

listen for some replying call ! But the sighing breeze in the pine tops, or sudden rustling of the leaves caused by the flight of the birds startled by the unusual glare of the torches, and the echoes of their own voices, were the only sounds that met their anxious ears. At daybreak they returned, sad and dispirited, to their homes, to snatch a morsel of food, endeavour to cheer the drooping hearts of the weeping mothers, and hurry off, taking different directions. But, unfortunately, they had little clue to the route which Hector and Louis had taken, there being many cattle-paths through the woods. Louis's want of truthfulness had caused this uncertainty, as he had left no intimation of the path he purposed taking when he quitted his mother's house. He had merely said he was going with Hector in search of the cattle, giving no hint of his intention of asking Catharine to accompany them ; he had but told his sick sister that he would bring home strawberries and flowers, and that he would soon return. Alas ! poor, thoughtless Louis ! how little did you think of the web of woe you were then weaving for yourself, and all those to whom you and your companions were so dear ! Children, think twice ere ye deceive once.

Catharine's absence would have been quite unaccountable but for the testimony of Duncan and Kenneth, who had received her sisterly caresses before she joined Hector at the barn ; and much her mother marvelled what could have induced her good, dutiful Catharine to have left her work and forsaken her household duties to go rambling away with the boys,