

found Hector with his axe on his shoulder. "What are you taking the axe for, Hector? you will find it heavy to carry," said his sister.

"In the first place, I have to cut a stick of blue beech to make a broom for sweeping the house, sister of mine, and that is for your use, Miss Kate; and in the next place, I have to find, if possible, a piece of rock elm or hickory for axe handles: so now you have the reason why I take the axe with me."

The children left the clearing and struck into one of the deep defiles that lay between the hills, and cheerfully they laughed and sung and chattered, as they sped on their pleasant path; nor were they loath to exchange the glowing sunshine for the sober gloom of the forest shade. What handfuls of flowers of all hues, red, blue, yellow, and white, were gathered, only to be gazed at, carried for a while, then cast aside for others fresher and fairer. And now they came to cool rills that flowed, softly murmuring, among mossy limestone, or blocks of red or gray granite, wending their way beneath twisted roots and fallen trees; and often Catharine lingered to watch the eddying dimples of the clear water, to note the tiny bright fragments of quartz or crystallized limestone that formed a shining pavement below the stream. And often she paused to watch the angry movements of the red squirrel, as, with feathery tail erect, and sharp scolding note, he crossed their woodland path, and swiftly darting up the rugged bark of some neighbouring pine or hemlock, bade the intruders on his quiet haunts defiance; yet so bold in his indignation,