

CHRISTIE'S CHRISTMAS.

BY PANSY.

CHAPTER III.—Continued.

"That is just what I wonder," thought Christie; and she ventured to glance in the direction of the turned seat. Wells Burton was looking right at her, and—why! was it possible that he was motioning to her? Her cheeks began to grow pink. What if she should walk over there to him, and he should stare at her and say, "What do you want, little girl?" and it should turn out that he had not thought of such a thing as motioning to her. If anything of this kind should happen, Christie felt that she must certainly sink through the floor. But he kept looking at her, and she felt almost sure that he was nodding his head at her. Poor Christie! It had not begun to take so much courage to pull that bell rope, as it did to think of walking down the aisle and stopping to see if that boy possibly wanted her. In fact, she had pulled the bell without thinking about it at all; but this was different; and her cheeks began to grow very hot, and she wondered whether mother would be ashamed of her for going, or for not going. What would all the passengers think of her for marching down there to talk to a boy whom she had told them she never spoke to in her life? "I won't go," she told herself; "not a step. Why should he be motioning to me? Of course he isn't."

And having settled this to her satisfaction, what did Christie do in the course of the next two minutes, but walk meekly down that aisle, and stand before the turned seats.

"I thought you motioned to me," she said gently. "Is there anything I can do to help you?"

"I should say you had done considerable in that line already," he answered heartily. "How came you to think of anything so sensible as stopping the train? Most any girl I know would have yelled like a screech-owl, and danced up and down a few times, and then finished up by fainting dead away, before anybody had found out what was the matter. How came you to act so differently from the usual style?"

"I didn't know that was the way to do," Christie said, a little glimmer of a laugh in her gray eyes. "Are you much hurt?"

"Not so very. My ankle is sprained, they say, and I feel somewhat as though I was a hundred and fifty years old, and had enjoyed the rheumatism for about half a century. Sit down here and let us talk about it." So Christie sat down on the extreme edge of the farther seat.

"I wish I could do something to help the pain," she said. "If your ankle is broken, it ought to be set, and I almost think that the man who sits in the seat right before mine is a doctor."

"Well, I'll tell you what I think. I think it was about as plucky a thing to do as I ever heard of in my life. Halloo, we are stopping again! This train has got so used to stopping that it can't go more than a mile without trying it. Can this be the junction? Just take a look out, will you, and report?"

"There are four rows of tracks instead of two," said Christie, "and they go criss-cross."

"Then it is the switch!" Wells exclaimed, and there was such a

sion of dizzying flashes past the window, then sudden relief from the deafening noise, and the express train had gone on its way.

Christie looked at Wells Burton. His face was very grave, and she thought it a trifle paler than before.

"Did you know that?" he asked, nodding his head in the direction of the departed train.

"Did I know what?"

"That the express train was almost due, and would come thundering over me so soon?"

Christie shivered. "I did not know anything about the express train," she said.

"Well, you could not have done any quicker work if you had known. It is queer I didn't think of it. I thought of almost everything else while I lay there; it was the queerest thing that ever happened to me. I can't think how it happened. I've stood on that very step fifty times this winter, and never thought of such a thing as slipping. I suppose there was ice on my boots. Nice-looking boot, isn't it?" he said, glancing down at it. "The conductor made short work of getting it off, with that sharp knife of his. Look here, I don't know why I keep talking about boots and things, instead of trying to thank you, and show my gratitude in some way. Boys don't know how to do that sort of thing, anyhow. You ought to see my mamma, or, she ought to see you. Mothers know how to say what they feel."

"I don't want to be thanked," said Christie, her cheeks flushing. "I didn't do anything."

"No, only saved my life, and showed more pluck and common sense and quick wit than any fourteen girls put together ever had before. You see, if you had wasted twenty-five seconds, this train couldn't have run back to pick me up, without running into the express; and I should just have had to lie there and be crushed. I

couldn't move, any more than if I had been dead; in fact, I was dead when they picked me up; fainted, you know. But before I fainted, I knew just what had happened, and where I was, and what was likely to happen next. I didn't think of this express that has just rushed by, but I thought of the up-train, due in half an hour, and I knew there wasn't a house nor a shed within a mile. Did you ever come to a



Ha, ha, ha, off they go,
Charlie & Bébe so merrily oh,
Knowing no fear,
no not they,
Away they fly so cheerily oh

"The ankle will keep until we get to the city. We are half-way there by this time, though we seem to have plenty of hinderances this morning. I say, how many trains of cars have you stopped in your life?"

"I never did such a thing before," Christie said, her eyes dancing now, "and I had just promised that I wouldn't stop this one; but you see there wasn't anything else to do."

peculiar sound to his voice, that Christie turned from the window to look at him.

"The switch!" she repeated, "what does that mean?"

"It means that the express train passes us here, and that just about now she is rushing over those rails where I lay a few minutes ago. Here she comes!"

CHAPTER IV.

A roar of machinery, a succes-