

Between the children of Pierre and Catharine the most charming harmony prevailed; they grew up as one family, a pattern of affection and early friendship. Though different in tempers and dispositions, Hector Maxwell, the eldest son of the Scottish soldier, and his cousin, young Louis Perron, were greatly attached: they, with the young Catharine and Mathilde, formed a little coterie of inseparables; their amusements, tastes, pursuits, occupations, all blended and harmonized delightfully; there were none of those little envyings and bickerings among them that pave the way to strife and disunion in after-life.

Catharine Maxwell and her cousin Louis were more like brother and sister than Hector and Catharine; but Mathilde was gentle and dove-like, and formed a contrast to the gravity of Hector and the vivacity of Louis and Catharine.

Hector and Louis were fourteen—strong, vigorous, industrious, and hardy, both in constitution and habits. The girls were turned of twelve. It is not with Mathilde that our story is connected, but with the two lads and Catharine. With the gaiety and *naïveté* of the Frenchwoman, Catharine possessed, when occasion called it into action, a thoughtful and well-regulated mind, abilities which would well have repaid the care of mental cultivation; but of book-learning she knew nothing beyond a little reading, and that but imperfectly, acquired from her father's teaching. It was an accomplishment which he had gained when in the army, having been taught by his colonel's son, a lad of twelve years of age, who had