Of course we always lost ourselves, and trusted to Barbara to guide us home, which she generally did by the most circuitous routes she could find. At dinner the lady-mother would inquire what had become of us, but none of us could tell where we had been, excepting Barbara. "Why Betty, my dear, you understood our geography well enough when you were guide to our good old friend, the General." Ah, but Betty found it was quite a different thing to be guide to her good young friend, the captain, and her explanation was generally a zigzag sort of performance, which out-did the best riddle of her album. It was the custom of the lady-mother to take a nap after dinner, and having a due regard for her, we always left her to this enjoyment as soon as possible. Sometimes we floated in a little skiff down the broad and tranquil river, which, kindled by the setting sun, moved onward like a stream of fire, tuning our voices to glees and duets, till the nightingales themselves were astonished. Oh, the witchery of bright eyes at sunset and music on the water! Sometimes we stole through the cavernous recesses of the old oak wood conjuring up fawns and satyrs at every step, and sending Barbara to detect the deceptions, and play at hide and seek with us. At last our mistress the moon would open her eye and warn us home, where, on the little study sofa we watched her progress, and repeated sweet poesy. Many a time did I long to break the footman's head when he brought the lights, and announced the tea. The lady-mother never slept after this, and the business of the day was ended.

Things went on in this way for a week or ten days, and lady Betty appeared to have less spirits, and a more serious and languid air than heretofore. There was nothing now hoidenish in her behaviour, and instead of the upper lip curling with scorn, the under one was dropping with sentiment. Her voice was not so loud, and fell in a gentler cadence, and the Madonna braid was festooned with a more exquisite grace. When I besought her to let me hear the subject of her thoughts,