give me liberty! But why do I address myself to you, who are heedless of my misery?” Here, casting an indignant look around, he stopped his song.

“What think you now, Dicky?” said the red-breast; “have you as high an idea of the happiness of this place as you conceived at the first view of it?”

“I cannot help thinking still,” replied Dicky, “that it is a charming retreat, and that it must be very comfortable to have everything provided for one’s use.”

“Well,” said the father, “let us move, and observe those linnets who are building their nest.”

Accordingly, they flew to a tree, the branches of which formed a part of the shelter of the aviary, where they easily heard, without being themselves observed, all that passed in it.

“Come,” said one of the linnets, “let us go on with our work and finish the nest, though it will rather be a melancholy task to hatch a set of little prisoners. How different was the case when we could anticipate the pleasure of rearing a family to all the joys of liberty! Men, it is true, now with officious care supply us with the necessary materials, and we make a very good nest; but I protest I had much rather be at the trouble of seeking them.