk. You are on safe ground. I
20 have engaged for your seeing him whenever he calls, as you might have done, had nothing of this sort occurred. You will see him with the rest of us, in the same manner, and as much as you can,
25 dismissing the recollection of every thing unpleasant. He leaves Northamptonshire so soon, that even this slight sacrifice cannot be often demanded. The future must be very uncertain. And now, my dear Fanny, this subject is closed between us."

30 The promised departure was all that Fanny could think of with much satisfaction. Her uncle's kind expressions, however, and forbearing manner, were

sensibly felt; and when she considered how much of the truth was unknown to him, she believed she had no right to wonder at the line of conduct he pursued. He who had married a daughter to Mr. Rushworth. Romantic delicacy was certainly not to be expected from him. She must do her duty, and trust that time might make her duty easier than it now was. 5

She could not, though only eighteen, suppose Mr. Crawford's attachment would hold out for ever; she could not but imagine that steady, unceasing discouragement from herself would put an end to it in time. How much time she might, in her own fancy, allot for its dominion, is another concern. It would not be fair to enquire into a young lady's exact estimate of her own perfections. 15

In spite of his intended silence, Sir Thomas found himself once more obliged to mention the subject to his niece, to prepare her briefly for its being imparted to her aunts; a measure which he would still have avoided, if possible, but which became necessary from the totally opposite feelings of Mr. Crawford, as to any secrecy of proceeding. He had no idea of concealment. It was all known at the parsonage, where he loved to talk over the future with both his sisters; and it would be rather gratifying to him to have enlightened witnesses of the progress of his success. When Sir Thomas understood this, he felt the necessity of making his own wife and sister-in-law acquainted with the business without delay; though on Fanny's account, he almost dreaded the effect of the communication to Mrs. 20 25 30

Norris as much as Fanny herself. He deprecated her mistaken, but well-meaning zeal. Sir Thomas, indeed, was, by this time, not very far from classing Mrs. Norris as one of those well-meaning people,
5 who are always doing mistaken and very disagreeable things.

Mrs. Norris, however, relieved him. He pressed for the strictest forbearance and silence towards their niece; she not only promised, but did observe it.
10 She only looked her increased ill-will. Angry she was, bitterly angry; but she was more angry with Fanny for having received such an offer, than for refusing it. It was an injury and affront to Julia, who ought to have been Mr. Crawford's choice; and,
15 independently of that, she disliked Fanny, because she had neglected her; and she would have grudged such an elevation to one whom she had been always trying to depress.

Sir Thomas gave her more credit for discretion
20 on the occasion than she deserved; and Fanny could have blessed her for allowing her only to see her displeasure, and not to hear it.

Lady Bertram took it differently. She had been a beauty, and a prosperous beauty, all her life; and
25 beauty and wealth were all that excited her respect. To know Fanny to be sought in marriage by a man of fortune, raised her, therefore, very much in her opinion. By convincing her that Fanny *was* very pretty, which she had been doubting about before,
30 and that she would be advantageously married, it made her feel a sort of credit in calling her niece.

"Well, Fanny," said she, as soon as they were

alone together afterwards,—and she really had known something like impatience, to be alone with her, and her countenance, as she spoke, had extraordinary animation—“Well, Fanny, I have had a very agreeable surprise this morning. I must just speak of it *once*, I told Sir Thomas I must *once*, and then I shall have done. I give you joy, my dear niece.”—And looking at her complacently, she added “Humph—We certainly are a handsome family.”

Fanny coloured, and doubted at first what to say; when hoping to assail her on her vulnerable side, she presently answered—

“My dear aunt, *you* cannot wish me to do differently from what I have done, I am sure. *You* cannot wish me to marry; for you would miss me, should not you?—Yes, I am sure you would miss me too much for that.”

“No, my dear, I should not think of missing you, when such an offer as this comes in your way. I could do very well without you, if you were married to a man of such good estate as Mr. Crawford. And you must be aware, Fanny, that it is every young woman’s duty to accept such a very unexceptionable offer as this.”

This was almost the only rule of conduct, the only piece of advice, which Fanny had ever received from her aunt in the course of eight years and a half.—It silenced her. She felt how unprofitable contention would be. If her aunt’s feelings were against her, nothing could be hoped from attacking her understanding. Lady Bertram was quite talkative.

“I will tell you what, Fanny,” said she.—“I am sure

he fell in love with you at the ball, I am sure the mischief was done that evening. You did look remarkably well. Every body said so. Sir Thomas said so. And you know you had Chapman to help
5 you dress. I am very glad I sent Chapman to you. I shall tell Sir Thomas that I am sure it was done that evening.”—And still pursuing the same cheerful thoughts, she soon afterwards added,—“And I will tell you what, Fanny—which is more than I did for
10 Maria—the next time pug has a litter you shall have a puppy.”

CHAPTER III

EDMUND had great things to hear on his return. Many surprises were awaiting him. The first that occurred was not least in interest,—the appearance of Henry Crawford and his sister walking together through the village, as he rode into it.—He had concluded,—he had meant them to be far distant. His absence had been extended beyond a fortnight purposely to avoid Miss Crawford. He was returning to Mansfield with spirits ready to feed on melancholy remembrances, and tender associations, when her own fair self was before him, leaning on her brother's arm; and he found himself receiving a welcome, unquestionably friendly, from the woman whom, two moments before, he had been thinking of as seventy miles off, and as farther, much farther from him in inclination than any distance could express.

Her reception of him was of a sort which he could not have hoped for, had he expected to see her. Coming as he did from such a purport fulfilled as had taken him away, he would have expected any thing rather than a look of satisfaction, and words of simple, pleasant meaning. It was enough to set his heart in a glow, and to bring him home in the properest state for feeling the full value of the other joyful surprises at hand.

William's promotion, with all its particulars, he was

soon master of; and with such a secret provision of comfort within his own breast to help the joy, he found in it a source of most gratifying sensation, and unvarying cheerfulness all dinner-time.

5 After dinner, when he and his father were alone, he had Fanny's history; and then all the great events of the last fortnight, and the present situation of matters at Mansfield were known to him.

Fanny suspected what was going on. They sat so
10 much longer than usual in the dining parlour, that she was sure they must be talking of her; and when tea at last brought them away, and she was to be seen by Edmund again, she felt dreadfully guilty. He came to her, sat down by her, took her
15 hand, and pressed it kindly; and at that moment she thought that, but for the occupation and the scene which the tea things afforded, she must have betrayed her emotion in some unpardonable excess.

He was not intending, however, by such action,
20 to be conveying to her that unqualified approbation and encouragement which her hopes drew from it. It was designed only to express his participation in all that interested her, and to tell her that he had been hearing what quickened every feeling of affection.
25 He was, in fact, entirely on his father's side of the question. His surprise was not so great as his father's, at her refusing Crawford, because, so far from supposing her to consider him with anything like a preference, he had always believed it
30 to be rather the reverse, and could imagine her to be taken perfectly unprepared, but Sir Thomas could not regard the connection as more desirable than

he did. It had every recommendation to him, and while honouring her for what she had done under the influence of her present indifference, honouring her in rather stronger terms than Sir Thomas could quite echo, he was most earnest in hoping, and sanguine in believing, that it would be a match at last, and that, united by mutual affection, it would appear that their dispositions were as exactly fitted to make them blessed in each other, as he was now beginning seriously to consider them. Crawford had been too precipitate. He had not given her time to attach herself. He had begun at the wrong end. With such powers as his, however, and such a disposition as hers, Edmund trusted that every thing would work out a happy conclusion. Meanwhile, he saw enough of Fanny's embarrassment to make him scrupulously guard against exciting it a second time, by any word, or look, or movement.

Crawford called the next day, and on the score of Edmund's return, Sir Thomas felt himself more than licensed to ask him to stay dinner; it was really a necessary compliment. He staid of course, and Edmund had then ample opportunity for observing how he sped with Fanny, and what degree of immediate encouragement for him might be extracted from her manners; and it was so little, so very very little, (every chance, every possibility of it, resting upon her embarrassment only, if there was not hope in her confusion, there was hope in nothing else) that he was almost ready to wonder at his friend's perseverance.—Fanny was worth it all; he held her to be worth every effort of patience, every exertion

of mind—but he did not think he could have gone on himself with any woman breathing, without something more to warm his courage than his eyes could discern in hers. He was very willing to hope that
5 Crawford saw clearer; and this was the most comfortable conclusion for his friend that he could come to from all that he observed to pass before, and at, and after dinner.

In the evening a few circumstances occurred which
10 he thought more promising. When he and Crawford walked into the drawing-room, his mother and Fanny were sitting as intently and silently at work as if there were nothing else to care for. Edmund could not help noticing their apparently deep tranquillity.
15 “We have not been so silent all the time,” replied his mother. “Fanny has been reading to me, and only put the book down upon hearing you coming.”—And sure enough there was a book on the table which had the air of being very recently closed, a
20 volume of Shakespeare.—“She often reads to me out of those books; and she was in the middle of a very fine speech of that man’s—What’s his name, Fanny?—when we heard your footsteps.”

Crawford took the volume. “Let me have the
25 pleasure of finishing that speech to your ladyship,” said he. “I shall find it immediately.” And by carefully giving way to the inclination of the leaves, he did find it, or within a page or two, quite near enough to satisfy Lady Bertram, who assured him, as soon
30 as he mentioned the name of Cardinal Wolsey, that he had got the very speech.—Not a look, or an offer of help had Fanny given; not a syllable for or

against. All her attention was for her work. She seemed determined to be interested by nothing else. But taste was too strong in her. She could not abstract her mind five minutes; she was forced to listen; his reading was capital, and her pleasure in good reading extreme. To *good* reading, however, she had been long used; her uncle read well—her cousins all—Edmund very well; but in Mr. Crawford's reading there was a variety of excellence beyond what she had ever met with. The King, the Queen, Buckingham, Wolsey, Cromwell, all were given in turn; for with the happiest knack, the happiest power of jumping and guessing, he could always light, at will, on the best scene, or the best speeches of each; and whether it were dignity or pride, or tenderness or remorse, or whatever were to be expressed, he could do it with equal beauty.—It was truly dramatic.—His acting had first taught Fanny what pleasure a play might give, and his reading brought all his acting before her again; nay, perhaps with greater enjoyment, for it came unexpectedly, and with no such drawback as she had been used to suffer in seeing him on the stage with Miss Bertram.

Edmund watched the progress of her attention, and was amused and gratified by seeing how she gradually slackened in the needle-work, which, at the beginning, seemed to occupy her totally; how it fell from her hand while she sat motionless over it—and at last, how the eyes which had appeared so studiously to avoid him throughout the day, were turned and fixed on Crawford, fixed on him for

minutes, fixed on him in short till the attraction drew Crawford's upon her, and the book was closed, and the charm was broken. Then, she was shrinking again into herself, and blushing and working as
5 hard as ever; but it had been enough to give Edmund encouragement for his friend, and as he cordially thanked him, he hoped to be expressing Fanny's secret feelings too.

"That play must be a favourite with you," said
10 he; "You read as if you knew it well."

"It will be a favourite I believe from this hour," replied Crawford; "—but I do not think I have had a volume of Shakespeare in my hand before, since I was fifteen.—I once saw Henry the 8th acted.—Or I
15 have heard of it from somebody who did—I am not certain which. But Shakespeare one gets acquainted with without knowing how. It is a part of an Englishman's constitution. His thoughts and beauties are so spread abroad that one touches them every
20 where, one is intimate with him by instinct.—No man of any brain can open at a good part of one of his plays, without falling into the flow of his meaning immediately."

"No doubt, one is familiar with Shakespeare in a
25 degree," said Edmund, "from one's earliest years. His celebrated passages are quoted by every body; they are in half the books we open, and we all talk Shakespeare, use his similies, and describe with his descriptions; but this is totally distinct from giving
30 his sense as you gave it. To know him in bits and scraps, is common enough; to know him pretty thoroughly, is, perhaps, not uncommon; but to read him

well aloud, is no every-day talent."

"Sir, you do me honour;" was Crawford's answer, with a bow of mock gravity.

Both gentlemen had a glance at Fanny, to see if a word of accordant praise could be extorted from her; yet both feeling that it could not be. Her praise had been given in her attention; *that* must content them.

Lady Bertram's admiration was expressed, and strongly too. "It was really like being at a play," said she.—"I wish Sir Thomas had been here."

Crawford was excessively pleased.—If Lady Bertram, with all her incompetency and languor, could feel this, the inference of what her niece, alive and enlightened as she was, must feel, was elevating.

"You have a great turn for acting, I am sure, Mr. Crawford," said her Ladyship soon afterwards—"and I will tell you what, I think you will have a theatre, some time or other, at your house in Norfolk. I mean when you are settled there. I do, indeed. I think you will fit up a theatre at your house in Norfolk."

"Do you, Ma'am?" cried he with quickness. "No, no, that will never be. Your Ladyship is quite mistaken. No theatre at Everingham! Oh! no."—And he looked at Fanny with an expressive smile, which evidently meant, "that lady will never allow a theatre at Everingham."

Edmund saw it all, and saw Fanny so determined *not* to see it, as to make it clear that the voice was enough to convey the full meaning of the protestation; and such a quick consciousness of compliment, such a ready comprehension of a hint, he thought,

was rather favourable than not.

The subject of reading aloud was farther discussed. The two young men were the only talkers, but they, standing by the fire, talked over the too common
5 neglect of the qualification, the total inattention to it, in the ordinary school-system for boys, the consequently natural—yet in some instances almost unnatural degree of ignorance and uncouthness of men, of sensible and well-informed men, when suddenly
10 called to the necessity of reading aloud, which had fallen within their notice, giving instances of blunders, and failures with their secondary causes, the want of management of the voice, of proper modulation and emphasis, of foresight and judgment, all
15 proceeding from the first cause, want of early attention and habit; and Fanny was listening again with great entertainment.

“Even in my profession”—said Edmund with a smile—“how little the art of reading has been studied!
20 how little a clear manner, and good delivery, have been attended to! I speak rather of the past, however, than the present.—There is now a spirit of improvement abroad; but among those who were ordained twenty, thirty, forty years ago, the larger
25 number, to judge by their performance, must have thought reading was reading, and preaching was preaching. It is different now. The subject is more justly considered. It is felt that distinctness and energy may have weight in recommending the most
30 solid truths; and, besides, there is more general observation and taste, a more critical knowledge diffused, than formerly; in every congregation, there

is a larger proportion who know a little of the matter, and who can judge and criticize."

Edmund had already gone through the service once since his ordination; and upon this being understood, he had a variety of questions from Crawford as to his feelings and success; questions which being made—though with the vivacity of friendly interest and quick taste—without any touch of that spirit of banter or air of levity which Edmund knew to be most offensive to Fanny, he had true pleasure in satisfying; and when Crawford proceeded to ask his opinion and give his own as to the properest manner in which particular passages in the service should be delivered, shewing it to be a subject on which he had thought before, and thought with judgment, Edmund was still more and more pleased. This would be the way to Fanny's heart. She was not to be won by all that gallantry and wit, and good nature together, could do; or at least, she would not be won by them nearly so soon, without the assistance of sentiment and feeling, and seriousness on serious subjects.

"Our liturgy," observed Crawford, "has beauties, which not even a careless, slovenly style of reading can destroy; but it has also redundancies and repetitions, which require good reading not to be felt. For myself, at least, I must confess being not always so attentive as I ought to be—(here was a glance at Fanny) that nineteen times out of twenty I am thinking how such a prayer ought to be read, and longing to have it to read myself—Did you speak?" stepping eagerly to Fanny, and addressing her in a

softened voice ; and upon her saying, "No," he added, "Are you sure you did not speak ? I saw your lips move. I fancied you might be going to tell me I ought to be more attentive, and not *allow* my thoughts
5 to wander. Are not you going to tell me so ?"

"No, indeed, you know your duty too well for me to—even supposing —"

She stopt, felt herself getting into a puzzle, and could not be prevailed on to add another word, not
10 by dint of several minutes of supplication and waiting. He then returned to his former station, and went on as if there had been no such tender interruption.

"A sermon, well delivered, is more uncommon even
15 than prayers well read. A sermon, good in itself, is no rare thing. It is more difficult to speak well than to compose well ; that is, the rules and trick of composition are oftener an object of study. A thoroughly good sermon, thoroughly well delivered,
20 is a capital gratification. I can never hear such a one without the greatest admiration and respect, and more than half a mind to take orders and preach myself. There is something in the eloquence of the pulpit, when it is really eloquence, which
25 is entitled to the highest praise and honour. The preacher who can touch and affect such an heterogeneous mass of hearers, on subjects limited, and long worn thread-bare in all common hands ; who can say any thing new or striking, any thing that
30 rouses the attention, without offending the taste, or wearing out the feelings of his hearers, is a man whom one could not (in his public capacity) honour

enough. I should like to be such a man."

Edmund laughed.

"I should indeed. I never listened to a distinguished preacher in my life, without a sort of envy. But then, I must have a London audience. I could not preach, but to the educated; to those who were capable of estimating my composition. And, I do not know that I should be fond of preaching often; now and then, perhaps, once or twice in the spring, after being anxiously expected for half a dozen Sundays together; but not for a constancy; it would not do for a constancy."

Here Fanny, who could not but listen, involuntarily shook her head, and Crawford was instantly by her side again, intreating to know her meaning; and as Edmund perceived, by his drawing in a chair, and sitting down close by her, that it was to be a very thorough attack, that looks and undertones were to be well tried, he sank as quietly as possible into a corner, turned his back, and took up a newspaper, very sincerely wishing that dear little Fanny might be persuaded into explaining away that shake of the head to the satisfaction of her ardent lover; and as earnestly trying to bury every sound of the business from himself in murmurs of his own, over the various advertisements of "a most desirable estate in South Wales"—"To Parents and Guardians"—and a "Capital season'd Hunter."

Fanny, meanwhile, vexed with herself for not having been as motionless as she was speechless, and grieved to the heart to see Edmund's arrangements, was trying, by every thing in the power of her

modest gentle nature, to repulse Mr. Crawford, and avoid both his looks and enquiries; and he unrepealable was persisting in both.

“What did that shake of the head mean?” said he.

5 “What was it meant to express? Disapprobation, I fear. But of what?—What had I been saying to displease you?—Did you think me speaking im-
properly?—lightly, irreverently on the subject?—
Only tell me if I was. Only tell me if I was wrong.
10 I want to be set right. Nay, nay, I entreat you; for one moment put down your work. What did that shake of the head mean?”

In vain was her “Pray, Sir, don’t—pray, Mr. Crawford,” repeated twice over; and in vain did she try
15 to move away—In the same low eager voice, and the same close neighbourhood, he went on, re-urging the same questions as before. She grew more agitated and displeased.

“How can you, Sir? You quite astonish me—I
20 wonder how you can”—

“Do I astonish you?”—said he. “Do you wonder? Is there any thing in my present intreaty that you do not understand? I will explain to you instantly
25 all that makes me urge you in this manner, all that gives me an interest in what you look and do, and excites my present curiosity. I will not leave you to wonder long.”

In spite of herself, she could not help half a smile, but she said nothing.

30 “You shook your head at my acknowledging that I should not like to engage in the duties of a clergyman always, for a constancy. Yes, that was the

word. Constancy, I am not afraid of the word. I would spell it, read it, write it with any body. I see nothing alarming in the word. Did you think I ought?"

"Perhaps, Sir," said Fanny, wearied at last into speaking—"perhaps, Sir, I thought it was a pity you did not always know yourself as well as you seemed to do at that moment."

Crawford, delighted to get her to speak at any rate, was determined to keep it up; and poor Fanny, who had hoped to silence him by such an extremity of reproof, found herself sadly mistaken, and that it was only a change from one object of curiosity and one set of words to another. He had always something to intreat the explanation of. The opportunity was too fair. None such had occurred since his seeing her in her uncle's room, none such might occur again before his leaving Mansfield. Lady Bertram's being just on the other side of the table was a trifle, for she might always be considered as only half awake, and Edmund's advertisements were still of the first utility.

"Well," said Crawford, after a course of rapid questions and reluctant answers—"I am happier than I was, because I now understand more clearly your opinion of me. You think me unsteady—easily swayed by the whim of the moment—easily tempted—easily put aside. With such an opinion, no wonder that—But we shall see.—It is not by protestations that I shall endeavour to convince you I am wronged, it is not by telling you that my affections are steady. My conduct shall speak for me—absence, distance,

time shall speak for me.—*They* shall prove, that as far as you can be deserved by any body, I do deserve you.—You are infinitely my superior in merit; all *that* I know.—You have qualities which I had not
5 before supposed to exist in such a degree in any human creature. You have some touches of the angel in you, beyond what—not merely beyond what one sees, because one never sees any thing like it—but beyond what one fancies might be. But still I
10 am not frightened. It is not by equality of merit that you can be won. That is out of the question. It is he who sees and worships your merit the strongest, who loves you most devotedly, that has the best right to a return. There I build my confidence. By that
15 right I do and will deserve you; and when once convinced that my attachment is what I declare it, I know you too well not to entertain the warmest hopes—Yes, dearest, sweetest Fanny—Nay—(seeing her draw back displeas'd) forgive me. Perhaps I
20 have as yet no right—but by what other name can I call you? Do you suppose you are ever present to my imagination under any other? No, it is 'Fanny' that I think of all day, and dream of all night.—You have given the name such reality of sweetness,
25 that nothing else can now be descriptive of you."

Fanny could hardly have kept her seat any longer, or have refrained from at least trying to get away in spite of all the too public opposition she foresaw to it, had it not been for the sound of approaching
30 relief, the very sound which she had been long watching for, and long thinking strangely delayed.

The solemn procession, headed by Baddely, of tea-

board, urn, and cake-bearers, made its appearance, and delivered her from a grievous imprisonment of body and mind. Mr. Crawford was obliged to move. She was at liberty, she was busy, she was protected.

Edmund was not sorry to be admitted again among ⁵ the number of those who might speak and hear. But though the conference had seemed full long to him, and though on looking at Fanny he saw rather a flush of vexation, he inclined to hope that so much could not have been said and listened to, without ¹⁰ some profit to the speaker.

CHAPTER IV

EDMUND had determined that it belonged entirely to Fanny to chuse whether her situation with regard to Crawford should be mentioned between them or not; and that if she did not lead the way, it should
5 never be touched on by him; but after a day or two of mutual reserve, he was induced by his father to change his mind, and try what his influence might do for his friend.

A day, and a very early day, was actually fixed
10 for the Crawfords' departure; and Sir Thomas thought it might be as well to make one more effort for the young man before he left Mansfield, that all his professions and vows of unshaken attachment might have as much hope to sustain them as possible.
15

Sir Thomas was most cordially anxious for the perfection of Mr. Crawford's character in that point. He wished him to be a model of constancy; and fancied the best means of effecting it would be by
20 not trying him too long.

Edmund was not unwilling to be persuaded to engage in the business; he wanted to know Fanny's feelings. She had been used to consult him in every difficulty, and he loved her too well to bear to be
25 denied her confidence now; he hoped to be of service to her, he thought he must be of service to her, whom else had she to open her heart to? If she

did not need counsel, she must need the comfort of communication. Fanny estranged from him, silent and reserved, was an unnatural state of things; a state which he must break through, and which he could easily learn to think she was wanting him to break through. 5

"I will speak to her, Sir; I will take the first opportunity of speaking to her alone," was the result of such thoughts as these; and upon Sir Thomas's information of her being at that very time walking alone in the shrubbery, he instantly joined her. 10

"I am come to walk with you, Fanny," said he. "Shall I?"—(drawing her arm within his,) "it is a long while since we have had a comfortable walk together." 15

She assented to it all rather by look than word. Her spirits were low.

"But, Fanny," he presently added, "in order to have a comfortable walk, something more is necessary than merely pacing this gravel together. You must talk to me. I know you have something on your mind. I know what you are thinking of. You cannot suppose me uninformed. Am I to hear of it from every body but Fanny herself?" 20

Fanny, at once agitated and dejected, replied, "If you hear of it from every body, cousin, there can be nothing for me to tell." 25

"Not of facts, perhaps; but of feelings, Fanny. No one but you can tell me them. I do not mean to press you, however. If it is not what you wish yourself, I have done. I had thought it might be a relief." 30

"I am afraid we think too differently, for me to find any relief in talking of what I feel."

"Do you suppose that we think differently? I have no idea of it. I dare say, that on a comparison of
5 our opinions, they would be found as much alike as they have been used to be: to the point—I consider Crawford's proposals as most advantageous and desirable, if you could return his affection. I consider
10 it as most natural that all your family should wish you could return it; but that as you cannot, you have done exactly as you ought in refusing him. Can there be any disagreement between us here?"

"Oh no! But I thought you blamed me. I thought you were against me. This is such a comfort."

15 "This comfort you might have had sooner, Fanny, had you sought it. But how could you possibly suppose me against you? How could you imagine me an advocate for marriage without love? Were I even careless in general on such matters, how could
20 you imagine me so where *your* happiness was at stake?"

"My uncle thought me wrong, and I knew he had been talking to you."

"As far as you have gone, Fanny, I think you perfectly right. I may be sorry, I may be surprised—
25 though hardly *that*, for you had not had time to attach yourself; but I think you perfectly right. Can it admit of a question? It is disgraceful to us if it does. You did not love him—nothing could
30 have justified your accepting him."

Fanny had not felt so comfortable for days and days.

“So far your conduct has been faultless, and they were quite mistaken who wished you to do otherwise. But the matter does not end here. Crawford’s is no common attachment; he perseveres, with the hope of creating that regard which had not been 5 created before. This, we know, must be a work of time. But (with an affectionate smile), let him succeed at last, Fanny, let him succeed at last. You have proved yourself upright and disinterested, prove yourself grateful and tender-hearted; and then 10 you will be the perfect model of a woman, which I have always believed you born for.”

“Oh! never, never, never; he never will succeed with me.” And she spoke with a warmth which quite astonished Edmund, and which she blushed at 15 the recollection of herself, when she saw his look, and heard him reply, “Never, Fanny, so very determined and positive! This is not like yourself, your rational self.”

“I mean,” she cried, sorrowfully, correcting herself, 20 “that I *think*, I never shall, as far as the future can be answered for—I think I never shall return his regard.”

“I must hope better things. I am aware, more aware than Crawford can be, that the man who 25 means to make you love him (you having due notice of his intentions), must have very up-hill work, for there are all your early attachments, and habits, in battle array; and before he can get your heart for his own use, he has to unfasten it from all the 30 holds upon things animate and inanimate, which so many years growth have confirmed, and which are

considerably tightened for the moment by the very idea of separation. I know that the apprehension of being forced to quit Mansfield will for a time be arming you against him. I wish he had not been obliged to tell you what he was trying for. I wish he had known you as well as I do, Fanny. Between us, I think we should have won you. My theoretical and his practical knowledge together, could not have failed. He should have worked upon my plans. I must hope, however, that time proving him (as I firmly believe it will), to deserve you by his steady affection, will give him his reward. I cannot suppose that you have not the *wish* to love him—the natural wish of gratitude. You must have some feeling of that sort. You must be sorry for your own indifference.”

“We are so totally unlike,” said Fanny, avoiding a direct answer, “we are so very, very different in all our inclinations and ways, that I consider it as quite impossible we should ever be tolerably happy together, even if I *could* like him. There never were two people more dissimilar. We have not one taste in common. We should be miserable.”

“You are mistaken, Fanny. The dissimilarity is not so strong. You are quite enough alike. You *have* tastes in common. You have moral and literary tastes in common. You have both warm hearts and benevolent feelings; and Fanny, who that heard him read, and saw you listen to Shakespeare the other night, will think you unfitted as companions? You forget yourself: there is a decided difference in your tempers, I allow. He is lively, you are

serious ; but so much the better ; his spirits will support yours. It is your disposition to be easily dejected, and to fancy difficulties greater than they are. His cheerfulness will counteract this. He sees difficulties no where ; and his pleasantness and gaiety 5 will be a constant support to you. Your being so far unlike, Fanny, does not in the smallest degree make against the probability of your happiness together : do not imagine it. I am myself convinced that it is rather a favourable circumstance. I am 10 perfectly persuaded that the tempers had better be unlike ; I mean unlike in the flow of the spirits, in the manners, in the inclination for much or little company, in the propensity to talk or to be silent, to be grave or to be gay. Some opposition here is, 15 I am thoroughly convinced, friendly to matrimonial happiness. I exclude extremes of course ; and a very close resemblance in all those points would be the likeliest way to produce an extreme. A counteraction, gentle and continual, is the best safeguard of 20 manners and conduct."

Full well could Fanny guess where his thoughts were now. Miss Crawford's power was all returning. He had been speaking of her cheerfully from the hour of his coming home. His avoiding her was 25 quite at an end. He had dined at the parsonage only the preceding day.

After leaving him to his happier thoughts for some minutes, Fanny feeling it due to herself, returned to Mr. Crawford, and said, "It is not merely in *temper* 30 that I consider him as totally unsuited to myself ; though in *that* respect, I think the difference be-

tween us too great, infinitely too great; his spirits often oppress me—but there is something in him which I object to still more. I must say, cousin, that I cannot approve his character. I have not
5 thought well of him from the time of the play. I then saw him behaving, as it appeared to me, so very improperly and unfeelingly, I may speak of it now because it is all over—so improperly by poor Mr. Rushworth, not seeming to care how he exposed
10 or hurt him, and paying attentions to my cousin Maria, which—in short, at the time of the play, I received an impression which will never be got over.”

“My dear Fanny,” replied Edmund, scarcely hearing her to the end, “let us not, any of us, be judged
15 by what we appeared at that period of general folly.

The time of the play, is a time which I hate to recollect. Maria was wrong, Crawford was wrong, we were all wrong together; but none so wrong as myself. Compared with me, all the rest were blameless.
20 I was playing the fool with my eyes open.”

“As a by-stander,” said Fanny, “perhaps I saw more than you did; and I do think that Mr. Rushworth was sometimes very jealous.”

“Very possibly. No wonder. Nothing could be
25 more improper than the whole business. I am shocked whenever I think that Maria could be capable of it; but if she could undertake the part, we must not be surprised at the rest.”

“Before the play, I am much mistaken, if *Julia*
30 did not think he was paying her attentions.”

“Julia!—I have heard before from some one of his being in love with Julia, but I could never see any-

thing of it. And Fanny, though I hope I do justice to my sisters' good qualities, I think it very possible that they might, one or both, be more desirous of being admired by Crawford, and might shew that desire rather more unguardedly than was perfectly 5 prudent. I can remember that they were evidently fond of his society; and with such encouragement, a man like Crawford, lively, and it may be a little unthinking, might be led on to—There could be nothing very striking, because it is clear that he had 10 no pretensions; his heart was reserved for you. And I must say, that its being for you, has raised him inconceivably in my opinion. It does him the highest honour; it shews his proper estimation of the blessing of domestic happiness, and pure attachment. 15 It proves him unspoilt by his uncle. It proves him, in short, every thing that I had been used to wish to believe him, and feared he was not."

"I am persuaded that he does not think as he ought, on serious subjects." 20

"Say rather, that he has not thought at all upon serious subjects, which I believe to be a good deal the case. How could it be otherwise, with such an education and adviser? Under the disadvantages, indeed, which both have had, is it not wonderful 25 that they should be what they are? Crawford's *feelings*, I am ready to acknowledge, have hitherto been too much his guides. Happily, those feelings have generally been good. You will supply the rest; and a most fortunate man he is to attach him- 30 self to such a creature—to a woman, who firm as a rock in her own principles, has a gentleness of char-

acter so well adapted to recommend them. He has chosen his partner, indeed, with rare felicity. He will make you happy, Fanny, I know he will make you happy; but you will make him every thing."

5 "I would not engage in such a charge," cried Fanny in a shrinking accent—"in such an office of high responsibility!"

"As usual, believing yourself unequal to anything!—fancying every thing too much for you! Well, 10 though I may not be able to persuade you into different feelings, you will be persuaded into them I trust. I confess myself sincerely anxious that you may. I have no common interest in Crawford's well doing. Next to your happiness, Fanny, his has the 15 first claim on me. You are aware of my having no common interest in Crawford."

Fanny was too well aware of it, to have anything to say; and they walked on together some fifty yards in mutual silence and abstraction. Edmund first 20 began again:—

"I was very much pleased by her manner of speaking of it yesterday, particularly pleased, because I had not depended upon her seeing every thing in so just a light. I knew she was very fond 25 of you, but yet I was afraid of her not estimating your worth to her brother, quite as it deserved, and of her regretting that he had not rather fixed on some woman of distinction, or fortune. I was afraid of the bias of those worldly maxims, which she has 30 been too much used to hear. But it was very different. She spoke of you, Fanny, just as she ought. She desires the connection as warmly as your uncle

or myself. We had a long talk about it. I should not have mentioned the subject, though very anxious to know her sentiments—but I had not been in the room five minutes, before she began, introducing it with all that openness of heart, and sweet peculiarity 5 of manner, that spirit and ingenuousness, which are so much a part of herself. Mrs. Grant laughed at her for her rapidity.”

“Was Mrs. Grant in the room, then?”

“Yes, when I reached the house I found the two 10 sisters together by themselves; and when once we had begun, we had not done with you, Fanny, till Crawford and Dr. Grant came in.”

“It is above a week since I saw Miss Crawford.”

“Yes, she laments it; yet owns it may have been 15 best. You will see her, however, before she goes. She is very angry with you, Fanny; you must be prepared for that. She calls herself very angry, but you can imagine her anger. It is the regret and disappointment of a sister, who thinks her brother 20 has a right to every thing he may wish for, at the first moment. She is hurt, as you would be for William; but she loves and esteems you with all her heart.”

“I knew she would be very angry with me.” 25

“My dearest Fanny,” cried Edmund, pressing her arm closer to him, “do not let the idea of her anger distress you. It is anger to be talked of, rather than felt. Her heart is made for love and kindness, not for resentment. I wish you could have overheard 30 her tribute of praise; I wish you could have seen her countenance, when she said that you *should* be

Henry's wife. And I observed, that she always spoke of you as 'Fanny,' which she was never used to do; and it had a sound of most sisterly cordiality."

"And Mrs. Grant, did she say—did she speak—
5 was she there all the time?"

"Yes, she was agreeing exactly with her sister. The surprise of your refusal, Fanny, seems to have been unbounded. That you could refuse such a man as Henry Crawford, seems more than they can understand. I said what I could for you; but in good
10 truth, as they stated the case—you must prove yourself to be in your senses as soon as you can, by a different conduct; nothing else will satisfy them. But this is teasing you. I have done. Do not turn
15 away from me."

"I *should* have thought," said Fanny, after a pause of recollection and exertion, "that every woman must have felt the possibility of a man's not being approved, not being loved by some one of her sex, at
20 least, let him be ever so generally agreeable. Let him have all the perfections in the world, I think it ought not to be set down as certain, that a man must be acceptable to every woman he may happen to like himself. But even supposing it is so, allowing Mr.
25 Crawford to have all the claims which his sisters think he has, how was I to be prepared to meet him with any feeling answerable to his own? He took me wholly by surprise. I had not an idea that his behaviour to me before had any meaning; and
30 surely I was not to be teaching myself to like him only because he was taking, what seemed, very idle notice of me. In my situation, it would have been

the extreme of vanity to be forming expectations on Mr. Crawford. I am sure his sisters, rating him as they do, must have thought it so, supposing he had meant nothing. How then was I to be—to be in love with him the moment he said he was with me? 5 How was I to have an attachment at his service, as soon as it was asked for? His sisters should consider me as well as him. The higher his deserts, the more improper for me ever to have thought of him. And, and—we think very differently of the 10 nature of women, if they can imagine a woman so very soon capable of returning an affection as this seems to imply.”

“My dear, dear Fanny, now I have the truth. I know this to be the truth; and most worthy of you 15 are such feelings. I had attributed them to you before. I thought I could understand you. You have now given exactly the explanation which I ventured to make for you to your friend and Mrs. Grant, and they were both better satisfied, though your warm- 20 hearted friend was still run away with a little, by the enthusiasm of her fondness for Henry. I told them, that you were of all human creatures the one, over whom habit had most power, and novelty least: and that the very circumstance of the novelty of 25 Crawford’s addresses was against him. Their being so new and so recent was all in their disfavour; that you could tolerate nothing that you were not used to; and a great deal more to the same purpose, to give them a knowledge of your character. Miss 30 Crawford made us laugh by her plans of encouragement for her brother. She meant to urge him to

persevere in the hope of being loved in time, and of having his addresses most kindly received at the end of about ten years' happy marriage."

Fanny could with difficulty give the smile that
5 was here asked for. Her feelings were all in revolt. She feared she had been doing wrong, saying too much, overacting the caution which she had been fancying necessary, in guarding against one evil, laying herself open to another, and to have Miss
10 Crawford's liveliness repeated to her at such a moment, and on such a subject, was a bitter aggravation.

Edmund saw weariness and distress in her face, and immediately resolved to forbear all farther dis-
15 cussion; and not even to mention the name of Crawford again, except as it might be connected with what *must* be agreeable to her. On this principle, he soon afterwards observed, "They go on Monday. You are sure therefore of seeing your friend either
20 to-morrow or Sunday. They really go on Monday! and I was within a trifle of being persuaded to stay at Lessingby till that very day! I had almost promised it. What a difference it might have made. Those five or six days more at Lessingby might
25 have been felt all my life."

"You were near staying there?"

"Very. I was most kindly pressed, and had nearly consented. Had I received any letter from Mans-
field, to tell me how you were all going on, I believe
30 I should certainly have stayed; but I knew nothing that had happened here for a fortnight, and felt that I had been away long enough."

“You spent your time pleasantly there.”

“Yes; that is, it was the fault of my own mind if I did not. They were all very pleasant. I doubt their finding me so. I took uneasiness with me, and there was no getting rid of it till I was in Mansfield 5 again.”

“The Miss Owens—you liked them, did not you?”

“Yes, very well. Pleasant, good-humoured, unaffected girls. But I am spoilt, Fanny, for common female society. Good-humoured, unaffected girls, 10 will not do for a man who has been used to sensible women. They are two distinct orders of being. You and Miss Crawford have made me too nice.”

Still, however, Fanny was oppressed and wearied; he saw it in her looks, it could not be talked away, 15 and attempting it no more, he led her directly with the kind authority of a privileged guardian into the house.

CHAPTER V

EDMUND now believed himself perfectly acquainted with all that Fanny could tell, or could leave to be conjectured of her sentiments, and he was satisfied. —It had been, as he before presumed, too hasty a
5 measure on Crawford's side, and time must be given to make the idea first familiar, and then agreeable to her. She must be used to the consideration of his being in love with her, and then a return of affection might not be very distant.

10 He gave this opinion as the result of the conversation, to his father; and recommended there being nothing more said to her, no farther attempts to influence or persuade; but that every thing should be left to Crawford's assiduities, and the natural
15 workings of her own mind.

Sir Thomas promised that it should be so. Edmund's account of Fanny's disposition he could believe to be just, he supposed she had all those feelings, but he must consider it as very unfortunate
20 that she *had*; for, less willing than his son to trust to the future, he could not help fearing that if such very long allowances of time and habit were necessary for her, she might not have persuaded herself into receiving his addresses properly, before the
25 young man's inclination for paying them were over. There was nothing to be done, however, but to submit quietly, and hope the best.

The promised visit from her "friend," as Edmund called Miss Crawford, was a formidable threat to Fanny, and she lived in continual terror of it. As a sister, so partial and so angry, and so little scrupulous of what she said; and in another light, so triumphant and secure, she was in every way an object of painful alarm. Her displeasure, her penetration, and her happiness were all fearful to encounter; and the dependence of having others present when they met, was Fanny's only support in looking forward to it. She absented herself as little as possible from Lady Bertram, kept away from the east room, and took no solitary walk in the shrubbery, in her caution to avoid any sudden attack.

She succeeded. She was safe in the breakfast-room, with her aunt, when Miss Crawford did come; and the first misery over, and Miss Crawford looking and speaking with much less particularity of expression than she had anticipated, Fanny began to hope there would be nothing worse to be endured than an half-hour of moderate agitation. But here she hoped too much, Miss Crawford was not the slave of opportunity. She was determined to see Fanny alone, and therefore said to her tolerably soon, in a low voice, "I must speak to you for a few minutes somewhere;" words that Fanny felt all over her, in all her pulses, and all her nerves. Denial was impossible. Her habits of ready submission, on the contrary, made her almost instantly rise and lead the way out of the room. She did it with wretched feelings, but it was inevitable.

They were no sooner in the hall than all restraint

of countenance was over on Miss Crawford's side. She immediately shook her head at Fanny with arch, yet affectionate reproach, and taking her hand, seemed hardly able to help beginning directly. She
5 said nothing, however, but, "Sad, sad girl! I do not know when I shall have done scolding you," and had discretion enough to reserve the rest till they might be secure of having four walls to themselves. Fanny naturally turned up stairs, and took her guest to the
10 apartment which was now always fit for comfortable use; opening the door, however, with a most aching heart, and feeling that she had a more distressing scene before her than ever that spot had yet witnessed. But the evil ready to burst on her, was at
15 least delayed by the sudden change in Miss Crawford's ideas; by the strong effect on her mind which the finding herself in the east room again produced.

"Ha!" she cried, with instant animation, "am I here again? The east room. Once only was I in
20 this room before!"—and after stopping to look about her, and seemingly to retrace all that had then passed, she added, "Once only before. Do you remember it? I came to rehearse. Your cousin came too; and we had a rehearsal. You were our audience
25 and prompter. A delightful rehearsal. I shall never forget it. Here we were, just in this part of the room; here was your cousin, here was I, here were the chairs.—Oh! why will such things ever pass away?"

30 Happily for her companion, she wanted no answer. Her mind was entirely self-engrossed. She was in a reverie of sweet remembrances.

“The scene we were rehearsing was so very remarkable! The subject of it so very—very—what shall I say? He was to be describing and recommending matrimony to me. I think I see him now, trying to be as demure and composed as Anhalt ought, through the two long speeches. ‘When two sympathetic hearts meet in the marriage state, matrimony may be called a happy life.’ I suppose no time can ever wear out the impression I have of his looks and voice, as he said those words. It was curious, very curious, that we should have such a scene to play! If I had the power of recalling any one week of my existence, it should be that week, that acting week. Say what you would, Fanny, it should be *that*; for I never knew such exquisite happiness in any other. His sturdy spirit to bend as it did! Oh! it was sweet beyond expression. But alas! that very evening destroyed it all. That very evening brought your most unwelcome uncle. Poor Sir Thomas, who was glad to see you? Yet, Fanny, do not imagine I would now speak disrespectfully of Sir Thomas, though I certainly did hate him for many a week. No, I do him justice now. He is just what the head of such a family should be. Nay, in sober sadness, I believe I now love you all.” And having said so, with a degree of tenderness and consciousness which Fanny had never seen in her before, and now thought only too becoming, she turned away for a moment to recover herself. “I have had a little fit since I came into this room, as you may perceive,” said she presently, with a playful smile, “but it is over now; so let us sit down and be comfortable;

for as to scolding you, Fanny, which I came fully intending to do, I have not the heart for it when it comes to the point." And embracing her very affectionately,—“Good, gentle Fanny! when I think of
5 this being the last time of seeing you; for I do not know how long—I feel it quite impossible to do any thing but love you.”

Fanny was affected. She had not foreseen anything of this, and her feelings could seldom withstand
10 the melancholy influence of the word “last.” She cried as if she had loved Miss Crawford more than she possibly could; and Miss Crawford, yet farther softened by the sight of such emotion, hung about her with fondness, and said, “I hate to leave you.
15 I shall see no one half so amiable where I am going. Who says we shall not be sisters? I know we shall. I feel that we are born to be connected; and those tears convince me that you feel it too, dear Fanny.”

Fanny roused herself, and replying only in part,
20 said, “But you are only going from one set of friends to another. You are going to a very particular friend.”

“Yes, very true. Mrs. Fraser has been my intimate friend for years. But I have not the least inclination
25 to go near her. I can think only of the friends I am leaving; my excellent sister, yourself, and the Bertrams in general. You have all so much more *heart* among you, than one finds in the world at large. You all give me a feeling of being able to
30 trust and confide in you; which, in common intercourse, one knows nothing of. I wish I had settled with Mrs. Fraser not to go to her till after Easter,

a much better time for the visit—but now I cannot put her off. And when I have done with her, I must go to her sister, Lady Stornaway, because *she* was rather my most particular friend of the two; but I have not cared much for *her* these three years.” 5

After this speech, the two girls sat many minutes silent, each thoughtful; Fanny meditating on the different sorts of friendship in the world, Mary on something of less philosophic tendency. *She* first spoke again. 10

“How perfectly I remember my resolving to look for you up stairs; and setting off to find my way to the east room, without having an idea whereabouts it was! How well I remember what I was thinking of as I came along; and my looking in and 15 seeing you here, sitting at this table at work; and then your cousin’s astonishment when he opened the door at seeing me here! To be sure, your uncle’s returning that very evening! There never was anything quite like it.” 20

Another short fit of abstraction followed—when, shaking it off, she thus attacked her companion.

“Why, Fanny, you are absolutely in a reverie! Thinking, I hope, of one who is always thinking of you. Oh! that I could transport you for a short 25 time into our circle in town, that you might understand how your power over Henry is thought of there! Oh! the envyings and heart-burnings of dozens and dozens! the wonder, the incredulity that will be felt at hearing what you have done! For 30 as to secrecy, Henry is quite the hero of an old romance, and glories in his chains. You should come

to London, to know how to estimate your conquest. If you were to see how he is courted, and how I am courted for his sake! Now I am well aware, that I shall not be half so welcome to Mrs. Fraser
5 in consequence of his situation with you. When she comes to know the truth, she will very likely wish me in Northamptonshire again; for there is a daughter of Mr. Fraser by a first wife, whom she is wild to get married, and wants Henry to take. Oh!
10 she has been trying for him to such a degree! Innocent and quiet as you sit here, you cannot have an idea of the *sensation* that you will be occasioning, of the curiosity there will be to see you, of the endless questions I shall have to answer! Poor Margaret Fraser will be at me for ever about your eyes
15 and your teeth, and how you do your hair, and who makes your shoes. I wish Margaret were married, for my poor friend's sake, for I look upon the Frasers to be about as unhappy as most other married people.
20 And yet it was a most desirable match for Janet at the time. We were all delighted. She could not do otherwise than accept him, for he was rich, and she had nothing; but he turns out ill-tempered, and *exigent*; and wants a young woman, a beautiful young
25 woman of five-and-twenty, to be as steady as himself. And my friend does not manage him well; she does not seem to know how to make the best of it. There is a spirit of irritation, which, to say nothing worse, is certainly very ill-bred. In their
30 house I shall call to mind the conjugal manners of Mansfield Parsonage with respect. Even Dr. Grant does shew a thorough confidence in my sister, and

a certain consideration for her judgment, which makes one feel there *is* attachment; but of that, I shall see nothing with the Frasers. I shall be at Mansfield for ever, Fanny. My own sister as a wife, Sir Thomas Bertram as a husband, are my standards of perfection. Poor Janet has been sadly taken in; and yet there was nothing improper on her side; she did not run into the match inconsiderately, there was no want of foresight. She took three days to consider of his proposals; and during those three days asked the advice of every body connected with her, whose opinion was worth having; and especially applied to my late dear aunt, whose knowledge of the world made her judgment very generally and deservedly looked up to by all the young people of her acquaintance; and she was decidedly in favour of Mr. Fraser. This seems as if nothing were a security for matrimonial comfort! I have not so much to say for my friend Flora, who jilted a very nice young man in the Blues, for the sake of that horrid Lord Stornaway, who has about as much sense, Fanny, as Mr. Rushworth, but much worse looking, and with a blackguard character. I *had* my doubts at the time about her being right, for he has not even the air of a gentleman, and now, I am sure, she was wrong. By the bye, Flora Ross was dying for Henry the first winter she came out. But were I to attempt to tell you of all the women whom I have known to be in love with him, I should never have done. It is you only, you, insensible Fanny, who can think of him with any thing like indifference. But are you so insensible as you pro-

fess yourself? No, no, I see you are not."

There was indeed so deep a blush over Fanny's face at that moment, as might warrant strong suspicion in a predisposed mind.

5 "Excellent creature! I will not tease you. Every thing shall take its course. But dear Fanny, you must allow that you were not so absolutely unpre-
pared to have the question asked as your cousin
fancies. It is not possible, but that you must have
10 had some thoughts on the subject, some surmises as
to what might be. You must have seen that he was
trying to please you, by every attention in his power.
Was not he devoted to you at the ball? And then
before the ball, the necklace! Oh! you received it
15 just as it was meant. You were as conscious as
heart could desire. I remember it perfectly."

"Do you mean then that your brother knew of the necklace beforehand? Oh! Miss Crawford, *that* was not fair."

20 "Knew of it! it was his own doing entirely, his own thought. I am ashamed to say, that it had never entered my head; but I was delighted to act on his proposal, for both your sakes."

"I will not say," replied Fanny, "that I was not
25 half afraid at the time, of its being so; for there was something in your look that frightened me—but not at first—I was as unsuspecting of it at first!—indeed, indeed I was. It is as true as that I sit here. And had I had an idea of it, nothing should
30 have induced me to accept the necklace. As to your brother's behaviour, certainly I was sensible of a particularity, I had been sensible of it some little

time, perhaps two or three weeks ; but then I considered it as meaning nothing, I put it down as simply being his way, and was as far from supposing as from wishing him to have any serious thoughts of me. I had not, Miss Crawford, been an inattentive observer of what was passing between him and some part of this family in the summer and autumn. I was quiet, but I was not blind. I could not but see that Mr. Crawford allowed himself in gallantries which did mean nothing.”⁵¹⁰

“Ah ! I cannot deny it. He has now and then been a sad flirt, and cared very little for the havoc he might be making in young ladies’ affections. I have often scolded him for it, but it is his only fault ; and there is this to be said, that very few¹⁵ young ladies have any affections worth caring for. And then, Fanny, the glory of fixing one who has been shot at by so many ; of having it in one’s power to pay off the debts of one’s sex ! Oh, I am sure it is not in woman’s nature to refuse such a triumph.”²⁰

Fanny shook her head. “I cannot think well of a man who sports with any woman’s feelings ; and there may often be a great deal more suffered than a stander-by can judge of.”

“I do not defend him. I leave him entirely to your mercy ; and when he has got you at Everingham, I do not care how much you lecture him. But this I will say, that his fault, the liking to make girls a little in love with him, is not half so dangerous to a wife’s happiness, as a tendency to fall in²⁵ love himself, which he has never been addicted to.³⁰ And I do seriously and truly believe that he is at-

tached to you in a way that he never was to any woman before; that he loves you with all his heart, and will love you as nearly for ever as possible. If any man ever loved a woman for ever, I think Henry
5 will do as much for you."

Fanny could not avoid a faint smile, but had nothing to say.

"I cannot imagine Henry ever to have been happier," continued Mary, presently, "than when he had
10 succeeded in getting your brother's commission."

She had made a sure push at Fanny's feelings here.

"Oh! yes. How very, very kind of him!"

"I know he must have exerted himself very much, for I know the parties he had to move. The Ad-
15 miral hates trouble, and scorns asking favours; and there are many young men's claims to be attended to in the same way, that a friendship and energy, not very determined, is easily put by. What a happy creature William must be! I wish we could see
20 him."

Poor Fanny's mind was thrown into the most distressing of all its varieties. The recollection of what had been done for William was always the most powerful disturber of every decision against Mr.
25 Crawford; and she sat thinking deeply of it till Mary, who had been first watching her complacently, and then musing on something else, suddenly called her attention, by saying, "I should like to sit talking with you here all day, but we must not forget the
30 ladies below, and so good bye, my dear, my amiable, my excellent Fanny, for though we shall nominally part in the breakfast parlour, I must take leave of

you here. And I do take leave, longing for a happy re-union, and trusting, that when we meet again, it will be under circumstances which may open our hearts to each other without any remnant or shadow of reserve.”

A very, very kind embrace, and some agitation of manner, accompanied these words.

“I shall see your cousin in town soon; he talks of being there tolerably soon; and Sir Thomas, I dare say, in the course of the spring; and your eldest cousin and the Rushworths and Julia I am sure of meeting again and again, and all but you. I have two favours to ask, Fanny; one is your correspondence. You must write to me. And the other, that you will often call on Mrs. Grant and make her amends for my being gone.”

The first, at least, of these favours Fanny would rather not have been asked; but it was impossible for her to refuse the correspondence; it was impossible for her even not to accede to it more readily than her own judgment authorised. There was no resisting so much apparent affection. Her disposition was peculiarly calculated to value a fond treatment, and from having hitherto known so little of it, she was the more overcome by Miss Crawford's. Besides, there was gratitude towards her, for having made their tête à tête so much less painful than her fears had predicted.

It was over, and she had escaped without reproaches and without detection. Her secret was still her own; and while that was the case, she thought she could resign herself to almost every thing.

In the evening there was another parting. Henry Crawford came and sat some time with them; and her spirits not being previously in the strongest state, her heart was softened for a while towards him—
5 because he really seemed to feel.—Quite unlike his usual self, he scarcely said any thing. He was evidently oppressed, and Fanny must grieve for him, though hoping she might never see him again till he were the husband of some other woman.

10 When it came to the moment of parting, he would take her hand, he would not be denied it; he said nothing, however, or nothing that she heard, and when he had left the room, she was better pleased that such a token of friendship had passed.

15 On the morrow the Crawfords were gone.

CHAPTER VI

MR. CRAWFORD gone, Sir Thomas's next object was, that he should be missed, and he entertained great hope that his niece would find a blank in the loss of those attentions which at the time she had felt, or fancied an evil. She had tasted of consequence 5 in its most flattering form; and he did hope that the loss of it, the sinking again into nothing, would awaken very wholesome regrets in her mind.—He watched her with this idea—but he could hardly tell with what success. He hardly knew whether there 10 were any difference in her spirits or not. She was always so gentle and retiring, that her emotions were beyond his discrimination. He did not understand her; he felt that he did not; and therefore applied to Edmund to tell him how she stood affected on the 15 present occasion, and whether she were more or less happy than she had been.

Edmund did not discern any symptoms of regret, and thought his father a little unreasonable in supposing the first three or four days could produce any. 20

What chiefly surprised Edmund was, that Crawford's sister, the friend and companion, who had been so much to her, should not be more visibly regretted. He wondered that Fanny spoke so seldom of *her*, and had so little voluntarily to say of her 25 concern at this separation.

Alas! it was this sister, this friend and companion,

who was now the chief bane of Fanny's comfort.—
If she could have believed Mary's future fate as un-
connected with Mansfield, as she was determined
the brother's should be, if she could have hoped her
5 return thither, to be as distant as she was much in-
clined to think his, she would have been light of
heart indeed; but the more she recollected and ob-
served, the more deeply was she convinced that every
thing was now in a fairer train for Miss Crawford's
10 marrying Edmund than it had ever been before.—
On his side, the inclination was stronger, on hers
less equivocal. His objections, the scruples of his
integrity, seemed all done away—nobody could tell
how; and the doubts and hesitations of her ambition
15 were equally got over—and equally without apparent
reason. It could only be imputed to increasing at-
tachment. His good and her bad feelings yielded to
love, and such love must unite them. He was to
go to town, as soon as some business relative to
20 Thornton Lacey were completed—perhaps, within a
fortnight, he talked of going, he loved to talk of it;
and when once with her again, Fanny could not
doubt the rest.—Her acceptance must be as certain
as his offer; and yet, there were bad feelings still
25 remaining which made the prospect of it most sor-
rowful to her, independently—she believed inde-
pendently of self.

In their very last conversation, Miss Crawford, in
spite of some amiable sensations, and much personal
30 kindness, had still been Miss Crawford, still shewn
a mind led astray and bewildered, and without any
suspicion of being so; darkened, yet fancying itself

light. She might love, but she did not deserve Edmund by any other sentiment. Fanny believed there was scarcely a second feeling in common between them; and she may be forgiven by older sages, for looking on the chance of Miss Crawford's future improvement as nearly desperate, for thinking that if Edmund's influence in this season of love, had already done so little in clearing her judgment, and regulating her notions, his worth would be finally wasted on her even in years of matrimony. 10

Experience might have hoped more for any young people, so circumstanced, and impartiality would not have denied to Miss Crawford's nature, that participation of the general nature of women, which would lead her to adopt the opinions of the man she loved 15 and respected, as her own.—But as such were Fanny's persuasions, she suffered very much from them, and could never speak of Miss Crawford without pain.

Sir Thomas, meanwhile, went on with his own hopes, and his own observations, still feeling a right, 20 by all his knowledge of human nature, to expect to see the effect of the loss of power and consequence, on his niece's spirits, and the past attentions of the lover producing a craving for their return; and he was soon afterwards able to account for his not yet 25 completely and indubitably seeing all this, by the prospect of another visitor, whose approach he could allow to be quite enough to support the spirits he was watching.—William had obtained a ten days' leave of absence to be given to Northamptonshire, 30 and was coming, the happiest of lieutenants, because the latest made, to shew his happiness and describe

his uniform.

He came; and he would have been delighted to shew his uniform there too, had not cruel custom prohibited its appearance except on duty. So the uniform remained at Portsmouth, and Edmund conjectured that before Fanny had any chance of seeing it, all its own freshness, and all the freshness of its wearer's feelings, must be worn away. It would be sunk into a badge of disgrace; for what can be more unbecoming, or more worthless, than the uniform of a lieutenant, who has been a lieutenant a year or two, and sees others made commanders before him? So reasoned Edmund, till his father made him the confident of a scheme which placed Fanny's chance of seeing the 2d lieutenant of H. M. S. Thrush, in all his glory, in another light.

This scheme was that she should accompany her brother back to Portsmouth, and spend a little time with her own family. It had occurred to Sir Thomas, in one of his dignified musings, as a right and desirable measure; but before he absolutely made up his mind, he consulted his son. Edmund considered it every way, and saw nothing but what was right. The thing was good in itself, and could not be done at a better time; and he had no doubt of it being highly agreeable to Fanny. This was enough to determine Sir Thomas; and a decisive "then so it shall be," closed that stage of the business; Sir Thomas retiring from it with some feelings of satisfaction, and views of good over and above what he had communicated to his son, for his prime motive in sending her away, had very little to do with the

propriety of her seeing her parents again, and nothing at all with any idea of making her happy. He certainly wished her to go willingly, but he as certainly wished her to be heartily sick of home before her visit ended; and that a little abstinence from the elegancies and luxuries of Mansfield Park, would bring her mind into a sober state, and incline her to a juster estimate of the value of that home of greater permanence, and equal comfort, of which she had the offer.

It was a medicinal project upon his niece's understanding, which he must consider as at present diseased. A residence of eight or nine years in the abode of wealth and plenty had a little disordered her powers of comparing and judging. Her Father's house would, in all probability, teach her the value of a good income; and he trusted that she would be the wiser and happier woman, all her life, for the experiment he had devised.

Had Fanny been at all addicted to raptures, she must have had a strong attack of them, when she first understood what was intended, when her uncle first made her the offer of visiting the parents and brothers, and sisters, from whom she had been divided, almost half her life, of returning for a couple of months to the scenes of her infancy, with William for the protector and companion of her journey; and the certainty of continuing to see William to the last hour of his remaining on land. Had she ever given way to bursts of delight, it must have been then, for she was delighted, but her happiness was of a quiet, deep, heart-swelling sort; and though never a great

talker, she was always more inclined to silence when feeling most strongly. At the moment she could only thank and accept. Afterwards, when familiarized with the visions of enjoyment so suddenly
5 opened, she could speak more largely to William and Edmund of what she felt; but still there were emotions of tenderness that could not be clothed in words—The remembrance of all her earliest pleasures, and of what she had suffered in being torn from them,
10 came over her with renewed strength, and it seemed as if to be at home again, would heal every pain that had since grown out of the separation. To be in the centre of such a circle, loved by so many, and more loved by all than she had ever been before,
15 to feel affection without fear or restraint, to feel herself the equal of those who surrounded her, to be at peace from all mention of the Crawfords, safe from every look which could be fancied a reproach on their account!—This was a prospect to be dwelt
20 on with a fondness that could be but half acknowledged.

Edmund too—to be two months from *him*, (and perhaps, she might be allowed to make her absence three) must do her good. At a distance unassailed
25 by his looks or his kindness, and safe from the perpetual irritation of knowing his heart, and striving to avoid his confidence, she should be able to reason herself into a properer state; she should be able to think of him as in London, and arranging every
30 thing there, without wretchedness.—What might have been hard to bear at Mansfield, was to become a slight evil at Portsmouth.

The only drawback was the doubt of her Aunt Bertram's being comfortable without her. She was of use to no one else; but *there* she might be missed to a degree that she did not like to think of; and that part of the arrangement was, indeed, the hardest 5 for Sir Thomas to accomplish, and what only *he* could have accomplished at all.

But he was master at Mansfield Park. When he had really resolved on any measure, he could always carry it through; and now by dint of long talking 10 on the subject, explaining and dwelling on the duty of Fanny's sometimes seeing her family, he did induce his wife to let her go; obtaining it rather from submission, however, than conviction, for Lady Bertram was convinced of very little more than that 15 Sir Thomas thought Fanny ought to go, and therefore that she must. In the calmness of her own dressing room, in the impartial flow of her own meditations, unbiassed by his bewildering statements, she could not acknowledge any necessity for Fanny's 20 ever going near a Father and Mother who had done without her so long, while she was so useful to herself. —And as to the not missing her, which under Mrs. Norris's discussion was the point attempted to be proved, she set herself very steadily against ad- 25 mitting any such thing.

Sir Thomas had appealed to her reason, conscience, and dignity. He called it a sacrifice, and demanded it of her goodness and self-command as such. But Mrs. Norris wanted to persuade her that Fanny could 30 be very well spared—(*She* being ready to give up all her own time to her as requested) and in short

could not really be wanted or missed.

“That may be, sister,”—was all Lady Bertram’s reply—“I dare say you are very right, but I am sure I shall miss her very much.”

5 The next step was to communicate with Portsmouth. Fanny wrote to offer herself; and her mother’s answer, though short, was so kind, a few simple lines expressed so natural and motherly a joy in the prospect of seeing her child again, as to
10 confirm all the daughter’s views of happiness in being with her—convincing her that she should now find a warm and affectionate friend in the “Mamma” who had certainly shewn no remarkable fondness for her formerly; but this she could easily suppose
15 to have been her own fault, or her own fancy. She had probably alienated Love by the helplessness and fretfulness of a fearful temper, or been unreasonable in wanting a larger share than any one among so many could deserve. Now, when she knew better
20 how to be useful and how to forbear, and when her mother could be no longer occupied by the incessant demands of a house full of little children, there would be leisure and inclination for every comfort, and they should soon be what mother and daughter
25 ought to be to each other.

William was almost as happy in the plan as his sister. It would be the greatest pleasure to him to have her there to the last moment before he sailed, and perhaps find her there still when he came in,
30 from his first cruise! And besides, he wanted her so very much to see the Thrush before she went out of harbour (the Thrush was certainly the finest

sloop in the service). And there were several improvements in the dock-yard, too, which he quite longed to shew her.

He did not scruple to add, that her being at home for a while would be a great advantage to every body. 5

“I do not know how it is,” said he, “but we seem to want some of your nice ways and orderliness at my father’s. The house is always in confusion. You will set things going in a better way, I am sure. You will tell my mother how it all ought to be, and 10 you will be so useful to Susan, and you will teach Betsey, and make the boys love and mind you. How right and comfortable it will all be !”

By the time Mrs. Price’s answer arrived, there remained but a very few days more to be spent at 15 Mansfield; and for part of one of those days the young travellers were in a good deal of alarm on the subject of their journey, for when the mode of it came to be talked of, and Mrs. Norris found that all her anxiety to save her Brother-in-law’s money 20 was vain, and that in spite of her wishes and hints for a less expensive conveyance of Fanny, they were to travel post, when she saw Sir Thomas actually give William notes for the purpose, she was struck with the idea of there being room for a 25 third in the carriage, and suddenly seized with a strong inclination to go with them—to go and see her poor dear sister Price. She proclaimed her thoughts. She must say that she had more than half a mind to go with the young people; it would be 30 such an indulgence to her; she had not seen her poor dear sister Price for more than twenty years;

and it would be a help to the young people in their journey to have her older head to manage for them; and she could not help thinking her poor dear sister Price would feel it very unkind of her not to come
5 by such an opportunity.

William and Fanny were horror-struck at the idea.

All the comfort of their comfortable journey would be destroyed at once. With woeful countenances they looked at each other. Their suspense lasted an
10 hour or two. No one interfered to encourage or dissuade. Mrs. Norris was left to settle the matter by herself; and it ended to the infinite joy of her nephew and niece, in the recollection that she could not possibly be spared from Mansfield Park at
15 present; that she was a great deal too necessary to Sir Thomas and Lady Bertram for her to be able to answer it to herself to leave them even for a week, and therefore must certainly sacrifice every other pleasure to that of being useful to them.

20 It had, in fact, occurred to her, that, though taken to Portsmouth for nothing, it would be hardly possible for her to avoid paying her own expenses back again. So, her poor dear sister Price was left to all the disappointment of her missing such an opportunity; and another twenty years' absence, perhaps,
25 begun.

Edmund's plans were affected by this Portsmouth journey, this absence of Fanny's. He too had a sacrifice to make to Mansfield Park, as well as his
30 aunt. He had intended, about this time, to be going to London, but he could not leave his father and mother just when every body else of most impor-

tance to their comfort, was leaving them ; and with an effort, felt but not boasted of, he delayed for a week or two longer a journey which he was looking forward to, with the hope of its fixing his happiness for ever.

He told Fanny of it. She knew so much already, that she must know every thing. It made the substance of one other confidential discourse about Miss Crawford ; and Fanny was the more affected from feeling it to be the last time in which Miss Crawford's name would ever be mentioned between them with any remains of liberty. Once afterwards, she was alluded to by him. Lady Bertram had been telling her niece in the evening to write to her soon and often, and promising to be a good correspondent herself ; and Edmund, at a convenient moment, then added, in a whisper, "And *I* shall write to you, Fanny, when I have any thing worth writing about ; any thing to say, that I think you will like to hear, and that you will not hear so soon from any other quarter." Had she doubted his meaning while she listened, the glow in his face, when she looked up at him, would have been decisive.

For this letter she must try to arm herself. That a letter from Edmund should be a subject of terror ! She began to feel that she had not yet gone through all the changes of opinion and sentiment, which the progress of time and variation of circumstances occasion in this world of changes. The vicissitudes of the human mind had not yet been exhausted by her.

Poor Fanny ! though going, as she did, willingly and eagerly, the last evening at Mansfield Park must

still be wretchedness. Her heart was completely sad at parting. She had tears for every room in the house, much more for every beloved inhabitant. She clung to her aunt, because she would miss her ; she
5 kissed the hand of her uncle with struggling sobs, because she had displeased him ; and as for Edmund, she could neither speak, nor look, nor think, when the last moment came with *him*, and it was not till it was over that she knew he was giving her the
10 affectionate farewell of a brother.

All this passed over night, for the journey was to begin very early in the morning ; and when the small, diminished party met at breakfast, William and Fanny were talked of as already advanced one
15 stage.

CHAPTER VII

THE novelty of travelling, and the happiness of being with William, soon produced their natural effect on Fanny's spirits, when Mansfield Park was fairly left behind, and by the time their first stage was ended, and they were to quit Sir Thomas's carriage, she was able to take leave of the old coachman, and send back proper messages, with cheerful looks. ⁵

Of pleasant talk between the brother and sister, there was no end. Every thing supplied an amusement to the high glee of William's mind, and he was full of frolic and joke, in the intervals of their higher-toned subjects, all of which ended, if they did not begin, in praise of the Thrush, conjectures how she would be employed, schemes for an action with some superior force, which (supposing the first lieutenant out of the way—and William was not very merciful to the first lieutenant) was to give himself the next step as soon as possible, or speculations upon prize money, which was to be generously distributed at home, with only the reservation of enough to make the little cottage comfortable, in which he and Fanny were to pass all their middle and latter life together. ¹⁵

Fanny's immediate concerns, as far as they involved Mr. Crawford, made no part of their conversation. William knew what had passed, and from ²⁵

his heart lamented that his sister's feelings should be so cold towards a man whom he must consider as the first of human characters ; but he was of an age to be all for love, and therefore unable to blame ;
5 and knowing her wish on the subject, he would not distress her by the slightest allusion.

She had reason to suppose herself not yet forgotten by Mr. Crawford.—She had heard repeatedly from his sister within the three weeks which had
10 passed since their leaving Mansfield, and in each letter there had been a few lines from himself, warm and determined like his speeches. It was a correspondence which Fanny found quite as unpleasant as she had feared. Miss Crawford's style of writing,
15 lively and affectionate, was itself an evil, independent of what she was thus forced into reading from the brother's pen, for Edmund would never rest till she had read the chief of the letter to him, and then she had to listen to his admiration of her language,
20 and the warmth of her attachments.—There had, in fact, been so much of message, of allusion, of recollection, so much of Mansfield in every letter, that Fanny could not but suppose it meant for him to hear ; and to find herself forced into a purpose of
25 that kind, compelled into a correspondence which was bringing her the addresses of the man she did not love, and obliging her to administer to the adverse passion of the man she did, was cruelly mortifying. Here, too, her present removal promised
30 advantage. When no longer under the same roof with Edmund, she trusted that Miss Crawford would have no motive for writing, strong enough to over-

come the trouble, and that at Portsmouth their correspondence would dwindle into nothing.

With such thoughts as these among ten hundred others, Fanny proceeded in her journey, safely and cheerfully, and as expeditiously as could rationally 5 be hoped in the dirty month of February. They entered Oxford, but she could take only a hasty glimpse of Edmund's College as they passed along, and made no stop any where, till they reached Newbury, where a comfortable meal, uniting dinner and 10 supper, wound up the enjoyments and fatigues of the day.

The next morning saw them off again at an early hour; and with no events and no delays they regularly advanced, and were in the environs of Ports- 15 mouth while there was yet daylight for Fanny to look around her, and wonder at the new buildings.— They passed the Drawbridge, and entered the town; and the light was only beginning to fail, as, guided by William's powerful voice, they were rattled into 20 a narrow street, leading from the high street, and drawn up before the door of a small house now inhabited by Mr. Price.

Fanny was all agitation and flutter—all hope and apprehension. The moment they stopt, a trollopy- 25 looking maid-servant, seemingly in waiting for them at the door, stepped forward, and more intent on telling the news, than giving them any help, immediately began with, “the Thrush is gone out of harbour, please Sir, and one of the officers has been here to” 30 — She was interrupted by a fine tall boy of eleven years old, who rushing out of the house, pushed the

maid aside, and while William was opening the chaise door himself, called out, "you are just in time. We have been looking for you this half hour. The Thrush went out of harbour this morning. I saw
5 her. It was a beautiful sight. And they think she will have her orders in a day or two. And Mr. Campbell was here at four o'clock, to ask for you; he has got one of the Thrush's boats, and is going off to her at six, and hoped you would be here in
10 time to go with him."

A stare or two at Fanny, as William helped her out of the carriage, was all the voluntary notice which this brother bestowed;—but he made no objection to her kissing him, though still entirely engaged in
15 detailing farther particulars of the Thrush's going out of harbour, in which he had a strong right of interest, being to commence his career of seamanship in her at this very time.

Another moment, and Fanny was in the narrow
20 entrance-passage of the house, and in her mother's arms, who met her there with looks of true kindness, and with features which Fanny loved the more, because they brought her aunt Bertram's before her; and there were her two sisters, Susan, a well-grown
25 fine girl of fourteen, and Betsey, the youngest of the family, about five—both glad to see her in their way, though with no advantage of manner in receiving her. But manner Fanny did not want. Would they but love her, she should be satisfied.

30 She was then taken into a parlour, so small that her first conviction was of its being only a passage-room to something better, and she stood for a mo-

ment expecting to be invited on ; but when she saw there was no other door, and that there were signs of habitation before her, she called back her thoughts, reproved herself, and grieved lest they should have been suspected. Her mother, however, could not stay long enough to suspect any thing. She was gone again to the street door, to welcome William. "Oh ! my dear William, how glad I am to see you. But have you heard about the Thrush ? She is gone out of harbour already, three days before we had any thought of it ; and I do not know what I am to do about Sam's things, they will never be ready in time ; for she may have her orders to-morrow, perhaps. It takes me quite unawares. And now you must be off for Spithead too. Campbell has been here, quite in a worry about you ; and now, what shall we do ? I thought to have had such a comfortable evening with you, and here every thing comes upon me at once."

Her son answered cheerfully, telling her that every thing was always for the best ; and making light of his own inconvenience, in being obliged to hurry away so soon.

"To be sure, I had much rather she had stayed in harbour, that I might have sat a few hours with you in comfort ; but as there is a boat ashore, I had better go off at once, and there is no help for it. Whereabouts does the Thrush lay at Spithead ! Near the Canopus ? But no matter—here's Fanny in the parlour, and why should we stay in the passage ?—Come, mother, you have hardly looked at your own dear Fanny yet."

In they both came, and Mrs. Price having kindly kissed her daughter again, and commented a little on her growth, began with very natural solicitude to feel for their fatigues and wants as travellers.

5 "Poor dears! how tired you must both be!—and now what will you have? I began to think you would never come. Betsey and I have been watching for you this half hour. And when did you get anything to eat? And what would you like to have
10 now? I could not tell whether you would be for some meat, or only a dish of tea after your journey, or else I would have got something ready. And now I am afraid Campbell will be here, before there is time to dress a steak, and we have no butcher at
15 hand. It is very inconvenient to have no butcher in the street. We were better off in our last house. Perhaps you would like some tea, as soon as it can be got."

They both declared they should prefer it to anything. "Then, Betsey, my dear, run into the kitchen,
20 and see if Rebecca has put the water on; and tell her to bring in the tea-things as soon as she can. I wish we could get the bell mended—but Betsey is a very handy little messenger."

25 Betsey went with alacrity; proud to shew her abilities before her fine new sister.

"Dear me!" continued the anxious mother, "what a sad fire we have got, and I dare say you are both starved with cold. Draw your chair nearer, my dear.
30 I cannot think what Rebecca has been about. I am sure I told her to bring some coals half an hour ago. Susan, *you* should have taken care of the fire."

“I was up stairs, mamma, moving my things;” said Susan, in a fearless, self-defending tone, which startled Fanny. “You know you had but just settled that my sister Fanny and I should have the other room; and I could not get Rebecca to give me any 5 help.”

Farther discussion was prevented by various bustles; first, the driver came to be paid—then there was a squabble between Sam and Rebecca, about the manner of carrying up his sister’s trunk, which 10 he would manage all his own way; and lastly in walked Mr. Price himself, his own loud voice preceding him, as with something of the oath kind he kicked away his son’s portmanteau, and his daughter’s band-box in the passage, and called out for a 15 candle; no candle was brought, however, and he walked into the room.

Fanny, with doubting feelings, had risen to meet him, but sank down again on finding herself undistinguished in the dusk, and unthought of. With a 20 friendly shake of his son’s hand, and an eager voice, he instantly began—“Ha! welcome back, my boy. Glad to see you. Have you heard the news? The Thrush went out of harbour this morning. Sharp is the word, you see. By G—, you are just in time. 25 The doctor has been here enquiring for you; he has got one of the boats, and is to be off for Spithead by six, so you had better go with him. I have been to Turner’s about your mess; it is all in a way to be done. I should not wonder if you had your orders 30 to-morrow; but you cannot sail with this wind, if you are to cruize to the westward; and Captain

Walsh thinks you will certainly have a cruize to the westward, with the Elephant. By G—, I wish you may. But old Scholey was saying just now, that he thought you would be sent first to the Texel. Well, 5 well, we are ready, whatever happens. But by G—, you lost a fine sight by not being here in the morning to see the Thrush go out of harbour. I would not have been out of the way for a thousand pounds. Old Scholey ran in at breakfast time, to say she had 10 slipped her moorings and was coming out. I jumped up, and made but two steps to the platform. If ever there was a perfect beauty afloat, she is one; and there she lays at Spithead, and anybody in England would take her for an eight-and-twenty. I was upon 15 the platform two hours this afternoon, looking at her. She lays close to the Endymion, between her and the Cleopatra, just to the eastward of the sheer hulk.”

“Ha!” cried William, “*that's* just where I should 20 have put her myself. It's the best birth at Spithead. But here is my sister, Sir, here is Fanny;” turning and leading her forward;—“it is so dark you do not see her.”

With an acknowledgement that he had quite for- 25 got her, Mr. Price now received his daughter; and, having given her a cordial hug, and observed that she was grown into a woman, and he supposed would be wanting a husband soon, seemed very much inclined to forget her again.

30 Fanny shrunk back to her seat, with feelings sadly pained by his language and his smell of spirits; and he talked on only to his son, and only of the Thrush,

though William, warmly interested, as he was, in that subject, more than once tried to make his father think of Fanny, and her long absence and long journey.

After sitting some time longer, a candle was obtained; but, as there was still no appearance of tea, nor, from Betsey's reports from the kitchen, much hope of any under a considerable period, William determined to go and change his dress, and make the necessary preparations for his removal on board directly, that he might have his tea in comfort afterwards.

As he left the room, two rosy-faced boys, ragged and dirty, about eight and nine years old, rushed into it just released from school, and coming eagerly to see their sister, and tell that the Thrush was gone out of harbour; Tom and Charles: Charles had been born since Fanny's going away, but Tom she had often helped to nurse, and now felt a particular pleasure in seeing again. Both were kissed very tenderly, but Tom she wanted to keep by her, to try to trace the features of the baby she had loved, and talk to him of his infant preference of herself. Tom, however, had no mind for such treatment: he came home, not to stand and be talked to, but to run about and make a noise; and both boys had soon burst away from her, and slammed the parlour door till her temples ached.

She had now seen all that were at home; there remained only two brothers between herself and Susan, one of whom was clerk in a public office in London, and the other midshipman on board an In-

diaman. But though she had *seen* all the members of the family, she had not yet *heard* all the noise they could make. Another quarter of an hour brought her a great deal more. William was soon
5 calling out from the landing-place of the second story, for his mother and for Rebecca. He was in distress for something that he had left there, and did not find again. A key was mislaid, Betsey accused of having got at his new hat, and some
10 slight, but essential alteration of his uniform waist-coat, which he had been promised to have done for him, entirely neglected.

Mrs. Price, Rebecca, and Betsey, all went up to defend themselves, all talking together, but Rebecca
15 loudest, and the job was to be done, as well as it could, in a great hurry; William trying in vain to send Betsey down again, or keep her from being troublesome where she was; the whole of which, as almost every door in the house was open, could be
20 plainly distinguished in the parlour, except when drowned at intervals by the superior noise of Sam, Tom, and Charles chasing each other up and down stairs, and tumbling about and hallooing.

Fanny was almost stunned. The smallness of the
25 house, and thinness of the walls, brought every thing so close to her, that, added to the fatigue of her journey, and all her recent agitation, she hardly knew how to bear it. *Within* the room all was tranquil enough, for Susan having disappeared with the oth-
30 ers, there were soon only her father and herself remaining; and he taking out a newspaper—the customary loan of a neighbour, applied himself to

studying it, without seeming to recollect her existence. The solitary candle was held between himself and the paper, without any reference to her possible convenience; but she had nothing to do, and was glad to have the light screened from her aching 5 head, as she sat in bewildered, broken, sorrowful contemplation.

She was at home. But alas! it was not such a home, she had not such a welcome, as—she checked herself; she was unreasonable. What right had she 10 to be of importance to her family? She could have none, so long lost sight of! William's concerns must be dearest—they always had been—and he had every right. Yet to have so little said or asked about herself—to have scarcely an enquiry made after 15 Mansfield! It did pain her to have Mansfield forgotten; the friends who had done so much—the dear, dear friends! But here, one subject swallowed up all the rest. Perhaps it must be so. The destination of the Thrush must be now pre-eminently interesting. 20 A day or two might shew the difference. *She* only was to blame. Yet she thought it would not have been so at Mansfield. No, in her uncle's house there would have been a consideration of times and seasons, a regulation of subject, a propriety, an atten- 25 tion towards every body which there was not here.

The only interruption which thoughts like these received for nearly half an hour, was from a sudden burst of her father's, not at all calculated to compose them. At a more than ordinary pitch of thumping 30 and hallooing in the passage, he exclaimed, "Devil take those young dogs! How they are singing out!

Ay, Sam's voice louder than all the rest! That boy is fit for a boatswain. Holla—you there—Sam—stop your confounded pipe, or I shall be after you."

This threat was so palpably disregarded, that
5 though within five minutes afterwards the three boys all burst into the room together and sat down, Fanny could not consider it as a proof of any thing more than their being for the time thoroughly fagged, which their hot faces and panting breaths seemed to
10 prove—especially as they were still kicking each other's shins, and hallooing out at sudden starts immediately under their father's eye.

The next opening of the door brought something more welcome; it was for the tea-things, which she
15 had begun almost to despair of seeing that evening. Susan and an attendant girl, whose inferior appearance informed Fanny, to her great surprise, that she had previously seen the upper servant, brought in every thing necessary for the meal; Susan look-
20 ing as she put the kettle on the fire and glanced at her sister, as if divided between the agreeable triumph of shewing her activity and usefulness, and the dread of being thought to demean herself by such an office. "She had been into the kitchen," she
25 said, "to hurry Sally and help make the toast, and spread the bread and butter—or she did not know when they should have got tea—and she was sure her sister must want something after her journey."

Fanny was very thankful. She could not but own
30 that she should be very glad of a little tea, and Susan immediately set about making it, as if pleased to have the employment all to herself; and with only

a little unnecessary bustle, and some few injudicious attempts at keeping her brothers in better order than she could, acquitted herself very well. Fanny's spirit was as much refreshed as her body; her head and heart were soon the better for such well-timed kindness. Susan had an open, sensible countenance; she was like William—and Fanny hoped to find her like him in disposition and good will towards herself. 5

In this more placid state of things William re-entered, followed not far behind by his mother and Betsey. He, complete in his Lieutenant's uniform, looking and moving all the taller, firmer, and more graceful for it, and with the happiest smile over his face, walked up directly to Fanny—who, rising from her seat, looked at him for a moment in speechless admiration, and then threw her arms round his neck to sob out her various emotions of pain and pleasure. 10

Anxious not to appear unhappy, she soon recovered herself: and wiping away her tears, was able to notice and admire all the striking parts of his dress—listening with reviving spirits to his cheerful hopes of being on shore some part of every day before they sailed, and even of getting her to Spithead to see the sloop. 15

The next bustle brought in Mr. Campbell, the Surgeon of the Thrush, a very well behaved young man, who came to call for his friend, and for whom there was with some contrivance found a chair, and with some hasty washing of the young tea-maker's, a cup and saucer; and after another quarter of an hour of earnest talk between the gentlemen, noise rising upon noise, and bustle upon bustle, men and 25 30

boys at last all in motion together, the moment came for setting off; every thing was ready, William took leave, and all of them were gone—for the three boys, in spite of their mother's intreaty, determined to
5 see their brother and Mr. Campbell to the sally-port; and Mr. Price walked off at the same time to carry back his neighbour's newspaper.

Something like tranquillity might now be hoped for, and accordingly, when Rebecca had been pre-
10 vailed on to carry away the tea-things, and Mrs. Price had walked about the room some time looking for a shirt sleeve, which Betsey at last hunted out from a drawer in the kitchen, the small party of females were pretty well composed, and the moth-
15 er having lamented again over the impossibility of getting Sam ready in time, was at leisure to think of her eldest daughter and the friends she had come from.

A few enquiries began; but one of the earliest—
20 “How did her sister Bertram manage about her servants? Was she as much plagued as herself to get tolerable servants?”—soon led her mind away from Northamptonshire, and fixed it on her own domestic grievances; and the shocking character of all the
25 Portsmouth servants, of whom she believed her own two were the very worst, engrossed her completely. The Bertrams were all forgotten in detailing the faults of Rebecca, against whom Susan had also much to depose, and little Betsey a great deal more,
30 and who did seem so thoroughly without a single recommendation, that Fanny could not help modestly presuming that her mother meant to part with

her when her year was up.

“Her year!” cried Mrs. Price; “I am sure I hope I shall be rid of her before she has staid a year, for that will not be up till November. Servants are come to such a pass, my dear, in Portsmouth, that it is quite a miracle if one keeps them more than half-a-year. I have no hope of ever being settled; and if I was to part with Rebecca, I should only get something worse. And yet, I do not think I am a very difficult mistress to please—and I am sure the place is easy enough, for there is always a girl under her, and I often do half the work myself.”

Fanny was silent; but not from being convinced that there might not be a remedy found for some of these evils. As she now sat looking at Betsey, she could not but think particularly of another sister, a very pretty little girl, whom she had left there not much younger when she went into Northamptonshire, who had died a few years afterwards. There had been something remarkably amiable about her. Fanny, in those early days, had preferred her to Susan; and when the news of her death had at last reached Mansfield, had for a short time been quite afflicted.—The sight of Betsey brought the image of little Mary back again, but she would not have pained her mother by alluding to her, for the world.—While considering her with these ideas, Betsey, at a small distance, was holding out something to catch her eyes, meaning to screen it at the same time from Susan’s.

“What have you got there, my love?” said Fanny, “come and shew it to me.”

It was a silver knife. Up jumped Susan, claiming it as her own, and trying to get it away; but the child ran to her mother's protection, and Susan could only reproach, which she did very warmly, and evidently hoping to interest Fanny on her side. "It was very hard that she was not to have her *own* knife; it was her own knife; little sister Mary had left it to her upon her death-bed, and she ought to have had it to keep herself long ago. But mamma kept it from her, and was always letting Betsey get hold of it; and the end of it would be that Betsey would spoil it, and get it for her own, though mamma had *promised* her that Betsey should not have it in her own hands."

Fanny was quite shocked. Every feeling of duty, honour, and tenderness was wounded by her sister's speech and her mother's reply.

"Now, Susan," cried Mrs. Price in a complaining voice, "now, how can you be so cross? You are always quarrelling about that knife. I wish you would not be so quarrelsome. Poor little Betsey; how cross Susan is to you! But you should not have taken it out, my dear, when I sent you to the drawer. You know I told you not to touch it, because Susan is so cross about it. I must hide it another time, Betsey. Poor Mary little thought it would be such a bone of contention when she gave it me to keep, only two hours before she died. Poor little soul! she could but just speak to be heard, and she said so prettily, 'Let sister Susan have my knife, mamma, when I am dead and buried.'—Poor little dear! she was so fond of it, Fanny, that she would

have it lay by her in bed, all through her illness. It was the gift of her good godmother, old Mrs. Admiral Maxwell, only six weeks before she was taken for death. Poor little sweet creature! Well, she was taken away from evil to come. My own ⁵ Betsey, (fondling her), *you* have not the luck of such a good godmother. Aunt Norris lives too far off, to think of such little people as you."

Fanny had indeed nothing to convey from aunt Norris, but a message to say she hoped her god-¹⁰ daughter was a good girl, and learnt her book. There had been at one moment a slight murmur in the drawing-room at Mansfield Park, about sending her a Prayer-book; but no second sound had been heard of such a purpose. Mrs. Norris, however, had ¹⁵ gone home and taken down two old Prayer-books of her husband, with that idea, but upon examination, the ardour of generosity went off. One was found to have too small a print for a child's eyes, and the other to be too cumbersome for her to carry about.²⁰

Fanny fatigued and fatigued again, was thankful to accept the first invitation of going to bed; and before Betsey had finished her cry at being allowed to sit up only one hour extraordinary in honour of sister, she was off, leaving all below in confusion ²⁵ and noise again, the boys begging for toasted cheese, her father calling out for his rum and water, and Rebecca never where she ought to be.

There was nothing to raise her spirits in the confined and scantily-furnished chamber that she was ³⁰ to share with Susan. The smallness of the rooms above and below indeed, and the narrowness of the

passage and staircase, struck her beyond her imagination. She soon learnt to think with respect of her own little attic at Mansfield Park, in *that* house reckoned too small for anybody's comfort.

CHAPTER VIII

COULD Sir Thomas have seen all his niece's feelings, when she wrote her first letter to her aunt, he would not have despaired ; for though a good night's rest, a pleasant morning, the hope of soon seeing William again, and the comparatively quiet state of the house, from Tom and Charles being gone to school, Sam on some project of his own, and her father on his usual lounges, enabled her to express herself cheerfully on the subject of home, there were still to her own perfect consciousness, many drawbacks suppressed. Could he have seen only half that she felt before the end of a week, he would have thought Mr. Crawford sure of her, and been delighted with his own sagacity. 5

Before the week ended, it was all disappointment. In the first place, William was gone. The Thrush had had her orders, the wind had changed, and he was sailed within four days from their reaching Portsmouth ; and during those days, she had seen him only twice, in a short and hurried way, when he had come ashore on duty. There had been no free conversation, no walk on the ramparts, no visit to the dock-yard, no acquaintance with the Thrush—nothing of all that they had planned and depended on. Every thing in that quarter failed her, except William's affection. His last thought on leaving home was for her. He stepped back again to the door to 15 20 25

say, "Take care of Fanny, mother. She is tender, and not used to rough it like the rest of us. I charge you, take care of Fanny."

William was gone;—and the home he had left her
5 in was—Fanny could not conceal it from herself—
in almost every respect, the very reverse of what
she could have wished. It was the abode of noise,
disorder, and impropriety. Nobody was in their right
place, nothing was done as it ought to be. She could
10 not respect her parents, as she had hoped. On her
father, her confidence had not been sanguine, but
he was more negligent of his family, his habits were
worse, and his manners coarser, than she had been
prepared for. He did not want abilities; but he had
15 no curiosity, and no information beyond his profes-
sion; he read only the newspaper and the navy-list;
he talked only of the dock-yard, the harbour, Spit-
head, and the Motherbank; he swore and he drank,
he was dirty and gross. She had never been able
20 to recal anything approaching to tenderness in his
former treatment of herself. There had remained
only a general impression of roughness and loud-
ness; and now he scarcely ever noticed her, but to
make her the object of a coarse joke.

25 Her disappointment in her mother was greater;
there she had hoped much, and found almost noth-
ing. Every flattering scheme of being of conse-
quence to her soon fell to the ground. Mrs. Price
was not unkind—but, instead of gaining on her affec-
30 tion and confidence, and becoming more and more
dear, her daughter never met with greater kindness
from her, than on the first day of her arrival. The

instinct of nature was soon satisfied, and Mrs. Price's attachment had no other source. Her heart and her time were already quite full ; she had neither leisure nor affection to bestow on Fanny. Her daughters never had been much to her. She was fond of her sons, especially of William, but Betsey was the first of her girls whom she had ever much regarded. To her she was most injudiciously indulgent. William was her pride ; Betsey, her darling ; and John, Richard, Sam, Tom, and Charles, occupied all the rest of her maternal solicitude, alternately her worries and her comforts. These shared her heart ; her time was given chiefly to her house and her servants. Her days were spent in a kind of slow bustle ; always busy without getting on, always behindhand and lamenting it, without altering her ways ; wishing to be an economist, without contrivance or regularity ; dissatisfied with her servants, without skill to make them better, and whether helping, or reprimanding, or indulging them, without any power of engaging their respect.

Of her two sisters, Mrs. Price very much more resembled Lady Bertram than Mrs. Norris. She was a manager by necessity, without any of Mrs. Norris's inclination for it, or any of her activity. Her disposition was naturally easy and indolent, like Lady Bertram's ; and a situation of similar affluence and do-nothing-ness would have been much more suited to her capacity, than the exertions and self-denials of the one, which her imprudent marriage had placed her in. She might have made just as good a woman of consequence as Lady Bertram, but Mrs. Norris

would have been a more respectable mother of nine children, on a small income.

Much of all this, Fanny could not but be sensible of. She might scruple to make use of the words, 5 but she must and did feel that her mother was a partial, ill-judging parent, a dawdle, a slattern, who neither taught nor restrained her children, whose house was the scene of mismanagement and discomfort from beginning to end, and who had no talent, 10 no conversation, no affection towards herself; no curiosity to know her better, no desire of her friendship, and no inclination for her company that could lessen her sense of such feelings.

Fanny was very anxious to be useful, and not to 15 appear above her home, or in any way disqualified or disinclined, by her foreign education, from contributing her help to its comforts, and therefore set about working for Sam immediately, and by working early and late, with perseverance and great dis- 20 patch, did so much, that the boy was shipped off at last, with more than half his linen ready. She had great pleasure in feeling her usefulness, but could not conceive how they would have managed without her.

25 Sam, loud and overbearing as he was, she rather regretted when he went, for he was clever and intelligent, and glad to be employed in any errand in the town; and though spurning the remonstrances of Susan, given as they were—though very reason- 30 able in themselves, with ill-timed and powerless warmth, was beginning to be influenced by Fanny's services, and gentle persuasions; and she found that

the best of the three younger ones was gone in him; Tom and Charles being at least as many years as they were his juniors distant from that age of feeling and reason, which might suggest the expediency of making friends, and of endeavouring to be less disagreeable. Their sister soon despaired of making the smallest impression on *them*; they were quite untameable by any means of address which she had spirits or time to attempt. Every afternoon brought a return of their riotous games all over the house; and she very early learnt to sigh at the approach of Saturday's constant half holiday.

Betsey too, a spoilt child, trained up to think the alphabet her greatest enemy, left to be with the servants at her pleasure, and then encouraged to report any evil of them, she was almost as ready to despair of being able to love or assist; and of Susan's temper, she had many doubts. Her continual disagreements with her mother, her rash squabbles with Tom and Charles, and petulance with Betsey, were at least so distressing to Fanny, that though admitting they were by no means without provocation, she feared the disposition that could push them to such length must be far from amiable, and from affording any repose to herself.

Such was the home which was to put Mansfield out of her head, and teach her to think of her cousin Edmund with moderated feelings. On the contrary, she could think of nothing but Mansfield, its beloved inmates, its happy ways. Every thing where she now was was in full contrast to it. The elegance, propriety, regularity, harmony—and perhaps,

above all, the peace and tranquillity of Mansfield, were brought to her remembrance every hour of the day, by the prevalence of every thing opposite to them *here*.

5 The living in incessant noise was to a frame and temper, delicate and nervous like Fanny's, an evil which no superadded elegance or harmony could have entirely atoned for. It was the greatest misery of all. At Mansfield, no sounds of contention, no
10 raised voice, no abrupt bursts, no tread of violence was ever heard; all proceeded in a regular course of cheerful orderliness; every body had their due importance; every body's feelings were consulted. If tenderness could be ever supposed wanting, good
15 sense and good breeding supplied its place; and as to the little irritations, sometimes introduced by aunt Norris, they were short, they were trifling, they were as a drop of water to the ocean, compared with the ceaseless tumult of her present abode.
20 Here, every body was noisy, every voice was loud, (excepting, perhaps, her mother's, which resembled the soft monotony of Lady Bertram's, only worn into fretfulness.)—Whatever was wanted, was halloo'd for, and the servants halloo'd out their excuses
25 from the kitchen. The doors were in constant banging, the stairs were never at rest, nothing was done without a clatter, nobody sat still, and nobody could command attention when they spoke.

In a review of the two houses, as they appeared
30 to her before the end of a week, Fanny was tempted to apply to them Dr. Johnson's celebrated judgment as to matrimony and celibacy, and say, that

though Mansfield Park might have some pains, Portsmouth could have no pleasures.

CHAPTER IX

FANNY was right enough in not expecting to hear from Miss Crawford now, at the rapid rate in which their correspondence had begun ; Mary's next letter was after a decidedly longer interval than the last, 5 but she was not right in supposing that such an interval would be felt a great relief to herself.—Here was another strange revolution of mind ! —She was really glad to receive the letter when it did come. In her present exile from good society, and distance 10 from every thing that had been wont to interest her, a letter from one belonging to the set where her heart lived, written with affection, and some degree of elegance, was thoroughly acceptable.—The usual plea of increasing engagements was made in 15 excuse for not having written to her earlier, “and now that I have begun,” she continued, “my letter will not be worth your reading, for there will be no little offering of love at the end, no three or four lines passionées from the most devoted H. C. in the 20 world, for Henry is in Norfolk ; business called him to Everingham ten days ago, or perhaps he only pretended the call, for the sake of being travelling at the same time that you were. But there he is, and, by the by, his absence may sufficiently account for 25 any remissness of his sister's in writing, for there has been no ‘well, Mary, when do you write to Fanny ?—is not it time for you to write to Fanny ?’

to spur me on. At last, after various attempts at meeting, I have seen your cousins, 'dear Julia and dearest Mrs. Rushworth;' they found me at home yesterday, and we were glad to see each other again. We *seemed very* glad to see each other, and I do 5 really think we were a little.—We had a vast deal to say.—Shall I tell you how Mrs. Rushworth looked when your name was mentioned? I did not use to think her wanting in self possession, but she had not quite enough for the demands of yesterday. 10 Upon the whole Julia was in the best looks of the two, at least after you were spoken of. There was no recovering the complexion from the moment that I spoke of 'Fanny,' and spoke of her as a sister should.—But Mrs. Rushworth's day of good looks 15 will come; we have cards for her first party on the 28th.—Then she will be in beauty, for she will open one of the best houses in Wimpole Street. I was in it two years ago, when it was Lady Lascelles's, and prefer it to almost any I know in London, and 20 certainly she will then feel—to use a vulgar phrase—that she has got her pennyworth for her penny. Henry could not have afforded her such a house. I hope she will recollect it, and be satisfied, as well she may, with moving the queen of a palace, though 25 the king may appear best in the back ground, and as I have no desire to tease her, I shall never *force* your name upon her again. She will grow sober by degrees.—From all that I hear and guess, Baron Wildenhaim's attentions to Julia continue, but I do 30 not know that he has any serious encouragement. She ought to do better. A poor honourable is no

catch, and I cannot imagine any liking in the case, for, take away his rants, and the poor Baron has nothing. What a difference a vowel makes!—if his rents were but equal to his rants!—Your cousin
5 Edmund moves slowly; detained, perchance, by parish duties. There may be some old woman at Thornton Lacey to be converted. I am unwilling to fancy myself neglected for a *young* one. Adieu, my dear sweet Fanny, this is a long letter from
10 London; write me a pretty one in reply to gladden Henry's eyes, when he comes back—and send me an account of all the dashing young captains whom you disdain for his sake."

There was great food for meditation in this letter,
15 and chiefly for unpleasant meditation; and yet, with all the uneasiness it supplied, it connected her with the absent, it told her of people and things about whom she had never felt so much curiosity as now, and she would have been glad to have been sure of
20 such a letter every week. Her correspondence with her aunt Bertram was her only concern of higher interest.

As for any society in Portsmouth, that could at all make amends for deficiencies at home, there were
25 none within the circle of her father's and mother's acquaintance to afford her the smallest satisfaction; she saw nobody in whose favour she could wish to overcome her own shyness and reserve. The men appeared to her all coarse, the women all pert, every
30 body under-bred; and she gave as little contentment as she received from introductions either to old or new acquaintance. The young ladies who ap-

proached her at first with some respect in consideration of her coming from a Baronet's family, were soon offended by what they termed "airs"—for as she neither played on the pianoforte nor wore fine pelisses, they could, on farther observation, admit 5 no right of superiority.

The first solid consolation which Fanny received for the evils of home, the first which her judgment could entirely approve, and which gave any promise of durability, was in a better knowledge of Susan, 10 and a hope of being of service to her. Susan had always behaved pleasantly to herself, but the determined character of her general manners had astonished and alarmed her, and it was at least a fortnight before she began to understand a disposition so 15 totally different from her own. Susan saw that much was wrong at home, and wanted to set it right. That a girl of fourteen, acting only on her own unassisted reason, should err in the method of reform was not wonderful; and Fanny soon became 20 more disposed to admire the natural light of the mind which could so early distinguish justly, than to censure severely the faults of conduct to which it led. Susan was only acting on the same truths, and pursuing the same system, which her own judg- 25 ment acknowledged, but which her more supine and yielding temper would have shrunk from asserting. Susan tried to be useful, where *she* could only have gone away and cried; and that Susan was useful she could perceive; that things, bad as 30 they were, would have been worse but for such interposition, and that both her mother and Betsey

were restrained from some excesses of very offensive indulgence and vulgarity.

In every argument with her mother, Susan had in point of reason the advantage, and never was
5 there any maternal tenderness to buy her off. The blind fondness which was for ever producing evil around her, *she* had never known. There was no gratitude for affection past or present, to make her better bear with its excesses to the others.

10 All this became gradually evident, and gradually placed Susan before her sister as an object of mingled compassion and respect. That her manner was wrong, however, at times very wrong—her measures often ill-chosen and ill-timed, and her looks and
15 language very often indefensible, Fanny could not cease to feel; but she began to hope they might be rectified. Susan, she found, looked up to her and wished for her good opinion; and new as any thing like an office of authority was to Fanny, new as it
20 was to imagine herself capable of guiding or informing any one, she did resolve to give occasional hints to Susan, and endeavour to exercise for her advantage the juster notions of what was due to every body, and what would be wisest for herself,
25 which her own more favoured education had fixed in her.

Her influence, or at least the consciousness and use of it, originated in an act of kindness by Susan, which after many hesitations of delicacy, she at last
30 worked herself up to. It had very early occurred to her, that a small sum of money might, perhaps, restore peace for ever on the sore subject of the

silver knife, canvassed as it now was continually, and the riches which she was in possession of herself, her uncle having given her 10*l.* at parting, made her as able as she was willing to be generous. But she was so wholly unused to confer favours, 5 except on the very poor, so unpractised in removing evils, or bestowing kindnesses among her equals, and so fearful of appearing to elevate herself as a great lady at home, that it took some time to determine that it would not be unbecoming in her to 10 make such a present. It was made, however, at last; a silver knife was bought for Betsey, and accepted with great delight, its newness giving it every advantage over the other that could be desired; Susan was established in the full possession 15 of her own, Betsey handsomely declaring that now she had got one so much prettier herself, she should never want *that* again—and no reproach seemed conveyed to the equally satisfied mother, which Fanny had almost feared to be impossible. The deed 20 thoroughly answered; a source of domestic altercation was entirely done away, and it was the means of opening Susan's heart to her, and giving her something more to love and be interested in. Susan shewed that she had delicacy; pleased as she was 25 to be mistress of property which she had been struggling for at least two years, she yet feared that her sister's judgment had been against her, and that a reproof was designed her for having so struggled as to make the purchase necessary for the tran- 30 quillity of the house.

Her temper was open. She acknowledged her

fears, blamed herself for having contended so warmly, and from that hour Fanny understanding the worth of her disposition, and perceiving how fully she was inclined to seek her good opinion and refer
5 to her judgment, began to feel again the blessing of affection, and to entertain the hope of being useful to a mind so much in need of help, and so much deserving it. She gave advice; advice too sound to be resisted by a good understanding, and given so
10 mildly and considerately as not to irritate an imperfect temper; and she had the happiness of observing its good effects not unfrequently; more was not expected by one, who, while seeing all the obligation and expediency of submission and forbearance,
15 saw also with sympathetic acuteness of feeling, all that must be hourly grating to a girl like Susan. Her greatest wonder on the subject soon became—not that Susan should have been provoked into disrespect and impatience against her better knowl-
20 edge—but that so much better knowledge, so many good notions, should have been hers at all; and that, brought up in the midst of negligence and error, she should have formed such proper opinions of what ought to be—she, who had no cousin Edmund
25 to direct her thoughts or fix her principles.

The intimacy thus begun between them was a material advantage to each. By sitting together up stairs, they avoided a great deal of the disturbance of the house; Fanny had peace, and Susan learnt
30 to think it no misfortune to be quietly employed. They sat without a fire; but *that* was a privation familiar even to Fanny, and she suffered the less

because reminded by it of the east-room. It was the only point of resemblance. In space, light, furniture, and prospect, there was nothing alike in the two apartments; and she often heaved a sigh at the remembrance of all her books and boxes, and various 5 comforts there. By degrees the girls came to spend the chief of the morning up stairs, at first only in working and talking; but after a few days, the remembrance of the said books grew so potent and stimulative, that Fanny found it impossible not to 10 try for books again. There were none in her father's house; but wealth is luxurious and daring—and some of hers found its way to a circulating library. She became a subscriber—amazed at being any thing *in propria persona*, amazed at her own doings in every 15 way; to be a renter, a chuser of books! And to be having any one's improvement in view in her choice! But so it was. Susan had read nothing, and Fanny longed to give her a share in her own first pleasures, and inspire a taste for the biography 20 and poetry which she delighted in herself.

In this occupation she hoped, moreover, to bury some of the recollections of Mansfield which were too apt to seize her mind if her fingers only were busy; and especially at this time, hoped it might be 25 useful in diverting her thoughts from pursuing Edmund to London, whither, on the authority of her aunt's last letter, she knew he was gone. She had no doubt of what would ensue. The promised notification was hanging over her head. The postman's 30 knock within the neighbourhood was beginning to bring its daily terrors—and if reading could banish

the idea for even half an hour, it was something gained.