

returned home. The gossip of the neighbourhood which, as was inevitable, had been for a little while busy with Mr. Percy and Lucia, was turned into another channel by their coming, and people again occupied themselves with the bride. Lucia was obliged to visit her friend, and to join the parties given on the occasion, and so day after day slipped by, and the surface of affairs seemed so unchanged that, but for one or two absent faces, it would have been difficult to believe in all that had happened lately.

But, of course, it did at last become known that Mrs. Costello was going away. She and Lucia both spoke of it lightly, as an ordinary occurrence enough; but it was so unlike their usual habits, that each person who heard the news instantly set himself or herself to guess a reason, and, connecting it with the loss of Lucia's gay spirits, most persons came naturally to one conclusion.

It did not matter whether they said, "Poor Lucia!" with the half-contemptuous pity people give to what they call "a disappointment," or "What else could she expect?" "I told you so!" or any other of the speeches in which we express our delight in a neighbour's misfortunes—every way