

minutes. My mother was taken ill immediately, and the whole house in such confusion!”

“Oh! Jane,” cried Elizabeth, “was there a servant belonging to it who did not know the whole story before the end of the day?”

“I do not know. I hope there was. But to be guarded at such a time is very difficult. My mother was in hysterics, and though I endeavoured to give her every assistance in my power, I am afraid I did not do so much as I might have done! But the horror of what might possibly happen almost took from me my faculties.”

“Your attendance upon her has been too much for you. You do not look well. Oh that I had been with you! you have had every care and anxiety upon yourself alone.”

“Mary and Kitty have been very kind, and would have shared in every fatigue, I am sure; but I did not think it right for either of them. Kitty is slight and delicate; and Mary studies so much, that her hours of repose should not be broken in on. My aunt Phillips came to Longbourn on Tuesday, after my father went away; and was so good as to stay till Thursday with me. She was of great use and comfort to us all. And Lady Lucas has been very kind; she walked here on Wednesday morning to condole with us, and offered her services, or any of her daughters’, if they should be of use to us.”

“She had better have stayed at home,” cried Elizabeth; “perhaps she *meant* well, but, under such a misfortune as this, one cannot see too little of one’s neighbours. Assistance is impossible; condolence insufferable. Let them triumph over us at a distance, and be satisfied.”

She then proceeded to inquire into the measures which her father had intended to pursue, while in town, for the recovery of his daughter.

“He meant I believe,” replied Jane, “to go to Epsom, the place where they last changed horses, see the postilions and try if anything could be made out from them. His principal object must be to discover the number of the hackney coach which took them from Clapham. It had come with a fare from London; and as he thought that the circumstance of a gentleman and lady’s removing from one carriage into another might be remarked he meant to make inquiries at Clapham. If he could anyhow discover at what house the coachman had before set down his fare, he determined to make inquiries there, and hoped it might not be impossible to find out the stand and number of the coach. I do not know of any other designs that he had formed; but he was in such a hurry to be gone, and his spirits so greatly discomposed, that I had difficulty in finding out even so much