

Family Department.

"ONE LORD, ONE FAITH."

O Holy, Holy Father,
O Christ ascended high,
O pure celestial Spirit,
Eternal Trinity!
We, with Thy countless seraphs,
We, with Thy saints in light,
Bow down in adoration,
And praise Thee day and night.

One life pervades Thy ransomed,
Within the golden gate,
And those who still are pilgrims
And for their glory wait.
Thou shouts of triumph yonder,
The plaintive songs of earth,
Flow from the Spirit's presence;
Both own a heavenly birth.

The precious blood of Jesus
Is now within the veil—
Yonder Thy saints behold it,
We too by it prevail!
Upon each shining forehead
We read the Saviour's Name;
While we, now pressing forward,
Bear on our brows the same.

Then teach us, Lord, to worship
With loving hearts to-day;
And whilst we sing Thy praises,
And learn in faith to pray,
Help us to feel our union
With all who know Thy Name,
And glory in Jehovah,
Unchangeably the same!

STUPID CHRIS.

CHAPTER I.

"If thou hadst not my letter I should not have had occasion to blame you? Oh dear! however shall I turn that into French? If I had not had this horrid exercise to do I should have had a nice country walk this afternoon," sighed poor Chris, leaning back in her chair hopelessly.

It was such a lovely afternoon, and the others were all gone primrosing, and here was she alone in the dull schoolroom, with a long French exercise to write over again, because she had done it so badly this morning.

Her lessons were the burden of Chris' life. Her governesses considered her the stupidest child they had ever had the pleasure of teaching. Perhaps it was partly by contrast with the others, for Chris was that unfortunate anomaly, the only stupid person in a clever family.

Her father was the head science master in a large school, her brothers were always winning prizes and scholarships, her eldest sister was now reading for Newnham, and those who were in the schoolroom with her were perpetually held up to her as examples.

"My dear Christina, Alice could do those sums at ten years old,"—"Really, Chris, I was further on in French than you are now when I was six months younger."—"How do you suppose you are ever to pass an examination, Christina, if you can't remember the difference between the claims to the throne of Henry IV. and Henry VII.? You really must take more pains. Dorothy, you know was specially distinguished in history."

This was the sort of cheering remark that was addressed to poor Chris all day long, and drove her nearly to despair. As it was quite hopeless for her to satisfy her teachers, she had given up trying, and scrambled through her lessons in a slovenly fashion very trying to all concerned.

"Stupid Chris," she was generally called, and "stupid Chris," she was really becoming, for

her brains were getting quite muddled by her system of learning by heart without attempting to understand, and turning out exercises at random with no reference to rules.

This afternoon she was slowly getting through her exercise, with intervals of looking out of the window at the gardener, or drawing figures on her blotting paper, but she was not trying to do it as well as she could. She put down any words that seemed as if they would do, and reflect that it didn't matter, because, if it was all wrong, Miss Wilson would only say, "Really Christina, you are the stupidest child I ever saw!" and there would be an end of it.

"Si tu n'avait—" wrote Chris, and then made a blot, as she paused to consider what came next.

How she did hate this schoolroom, with the big table, and ink-stained cloth, the bookshelves full of sober-backed books, and the big maps on the walls. How hard was the fate that condemned her to sit here, while Alice and Maud were roaming the woods in the May sunshine, and filling their baskets with pale starry flowers.

"Not—not—I wonder what not is? Oh, *ne pas*! Si tu n'avait *ne pas*," wrote on Chris, after turning the leaves of her book in a desultory fashion.

At that point the door opened, and a maid appeared.

"Miss Christina, there's a gentleman in the drawing room asking to see you. Mr. Woodhouse he said his name was."

"Mr. Woodhouse! I never heard of him. What does he want to see me for?" asked Chris, with wide-open eyes.

"He asked for the master and mistress, and when I said they were both out, he asked if there was any one at home he could see, so I told him you were at home. He is quite an old gentleman, and a clergyman," added Mary.

"Oh!" said Chris; she began to have a vague idea of having heard her father speak of an old friend of the name of Woodhouse, but she could not remember anything about him. Still, she was not a shy child, and entertaining a visitor would be an agreeable change after the fatigues of her literary labors. She got up and mounted on a chair, to view herself in the glass over the mantelpiece.

"Am I tidy?" she asked.

"Pretty well, miss. I should take my apron off, if I were you," counselled Mary.

"Oh, I like my apron; the pockets are so nice," said Chris, and she marched off with a hand thrust into each, rather an untidy little figure, it must be owned, in her old blue serge frock, and the holland apron, that had done duty all the week, and with exceedingly rough hair. Luckily her hair curled naturally, so the roughness matter lessed.

She marched up the tiled passage that led from the wing, where the schoolroom party chiefly dwelt, to the main body of the house, crossed the square hall, and opened the drawing-room door.

The drawing-room was a large square room, with a large bay window looking out on the tennis lawn, and a pretty view of the open country beyond. All the furniture was handsome and comfortable, and there were some good prints and engravings on the walls; but the room had rather a stiff look, partly perhaps because there were no flowers about, and no signs of recent occupation in the shape of work or light literature.

Mr. Woodhouse was standing near the open window but as Chris came in, shutting the door rather loudly behind her, he turned, and came to meet her. He was a tall old man, with grey hair, a very fine face, and kind, fatherly eyes. Chris took a fancy to him at once, and did not feel the least afraid of him.

"How do you do, little one?" he said in a pleasant, gentle voice. "Now, which are you?"

"I am Chris," she answered laying her hand in his confidently. "I am the youngest."

"Yes, of course you are, I know your name quite well," he said, "I wonder if you know mine?"

He led the way to a sofa, and sat down, still holding Chris' hand in his.

She liked his smile now their eyes were on a level, and answered, "Yes, I think I have heard it. Aren't you an old friend of father's?"

"A very old friend! I knew him when he was a little boy. That seems a long time ago, doesn't it? But I haven't seen him for seven or eight years, so I am very sorry to hear he is out."

Chris explained that Mr. Raymond was gone out for the afternoon with some of the boys on a botanising expedition, and that he would not be home till late, and as her mother had gone to town for the day, there was no chance of Mr. Woodhouse seeing either of them. He seemed very sorry to hear it, for he explained in his turn that he was only staying in the neighborhood for three or four days, and was not likely to be able to come over again.

He charged Chris with several messages for her parents, and then began asking questions about all the family. What was Louis doing? And was it true that Dorothy was going to Newnham? and so on. He seemed to know them all by name, and to be so much interested in them, that Chris entered into all sorts of details in the most friendly manner, and they were soon on the best of terms.

"And how did you come to be at home this lovely afternoon, when everyone else is out?" he asked her at last with a kind smile.

"I had a French exercise to do," explained Chris.

"How was that?" he asked.

"Because I did it badly this morning; I always do my lessons badly—I am not clever—I am the stupid one of the family you know," said Chris frankly and cheerfully.

"Are you?" he said, a little puzzled. Chris did not look stupid, she had such clear grey eyes, and a determined little mouth, and while she talked her face was quite bright.

"Yes," she said, "I really am. I am dreadfully stupid. I hate sums, and I have no turn for language, and I can't remember anything in history. The others say they can't think what will become of me when I grow up, if I don't learn anything."

It struck the old man that her cheerfulness was a little put on, and she felt the family reproach more keenly than she chose to allow.

"And don't you want to learn anything?" he asked gently. "Do you like to be thought stupid?"

Something in his voice and eyes moved Chris almost against her will.

"No," she said with a little break in her voice. "Of course I don't like it. But I can't help it; I am stupid, and it is no use trying."

"No use trying to do the best?" he asked. "Oh! I think that is a mistake. You don't mean that you don't try to do your lessons, little one surely?"

Chris liked his fatherly voice, and the soft way in which he said "little one." She could not help responding to his evident interest in her.

"No, I don't try now," she said, twisting her apron between her fingers. "I used to, because I always thought I should find some subject I could take up; but there isn't any, so I have given up trying. Maud is not not so clever at books as the others, but then she plays the violin splendidly. But I don't care for music at all. Miss Wilson says I might as well give it up, for I have no ear. And I don't care for drawing either. There isn't anything I can do."

Chris' voice had grown a little sad, and her eyes were suspiciously bright Mr. Woodhouse