

THE LOVERS' LITANY.

Eye of gray, a sudden quail,
Driving rain and falling stars,
As the storm wears to sea
In a parting storm of cheer.

HAVING HER OWN WAY

A FAMILY FAILING.

[Contributed by "Jesson."]
EVEN O'CLOCK!



The little carved wooden timepiece on the mantel chimed out the hour of 7.

Mr. Dobson turned pale. He had been walking restlessly up and down the salon for the past half hour, rushing to the windows at every sound in the quiet room outside, and becoming every moment more anxious than he dared to admit, even to himself.

At 5 o'clock, and the clock had just struck 7. The anxious father passed rapidly out of an open window at the back of the charming flower scented room and on to the first of the three broad terraces of the garden, behind the final parapet of which and its trailing willows Lake Leman slept, glowing like a great deep colored sapphire in the heat of the August evening.

There was nothing but the familiar, exquisite scene to meet Mr. Dobson's eyes—the sun blazing hotly upon the white walled villa, with its numberless balconies and verandas, and its red striped Spanish blinds; the roses and magnolias and oleanders rejoicing in the golden blaze; the long tresses of the willows dipping into the cool green water far down beneath the last low terrace wall, the waves of which were overflowing with scarlet geraniums; and opposite to him, across the broad, blue green expanse of the loveliest lake in Switzerland, the glorious mountains of Savoy, their snow capped heads uplifted inexorably against the dazzling blue of the midsummer sky.

The poor father saw nothing of all this. What to him was this mighty world that surrounded his empty home when Amoret was away?

Decidedly the child needed someone to look after her when he was away. But, then, he never was away. It had only been the most urgent necessity that had induced him to go to Vevey without her.

Mr. Dobson looked at his watch—quarter past seven! Oh, this was going too far! "Dinner? Of course not!"—excitedly—to poor Francine, who appeared at the windows of the salon, with a timid plea for the cook's plate.

again—"If I could only send word to papa! What will he think? What will he do? And the doctors said he was not to be excited or annoyed about anything! Oh, Bingham, what shall I do?"

Bingham only shook her head helplessly, and went on sobbing and rocking herself to and fro.

"If I could only manage to hobble on somehow!" continued poor Amoret. "But, no," her face contracted by a sudden pain as she tried to move her ankle, "it is quite impossible. I shall have to sit on this stone all night, that is evident, unless—oh, Bingham,—in piteous appeal—don't you think you could pick up courage and make your way back to Gifon? There is a hotel there; they could send a message to papa—they speak English at all those places."

Bingham shrieked at the late suggestion.

"Me go by myself up them rocks, ma'am, with that torrent roaring loud enough to drive a body distracted, and the night coming on—oh, ma'am, I couldn't really! I should die of fright!"

"Well," said Amoret resignedly, "we must keep together, I suppose; only, what will papa think when it gets dark and I don't come home?"

There was no answer except a fresh burst of sobbing and moaning from Bingham; and poor little Amoret, whose ankle was every moment becoming more and more painful, relapsed into an uneasy silence. Oh, why had it come into her head to take that unlucky walk to the Gorge de Chauderon?

"Cheer up, Bingham," she urged, as her maid's sobs became louder and louder; "some one may pass by yet. It is only half past seven by my watch, and as it seems underneath these trees; and the worst that can happen to us is to be late. We shall hardly die of hunger before to-morrow morning, and by that time Heaven will surely send some stray tourist to our rescue."

"Oh, don't, ma'am!" moaned Bingham. "By to-morrow we may both be sweltering in our gore. Oh, why did I ever leave my good 'ome to go traipsing in foreign parts! Oh, if ever I see Keutish town again—"

"Bingham!" Amoret interrupted with a sudden cry of relief, which made poor Bingham spring to her feet and draw nearer to her mistress. "Oh, Bingham, look! Look up there on the other side, near the bridge! Don't you see something moving between the trees? I do believe someone is coming at last! Oh, now I shall be able at least to send word to papa—oh, I am so glad!"—clasping her hands. "Yes, it is—it is a man! Oh, I hope he will see us. Call out, Bingham—call out loud, and wave your handkerchief! Monsieur, oh, monsieur!—raising her clear treble voice—"oh, monsieur, please come here!"

The man paused midway on the little bridge, attracted doubtless by the fluttering handkerchiefs just visible in the dusk, for the women's voices could hardly make themselves heard above the roar of the leaping torrent.

"He sees us!" cried Amoret eagerly. "He is coming!"

And as she spoke the man crossed the bridge and was lost to sight in a turn in the winding pathway overhead.

"Oh," said Amoret, with a sigh of relief, "I don't mind now! Whoever it is, I am sure he will help us."

"Oh, ma'am, don't be too sure of that," whispered Bingham; "there's no trusting these foreigners at all!"

"Well, let us hope it will turn out to be an Englishman!"—with an impatient laugh. "If he is not, I shall find it hard to explain. I must make it up in a pantomime; and when he sees that I can't put my foot to the ground surely he will understand. Oh!"

She started again, as at that moment the man reappeared close at her elbow, and made some surly demand in French. Bingham could scarcely repress a scream. The stranger was dressed in a big blouse and wooden shoes. Amoret noticed, and she began, in her imperfect French, to pour out her troubles.

Would he be so kind as to hasten on and go to the Villa Beau Sejour at Montreux, where, if he would deliver this little note—which she prepared to write on a leaf of her pocketbook—he would be well rewarded for his trouble.

The man nodded in a stolid way, and stood with his eyes fixed upon the girl's hand, from which she had torn her glove when she began to write. One or two valuable rings, that had been her mother's, sparkled on Miss Dobson's slender fingers. The man in the blue blouse regarded them with curiosity, and then, as Amoret gave him the folded paper, he slowly held out his dirty palm.

"Oh, yes, of course," said the girl eagerly, searching her pocket for her little lizard skin purse. "I am afraid I have not much—pas beaucoup, monsieur—but tenez! Here are five francs, and"—holding out the money—"you will make haste!"

The man did not answer; he was turning the five francs over and over in his hand, and as he did so he cast a hurried glance up and down the darkening ravine.

"Oh, ma'am!" whispered Bingham, whose teeth were now chattering. "I don't like the looks of him! And I am afraid that he has been drinking."

"What does it matter," answered Amoret rapidly, "so long as he will take the note to papa? Quick!" she pleaded, as the man drew still nearer to the stone on which she was sitting. "Oh, please, do make haste!"

The man began to mutter as though he were dissatisfied. She guessed by his actions that he was demanding more money. The way was long, he declared; mademoiselle was rich.

"But I have no more money!" exclaimed the girl piteously. "The gentleman at Montreux will give you as much as you like. But"—she turned her empty purse upside down with an expressive gesture—"you see that I can not."

"Mademoiselle has her rings!" said the man roughly. A man doesn't take a long course like that for nothing."

"My rings?" echoed Amoret faintly. "I can not give you my rings—they were my mother's. Ah, you coward!"—for the man had now seized her hand and

was dragging off the rings, cutting her tender flesh as he did so and making it bleed.

Bingham began to scream; but Amoret sternly bade her be silent.

"What good does it do to scream?" she demanded, her voice hardly trembling, though her face was ashy pale. "I wouldn't mind losing my rings even if I thought he would take the note. But, now that he has robbed me, he will be afraid to go to the house. We are no better off than we were before."

"We shall be murdered—murdered!" sobbed Bingham, falling upon her knees and hiding her head in her shawl. "Ah, well, I know it! We shall be murdered in cold blood!"

"You have my rings now," Amoret said to the man in her halting French; "but at least you will take the letter?"

"Hien! We shall see!" returned the man, with a drunken sneer. "Give me that too; it would be a pity to leave that behind," and he snatched at the antique chateleine in which Amoret carried her valuable little watch.

The girl unfastened the chateleine without a word. Her heart was beating violently, but she showed no sign of alarm.

"I have nothing else for you to steal," she said then, her head drawn up high; "you may as well go to the villa and deliver the letter. Nothing shall be done to you—I will not tell my father what you have done."

The man turned as he hid the trinkets away in the breast of his blouse and looked with tipsy admiration at the pretty, pale girl facing him so bravely, her eyes flashing at him through the tears that had risen again at the thought of her father's distress of mind.

"Tenez!" he exclaimed, with an oath. "You are a fine lass; you shall give me a kiss into the bargain, just to show that you don't bear any malice!"

Amoret grew faint and cold as he drew near.

"No, no—not!" she panted; but her voice died away upon her lips; she felt her strength—nerved as she was by disgust and dread—giving way before the drunken scoundrel's persistence. "Papa," she thought, "oh, papa!"—and then a black cloud seemed to pass before her eyes and the roar of the torrent seemed suddenly to cease.

"She is better now," Amoret heard a low voice say—the next moment, as it seemed to her—and, opening her eyes, she saw Bingham kneeling by her side, no longer crying and with her a man who looked English, and who certainly did not wear a blouse.

"Ah," she said, putting her two weak little hands up to her forehead, "what was it? Did I faint? Oh,—drawing a long breath—"what a horribly deathly sensation it is!"

"Don't try to speak just yet," said the voice again, very kindly. "You are safe now, and your maid is here. Keep quiet for a few minutes longer; there is no danger."

Amoret laid her head down again obediently. She knew then that it had been raised against the speaker's shoulder. She felt the roughness of his tweed coat against her cheek, and smelt the—her—not unpleasant fragrance of tobacco. There was a wet handkerchief on her forehead; it felt cool and pleasant. The girl closed her eyes.

"Oh, dear, sir," whispered Bingham nervously, "do you think she's going off again?"

Amoret opened her eyes as the sound of her maid's dolorous voice fell upon her ears.

"Well, Bingham," she said, with a weak little laugh, "you are not much better after all; and I—oh—as her thoughts became clearer, she sat up again and began to cry—"oh, papa, papa, I am a wicked girl! I had forgotten papa! Oh, Bingham, let us go home to papa! This gentleman will take care of us. You will, won't you?" she pleaded. "We should be afraid to go by ourselves, and then—my foot—I can't walk."

In her eagerness she turned her face toward the stranger, who was bending over her and holding her so firmly, and as she did so she started, blushing in the friendly darkness, for her cheek had been brushed by a thick, soft beard.

"I am so sorry to trouble you," she went on hurriedly, sitting up and putting her hand to her dizzy head; "but—"

"Don't think of that at all," said the pleasant voice. "Between your maid's arm and mine you will perhaps be able to get on; if not—as I can not leave you alone while I go for help, and as your maid is very nervous—I am afraid you must submit to being carried."

"Oh," replied Amoret piteously, "but I am heavy. You are very good natured—I don't know how to thank you. But how could you carry me all the way to Montreux? You would be dead before you got half way!"

"I don't think so," answered the stranger, with a cheerful laugh. "At any rate, I mean—with your permission—to have a try. You are certainly in no condition for walking."

"No," Amoret admitted ruefully, "and I wish I were not afraid to stay here while you went and told papa, but I am."

"And no wonder," said he kindly. "But there is no danger now. I don't think that fellow will trouble ladies again in a hurry. Ah, you see—as Amoret tried to stand up but subsided again upon her stone, with a cry of pain—"there is nothing for it but to make up your mind to let me carry you, at any rate until we are out of the gorge; we may meet a passing carriage then, and—"

"Oh, yes—let us make haste!" urged Amoret, blushing again like a carnation as she felt herself very carefully and gently lifted in two strong arms. "Bingham, you will keep near us. And please don't try to talk, with pretty hesitation, to the stranger—it is quite hard enough for you as it is."

"Well," he returned, laughing again, "the path is not very good. I think I must concentrate all my energies upon following it as well as I can in the dark."

Amoret saw then that night had really set in, that it was not only the dense fir boughs over head that prevented her from seeing the features of her deliverer. The thought of her father's misery absorbed

all other feelings for the time being. She forgot the strangeness of the situation—was conscious only of a vehement desire to reach Montreux as speedily as possible.

She sighed once or twice, and then the stranger asked her good naturedly if she was uncomfortable—if she would like to rest for a while.

"Oh, no!" she answered piteously, blushing. "But you—you must be nearly dead. Don't you think I could manage to hobble on now between you and Bingham?"

"No, no—don't think of me at all! I am all right, and we shall soon be out of the gorge now."

And then, slowly and steadily, the stranger went on down the winding path, feeling his way cautiously at each step, with the sound of the torrent always in their ears, and at intervals, between the overshadowing pine branches, the stars shining down upon them from the purple midsummer sky.

When, an hour later, a carriage stopped at the door and the stranger of the tweed coat helped his charge to alight, poor Mr. Dobson was half dead from anxiety, and Amoret, as she limped painfully into the room between Bingham and her protector, saw an expression on her father's face that smote her heart with a great and sudden dread.

"Papa," she sobbed, falling upon his neck as he opened his arms to her—"oh, papa, forgive me! I will never leave you again, never! oh, never!"

And as father and child stood thus, locked in each other's arms, their faces wet with each other's tears, the stranger turned away and quietly beckoned Bingham out of the room.

"I will call to-morrow," he said, "to inquire after your mistress. Her ankle should be seen to at once. Here is my card. I am staying at the Hotel Beau Site, close by. If I can be of any use I hope Mr. Dobson will let me know."

"Mr. Roland Askam," Bingham read on the card she carried in to Amoret, who, with broken words and sobs and kisses, was hurriedly relating the story of her danger and her deliverance from it.

"He is gone," said the girl, hastily wiping away her tears as Bingham delivered her message. "Oh, but we shall see him again to-morrow, papa, and then—"

"God bless him, whoever he may be!" said Mr. Dobson solemnly. "He has given me back my very life! What can I ever do for him in return?"

Chapter II. All night long Amoret lay awake, haunted by her father's face, as she had seen it through her tears on her return.

"He must be very ill," worse than even Doctor Grimshaw has allowed me to suppose," the girl thought, her heart beating wildly with anxiety. "How wicked of doctors to keep back the truth from people! I will speak to him to-morrow. I will make him tell me every thing. Does he think I am one of those silly girls who could not bear to know—that I should not be able to hide my uneasiness from papa? Oh, if I had suspected, I would not have run the risk that I ran to-day. How could I bear to live if I thought that I had caused him another anxious moment. My kindest, my dearest, who has worked and waited for me so long—whom mamma left me to console and to take care of when I grew up?"

When the doctor came the next morning to see to her ankle Amoret contrived to be alone with him for a few minutes, and in those few minutes she learned the truth about her father's health.

Deadly pale, she sat among the pillows and listened, with her great startled brown eyes fixed upon good Doctor Grimshaw's face.

"There, my child," said the old man gently, "I can tell you nothing more; and you must not be over anxious. After all, we doctors are not infallible: like other people, we are sometimes mistaken in our opinions. But"—laying his trembling hand upon her head—"your father must live carefully, and avoid any possibility of annoyance or excitement."

"Yes," murmured Amoret. "It has seemed to me that of late he has had some special cause for distress of mind. Do you try and find out, my dear, what it is, and smooth it away, if possible."

"Yes," Amoret said again, breathlessly. "I understand. Ah"—as Mr. Dobson's slow footsteps crossed the neighboring room—"he is coming! Do I look very white? I must get a color." She put her hands up hastily, and rubbed her bloodless cheeks. "He must not know that you have been talking to me. Oh, dad," she broke into an hysterical laugh as Mr. Dobson opened the door—"Doctor Grimshaw says it may be a fortnight before I can put my foot to the ground, isn't he a dreadful man? And what am I to do with myself, I should like to know, all of that time?"

As her father went to the door with the good doctor, to have a last word about his darling, Amoret resolved that she would speak frankly to him when he came back.

"We have never yet had any secrets," she thought, "and I never could see the good of beating about the bush. He will know that I have been questioning Dr. Grimshaw. I had better not try to hide it from him."

When her father returned and sat down by the sofa where the girl had been established with books and flowers and work, she began to scold him gently for his want of confidence in her.

"There is something you are keeping back from me, dear," she urged in trembling tones, "something you are afraid to tell me. Papa, why need you be afraid? We are not two people, you and I—we are one, and what hurts one of us hurts the other—doesn't it?"

"My little Amoret!" murmured Mr. Dobson, putting his arms about her; and Amoret, drawing the kind, gray head down to her bosom, held it there in a long, close pressure, so that she could speak to him without his seeing the tears she could not keep back.

"Tell me, papa—speak openly to me," she pleaded; "and then, little by little, Mr. Dobson did unfold the cause of his anxiety to his loving little daughter.

"The doctors are agreed," he said. "They both advised me to set my affairs in order—nay, child," as Amoret, in spite of herself, uttered a cry of pain, "it will not happen any the sooner because we are warned; but it is of you I am thinking. I can not rest day or night when I remember how utterly alone in the world you would be if I were to leave you."

Amoret sat up and faced him bravely, though the sharp sword of sorrow had pierced her very heart.

"We will talk of it together, papa," she said cheerfully. "Of course it distresses you. Let us think about it, dear. What would you like me to do if—"

The words died on her lips, the little face was paler than ever, but she smiled bravely.

"Well, you know, my darling," he began, "even if all goes well with me, you would have to marry some day."

"Oh! The poor child's heart sank within her. "You would like me to marry—to leave you?"

"I think it would be best, dear," he answered. "Think how it would ease my mind, if I could see you settled in a home of your own, and a kind husband to take care of you when I—"

"Papa!"

Do what she would, she could not suppress a sharp cry of pain.

"Oh, my little Amoret!" the father answered, in a moment they were in each other's arms again, and lying silently heart to heart.

It was the girl who recovered herself first. Was not all excitement forbidden to her father? She sat up laughing, and went on in a very matter of fact tone—

"A nice pair of geese we are, dad, to be fretting about my marriage. Why, of course, every girl marries. You would not like your little Amoret to be an old maid, would you? No, of course not! So, now that is settled, I will make haste and fall in love. Only with whom? That is the question."

"Is there no one—no one at all," began Mr. Dobson nervously, "whom you have seen that you could learn to like?"

Amoret knitted her pretty brows, pursed up her lips, and tried very hard to think of all the men she had seen in her short life.

"Papa," she said, laughing a little hysterically, "I have met so few people! There is dear old Doctor Grimshaw, where, and the curate, and that is all. And then at Manchester there is—"

"Yes, yes, at Manchester," interrupted the poor father anxiously—"the cousins, you know. There was Tom—Tom is really not a bad fellow, dear."

"Tom is the best fellow in the world," assented Amoret warmly. "They are all three good fellows, but I like Tom even better than Ned or Jim."

"That is what I thought!" exclaimed her father, no longer concealing his eagerness. "If I were once sure that my little Amoret would have so kind a protector—"

"Papa," broke in Amoret, her voice rather unsteady, although she still smiled at him—"so that is what you have been plotting, dear. Why did you not tell me before?"

"I hardly dared. I—I could scarcely bear to think of it myself. It seems too much to ask of you, my darling; but—"

"What that I should marry Tom?"

"Yes, I know that you used to laugh at him, and—"

"Oh, but that was only nonsense, you know! Papa, I never thought about it seriously at all. I—with a tremulous laugh—"I was so happy to be with you, I cared for nothing else; but now—it is different. And it really would make me happy if I were to marry Cousin Tom? Is it the thought of this that has been fretting you of late?"

"Yes, the thought of what might happen—and you friendless. And so I wrote the other day to the cousins, and I asked him to come and see us; but I was afraid that you—"

"That I should laugh at Tom again when he came?" asked Amoret. "But indeed I won't, dear! I don't mind confessing to you—the girl set her teeth and clenched her hands, though the pretty, fond smile never left her lips—"that I always liked Tom a little bit; and now, if my marrying him will set your mind at rest, and relieve you from any further suffering, why, all I have got to say is that I think I am a very lucky girl to find such a good, sensible, kind hearted husband as Tom, and I will say 'yes' the moment he asks me again. And, oh"—as the tears began to roll down her face—"what a twinge my foot gave me just then! Oh, there's another one! What a baby I am to cry; but I really can't help it, and I'm as happy as a queen!"

"My little Amoret—my good child!" Mr. Dobson murmured, clasping her in his arms and laying his cheek down upon her brown head.

But Amoret was not going to allow any more sentiment, and she began to draw pictures of their life when she should be married, and how she meant to queep it over poor Ned and poor Jim in the villa at Euphonia.

"They will spoil me, you know," she said; "but Tom will be more severe. He is so sensible. He will keep me in order, just as you do, dad."

"Exactly—as I do!" assented Mr. Dobson, his sad heart warming into happiness again under the sunshine of Amoret's gaiety.

Surely, he said to himself, the thought of the marriage could not be altogether distasteful to the child, since she could talk and laugh about it so easily. He felt himself wonderfully cheered by his daughter's good spirits, and the two were chatting together very happily, when the door was opened and Francine announced "Mr. Askam."

Mr. Dobson rose with eagerness to meet the young man, while Amoret smiled at him from among her pillows and held out her hand.

much had happened since the previous night. She had experienced dread and sorrow; she had given her life away to Cousin Tom.

"I called this morning at your hotel, Mr. Askam," Mr. Dobson was saying; "but they told me you were out. When you know all that my little girl is to me, you will understand what I feel toward the man who befriended her in a great danger."

Roland Askam pressed the trembling hand of the speaker, and said a few quiet words. He saw how ill Mr. Dobson was, and could understand his daughter's anxiety of the previous evening. And then, in order to give the invalid time to compose himself, he turned to speak to the young lady on the sofa, and the two young people regarded each other with some natural curiosity.

Amoret saw a tall, strong, fair young man of about 25, who was decidedly as good looking as she could possibly have desired her hero to be. His frank smile showed the whiteness of teeth, his well chiselled nose, crisp, brown beard, and square, honest forehead, his "eyes of dangerous gray," all seemed to Miss Dobson just what should accompany the kind voice and the strong arms that had come to her in her need.

Mr. Askam, on his side, was thinking at the same moment that he was more than rewarded for the loss of his dinner the night before. Until then Amoret had been to him, as he thought, little more than a voice, a faint fragrance of violets, the flutter of a ribbon against his cheek—and a sufficiently substantial weight in his arms.

He looked at her now with his keen artist's glance, and saw a very young face with great brown eyes raised to his in wondering admiration and gratitude.

Amoret was always pale, but she had a pretty, red, flower like mouth, and she blushed readily when people spoke to her. Her brown hair was cropped behind like a boy's, and in front it curled in a mass of soft little rings over her white forehead and delicate dark eye-brows.

Lying among her pillows, in a white gown and with a knot of yellow velvet tied under her soft chin, she looked a study ready made, Roland Askam thought, for a charming little tableau de genre. And the pretty Swiss salon lent itself so delightfully as background, with its polished floor and carved cabinets and chintzy pieces, its blue china clock, its spindle legged chairs and tables, and every where the glimmer of the tall white lilies with which Amoret loved to fill the bowls and jars.

This mutual inspection occupied only a very few moments, and then the young man, having inquired with due politeness after Miss Dobson's ankle, and seated himself upon a chair close to her sofa, produced from his pocket the watch and rings which she had believed were lost forever.

"I forgot these last night," he said; "I was in such a hurry to get back to Jack—to my friend Cadogan."

"Oh," cried Amoret, blushing with joy, "how very good of you to have got them back for me! They are my mother's rings—I thought I should never see them any more."

She slipped them on to her slender finger, for which the beautiful old jewels seemed far too heavy, and covered them with childish kisses.

"Your maid told me that the fellow had robbed you," returned the young man, "and of course I made him give the things up. And when I had seen Jack I went out again and put the police on the scoundrel's track. It is not often such things happen in these parts; but," turning to Mr. Dobson, "I don't think Miss Dobson ought to go so far again by herself—it is hardly safe."

"Oh, please don't blame me!" said Amoret, laughing and putting her hands up to her ears. "Of course I will never do it again—I never did it before. I don't know what put it into my head; and I could never believe that a man could be so cowardly, and so—so dreadful!" She blushed vividly again, and then as suddenly turned pale.

"I think indeed it has been a lesson to her," observed Mr. Dobson, smoothing the girl's brown hair with his trembling hand, "for here she is laid upon her sofa for many a day to come. And if it had not been for you, Mr. Askam—"

"Oh," interposed Roland, with energy, "I am only sorry I let the fellow off so easily! If I had known all"—with an involuntary glance at the picturesque head among the pillows, of which Amoret was demurely aware—"I would have broken every bone in his body!"

"Oh, dear me," thought Miss Dobson, "I believe he is capable of doing it! Well, Tom won't go about the world breaking people's bones for me—that is one comfort. These very young men, looking dispraggingly with her eyes of 16 at Roland, with his 25 years of manliness and good health, "are so impetuous, so foolish!"

The young fellow went on talking with Mr. Dobson, and Amoret lay and listened in a kind of dream, in which her interview that morning with the doctor and her conversation afterward with her father seemed to blend oddly with an account Mr. Askam was giving of a recent tour in Holland, and of the sketches which he had made.

So he was an artist. No doubt that was why his coat had smelled of tobacco; artists were always smoking. And he would go on wandering about all over the beautiful world long after she was married to Tom and had settled down in the house at Manchester. Men were such enviable creatures—they need never marry unless they chose. They could go where they pleased—do as they pleased. Tom—Tom Churchill—was to be her husband. How strange it seemed—and what a pity that she need have a husband at all! She would have liked her life always to go on as it was now—to be alone with her father, living in the sunshine, with beautiful and wonderful sights surrounding her, and a delicious vagueness hiding the future from her eyes. But to marry, and live in Manchester, when she was only 16 and a half—

She drew a long breath and woke from her reverie. [To be continued.]