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Sir Charles Grandison and Jane Austen's Men

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I

My connection with Jane Austen's play goes back forty years, to Oxford in the 1950s, when I was preparing a study of Jane Austen's manuscripts.

It was during this research that I first came across "Sir Charles Grandison," not the play itself, but a reference to it in an Edwardian book, *Jane Austen: Her Homes & Her Friends*, by Constance Hill, published in London and New York in 1902. Some readers may know this book well, may indeed have explored it in detail. But forty years ago the serious study of Jane Austen was not a common pursuit, and certainly had not reached the scale on which we see it today. Beyond Oxford, there was no community of Austen scholars, and at Oxford itself, there was only one student apart from myself working on Jane Austen—a young American graduate from Princeton, Walton Litz.

To this day, I can remember the surprise with which I came across the reference in the recollections of Fanny Lefroy (a great-niece of Jane Austen) quoted by Constance Hill. She revealed that in her possession, in Jane Austen's writing, she had a play that her own mother, Anna (daughter of James Austen), had dictated to Aunt Jane, "founded on *Sir Charles Grandison*, a book with which she was familiar at seven years old." This would date it about 1800. I asked the Austen scholars at Oxford, R. W. Chapman, the great editor, Mary Lascelles at Somerville College, and Lord David Cecil at New College. But none of them had ever heard of the play.

I spread my enquiries further afield: to St. John's, the Austens' Oxford College; to the Bodleian Library; and, outside Oxford, to Elizabeth Jenkins; T. Edward Carpenter, the benefactor of Jane Austen's House at Chawton; the British Museum Library; and, across the Atlantic, to the Pierpont Morgan Library; to Jack Gray, and to the great American collectors, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Burke. I also enquired of the Austen family. But to no avail. No one knew of Jane Austen's "Grandison." Reluctantly, I could only record the reference and file it away as a dead end, as it seemed; I was left wondering, indeed, if it could even be true.

Was there any likelihood at all that a child of seven could possibly be familiar with Richardson's enormous novel? For *Sir Charles Grandison* is one of the longest works of English literature, running to almost three-quarters of a million words, that is, as long as all Jane

Austen's novels put together, plus another *Mansfield Park*. Privately, I dismissed the story as family myth and put it to one side.

And there my notes remained, filed away, for the next twenty years, dismissed and forgotten, as far as I was concerned, until 1977. In October of that year, I received a telephone call from Sotheby's, the London auctioneers: A manuscript play, "Sir Charles Grandison," said to be by Anna Austen and written out by Jane Austen, had been entered for auction by great-grandnephews of Jane Austen. Would I like to see it and advise them on its authenticity? The manuscript duly arrived, 53 pages long, of different shapes and sizes, in a hand I recognised immediately as Jane Austen's: The early pages were in her childhood writing, the later pages in her adult hand, more mature and developed.

The play itself developed correspondingly. The style of the early pages was somewhat juvenile, whereas that of the later pages was sophisticated. And when I began to read the manuscript, I found a comedy of allusion in which Richardson's characters, situations, and language were imitated, echoed, and rearranged. To do this, Anna would have needed no less than a verbatim knowledge of the novel, and for a seven-year-old, that was out of the question. Evidently, "Sir Charles Grandison" was the product of an adult mind, and beyond the abilities of any child, however bright.

Nonetheless, Anna's contribution was clear to see. It amounted to no more than a few words and phrases added clumsily to her Aunt Jane's manuscript. This, then, was the basis for the story of Anna's supposed authorship, and we can understand how from this small beginning the story entered family history and, over the years, grew into an undisputed fact of authorship. I explained all this to the auctioneers and these points were incorporated into the catalogue entry; and in the autumn of 1977 the manuscript was duly sold as a newly-discovered work of Jane Austen.

When I came to examine the manuscript in detail, following its sale, it was thanks to Miss Helen Lefroy that I was able to reconstruct its history and to understand why it had disappeared from view and why it remained unknown to Jane Austen researchers, including Dr. Chapman, for so many years. It had, in fact, been in the possession of Miss Lefroy's godmother, Miss Louie Lefroy, a granddaughter of Anna, circumstances which are fully explained in my edition of the play.[1]

When the existence of the play became known, there was lively discussion in the press. It was a news story on both sides of the Atlantic. According to *The New York Times* (14 December 1977, 21), the play was "believed to make an important contribution to Austen studies." David Gilson was quoted in the London *Sunday Times*: "It really is a discovery. Any manuscript by Austen would be exciting

and the fact that it is a play is extraordinary." Mary Lascelles, however, also quoted in the *Sunday Times*, took a wholly different view: "It sounds like a family joke. Frankly, I wish they'd stop digging for manuscripts. Some of the discoveries are charming, but so much of it is negligible" (20 November 1977).

The truth lies somewhere in between. Alongside Jane Austen's other works, "Grandison" is "negligible," has none of the literary interest of *Lady Susan* or *The Watsons* or the juvenilia. Yet it does have a strong biographical value. It carries us to the very heart of the Austen household, reminding us of the tradition of family theatricals, stretching back to the 1780s, the memories that Jane Austen drew upon and reshaped thirty years later, in describing the rehearsal of *Lovers' Vows* by the younger Bertrams and their guests at Mansfield Park.

The play also holds a historical value. *Sir Charles Grandison* is one of the great novels of the age, a landmark of eighteenth century literature. It was a favourite novel of the Austens, and the Steventon household would enjoy the sheer cheek of Jane Austen's joke, in which *Grandison* is shrunk to the point of absurdity.

II

But this is not to say that Jane Austen scorned *Grandison*. For her, it was much more than a landmark: It was a novel beloved since childhood; a work which she knew through and through, and which provided a model for the novel of manners in a domestic setting, a type of fiction that inspired Jane Austen's own style of social comedy. At his best, Richardson was capable of catching the wit and momentum of Restoration drama, an energy unmistakably echoed in Jane Austen's handling of dialogue.

Grandison also gave women a voice. This may seem an odd claim to make on behalf of a novel written by a man. But Richardson possessed a high mimetic skill, a fine ear for female tones, and successfully entered into the woman's point of view. These gifts he exploited in carrying much of *Grandison* through the letters of the heroine and the other female characters. In particular, Richardson gave his women skill in "raillery," the art of verbal mockery, or in Dr. Johnson's definition, "satirical merriment." "Raillery" becomes the weapon of the woman of spirit in challenging male values, and it was in the vivid and entertaining "raillery" of Charlotte Grandison that Richardson gave a lead to "the female cause."

"The female cause" is also put in reflective terms by Mrs. Shirley: "Why must women be always addressed in appropriate language (i.e., the 'language' which *men* deem to be 'appropriate') and not treated on the common footing of reasonable creatures?"

This question stuck in Jane Austen's mind and she returned to it. We meet it, for example, in Elizabeth Bennet's rebuke to Mr. Collins, when he presses on with his proposal of marriage, too thick-skinned to worry about the fact that Elizabeth has just refused him. She admonishes him in Mrs. Shirley's terms: "Do not consider me now as an elegant *female* intending to plague you, but as a *rational* creature speaking the truth from her heart" (*PP* 109). [Emphasis mine][2] It was not only blundering Mr. Collins who was guilty. In their thoughtlessness, their mouthing of "appropriate language," the same offence could be committed by men of honour and sensibility. In *Persuasion*, Mrs. Croft is provoked by her brother, Captain Wentworth, to a similar rebuke when he announces that naval vessels are no place for ladies: this, to a lady determined to remain at her husband's side, on land or sea, in peace or war. And she answers Wentworth bluntly: "I hate to hear you talking so, like a fine gentleman, as if women were all fine ladies, instead of rational creatures" (70).

As Dr. Johnson put it, Richardson "enlarged the knowledge of human nature." He was the first novelist to portray women who are psychologically interesting. The heroine of *Grandison* possesses a "mind," a "mind," Richardson tells us, which is to be admired "more than her person." This was an observation that struck Jane Austen and in Act 4, her Sir Charles likewise credits Harriet with a "mind," and, echoing Richardson, a "mind . . . as complete as her person."

Jane Austen also respected Richardson's moral purpose in *Grandison*, a purpose declared in the novel's subtitle, "the Good Man": It was to portray such a figure that Richardson originally began the work. His hero was to be a gentleman, a man of virtue, honour, and religion, demonstrating that it was possible to draw an admirable hero to stand against Fielding's lovable rogue, Tom Jones. More than merely "good," Sir Charles is perfection itself. Richardson tells us this unceasingly: "the best of HUSBANDS . . . the most dutiful of Sons," "the most affectionate of BROTHERS; the most faithful of FRIENDS," "The Domestic Man," "The Kind Master, the enlivening Companion," "The polite Neighbour." Richardson reels off the list of roles in which Sir Charles excels. Richardson's object was to create a conduct-book hero, a paragon whose behaviour the gentleman reader is meant to aspire to, to learn from and copy.

Within this exemplary scheme, Richardson demonstrates Sir Charles's unerring judgement, his refined sense of correct behaviour, his balancing of the polite and the ethical, his masterful handling of the problems of public and private life. All in all, he is the epitome of the civilised Augustan gentleman, a marriageable gentleman, too—rich, well-born, handsome; a patient and faithful lover; gracious, considerate, and protective towards women, and heroic in their defence. He sets the ultimate standard of the ideal husband.

These are his worldly gifts. Sir Charles also performs at an allegorical and spiritual level. He embodies virtue and active religion, is an observant and pious Christian: as Richardson put it, is a "CHRISTIAN" in capital letters; is literally the great man, the *Grand*ison, that his name spells out. So he stands, at the centre of the novel, attended by a circle of admiring men and adoring women, lapped in "the incense of praise," a "Blessing" to his followers.

The problem with such a character is self-evident. *Clarissa*, Richardson's masterpiece, telling the story of a "good" woman seduced and betrayed, is a novel of unmistakable dramatic force and humanity. But what can an author do with a "good" man who suffers little or nothing? Sir Walter Scott put his finger on the problem: ". . . in the living world, a state of trial and a valley of tears, such unspotted worth, such unvarying perfection, is not to be met with: Grandison is that 'faultless monster that the world ne'er saw.'"[3]

We know exactly what Jane Austen thought about this "faultless monster." He makes his first appearance in the person of Charles Adams, a bumptious young man in "Jack & Alice," an early work in *Volume the First*:[4]

> I look upon myself to be Sir a perfect Beauty—where would you see a finer figure or a more charming face. Then, sir I imagine my Manners & Address to be of the most polished kind; there is a certain elegance, a peculiar sweetness in them that I never saw equalled & cannot describe—. Partiality aside, I am certainly more accomplished in every Language, every Science, every Art and every thing than any other person in Europe. My temper is even, my virtues innumerable, my self unparalelled. . . . I expect nothing more in my wife than my wife will find in me—Perfection. (25, 26)

This was Jane Austen's view in 1790. Twenty-seven years later, in 1817, the year of her death, her view was unchanged: "pictures of perfection," she wrote to her niece, Fanny Knight, "make me sick & wicked."[5]

It was a wickedness which Jane Austen was happy to indulge. *Grandison* jokes appear throughout the juvenilia; a wickedness which she was happy to revive, as she did in 1800, in completing her "Grandison" play; a wickedness which appears again, in 1815, in *Emma*, where "the standard of perfection in Highbury, both in person and mind" is the unpalatable Mr. Elton, and Emma Woodhouse is gently marshalled into the company. In Knightley's eyes "this sweetest and best of all creatures" is "faultless in spite of all her faults" (433). It is the same wickedness which appeared a year later, in 1816, in the spoof, "Plan of a Novel," assembled from hints by friends and family, including Fanny Knight, who slyly proposed a Grandison hero, "all perfection of course" together with a "faultless" heroine, granted all the attributes and accomplishments of a

female Grandison (*MW* 428-29). And *Grandison* jokes continue into *Sanditon*.

Within the six novels, however, Jane Austen is very far from dismissive. She took her earliest lessons in domestic comedy from *Grandison*; she valued what Richardson had to say about the life of the mind and women's right to a voice; and in Sir Charles, Richardson provided English fiction with a new and commanding style of hero: The hero who is *both* the heroine's "mentor," her wise counsellor, *and* her "reward,"[6] an intriguing relationship which attracted Jane Austen and which she explored and developed in *Northanger Abbey*, *Mansfield Park*, and *Emma*. The presence of Sir Charles, half-mockingly in Henry Tilney, Edmund Bertram, and George Knightley is unmistakable. Yet between the two novelists there is an essential difference. In Richardson, the learning process is one-way: Sir Charles is mentor by virtue of his superiority of knowledge, experience, and wisdom, and Harriet Byron is the young pupil, eager to learn. In Jane Austen, the process is reciprocal: the heroes and heroines learn from one another, and this mutual process of learning and teaching provides a binding element in their affection.

There is a second difference, equally interesting and equally important: In *Grandison*, the hero is the superior being, superior, in every respect, to everyone else in the novel, the heroine included; whereas in Jane Austen the superiority, the moral and intellectual leadership, is by no means male. In *Sense and Sensibility*, *Mansfield Park*, and *Persuasion*, the boot of guidance is on the other foot; it is the heroines who take the lead.

III

All this may seem to place *Grandison* at a distance from Jane Austen. But the line of influence from *Grandison* to Jane Austen's heroes is strong, nonetheless, and is found in unexpected places. To illustrate this, I want to take one of the great scenes, the Pemberley chapter in *Pride and Prejudice*. We think of this, like the visit to Sotherton in *Mansfield Park*, as one of Jane Austen's most accomplished set-pieces, displaying her wonderful control of space and the positioning and movement of characters within a stagelike, almost theatrical setting. Both Sotherton and Pemberley seem to display this compositional, "scenic" quality. Nonetheless, in many respects the presentation of Pemberley is far from original. In 1813, the readers of *Pride and Prejudice* would have recognised immediately, as Jane Austen meant them to, that they were looking at a modernized version of Harriet Byron's first sight of Grandison Hall and that throughout the Pemberley chapter Jane Austen uses the earlier novel both as a point of reference and a point of departure.

Before discussing this matter of adaptation and allusion, I want first to place the Pemberley visit within the scheme of Elizabeth's relationship with Darcy. It comes at a turning-point. Elizabeth's feelings are unsettled, her mind in a "tumult" (277), following Darcy's clumsy proposal, her refusal, and his subsequent letter explaining his treatment of Wickham. Elizabeth's eyes have been opened to some painful truths about herself and her family; and, having received his explanation of Wickham's treachery, she is beginning to see Darcy in a better light.

The Pemberley chapter is the mechanism by which Jane Austen accelerates this process. The old Darcy, of Hertfordshire days—cold, haughty, and aloof—is transformed into someone new, a courteous and approachable Darcy, a Darcy of unsuspected virtues and values, on his home ground a man of responsibility, position, and power. The new Darcy is first described to us by Mrs. Reynolds, the Pemberley housekeeper, who shows Elizabeth and the Gardiners round the house. To their surprise, Mrs. Reynolds sings Darcy's praises, dwelling "with energy on his many merits." In his youth, she says, he was "always the sweetest-tempered, most generous-hearted, boy in the world." Now grown up, "He is the best landlord, and the best master . . . that ever lived. Not like the wild young men now-a-days, who think of nothing but themselves." Mrs. Reynolds provides convincing testimonials: "There is not one of his tenants or servants but what will give him a good name. Some people call him proud; but I am sure I never saw any thing of it" (249).

Elizabeth moves on, to admire the picture gallery and the family portraits and is "arrested" (Jane Austen's striking word) by a picture of Darcy, smiling, "with such a smile over the face, as she remembered to have sometimes seen, when he looked at her" (250). She falls into a deep reverie, reflecting on the portrait and on what Mrs. Reynolds has been saying:

> There was certainly at this moment, in Elizabeth's mind, a more gentle sensation towards the original, than she had ever felt in the height of their acquaintance. The commendation bestowed on him by Mrs. Reynolds was of no trifling nature. What praise is more valuable than the praise of an intelligent servant? As a brother, a landlord, a master, she considered how many people's happiness were in his guardianship!—How much of pleasure or pain it was in his power to bestow!—How much of good or evil must be done by him! Every idea that had been brought forward by the housekeeper was favourable to his character, and as she stood before the canvas, on which he was represented, and fixed his eyes upon herself, she thought of his regard with a deeper sentiment of gratitude than it had ever raised before; she remembered its warmth, and softened its impropriety of expression. (250-51)

This is the language of *Grandison*, the roles and "perfections" of Sir Charles now attached to Darcy: "the best landlord," "the best master

. . . that ever lived"; a man controlling the destinies of others, their "happiness . . . in his guardianship," "pleasure or pain . . . in his power." Elizabeth's meditation on these Grandisonian matters, on his "guardianship"—and the "warmth" of his "regard," her wonder and "gratitude"—all this echoes the mentor-pupil relationship of Sir Charles and Harriet Byron; and, as a whole, the passage could be inserted into Richardson's text unchanged and virtually undetectable. Jane Austen's contemporary audience would have made the connection at once: Elizabeth's visit to Pemberley House is evidently based upon Harriet Byron's first sight of Grandison Hall.

Like Elizabeth, Harriet is conducted from room to room, meets the housekeeper, learns of the servants' loyalty and affection, admires everything she sees: the elegance and nobility of the rooms, the delicacy of their ornamentation, the richness of the furniture, the tapestries and hangings: rich but not ostentatious; the musical instruments, the cabinets and collections of "statues" and "bronzes," the "medals" and "gems," the *objets d'art* gathered by Sir Charles on his European tours, signifying his cultivated connoisseurship; his scientific "instruments," "geographical" and "astronomical," and his pictures "of the best masters of the Italian and Flemish schools," marking both the breadth and discrimination of his learning and culture which range across the ancient and the modern, the sciences and the arts.

Richardson is painstaking in the listing of these possessions and attributes, rather in the style of an auctioneer's catalogue. But this exhaustiveness of detail is central to the purpose of *Grandison* as a conduct book, in which Sir Charles is equipped to the last degree with the possessions and attributes of the enlightened Augustan gentleman. This is the new Renaissance man on display for the gentleman reader to mark, copy, and emulate, and also to set a standard for the lady reader to require of her own circle of gentlemen friends.

The imprint of Sir Charles is stamped not only within Grandison Hall but outside too. The genius of the place is the genius of its proprietor. Aesthetics and morality are one. Richardson spells out the equation. "The gardens and lawns" seem to Harriet "as boundless as the mind of the owner, and as free and open as his countenance." She observes that Sir Charles has "a great taste . . . yet not an expensive one" in his landscaping of the grounds. He "pretends not to level hills, or to force and distort nature, but to help it, as he finds it, without letting art be seen in his works." This is the discreet and judicious landscaping of the man of moderation, whose expression of aesthetic taste communicates his refinement on the moral plane as well.[7]

Jane Austen adopts this same philosophy of landscape. At the opening of the chapter, on her way to Pemberley, Elizabeth looks across the valley towards the house and sees the evidence of landscaping employed unobtrusively in the service of natural beauty and the creation of a pleasing and artistically contrived landscape.

> It was a large, handsome, stone building, standing well on rising ground, and backed by a ridge of high woody hills;—and in front, a stream of some natural importance was swelled into greater, but without any artificial appearance. Its banks were neither formal, nor falsely adorned. Elizabeth was delighted. She had never seen a place for which nature had done more, or where natural beauty had been so little counteracted by an awkward taste. They were all of them warm in their admiration; and at that moment she felt, that to be mistress of Pemberley might be something! (245)

A modern reader wanting to picture the appearance of Pemberley cannot do better than to recall the BBC film. There, Pemberley was represented by Lyme Park (on the Cheshire-Derbyshire border), a house of Elizabethan origin with an impressive Palladian exterior added in the early eighteenth century. Its remoteness, splendour, and formality are true to the book and in keeping with Darcy's Anglo-Norman ancestry: an ancient lineage both on his mother's and his father's side; and aristocratic too, as the grandson of an earl. Such circumstances would have been very much in the minds of Jane Austen's readers; and would give an added zest to an awareness of the social chasm between the Bennets and the patrician Darcys and all the subtle snobberies of property and class involved in Elizabeth's marriage, the marriage which Lady Catherine regards as a "pollution."

Elizabeth answers Lady Catherine's attack accurately: "He is a gentleman; I am a gentleman's daughter; so far we are equal" (356). However, this is an equality only of rank. In the eyes of the world, as Elizabeth accepts, Lady Catherine's charges hold true: She is indeed "without family, connections or fortune," whereas Darcy is a man of "splendid property, noble kindred, and extensive patronage" (362)—Mr. Collins's description, but fair nonetheless.

"[T]o be mistress of Pemberley might be something!" Elizabeth's conviction on this point is reinforced when, like Harriet, she is also able to see the landscape from *inside* the house. Moving from window to window, Elizabeth views the "prospect" from different angles: the wooded hill, the "disposition" of the ground, the river, "the trees scattered on its banks, and the winding of the valley" revealed in "different" perspectives and "positions," "beauties" visible "from every window" and all of them composing scenes of the picturesque; testifying to the good taste and judgement of the Darcy

family over the centuries during which they formed and shaped the "prospect" around the house.

Within the house, the scene is equally satisfying with the character of the Darcy heritage strongly in evidence. The rooms are "lofty and handsome," the "furniture suitable to the fortune of their proprietor," and "Elizabeth saw, with admiration of his taste, that it was neither gaudy nor uselessly fine; with less of splendour, and more real elegance, than the furniture of Rosings" (246).

"'And of this place,' thought she, 'I might have been mistress! . . . Instead of viewing them [these rooms] as a stranger, I might have rejoiced in them as my own'" (246).

By now, Jane Austen's readers could be in no doubt of the story's outcome. Elizabeth Bennet is destined to become "mistress of Pemberley," and fit to be its mistress too. She has eyes educated to read its landscape and to identify its manifestation of moral values; and has the insight to discern the virtues of its owner in the character of the house and its grounds. When the tour of the house is completed, the gardener takes over and conducts the party "across the lawn towards the river." They turn to look again at the house when, "suddenly," Darcy comes into view, and Jane Austen takes us into the great recognition scene, where Elizabeth confronts Darcy in person, the new Darcy, a man of "perfect civility" "his behaviour, so strikingly altered," "polite and unassuming," speaking "with such civility . . . and gentleness" (252) in his courtesy towards the Gardiners, and "his wishing her to be acquainted with his sister," a Darcy in whose "character" Elizabeth is now able to feel assured, its puzzles and contradictions on the way to resolution.

IV

The likenesses between Grandison Hall and Pemberley are many: An important difference is the eye of the observer. Harriet Byron comes to Grandison Hall overjoyed and starry-eyed as a young bride taking possession of her new home, enchanted with everything she sees. Jane Austen's joke is to make Elizabeth a tourist, a somewhat jaded tourist, and the detail of the visit is laid out with considerable care.[8] The original plan was for Elizabeth and the Gardiners to make "their Northern tour" to the Lake District. However, it has to be cut short and limited to Derbyshire, as Mr. Gardiner, a City merchant, is kept in London by his business. This delays their start, contracting their planned six weeks to three, a great disappointment to Elizabeth. When the plan was first mooted, the scheme "was a constant source of delight" to Elizabeth, whose "heart" was set "on seeing the Lakes." Instead, on their shortened tour, they devote their time to visiting "the celebrated beauties of Matlock, Chatsworth, Dovedale, or the Peak." Helpfully, the Oxford edition of the novel includes

contemporary pictures of Matlock (facing 143) and Dovedale (facing 245). These convey something of the scenic quality of these rocky landscapes, so highly regarded for their savagery and desolation, and the emotions of wonder, sublimity, and grandeur to which they gave rise. Moreover, they provide a useful topic of conversation in the following chapter when Elizabeth meets Darcy and is tongue-tied, lost for something to talk about: It is "Matlock and Dove Dale" that come to her rescue.

Alongside these "celebrated beauties" of nature, Jane Austen names Chatsworth, one of England's great houses, the vast and palatial seat of the Duke of Devonshire. In fact, Derbyshire was renowned for both natural beauties and great houses, which included Hardwick, Kedlestone, and Haddon Hall. This is the context in which Elizabeth and the Gardiners make their way at last to Pemberley. Having "seen all the principal wonders of the country," Elizabeth is "tired of great houses; after going over so many, she really had no pleasure in fine carpets or satin curtains." Nor would Mrs. Gardiner have bothered with Pemberley "if it were merely a fine house richly furnished" but it has "delightful" grounds and "some of the finest woods in the country" (240). She knows the house, having been there before, and it is convenient to visit, only lying a mile or so off their road from Bakewell to Lambton, a town in which Mrs. Gardiner once lived. So their interests and expectations are carefully modulated. Mrs. Gardiner sets out for Pemberley to show Elizabeth its famous "woods" and "grounds"; Elizabeth goes out of sheer curiosity, to see Darcy's home, having first taken care to check that the family is away.

They can make the visit without invitation or prior warning. At that time, it was customary for country houses to be accessible when the owners were not in residence. Visitors needed only to arrive and ask if they might be shown round. Jane Austen tells us that Elizabeth and the Gardiners "were admitted into the hall" "on applying to see the place"; and that once inside, they were shown "all the house that was open to general inspection." In other words, not the family's private living quarters but those public rooms with features of interest, the dining-parlour, the principal reception rooms, the picture gallery, the library, the living rooms, and the principal bedrooms. And when they explore the grounds, guided by the gardener, Jane Austen tells us that they followed "the accustomed circuit," the route which would take visitors to the beauty spots and notable features of the Park, which, at ten miles round, was too extensive to explore in detail.

Unannounced and uninvited, this is how Elizabeth and the Gardiners come across Darcy so unexpectedly. "Business with his steward" has brought him to Pemberley a day early, ahead of "the

rest of the party," and they meet him coming from the stables, having arrived only that minute. Knowing nothing of their presence in the house, Darcy is caught totally off guard, a point that Jane Austen underlines in describing his shock at seeing them: "He absolutely started, and for a moment seemed immovable from surprise" (251). For Elizabeth, too, the encounter comes as a shock, leaving her "astonished and confused": "the few minutes in which they continued together, were some of the most uncomfortable of her life" (252).

These are the circumstances Jane Austen means us to take account of in understanding the emotional dynamics of their meeting, a sudden and strange situation in which Darcy finds Elizabeth at the very heart of his family's domain, a penetration that reaches his heart as well.

Away from Pemberley, Jane Austen continues the reconstruction of Darcy in the Grandison mould. One of Sir Charles's occupations is doing good by stealth, engaging on missions of charity and benevolence, travelling far and wide on the business of his family and friends. Darcy enters that same role, undertaking in secret the task of tracking down Wickham and Lydia. He succeeds in negotiating them towards the respectability of marriage, using his own funds to bribe Wickham, an arrangement he conceals, with the pretence that the money has come from Mr. Gardiner's pocket. When Elizabeth discovers this subterfuge, she comes to him in "gratitude." This provides the opportunity for their hearts to be opened to one another and confession to be made of the mistakes and misunderstandings, the varieties of pride and prejudice, on both sides, which have kept them apart.

V

It can be said that the hand of Richardson lies rather heavy on the last section of *Pride and Prejudice*, that the later Darcy, the Grandison-Darcy, is less vital than the Austen-Darcy of the early chapters. This may be so. But with Elizabeth, there is no hint of failure. For the first time encountering the great landed proprietor on his home ground, in the dignity and setting of the family seat, with its associations of stewardship, wealth, tradition, and history, a world remote from the Bennet home at Longbourn, Elizabeth is neither swamped nor transformed, but retains possession of herself: thus Jane Austen signals Elizabeth's fitness to be "mistress" of Pemberley. Her new role, as Darcy's wife, is not at the cost of her character. Unlike Harriet Byron, whose initial liveliness and humour are subdued under the sobering influence of Sir Charles, Elizabeth's intelligence, her critical spirit, her playfulness, her vitality, remain undiminished—those qualities of mind and spirit which place superiority so strongly on the side of the heroine.

In his Preface, Richardson describes Sir Charles as "a Man . . . of Liveliness and Spirit." But these qualities are scarcely in evidence, and it was left to Jane Austen to bring them to life, not in a man but in a woman.

Towards the end of the story, when Darcy and Elizabeth come together in the Platonic ideal, the giving and receiving of knowledge, Elizabeth is tempted to pull Darcy's leg. But the events and experiences of recent months have taught her tact and timing. She checks herself, remembering that Darcy "had yet to learn to be laughed at, and it was rather too early to begin." Yet that time does arrive, and she shocks Georgiana, with her "lively, sportive manner of talking to her brother," whom she now sees as "the object of open pleasantry" and of "liberties" taken (387-88).

"Liveliness" is the quality Darcy lacks; "liveliness of . . . mind" is what he admires in Elizabeth; and "liveliness" is what she brings to him. What he makes of this gift is an open question, something beyond the novel, for us to imagine for ourselves. Jane Austen ends *Pride and Prejudice* on a note entirely her own. Richardson is far away. And in the novels which follow *Pride and Prejudice*, the shadow of Grandison Hall wholly disappears. Never again was Jane Austen to invest her great houses with the glamour of Pemberley, its authority and substance, like Grandison Hall, a stronghold of values. Mansfield Park, with its foundations in the slave trade and its household in moral disorder; and Kellynch Hall, the ancestral home ruled by "vanity," its "ancient dignity" abandoned by the Elliots under the burden of debt; in relation to Grandison Hall, these two great houses of the later novels could not be more different, steeped as they are in the pain and turbulence of families adrift.

In conclusion, we return to Fanny Knight, the beloved niece to whom Jane Austen expressed her violent dislike for those Grandisonian "pictures of perfection." Jane Austen harboured an equal distaste for Grandisonian married life, the married life that Harriet Byron enters upon, a life of sobriety, conformity, and submission. She warned Fanny against such a fate: "I shall hate you when your delicious play of Mind is all settled down into conjugal & maternal affections." It was a fate Jane Austen observed all too often among her friends. But in art, if not in life, that "delicious play of Mind" could be preserved, could be kept eternally young, eternally "lively, sportive" and spirited, as it is in the person of Elizabeth Bennet or, as we should properly call her by her married name, Elizabeth Darcy.

NOTES

[1] Jane Austen's *'Sir Charles Grandison,'* ed. Brian Southam. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980, 4.

[2] Quotations from the text are taken from *The Novels of Jane Austen*, 3rd ed., ed. R. W. Chapman. London: Oxford University Press, 1932, 1933, 1934 (and reprints). References appear in the text.

[3] "Samuel Richardson" in Ioan Williams, ed., *Sir Walter Scott on Novelists and Fiction*. London: Routledge Press, 1968, 33. (Issued in New York by Barnes & Noble, 1968.) The essay on Richardson was originally published in 1824 in *Lives of the Novelists*. Scott quotes from *Essay on Poetry* by John Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham, published in 1682.

[4] *The Works of Jane Austen*, Vol. VI, *Minor Works*, ed. R. W. Chapman. London: Oxford University Press, 1954.

[5] 23 March 1817. *Jane Austen's Letters*, ed. Deirdre Le Faye. Third edition. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1995, 335. This was already a running joke with her niece. In 1814, she wrote to Fanny about "such beings in the World . . . as the Creature You & I should think perfection" (*Letters*, 280).

[6] This point was first made by Mary Lascelles in *Jane Austen and Her Art*. London: Oxford University Press, 1939, 67.

[7] Richardson's association of these qualities derives from the idea that the aesthetic sense and the moral sense arise from the same faculties. This assumption was widespread in the eighteenth century.

[8] This aspect of the novel, together with landscaping and the picturesque, is finely discussed by Mavis Batey in *Jane Austen and the English Landscape* (London: Barn Elms Publishing, 1996); the book was published shortly after this paper was given.

I use the Oxford English Novels edition of Samuel Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison*, 3 volumes, edited by Jocelyn Harris, published in London, New York and Toronto by the Oxford University Press in 1972.