“Pray, Mrs. Wilson,” said Frederick, “do your sons ever go bird’s-nesting?” “No,” said she; “I hope I have not a child amongst my family capable of such barbarity. In the course of the summer they generally have young birds to nurse, which fall out of their nests or lose their parents, but are seldom lucky enough to raise them, and we have only one in a cage which they reared last summer. Yet we have plenty of singing, for the sweet creatures, finding they may enjoy themselves unmolested in the trees, treat us with their harmony from morning to night, of which you had a specimen in the garden. Sparrows, indeed, my husband is under the necessity of destroying, for they are such devourers, they would leave him but little corn to carry to market if he did not shoot them: but he never kills the crows, because they are very serviceable in picking up grubs and other things injurious to farmers. We only set a little boy to watch our new-sown grain, and he keeps making a noise, which effectually frightens them.”

“Oh,” said Frederick, “I nurse young birds too. I have got a linnet and a robin redbreast, and I feed a hundred beside.” Mrs. Wilson smiled, and addressing herself to Mrs. Benson, said, “Now, madam, we will, if you please, return to the house,