

This circumstance was construed by some to indicate that a quarrel had taken place between the two friends, and was preying upon Minnie's mind, which hypothesis, however, was quickly annihilated when the two walked off together as usual, apparently on their usual terms, and in their usual spirits.

Next day things stood in exactly the same position, and the girls were beginning to get impatient for a solution of the mystery, but no solution was forthcoming. Then came Saturday, on which day school was not held, and the two friends were at liberty to discuss their project in full.

They had arranged that the discussion was to take place at Mabel's home, as Minnie's brothers were all at home on Saturday, and would be likely to interfere with their intention of keeping the matter private.

Mabel was an only child, her father being a business man with whom the world had not dealt too kindly. Her mother was dead, which circumstance had first drawn Minnie towards her, for she also was motherless.

A sister of Mr. Chartres kept house for him, so that Mabel was at liberty to spend as much time with her friend as she thought proper. She would often have felt more comfortable if her aunt would have allowed her to remain at home and render her some assistance with her household duties, but her aunt was immovable in her determination to allow no interference with what she considered her special department, declaring indeed that she could not perform her duties to her own satisfaction, or her brother's comfort, if her mind