

Family Department.

"THE SONG OF THE LARK."

"The time of the singing of birds has come."—
Song of Solomon.

In early morn when day is springing,
The Lark its own sweet song is singing.
Singing and wending its upward flight
Unto the regions of purest light.
From out the sky where it is dwelling
That voice of song is surely telling;
Telling of rapture beyond compare,
Only attained in moments rare!
It hovers near—"list to its thrilling,
Trying to tell us the song so thrilling
Thrilling, because so full of joy
Above, beyond, all earth's alloy.
Then up again—for wings are willing,
No weariness, it still is singing;
Singing the song, and singing again,
Striving to echo the heavenly strain.
Higher and higher—with all its soaring
It surely is in heart adoring—
Adoring One who dwelleth there,
Far up above the mortal stair.
Even higher still! Is it ariving
Into the heavenly all-surprising?
Surprising to those who as yet but know
Minglings of earthly pleasure and woe!
Hovering, hovering, down to the sod;
The singing all done, the chanting to God.
Yet still does it echo that sweetest of song,
"It cannot be long—it cannot be long!"

It rises again—it is lost to our hearing—
Oh, no! for the distant song is nearing;
Nearing to call us away, away!
For Glory, it breaketh in Dawn of Day!

L. O. E.

STUPID CHRIS.

CHAPTER III. (Continued.)

Chris was scarlet with pleasure. No one had ever called her unselfish and sweet-tempered before. She was only stupid Chris, and she was accustomed to be put on one side, and of course she never thought of minding.

"You won't tell that I asked you?" she said, suddenly feeling a little shy.

"No, of course not, Chris," he answered. "I never betray confidences."

"Have you heard from Louis lately? How is he getting on?" he said changing the subject after a slight pause.

"He didn't write this week. I suppose he is working too hard," said Chris.

"I hope he isn't overworking himself. I thought he wasn't looking well in the holidays."

"I don't think he was," said Chris. "I believe," mysteriously, "that he had headaches. But don't say so, he wouldn't like it."

"He ought to have had a thorough holiday; it was very foolish of him to be grinding away all the time," said Mr. Palmer.

"He wants so much to get a scholarship in the summer, you see," said Chris.

"I know, but it would be better to do without the scholarship and keep well and strong," he said.

"What have you been doing all day, Chris?" asked Maud, when Chris entered the schoolroom again, and found the Essay Club in solemn convulse.

"Oh, we played games," said Chris. "Mr. Palmer played after tea, and Baily Major, and Devas."

"They played with you children?" said Maud amazed. "How bored they must have been."

"They weren't, they liked it," said Chris. "They did such funny things. Devas hid in a yew tree, and came down all green and horrid; we did laugh at him so. Is there a letter from Louis to-night?"

"Yes; what made you think so?"

"I thought I saw one on father's table; I

went into the study to leave a note from Mr. Palmer," explained Chris. "Is Louis all right?"

"No, he has been having headaches and staying out, and he has lost his place in the form. He is disgusted," said Maud.

"Poor old Louis! I knew he had headaches," said Chris to herself.

CHAPTER IV.

"Alice, I suppose you haven't heard whether father had a letter about Louis this morning?" asked Chris rather anxiously, as she put out her lesson-books after breakfast, two or three days after.

"About Louis? No! Why should he?" returned Alice, looking over her notes of the last lecture she had attended.

"Only because there was a letter with a Harrow post-mark, and it wasn't Louis' writing, and when father had read it I thought he looked as if there was something wrong," said Chris.

"I wasn't looking," said Alice. "I was talking to Dorothy. She says I ought to read some more Milton before I write my essay on classic poetry, Maud."

"I daresay you ought. I think I shall write on Enthusiasm," said Maud, "with illustrations from the Crusaders and the Jacobites. It would be rather interesting. I wonder where I could read up the Crusades? I shall ask Dorothy. Oh, here she is!"

Dorothy came into the schoolroom, her usually bright face overclouded, and an air about her of being the bearer of bad news.

"Is anything the matter, Dora?" asked Alice.

"Yes, Louis isn't well. He's coming home on Friday," said Dorothy.

"Louis! Why?" began Maud.

"He has been over-working himself. It seems he has had such constant headaches lately, and last week he fainted twice. The first time was in his study, and no one knew anything about it; but on Thursday he fainted in school, so of course there was a great fuss," said Dorothy. "At first the doctor thought a few days' rest would put him straight, but now he says Louis must have a complete holiday for three months, so he is to come home at once."

"A holiday? Now?" cried Alice. "Dorothy, how dreadful! What will become of his chance of a scholarship?"

"He must go on working now," said Maud. "Surely a week or two of rest will put him straight again."

"He is not to look at a book for three months," said Dorothy. "I can't think what on earth we shall do with him. Fancy Louis cut off his books!"

"What will he do?" cried Alice in consternation. "He will be perfectly mad about it. Surely it would worry him a great deal less to go on doing a little work? Suppose he isn't able to go in for the scholarship at all?"

"It would be too awful!" said Maud.

"Father is dreadfully upset and disappointed about it," said Dorothy. "So don't say anything on the subject before him. I suppose we must make the best of it, but it really is a terrible blow."

"Poor old Louis! Will he be quite well again?" asked Chris.

"O yes! of course he will in time," answered Dorothy. "But if he loses three months at his age he will never be able to make it up. It is most trying altogether."

"It wouldn't have mattered half so much if it had been Noel or Bob," said Alice. "But Louis!"

Her eyes were full of tears as she turned over the papers she could not see. Louis was her particular brother. Noel, who was nearly one and twenty, was Dorothy's property, but Louis, the family genius, was only eighteen months older than herself, and she was devoted

to him. Bob, who was fourteen, was Maud's chosen chum. As Chris had not been provided with a special brother, she had to do without one.

Noel had always done remarkable well at school, and was expecting to take a very good degree; but Louis's ability had always been spoken of as brilliant. He had come out head of the list when he tried for a Harrow scholarship, and he had gone on adding honors and distinctions to his name ever since. Alice always looked forward to a splendid future for him. The ambition of her life was to walk with him some day through Cambridge, and hear him pointed out at first in the Classical Tripos.

And now he was to come home ignominiously, and lose a whole term, besides the chance of entering for a scholarship this summer! It was too disappointing, too humiliating! Muttering something about getting a run before lessons, Alice fled out into the garden to wipe away in secret the tears that she could not control.

"Poor old Alice! No wonder she feels it," said Dorothy, sitting down by the table, and playing absently with a paper knife. The sun shone brilliantly, the thrushes and blackbirds were bursting their little throats with melody outside the window, a faint spring-like perfume was wafted in from the garden. But to the three sad sisters in the schoolroom no November day could have seemed more gloomy.

"Do you think he is very ill, Dorothy?" asked Chris timidly at last.

"No of course not! That's the worry of it. We shall have him on our hands, and absolutely nothing to amuse him with. I can't imagine what he will do with himself. He never cared for cricket or football at the best of times, and I am sure he won't now. He will just eat his heart out at the thought of the precious time he is losing. Poor boy!" said Dorothy.

"And he will lose the scholarship, and fall behind in all the form work next term," added Maud. "Oh, it is too trying! It is unbearable."

"Don't be foolish my dear Maud," said her mother, who overheard the last words as she entered the room. "You mustn't make the worse of things. I am very sorry for poor old Louis, but you mustn't receive him as if he had committed a crime. I daresay the rest will be very good for him, and there are plenty more scholarships left in the world. I want you all to be as cheerful as you can about it, because this is a great blow to your father."

"It's the most awful blow to us all," said Maud. "It would have been such a splendid thing if he had got that scholarship at seventeen."

"That he certainly won't do, so you must make up your mind to it," said Mrs. Raymond. "It is very tiresome for him, but it can't be helped. Chris, what's the matter? you look quite scared."

"I thought perhaps Louis was very ill," said Chris.

"Poor child!" said her mother kindly. "Oh no; you needn't fret about that. You will see he will come home quite jolly, and we must all do our best to keep him amused. It will be very nice to have him at home for so long, and I daresay he will enjoy the holiday. Dorothy, I came to see if you had a few minutes to spare. I am cutting out a fresh batch of work for our sewing party, and I should be so glad of a little help."

"It's all very well, but mother doesn't understand what this will be to Louis," said Maud, as the door closed behind Mrs. Raymond and Dorothy. "Intellect isn't exactly her line. Now if she were cut off all her working parties and committees for three months, she would know what it was like. Louis will be heart-broken."

Chris felt almost heart-broken, as she set herself to read over her history again. This was the first real trouble that ever befallen her,