'Mrs Cole has servants to send. Can I do any thing for you?'

'No, I thank you. But do come in. Who do you think is here?—Miss Woodhouse and Miss Smith; so kind as to call to hear the new pianoforte. Do put up your horse at the Crown, and come in.'

'Well,' said he, in a deliberating manner, 'for five minutes, perhaps.'

'And here is Mrs Weston and Mr Frank Churchill too!—Quite delightful; so many friends!'

'No, not now, I thank you. I could not stay two minutes. I must get on to Kingston as fast as I can.'

'Oh! do come in. They will be so very happy to see you.'

'No, no; your room is full enough. I will call another day, and hear the pianoforte.'

'Well, I am so sorry!—Oh! Mr Knightley, what a delightful party last night; how extremely pleasant.—Did you ever see such dancing?—Was not it delightful?—Miss Woodhouse and Mr Frank Churchill; I never saw any thing equal to it.'

'Oh! very delightful indeed; I can say nothing less, for I suppose Miss Woodhouse and Mr Frank Churchill are hearing every thing that passes. And (raising his voice still more) I do not see why Miss Fairfax should not be mentioned too. I think Miss Fairfax dances very well; and Mrs Weston is the very best country-dance player, without exception, in England. Now, if your friends have any gratitude, they will say something pretty loud about you and me in return; but I cannot stay to hear it.'

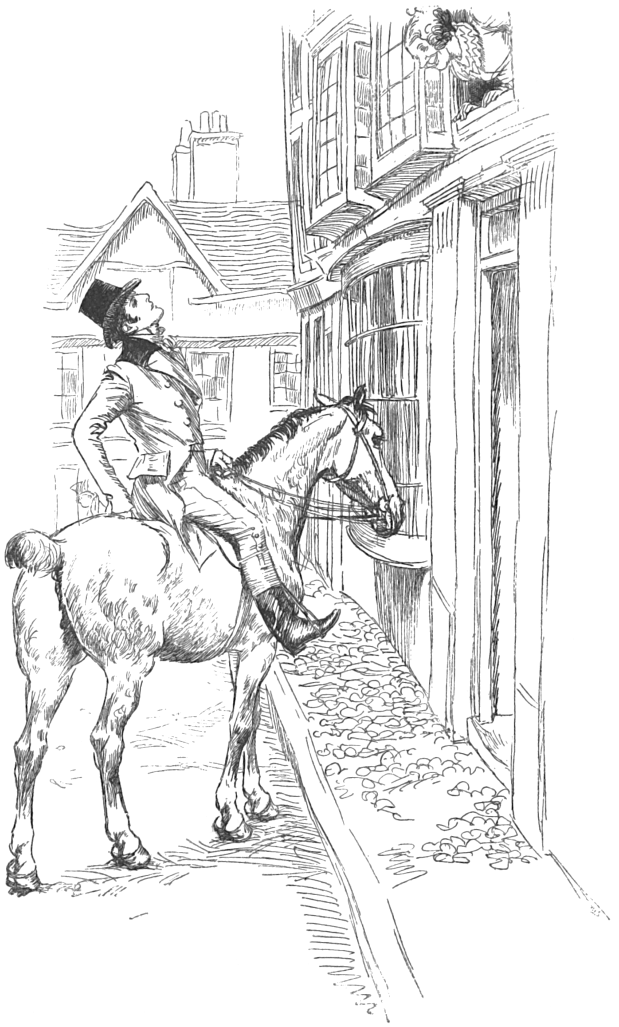
'Oh! Mr Knightley, one moment more; something of consequence—so shocked!—Jane and I are both so shocked about the apples!'

'What is the matter now?'

'To think of your sending us all your store apples. You said you had a great many, and now you have not one left. We really are so shocked! Mrs Hodges may well be angry. William Larkins mentioned it here. You should not have done it, indeed you should not. Ah! he is off. He never can bear to be thanked. But I thought he would have staid now, and it would have been a pity not to have mentioned.... Well, (returning to the room,) I have not been able to succeed. Mr Knightley cannot stop. He is going to Kingston. He asked me if he could do any thing....'

'Yes,' said Jane, 'we heard his kind offers, we heard every thing.'





'Oh! Mr Knightley, one moment more'

'Oh! yes, my dear, I dare say you might, because you know, the door was open, and the window was open, and Mr Knightley spoke loud. You must have heard every thing to be sure. "Can I do any thing for you at Kingston?" said he; so I just mentioned.... Oh! Miss Woodhouse, must you be going?—You seem but just come—so very obliging of you.'

Emma found it really time to be at home; the visit had already lasted long; and on examining watches, so much of the morning was perceived to be gone, that Mrs Weston and her companion taking leave also, could allow themselves only to walk with the two young ladies to Hartfield gates, before they set off for Randalls.





'But really, I am half ashamed, and wish I had never taken up the idea.'

'I am very glad you did, and that you communicated it to me. I have now a key to all her odd looks and ways. Leave shame to her. If she does wrong, she ought to feel it.'

'She is not entirely without it, I think.'

'I do not see much sign of it. She is playing Robin Adair at this moment—his favourite.'

Shortly afterwards Miss Bates, passing near the window, descried Mr Knightley on horse-back not far off.

'Mr Knightley I declare!—I must speak to him if possible, just to thank him. I will not open the window here; it would give you all cold; but I can go into my mother's room you know. I dare say he will come in when he knows who is here. Quite delightful to have you all meet so!—Our little room so honoured!'

She was in the adjoining chamber while she still spoke, and opening the casement there, immediately called Mr Knightley's attention, and every syllable of their conversation was as distinctly heard by the others, as if it had passed within the same apartment.

'How d' ye do?—how d'ye do?—Very well, I thank you. So obliged to you for the carriage last night. We were just in time; my mother just ready for us. Pray come in; do come in. You will find some friends here.'

So began Miss Bates; and Mr Knightley seemed determined to be heard in his turn, for most resolutely and commandingly did he say,

'How is your niece, Miss Bates?—I want to inquire after you all, but particularly your niece. How is Miss Fairfax?—I hope she caught no cold last night. How is she to-day? Tell me how Miss Fairfax is.'

And Miss Bates was obliged to give a direct answer before he would hear her in any thing else. The listeners were amused; and Mrs Weston gave Emma a look of particular meaning. But Emma still shook her head in steady scepticism.

'So obliged to you!—so very much obliged to you for the carriage,' resumed Miss Bates.

He cut her short with,

'I am going to Kingston. Can I do any thing for you?'

'Oh! dear, Kingston—are you?—Mrs Cole was saying the other day she wanted something from Kingston.'

Fairfax said something about conjecturing. There, it is done. I have the pleasure, madam, (to Mrs Bates,) of restoring your spectacles, healed for the present.'

He was very warmly thanked both by mother and daughter; to escape a little from the latter, he went to the pianoforte, and begged Miss Fairfax, who was still sitting at it, to play something more.

'If you are very kind,' said he, 'it will be one of the waltzes we danced last night;—let me live them over again. You did not enjoy them as I did; you appeared tired the whole time. I believe you were glad we danced no longer; but I would have given worlds—all the worlds one ever has to give—for another half-hour.'

She played.

'What felicity it is to hear a tune again which has made one happy!—If I mistake not that was danced at Weymouth.'

She looked up at him for a moment, coloured deeply, and played something else. He took some music from a chair near the pianoforte, and turning to Emma, said,

'Here is something quite new to me. Do you know it?—Cramer.—And here are a new set of Irish melodies. That, from such a quarter, one might expect. This was all sent with the instrument. Very thoughtful of Colonel Campbell, was not it?—He knew Miss Fairfax could have no music here. I honour that part of the attention particularly; it shews it to have been so thoroughly from the heart. Nothing hastily done; nothing incomplete. True affection only could have prompted it.'

Emma wished he would be less pointed, yet could not help being amused; and when on glancing her eye towards Jane Fairfax she caught the remains of a smile, when she saw that with all the deep blush of consciousness, there had been a smile of secret delight, she had less scruple in the amusement, and much less compunction with respect to her.—This amiable, upright, perfect Jane Fairfax was apparently cherishing very reprehensible feelings.

He brought all the music to her, and they looked it over together.—Emma took the opportunity of whispering,

'You speak too plain. She must understand you.'

'I hope she does. I would have her understand me. I am not in the least ashamed of my meaning.'



# Chapter XXIX

It may be possible to do without dancing entirely. Instances have been known of young people passing many, many months successively, without being at any ball of any description, and no material injury accrue either to body or mind;—but when a beginning is made—when the felicities of rapid motion have once been, though slightly, felt—it must be a very heavy set that does not ask for more.

Frank Churchill had danced once at Highbury, and longed to dance again; and the last half-hour of an evening which Mr Woodhouse was persuaded to spend with his daughter at Randalls, was passed by the two young people in schemes on the subject. Frank's was the first idea; and his the greatest zeal in pursuing it; for the lady was the best judge of the difficulties, and the most solicitous for accommodation and appearance. But still she had inclination enough for shewing people again how delightfully Mr Frank Churchill and Miss Woodhouse danced—for doing that in which she need not blush to compare herself with Jane Fairfax—and even for simple dancing itself, without any of the wicked aids of vanity—to assist him first in pacing out the room they were in to see what it could be made to hold—and then in taking the dimensions of the other parlour, in the hope of discovering, in spite of all that Mr Weston could say of their exactly equal size, that it was a little the largest.

His first proposition and request, that the dance begun at Mr Cole's should be finished there—that the same party should be collected, and the same musician engaged, met with the readiest acquiescence. Mr Weston entered into the idea with thorough enjoyment, and Mrs Weston most

willingly undertook to play as long as they could wish to dance; and the interesting employment had followed, of reckoning up exactly who there would be, and portioning out the indispensable division of space to every couple.

'You and Miss Smith, and Miss Fairfax, will be three, and the two Miss Coxes five,' had been repeated many times over. 'And there will be the two Gilberts, young Cox, my father, and myself, besides Mr Knightley. Yes, that will be quite enough for pleasure. You and Miss Smith, and Miss Fairfax, will be three, and the two Miss Coxes five; and for five couple there will be plenty of room.'

But soon it came to be on one side,

'But will there be good room for five couple?—I really do not think there will.'

On another,

'And after all, five couple are not enough to make it worth while to stand up. Five couple are nothing, when one thinks seriously about it. It will not do to invite five couple. It can be allowable only as the thought of the moment.'

Somebody said that Miss Gilbert was expected at her brother's, and must be invited with the rest. Somebody else believed Mrs Gilbert would have danced the other evening, if she had been asked. A word was put in for a second young Cox; and at last, Mr Weston naming one family of cousins who must be included, and another of very old acquaintance who could not be left out, it became a certainty that the five couple would be at least ten, and a very interesting speculation in what possible manner they could be disposed of.

The doors of the two rooms were just opposite each other. 'Might not they use both rooms, and dance across the passage?' It seemed the best scheme; and yet it was not so good but that many of them wanted a better. Emma said it would be awkward; Mrs Weston was in distress about the supper; and Mr Woodhouse opposed it earnestly, on the score of health. It made him so very unhappy, indeed, that it could not be persevered in.

'Oh! no,' said he; 'it would be the extreme of imprudence. I could not bear it for Emma!—Emma is not strong. She would catch a dreadful cold. So would poor little Harriet. So you would all. Mrs Weston, you would be quite laid up; do not let them talk of such a wild thing. Pray do not





but pity such feelings, whatever their origin, and could not but resolve never to expose them to her neighbour again.

At last Jane began, and though the first bars were feebly given, the powers of the instrument were gradually done full justice to. Mrs Weston had been delighted before, and was delighted again; Emma joined her in all her praise; and the pianoforte, with every proper discrimination, was pronounced to be altogether of the highest promise.

'Whoever Colonel Campbell might employ,' said Frank Churchill, with a smile at Emma, 'the person has not chosen ill. I heard a good deal of Colonel Campbell's taste at Weymouth; and the softness of the upper notes I am sure is exactly what he and all that party would particularly prize. I dare say, Miss Fairfax, that he either gave his friend very minute directions, or wrote to Broadwood himself. Do not you think so?'

Jane did not look round. She was not obliged to hear. Mrs Weston had been speaking to her at the same moment.

'It is not fair,' said Emma, in a whisper; 'mine was a random guess. Do not distress her.'

He shook his head with a smile, and looked as if he had very little doubt and very little mercy. Soon afterwards he began again,

'How much your friends in Ireland must be enjoying your pleasure on this occasion, Miss Fairfax. I dare say they often think of you, and wonder which will be the day, the precise day of the instrument's coming to hand. Do you imagine Colonel Campbell knows the business to be going forward just at this time?—Do you imagine it to be the consequence of an immediate commission from him, or that he may have sent only a general direction, an order indefinite as to time, to depend upon contingencies and conveniences?'

He paused. She could not but hear; she could not avoid answering,

'Till I have a letter from Colonel Campbell,' said she, in a voice of forced calmness, 'I can imagine nothing with any confidence. It must be all conjecture.'

'Conjecture—aye, sometimes one conjectures right, and sometimes one conjectures wrong. I wish I could conjecture how soon I shall make this rivet quite firm. What nonsense one talks, Miss Woodhouse, when hard at work, if one talks at all;—your real workmen, I suppose, hold their tongues; but we gentlemen labourers if we get hold of a word—Miss

Occupied about her spectacles



let them talk of it. That young man (speaking lower) is very thoughtless. Do not tell his father, but that young man is not quite the thing. He has been opening the doors very often this evening, and keeping them open very inconsiderately. He does not think of the draught. I do not mean to set you against him, but indeed he is not quite the thing!'

Mrs Weston was sorry for such a charge. She knew the importance of it, and said every thing in her power to do it away. Every door was now closed, the passage plan given up, and the first scheme of dancing only in the room they were in resorted to again; and with such good-will on Frank Churchill's part, that the space which a quarter of an hour before had been deemed barely sufficient for five couple, was now endeavoured to be made out quite enough for ten.

'We were too magnificent,' said he. 'We allowed unnecessary room. Ten couple may stand here very well.'

Emma demurred. 'It would be a crowd—a sad crowd; and what could be worse than dancing without space to turn in?'

'Very true,' he gravely replied; 'it was very bad.' But still he went on measuring, and still he ended with,

'I think there will be very tolerable room for ten couple.'

'No, no,' said she, 'you are quite unreasonable. It would be dreadful to be standing so close! Nothing can be farther from pleasure than to be dancing in a crowd—and a crowd in a little room!'

'There is no denying it,' he replied. 'I agree with you exactly. A crowd in a little room—Miss Woodhouse, you have the art of giving pictures in a few words. Exquisite, quite exquisite!—Still, however, having proceeded so far, one is unwilling to give the matter up. It would be a disappointment to my father—and altogether—I do not know that—I am rather of opinion that ten couple might stand here very well.'

Emma perceived that the nature of his gallantry was a little self-willed, and that he would rather oppose than lose the pleasure of dancing with her; but she took the compliment, and forgave the rest. Had she intended ever to marry him, it might have been worth while to pause and consider, and try to understand the value of his preference, and the character of his temper; but for all the purposes of their acquaintance, he was quite amiable enough.

Before the middle of the next day, he was at Hartfield; and he entered the room with such an agreeable smile as certified the continuance of the scheme. It soon appeared that he came to announce an improvement.

'Well, Miss Woodhouse,' he almost immediately began, 'your inclination for dancing has not been quite frightened away, I hope, by the terrors of my father's little rooms. I bring a new proposal on the subject:—a thought of my father's, which waits only your approbation to be acted upon. May I hope for the honour of your hand for the two first dances of this little projected ball, to be given, not at Randalls, but at the Crown Inn?'

'The Crown!'

'Yes; if you and Mr Woodhouse see no objection, and I trust you cannot, my father hopes his friends will be so kind as to visit him there. Better accommodations, he can promise them, and not a less grateful welcome than at Randalls. It is his own idea. Mrs Weston sees no objection to it, provided you are satisfied. This is what we all feel. Oh! you were perfectly right! Ten couple, in either of the Randalls rooms, would have been insufferable!—Dreadful!—I felt how right you were the whole time, but was too anxious for securing any thing to like to yield. Is not it a good exchange?—You consent—I hope you consent?'

'It appears to me a plan that nobody can object to, if Mr and Mrs Weston do not. I think it admirable; and, as far as I can answer for myself, shall be most happy—It seems the only improvement that could be. Papa, do you not think it an excellent improvement?'

She was obliged to repeat and explain it, before it was fully comprehended; and then, being quite new, farther representations were necessary to make it acceptable.

'No; he thought it very far from an improvement—a very bad plan—much worse than the other. A room at an inn was always damp and dangerous; never properly aired, or fit to be inhabited. If they must dance, they had better dance at Randalls. He had never been in the room at the Crown in his life—did not know the people who kept it by sight.—Oh! no—a very bad plan. They would catch worse colds at the Crown than anywhere.'

'I was going to observe, sir,' said Frank Churchill, 'that one of the great recommendations of this change would be the very little danger of any body's catching cold—so much less danger at the Crown than at



# Chapter XXVIII

The appearance of the little sitting-room as they entered, was tranquillity itself; Mrs Bates, deprived of her usual employment, slumbering on one side of the fire, Frank Churchill, at a table near her, most deedily occupied about her spectacles, and Jane Fairfax, standing with her back to them, intent on her pianoforte.

Busy as he was, however, the young man was yet able to shew a most happy countenance on seeing Emma again.

'This is a pleasure,' said he, in rather a low voice, 'coming at least ten minutes earlier than I had calculated. You find me trying to be useful; tell me if you think I shall succeed.'

'What!' said Mrs Weston, 'have not you finished it yet? you would not earn a very good livelihood as a working silversmith at this rate.'

'I have not been working uninterruptedly,' he replied, 'I have been assisting Miss Fairfax in trying to make her instrument stand steadily, it was not quite firm; an unevenness in the floor, I believe. You see we have been wedging one leg with paper. This was very kind of you to be persuaded to come. I was almost afraid you would be hurrying home.'

He contrived that she should be seated by him; and was sufficiently employed in looking out the best baked apple for her, and trying to make her help or advise him in his work, till Jane Fairfax was quite ready to sit down to the pianoforte again. That she was not immediately ready, Emma did suspect to arise from the state of her nerves; she had not yet possessed the instrument long enough to touch it without emotion; she must reason herself into the power of performance; and Emma could not

to see him. But, however, I found afterwards from Patty, that William said it was all the apples of that sort his master had; he had brought them all—and now his master had not one left to bake or boil. William did not seem to mind it himself, he was so pleased to think his master had sold so many; for William, you know, thinks more of his master's profit than any thing; but Mrs Hodges, he said, was quite displeased at their being all sent away. She could not bear that her master should not be able to have another apple-tart this spring. He told Patty this, but bid her not mind it, and be sure not to say any thing to us about it, for Mrs Hodges would be cross sometimes, and as long as so many sacks were sold, it did not signify who ate the remainder. And so Patty told me, and I was excessively shocked indeed! I would not have Mr Knightley know any thing about it for the world! He would be so very.... I wanted to keep it from Jane's knowledge; but, unluckily, I had mentioned it before I was aware.'

Miss Bates had just done as Patty opened the door; and her visitors walked upstairs without having any regular narration to attend to, pursued only by the sounds of her desultory good-will.

'Pray take care, Mrs Weston, there is a step at the turning. Pray take care, Miss Woodhouse, ours is rather a dark staircase—rather darker and narrower than one could wish. Miss Smith, pray take care. Miss Woodhouse, I am quite concerned, I am sure you hit your foot. Miss Smith, the step at the turning.'





Randalls! Mr Perry might have reason to regret the alteration, but nobody else could.'

'Sir,' said Mr Woodhouse, rather warmly, 'you are very much mistaken if you suppose Mr Perry to be that sort of character. Mr Perry is extremely concerned when any of us are ill. But I do not understand how the room at the Crown can be safer for you than your father's house.'

'From the very circumstance of its being larger, sir. We shall have no occasion to open the windows at all—not once the whole evening; and it is that dreadful habit of opening the windows, letting in cold air upon heated bodies, which (as you well know, sir) does the mischief.'

'Open the windows!—but surely, Mr Churchill, nobody would think of opening the windows at Randalls. Nobody could be so imprudent! I never heard of such a thing. Dancing with open windows!—I am sure, neither your father nor Mrs Weston (poor Miss Taylor that was) would suffer it.'

'Ah! sir—but a thoughtless young person will sometimes step behind a window-curtain, and throw up a sash, without its being suspected. I have often known it done myself.'

'Have you indeed, sir?—Bless me! I never could have supposed it. But I live out of the world, and am often astonished at what I hear. However, this does make a difference; and, perhaps, when we come to talk it over—but these sort of things require a good deal of consideration. One cannot resolve upon them in a hurry. If Mr and Mrs Weston will be so obliging as to call here one morning, we may talk it over, and see what can be done.'

'But, unfortunately, sir, my time is so limited— '

'Oh!' interrupted Emma, 'there will be plenty of time for talking every thing over. There is no hurry at all. If it can be contrived to be at the Crown, papa, it will be very convenient for the horses. They will be so near their own stable.'

'So they will, my dear. That is a great thing. Not that James ever complains; but it is right to spare our horses when we can. If I could be sure of the rooms being thoroughly aired—but is Mrs Stokes to be trusted? I doubt it. I do not know her, even by sight.'

'I can answer for every thing of that nature, sir, because it will be under Mrs Weston's care. Mrs Weston undertakes to direct the whole.'

'There, papa!—Now you must be satisfied—Our own dear Mrs Weston, who is carefulness itself. Do not you remember what Mr Perry said, so many years ago, when I had the measles? "If Miss Taylor undertakes to wrap Miss Emma up, you need not have any fears, sir." How often have I heard you speak of it as such a compliment to her!'

'Aye, very true. Mr Perry did say so. I shall never forget it. Poor little Emma! You were very bad with the measles; that is, you would have been very bad, but for Perry's great attention. He came four times a day for a week. He said, from the first, it was a very good sort—which was our great comfort; but the measles are a dreadful complaint. I hope whenever poor Isabella's little ones have the measles, she will send for Perry.'

'My father and Mrs Weston are at the Crown at this moment,' said Frank Churchill, 'examining the capabilities of the house. I left them there and came on to Hartfield, impatient for your opinion, and hoping you might be persuaded to join them and give your advice on the spot. I was desired to say so from both. It would be the greatest pleasure to them, if you could allow me to attend you there. They can do nothing satisfactorily without you.'

Emma was most happy to be called to such a council; and her father, engaging to think it all over while she was gone, the two young people set off together without delay for the Crown. There were Mr and Mrs Weston; delighted to see her and receive her approbation, very busy and very happy in their different way; she, in some little distress; and he, finding every thing perfect.

'Emma,' said she, 'this paper is worse than I expected. Look! in places you see it is dreadfully dirty; and the wainscot is more yellow and forlorn than any thing I could have imagined.'

'My dear, you are too particular,' said her husband. 'What does all that signify? You will see nothing of it by candlelight. It will be as clean as Randalls by candlelight. We never see any thing of it on our club-nights.'

The ladies here probably exchanged looks which meant, 'Men never know when things are dirty or not;' and the gentlemen perhaps thought each to himself, 'Women will have their little nonsenses and needless cares.'

One perplexity, however, arose, which the gentlemen did not disdain. It regarded a supper-room. At the time of the ballroom's being built, sup-





any thing.... I do congratulate you, Mrs Weston, most warmly. He seems every thing the fondest parent could.... "Oh!" said he, "I can fasten the rivet. I like a job of that sort excessively." I never shall forget his manner. And when I brought out the baked apples from the closet, and hoped our friends would be so very obliging as to take some, "Oh!" said he directly, "there is nothing in the way of fruit half so good, and these are the finest-looking home-baked apples I ever saw in my life." That, you know, was so very.... And I am sure, by his manner, it was no compliment. Indeed they are very delightful apples, and Mrs Wallis does them full justice—only we do not have them baked more than twice, and Mr Woodhouse made us promise to have them done three times—but Miss Woodhouse will be so good as not to mention it. The apples themselves are the very finest sort for baking, beyond a doubt; all from Donwell—some of Mr Knightley's most liberal supply. He sends us a sack every year; and certainly there never was such a keeping apple anywhere as one of his trees—I believe there is two of them. My mother says the orchard was always famous in her younger days. But I was really quite shocked the other day—for Mr Knightley called one morning, and Jane was eating these apples, and we talked about them and said how much she enjoyed them, and he asked whether we were not got to the end of our stock. "I am sure you must be," said he, "and I will send you another supply; for I have a great many more than I can ever use. William Larkins let me keep a larger quantity than usual this year. I will send you some more, before they get good for nothing." So I begged he would not—for really as to ours being gone, I could not absolutely say that we had a great many left—it was but half a dozen indeed; but they should be all kept for Jane; and I could not at all bear that he should be sending us more, so liberal as he had been already; and Jane said the same. And when he was gone, she almost quarrelled with me—No, I should not say quarrelled, for we never had a quarrel in our lives; but she was quite distressed that I had owned the apples were so nearly gone; she wished I had made him believe we had a great many left. Oh, said I, my dear, I did say as much as I could. However, the very same evening William Larkins came over with a large basket of apples, the same sort of apples, a bushel at least, and I was very much obliged, and went down and spoke to William Larkins and said every thing, as you may suppose. William Larkins is such an old acquaintance! I am always glad