"And so," said Harriet, "you had rather see a string of empty egg-shells than hear a sweet concert of birds singing in the trees? I admire your taste, truly!"

"Why, is there any harm in taking birds' eggs?" said Lucy; "I never before heard that there was."

"My dear mamma," replied Harriet, "has taught me to think there is harm in every action which gives causeless pain to any living creature; and I own I have a very particular affection for birds."

"Well," said Lucy, "I have no notion of such affections, for my part. Sometimes, indeed, I try to rear those which Edward brings home, but they are teasing, troublesome things, and I am not lucky. To tell the truth, I do not concern myself much about them: if they live, they live; and if they die they die. He has brought me three nests this day to plague me; I intended to have fed the birds before I came out, but being in a hurry to come to see you, I quite forgot it. Did you feed them, Edward?"

"Not I," said he, "I thought you would do it 'tis enough for me to find the nests."

"And have you actually left three nests of young birds at home without food?" exclaimed Harriet.

"I did not think of them, but will feed them when I return," said Lucy.