

The mother grew used to the sound, and when she asked Ossie to soothe her by giving "some o' that pritty book-readin'" the girl would comply with a thin smile of triumph.

"Ef only yo' po' Paw could see you a'settin' thar straight as a stick, an' er-dronin' along, same ez ole Pason Wiggs fum his Bible," the widow once sighed.

Chris, on the contrary, hated the sound of it, and to pin the tall active boy to five minutes of attention proved a difficult task.

"But you *mus'* lissen, Chris," said his sister with vehemence. "You hev got ter larn readin' an' writin' an' figgers the same as me, an' it should be even better,—you bein' a man.

"I tell you, hit's somethin' ez can't be put off. Mebbe we-uns too, Chris," she added, looking straight into his face, "mout go down to the broader lands soon."

Chris, seated on the sill of the door leading down into the yard, dug into the sand with his toe. His face had not reflected her eagerness.

"We cain't git erway fum the mountings," he said slowly. "Thar's Maw. Ye cain't travel Maw down."

"Yes, thar's Maw, sure 'nuf," answered Ossie, and something determined and hard in her voice made Chris wince. "I warn't thinkin' of movin' Maw outen,—I warn't thinkin' o' goin' jes' yit."

In the bleak of that winter Mrs. Laird's lifelong