she was seated she observed that they were not so cheerful as usual. "What is the matter?" said she; "how have you agreed during my absence?" To these questions all were unwilling to reply; for the truth was that they had been quarrelling almost the whole time. "What! all silent?" said she. "I fear you have not obeyed my commands, but have been contending. I desire you will tell me the truth." Robin, knowing that he was the greatest offender, began to justify himself before the others could have time to accuse him.

"I am sure, mother," said he, "I only gave Dicky a little peck because he crowded me so; and all the others joined with him, and fell upon me at once."

"Since you have begun, Robin," answered Dicky, "I must speak, for you gave me a very hard peck indeed and I was afraid you had put out my eye. I am sure I made all the room I could for you; but you said you ought to have half the nest, and to be master when your father and mother were out, because you are the eldest."

"I do not love to tell tales," said Flapsy, "but what Dicky says is very true, Robin; and you plucked two or three little feathers out of me, only because I begged you not to use us ill."