and kindness? Which of you has cause to reproach either your father or me with partiality? Do we not with the exactest equality distribute the fruits of our labours among you? And in what respect has poor Pecksy the preference, but in that praise which is justly her due, and which you do not strive to deserve? Has she ever yet uttered a complaint against you? though, from the dejection of her countenance, which she in vain attempted to conceal, it is evident that she has suffered your reproaches for some days past. I positively command you to treat her otherwise, for it is a mother’s duty to succour a persecuted nestling; and I will certainly admit her next my heart, and banish you all from that place you have hitherto possessed in it, if you suffer envy and jealousy to occupy your bosoms, instead of that tender love which she, as the kindest of sisters, has a right to expect from you.”

Robin, Dicky, and Flapsy were quite confounded by their mother’s reproof; and Pecksy, sorry that they had incurred the displeasure of so tender a parent, kindly endeavoured to soften her anger. “That I have been vexed, my dear mother,” said she, “is true, but not so much as you suppose; and I am ready to believe that my dear brothers and sister were not in earnest in the severe things they said of