

"I don't believe she would ever open a book again if she were left to her own devices," said Alice absently, as she tried to remember what she had meant to say next.

Chris meanwhile went joyfully down passage and hall to the dining-room, a pleasant room with a western aspect, which she infinitely preferred to the schoolroom. Mr. and Mrs. Raymond and the eldest daughter, Dorothy, were at dinner, and all three looked up as Chris came in. Mr. Raymond was a tall man with a thin eager face and absent eyes. Chris was extremely proud of him, and considered him the cleverest man in the world; but she was a little afraid of him, she always felt stupider and more ignorant than usual in his presence.

"Well, Chris," he said. "So I hear you had a long interview with Mr. Woodhouse this afternoon. Did he leave any message for me?"

"Yes, father, lots," said Chris!

"Have you done your lessons, Chris?" asked her mother.

Mrs. Raymond was a tall and slight and young-looking. She was the most wonderful manager and housekeeper, and the amount of work she got through was the marvel of her acquaintance. Chris meant to be exactly like her when she grew up, except that she did not think she could ever read the books her mother delighted in. But to manage store-cupboard, and attend meetings, and run up to London for shopping,—what could be more delightful? Chris would have loved to live in a whirl of busy usefulness, instead of being tied down to the monotonous schoolroom routine.

"I have finished all but one little bit of one, mother," she said.

"Then you can bring a chair to the table and stay," said Mrs. Raymond, carving a chicken with skill and delicacy. She never let her husband have anything to do in the house if she could help it—he had plenty to do with his school work.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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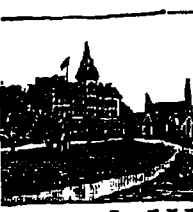
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