Yours, Et Cetera

by Elizabeth (anghraine)

Summary

First Impressions, as seen in the characters' correspondence with one another.

Notes

I originally wrote First Impressions in letters, before deciding against it and switching over to narrative. It recently occurred to me that some of you might like to have the letters as a companion to FI itself, so here they are.
Chapter 1

Letter 1: Mr Wickham to Miss Darcy

Madam, my gratitude to your father cannot possibly be expressed. I am well aware that every blessing of education and manner I possess must be owing to his great kindness, little deserving of it though I may be, and I assure you, with all solemnity, that the debt of gratitude I owe to him will never be forgotten.

I am given to understand that Mr Darcy's benevolence did not end with his death, for which I offer the deepest condolences. -- Pray forgive the hand in which I scrawl (and I fear, blot) this letter, I still cannot contemplate my -- our -- losses with any kind of equanimity. -- You must understand. Although my inclination is not for the quiet and retirement of the church (I trust that you, more familiar with the unguarded warmth and vivacity of my disposition than anybody now living, had perceived as much), I must confess that I was loath to disregard Mr Darcy's wishes in this matter. Plainly, his desire for me to enter into the church continued to the end of his life; his recommendation of such a valuable living allows no other interpretation. The matter, therefore, required considerable reflection.

Nevertheless, I have now decided absolutely against taking orders. It is not unreasonable, I hope, for me to expect some small sum in place of the preferment -- which can be of no benefit to me now. Rather, I intend to study the law, a profession far better suited to my abilities; but the interest of one thousand pounds will be a very insufficient support therein. I am sure that your father, had he lived, would have provided for me in the profession of my choice.

Pray forgive any inconvenience this may cause you, and accept my sincerest condolences,

George Wickham

Letter 2: Miss Darcy to Captain Fitzwilliam

My dear Jack,

You know that my father particularly recommended that the Kympton living be given to Mr Wickham, whenever Mr Trent leaves this world. I pray for his continued good health.

Today I received the most extraordinary letter from Mr Wickham. It seems that he does not intend to take orders at all -- thank God! I could hardly deny my father's dying wish, yet Mr Wickham ought not to be a clergyman. I must confess, I am surprised that he should see the matter so clearly himself, but perhaps there is hope for him after all. He claims that the law is much more suited to his abilities and temperament, which is certainly the case; he does not want social powers. He has asked for a sum of money in lieu of the living -- several thousand pounds seemed implied, which is hardly unreasonable in the circumstances.

Perhaps my doubts spring from flaws in my disposition, rather than his; if so, then of course I will be very sorry, and promote his advancement in whatever way I can. I would like to believe he is sincere. I would like to believe everybody is sincere, but I cannot. I particularly cannot when presented with such incompetent, unsubtle attempts at ingratiations.

Georgiana, poor thing, is asking for you again. Her spirits were always melancholy, but I believe she has never recovered from my father's death. I cannot seem to console her; my temper is not maternal and she has not been easy with me since she went to school. Please write to her; I believe she would confide more readily in you than me, and if not, she would at least be
comforted by your interest.

I remain your affectionate cousin,

C. D.

**Letter 3: Captain Fitzwilliam to Miss Darcy**

Two or three thousand pounds is little enough to be finally rid of George Wickham. He will never study the law, of course.

I have written to Gee. Bring her to Ardsley for Christmas, my father adores children and my mother is already gathering her armies of nephews and nieces -- it would do Georgiana good to associate with children her own age, and the Howards and Darcys and Carterets are related in so many ways that Mama half-considers her a Howard already. Moreover, she has promised that I will be home by the 23rd if she has to swim across the Channel and fetch me herself.

J. Fitzwilliam

PS -- She also mentioned that you have not sung a note since Mr Darcy died, and believes -- as do I -- that that would be a greater comfort to your sister than anything we can do. As concerns music, at least, Georgiana is wholly my uncle's daughter.

**Letter 4: Miss Darcy to Mr Wickham**

Mr Wickham,

Naturally, if you intend to resign all claim to assistance in the church -- even supposing that you would ever be in a position to receive it -- I consider it only just that you should receive more immediate assistance. I hope three thousand pounds will be satisfactory.

I am prepared to present your inheritance to you at your earliest convenience. I trust that the inevitable meeting between us will be brief.

C. Darcy

**Letter 5: Mr Wickham to Miss Darcy**

My dear Miss Darcy,

I have received news of your recent loss. Mr Trent was the finest sort of clergyman -- inspiring as an orator, but gentle and kindly in his charge. I can only hope that I will, in some small way, be able to live up to the memory of his many excellences.

My own circumstances are exceedingly bad; the law was most unprofitable a study, and I am now resolved upon being ordained if you will present me to the Kympton living -- an eventuality of which I trust there can be little doubt, as I am assured that your family has nobody else to provide for, and you could not possibly have forgotten your late, revered father’s intentions for me.

I am, as always, your servant,

George Wickham

**Letter 6: Miss Darcy to Mr Wickham**

Mr Wickham,
Acquainted as I am with the multifarious vagaries and vices of your character, I had never before believed you to want understanding. You must recall that you received three thousand pounds in lieu of the preferment, not as a personal gift. If not, then you are certainly not capable of the duties of the office, so the entire matter is academic.

Pray do not importune me on this matter again.

Catherine Darcy
Letter 7: Miss Darcy to Mr Wickham

Mr Wickham,

I suggest that you leave Ramsgate immediately. My cousins will be here in two days, at the latest, and I cannot answer for their reactions to what I must tell them. Colonel Fitzwilliam, you may remember, is my sister's guardian.

Do not respond to this note, and do not attempt to gain entry to this house, or any other my sister or I shall ever reside in; your confederate has been removed from her charge, and if Georgiana is ever again so unfortunate as to set eyes upon you, my family will do everything within our power to blight all possibility of your ever enjoying worldly comfort or prosperity.

Letter 8: Mr Collins to Mr Bennet

Dear sir,

The disagreement subsisting between yourself and my late honoured father always gave me much uneasiness, and since I have had the misfortune to lose him I have frequently wished to heal the breach; but for some time I was kept back by my own doubts, fearing lest it might seem disrespectful to his memory for me to be on good terms with any one with whom it had always pleased him to be at variance.

My mind however is now made up on the subject, for having received ordination at Easter, I have been so fortunate as to be distinguished by the patronage of the Right Honourable Lady Catherine de Bourgh, widow of Sir Lewis de Bourgh, whose bounty and beneficence has preferred me to the valuable rectory of this parish, where it shall be my earnest endeavour to demean myself with grateful respect towards her ladyship, and be ever ready to perform those rites and ceremonies which are instituted by the Church of England. As a clergyman, moreover, I feel it my duty to promote and establish the blessing of peace in all families within the reach of my influence; and on these grounds I flatter myself that my present overtures of good-will are highly commendable, and must be acceptable to you and, particularly, your amiable daughters -- but of this hereafter.

If you should have no objection to receiving me into your house, I propose myself the satisfaction of waiting on you and your family, Monday, November 18th, by four o'clock, and shall probably trespass on your hospitality till the Saturday se'nnight following, which I can do without any inconvenience, as Lady Catherine is far from objecting to my occasional absence on a Sunday, provided that some other clergyman is engaged to do the duty of the day. I remain, dear sir, with respectful compliments to your lady and children, your well-wisher and friend,

William Collins

Letter 9: Mr Bennet to Mr Collins

Sir,

I will expect you on the 18th, with pleasure.

H. Bennet

Letter 10: Miss Bingley to Miss Bennet
My dear friend,

If you are not so compassionate as to dine to-day with Louisa and me, we shall be in danger of hating each other for the rest of our lives, for a whole day's tête-à-tête between two women can never end without a quarrel. Come as soon as you can on the receipt of this. Miss Darcy has gone to visit her aunt at Pickering, and my brothers are to dine with the officers. Yours ever,

Caroline Bingley

Letter 11: Miss Bennet to Mr Henry Bennet

My dearest Hal,

I find myself very unwell this morning, which, I suppose, is to be imputed to my getting wet through yesterday. My kind friends will not hear of my returning home till I am better. They insist also on my seeing Mr Jones -- therefore do not be alarmed if you should hear of his having been to me -- and excepting a sore throat and headache, there is not much the matter with me.

Yours, &c.

Letter 12: Mr Henry Bennet to Mrs Bennet

Madam,

My sister does not appear to be in any danger; nevertheless, I would desire you to visit her yourself, and form your own judgment of her situation.

Yours, &c.

Letter 13: Miss Darcy to Miss Georgiana Darcy

My dearest Georgiana,

I hope you are enjoying your time at Stanton. My uncle and aunt have told me how glad they are to have you with them for awhile. I suspect that they miss the days when the house was overflowing with young people; with nearly all of Lady Harrington's nieces married, her son and half her nephews in the army, and the Carterets fixed at their Irish estates, such occasions are quite rare now. If you would like any of our Darcy cousins with you, I am sure they would be only too welcome. When I called on Lady Darcy at Pickering -- it is only about twelve miles away from Netherfield, and I was only too glad to escape this dull, uncultured market-town for a day -- she told me that Phylly and Lavinia are quite miserable by themselves.

Miss Bingley wishes for me to say that she longs to see you. -- Consider it said.

I would exhort you to practise your music and drawing, but I know that you will do so regardless. If I had a quarter of your dedication, dearest sister, I would be as accomplished as any woman (or man, I suppose) could desire; but I have not your patience. So while you, undoubtedly, practised on the pianoforte and harp until your fingers were sore and unsteady, and studied twice as much as your masters commanded, I persuaded Miss Bingley to accompany me for an hour -- though she is so eager to oblige my every whim, that rhetoric is rather wasted on her -- and considered that quite sufficient for the entire week.

I suppose I might have performed in company, for we have been compelled to associate with Mr Bingley's neighbours -- Sir William Lucas requested a song, but of course I refused. To sing in such a place! Moreover, though I do not consider myself at all timid or fearful, I can admit to you
that the very idea of performing before a room full of strangers is highly disagreeable to me. I felt my hands shaking, and then was furious with myself for being so silly.

I have just realised that of course, you know nothing about Sir William or anybody else here. As I expect you shall join us by January, you ought to be prepared -- so I shall provide the *dramatis personae* forthwith.

Sir William Lucas, I understand, was formerly mayor of Meryton and, for reasons which defy all understanding, made a small fortune in trade, and then received a knighthood from His Majesty. At present he is a slightly presumptuous, very stupid, but rather kindly magistrate-cum-village fool. His wife is a sort of shrill caricature of himself, and there is an army of children -- ranging from an ill-behaved boy to the eldest, a lady of about twenty-seven. The latter is clever, very sensible, and rather plain; all of the former are noisy children, or ill-bred young men and nonsensical girls. They are certainly irksome, to their sister as well as all their neighbours, but I hope to see more of her. I have missed intelligent company.

Then there are the Bennets, neighbours and friends to the Lucases -- or rather, the other way around. They are by far the most prominent family in the area. Mr Bennet is master of the aptly-named Longbourn, a modest, but respectable estate, and rarely appears to either his family or neighbours. Perhaps the dereliction of his duties ought to be condemned; but, as I have been so unfortunate as to spend many hours in the company of both, his motives are entirely understandable. Whenever his wife enters any room I occupy, I only wish it were possible to emulate him. Her utter vulgarity, avarice and imbecility are almost beyond the power of words to describe. Even her low birth and connections cannot fully account for them.

There are five children -- a son of about five- or six-and-twenty, and four daughters. The eldest girl, perhaps a year or two younger than I, is lovely, good-humoured and well-bred; an angel, as Mr Bingley constantly avers. He is madly in love, again, but she really is a picture of perfection. I ought to like her better than I do. The younger three are much worse -- Miss Mary a prosing, surprisingly silly pedant, while Miss Catherine and Miss Lydia are prattling flirts.

Fortunately for his father's sanity and mine, the younger Mr Bennet is far superior to his sisters in understanding. I like him; I do not know if he means half of what he says, but he is always amusing. However, I must confess that it is disconcerting to speak to someone who has the wit to comprehend me -- particularly a handsome young man. I did not think so at first; indeed, I was initially more struck by his want of striking beauty than anything else; but I now find him quite pleasing to look upon.

He is light and rather tall, and altogether there is an elasticity about his walk that I admire. And although I was at first convinced that he had scarcely a good feature in his face, I had no sooner told my friends so when I saw that his countenance is rendered unusually intelligent by the expression in his dark eyes.

It is all very humiliating. It is, however, also very worthwhile, as my changed opinion gave me the opportunity to deliver a crushing set-down. Miss Bingley is really quite presumptuous sometimes. Moreover, Mr Bingley's infatuation with Miss Bennet, and our shared regard for Miss Lucas, have necessarily thrown us together a good deal, and it is much pleasanter to look at a handsome man than a plain one.

There are also the Longs, Gouldings, &c -- I do not know any of them well, and do not care to, as they all seem hopelessly dull. Mrs Long, who once sat beside me for half an hour without saying anything but "how d'ye do," apparently took umbrage at my silence. Miss Lucas tells me that it has something to do with a hack chaise. I do not pretend to understand this.

Speaking of Mr Bennet, he arrived at Netherfield yesterday. It seems that the day before that,
when I went to see my great-aunt Darcy, Miss Bingley and Mrs Hurst invited Miss Bennet to Netherfield. She was caught in the rain, developed a cold, they sent for the apothecary, Mr Bennet rushed here to see her for himself, she begged him to stay with her, Mr Bingley naturally invited him to remain until she recovers, et cetera. Miss Bingley is convinced that all of this, somehow, is the consequence of a complex plan of Mrs Bennet’s, which I rather doubt. Mrs Bennet scarcely has the capacity for complex thought of any kind -- or, unless she is the Almighty in disguise, command over the elements.

Regardless of how it has happened, Mr Bennet is in this room at this very moment. It is a little unsettling; I cannot see him well enough to tell what he is doing, but he seems to be listening to Miss Bingley's rhapsodies over my penmanship. Even Mr Bingley must have a book that is more interesting than that. -- I am almost out of paper, so you shall not hear her rhapsodies over you until January. Pray forgive me. -- And now that her brother has begged for an end to Mr Bennet's argument with me, there is nothing else to report. I will expect your lovely long letters as often as you can write them, and am, as always, your devoted sister,

Catherine Darcy

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!