

CHRISTIE AT HOME.

A SEQUEL TO CHRISTIE'S CHRISTMAS.

By Pansy.

CHAPTER XII—(Continued).

They were gone until nearly dark, and Mrs. Tucker came home with a satisfied air; much had been accomplished.

"They are fixed out finely, now, especially Lucius," she said, nodding her head at Karl and Christie, but meaning the Cox children. "You two will have as much as you can do not to envy them, I guess. Wells' outgrown suit fits Lucius as well as though it was made for him, and Lucy's doesn't want much fixing, though Mrs. Burton says her Estelle wore it when she was fourteen. She must be a delicate girl.



"FIXED FINE, SPECIALLY LUCIUS."

Lucy is really a very pretty child when she gets dressed up. She put a blue flannel suit on her, and it made her look like a lady. Her mother just broke down and cried; but that didn't last long. The next thing she did was to begin sweeping the room, and I thought that was a better sign than the crying."

"Sweeping the room while you and Mrs. Burton were there!" exclaimed Christie, aghast. That sort of politeness was not in keeping with her mother's usual teachings.

"Yes, while we were there; and I was glad to see it too. That poor woman hasn't had the heart to sweep her room this long time, and I was afraid she had lost all care as to how things looked. It did me good to see her start up and begin to pick up things and sweep. The sweeping didn't last long. She said she forgot, for a minute, but she did not notice that things were so bad; that is just it; she has been too discouraged to notice. Now that Mrs. Burton has put a little heart into her, she will wake up and try again, I do believe. That is a good woman, Christie. There is a difference in rich people as well as in poor ones."

"Mother, do you think she is a Christian?"

"No," said Mrs. Tucker in a low voice, "I know she isn't—she said so; but I guess she wants to be, and I can't help hoping that she is going to be."

"Mother," said Christie softly, after a few minutes of quiet, "don't you think the furniture and other things, are beginning to work a little bit in the way the old gentleman said he wanted them to?"

"I guess they are, child; I know they are setting me to thinking."

Saturday it rained. If it had not been for that, Christie was to have gone to the depot with Karl when he took in the Saturday night's extra supply of milk. As it was, she stayed at home and watched for him with no little eagerness. The truth was, she was to have a new pair of gloves for Sunday, and Karl had had very careful directions about picking them out. She did hope he wouldn't make a mistake. He was later than usual. She began to fear that it had grown too dark for him to select the right shade.

"Did you get them?" was the first question she asked, as at last he opened the door. You see, when a girl has as few new things as our Christie, a pair of lisle thread gloves,

at twenty cents, becomes a matter of great importance.

"Yes," said Karl, "I got them, and I guess they are the right shade, for Wells picked them out. He says he knows they are all right."

"Wells!" said Christie, with a little start. "How came he to?"

"Why, he offered to do it while I went over to the office, and I knew he understood how to do such things; he does them for his sister. He was waiting for her. She came in on the train. She is a beauty, Christie. But I got a good deal more than gloves. Something for you. I never did see the beat."

"What is it?" asked Christie, sitting down in the nearest chair. "If anything more comes to me, Karl Tucker, I shall give it up!"

"Well, something has. A letter, for one thing, and a little bit of a white box for another. Just as I was coming out of the post-office, Hal Parsons called me.—He is the one who was along that day and helped with the piano.—'Halloo!' he said. 'Does Miss Christie Tucker live out your way now, or don't you know her?' Then they all laughed. Those fellows never will get over laughing at me about that time when I said I didn't know any such person. Well, I told him I had made her acquaintance lately, and then Hal said I had better step in and look after her property. And there was an express package for you."

"An express package!" repeated Christie, her cheeks glowing. "What is that?"

"Oh, it comes by express—on the cars—you know. A man has to go along and take care of the things, and see that they get safely to the express office. Then you have to sign your name, and the clerk gives the package to you. There was nothing to pay. Here it is. What a speck of a thing to send by express."

Christie took the small white package bearing her name and looked at it eagerly.

"What can it be?" she said, a great deal of suppressed excitement in her voice.

"It can't be a piano," Karl said laughing. "Nor a sewing machine, nor a rocking-chair, nor even a book. It is too little for anything."

"Oh, no," said Christie, "ever so many nice things are small. Don't you know that locket which Mrs. Burton wears on her chain, what a tiny thing it is; I suppose it cost a great deal of money. But of course this isn't a locket."

"Open it, Christie, and let's see what it is."

But Christie turned away and laid it resolutely down on the supper table.

"No, let's keep it until father comes in and we are all ready to sit down. Then we'll have the nice time altogether. We have a treat for to-night, Karl. Little bits of soda biscuit, and the nicest maple syrup you ever saw. Mrs. Burton sent us a pail full since

your supper keep, my girl, while you read it out?"

Christie thought it would, and with her clean knife dexterously made an opening and drew out the neat sheet of very handsome note-paper, written in a man's hand.

"Oh Karl," she said in admiration, "what beautiful writing! I want you to learn to write just like it."

"All right," said Karl cheerily. "Of course I can, as well as not. I'll attend to it to-morrow." Then the reading began.

DEAR LITTLE SUNSHINE,—I cannot help calling you so, because on that long, long rainy day which we spent together, you were the only ray of sunshine to be seen anywhere, and you shone steadily and patiently all day, and reached right into my heart, which I thought was too sad and gloomy ever to get into sunshine again. Do you remember me, I wonder? And the number of times I looked at my watch, and how you laughed at me—a sweet, bright little laugh—and then how gently you apologized for doing what was no harm at all? Oh, I remember every little thing you said and did that day. I had nothing else to do, and I cannot help thinking that your sunshine had a great deal to do with helping me keep my senses, and your praying did, I believe, great things for me.

Do you remember my promise, little woman? I was to write you a letter—

"[Oh," said Christie, looking up, "he did say he would, but I thought he would forget all about it. He promised to tell me—well, I'll read on. Oh, dear, I hope it did do some good, though I don't see how it could!"]

Then she read:

If our five hours' stop in the rain and the mud did any possible good to my friend, in any way, I was to tell you of it. Remember? Well, now, I have a wonderful story to tell you. There was a great physician whom I happened to know was travelling that day, and would take a train at Brightwood Junction about noon, for his home in a far-away city. My plan was to get to the city in time to connect with the Brightwood cars, and get out there before the noon train would leave, and beseech that doctor to go on with me, and try to do something for my friend. This was my plan. But it so happened that nothing of this was true. The great doctor did not go to Brightwood Junction at all, as I had been telegraphed that he would. At the last minute he changed his mind and went to the city to get the East-bound train on the Wabash railway. But the same storm which made trouble for us worked mischief on the Wabash road, and there that doctor sat and waited, and hoped that the train would leave. Pretty soon came into the depot a man, a friend of mine, who had been waiting at our depot for two hours for me, and then gone around to the Wabash depot in the hope that I might have come that way. The first person he saw was this doctor, whom I had telegraphed him I was going to try to bring with me. He rushed up to him and told his eager story, and the doctor went away with him to my friend's sick-room. When I reached there at night, the great doctor had just gone, having stayed with her all day, and done for her what he hoped would save her life. Now, little friend, let me stop right here and say with all my heart, Thank God! and next to him, thank you, for your faith and your prayers. It would take a great deal to convince me that your praying all that day had



MRS. BURTON PUT A LITTLE HEART INTO HER.

you have been gone? And, oh Karl! Dennis had a real load of things for the Coxes—meat, and a sack of flour, and some butter, and I don't know what all. Won't they have a nice Sunday?"

"Going to keep the letter too?" Karl asked. "Well then, I'm off. Hurry up your biscuit; father and I will be in in five minutes."

Ten minutes more of pleasant bustle and then baby was tied in his high chair, and Nettie climbed into hers, and the happy family gathered about their table.

"Now for the letter," said Father Tucker, as he tucked away a nice biscuit. "Will

not a great deal to do with the strange providences that led us all. For see! Suppose I had been able to carry out my plans: I should have gone as fast as I could to Brightwood Junction and so missed the doctor entirely. Or suppose I had appeared at the depot on the train which my friend expected, then he would not have gone to the other depot at all, and in that way we would have missed him. Dear little Sunshine, he is a wonderful God. I know you will be glad to hear that I have learned to pray. I got down on my knees that night, and told him that I would serve him forever, and I thanked him for overturning my foolish plans, and carrying out his own that day. I wonder how many more things were accomplished by that rain storm? Wouldn't you like to have the story of that day written out for you? And

now, my little woman, I have taken the first leisure moment in which to write you. There has been a great deal to do, and you see my letter comes from a long way off. I was married ten days ago to the friend whose life was saved that Christmas day, and I carried her away at once for change of air. She is growing strong and well. In a little box which you will find at the express office, there is a wedding present for you to help you to keep in mind the time when you laughed and prayed a soul out of sore trouble. My wife sends her love to you, and says that when you see that baby you may kiss him twice for us both. Write and tell me how often you look at my wedding present.

Yours, for Christ and Heaven,
LEONARD RAMSEY,

"Well, I never," said Mrs. Tucker.

"I should think as much," said Mr. Tucker.

"Pooh! pooh!" said the baby, but he did not mean any disrespect. He was simply trying to blow out the light. As for Karl, he pushed the package toward Christie, and said in unusual excitement.

"Open it, quick! I most guess what it is."

"What!" said Christie, and "What?" said Nettie, her eyes bright with expectation.

"I'm not going to tell; open it, quick!"

So amid silence, except from the baby who gravely and steadily pursued his scientific project, the seal of the package was broken. It showed a small white box, with a string tied around it. The string was cut and the lid lifted. It showed simply a puff of white cotton. Then Karl seized the box and held it to his ear.

"I knew it!" he said in intense excitement. "It is alive."

Christie's face was growing pale. She took back the box and pushed away the cotton. Certainly it was alive, and it spoke very distinctly too.

"Tick-tock, tick-tock!" was what it said.

"Do for pity's sake lift it up," said Mrs. Tucker, and Christie lifted it up. A small gleaming gold watch which despite its journey from the city, was steadily engaged at its work saying "Tick-tock, tick-tock!"

Don't expect me to tell you what any of them said or did for the next half-hour, for really I cannot do it.

"Well," said Karl, drawing a long breath when the excitement was somewhat abated, "I know one thing, I know I was never so glad of anything in my life as that I stayed at home Christmas and you went to uncle Daniel's."

"But I didn't go," said Christie, bursting into laughter.

Then they all laughed.

THE END.

"READY FOR THE CALL."

A striking incident was related at a recent Medical Missionary Conference in New York, by Mr. A. M. Cochran, a manager of the New York Medical Missionary Society, as follows: I was visiting a young doctor in Bellevue Hospital, one evening. Being off duty, he was in his own room, enjoying a rest, and we were engaged in pleasant conversation when the electric bell sounded an alarm. Immediately there was a wonderful change in my friend; jumping up, he said: "Excuse me, that is the 'hurry' call for all the ambulances on emergency." His slippers were off, and boots pulled on in an instant; putting on his uniform cap, he reached for his overcoat, and saying, "Come in again, won't you?" he was half-way down stairs before the gong stopped sounding. The ambulance rolled up to the gateway and didn't need to stop for him as he swung into it. I walked down stairs slowly and out into Twenty-sixth street, thinking what a grand thing it would be if we were all as ready to hear the cry of the distressed and suffering and run to their relief. We cannot all be physicians or foreign missionaries, but if any have heard the appeals made and are impelled to listen to the "emergency" call, let them get ready as quickly as possible. "The King's business requireth haste," and the effectiveness of our service for the Master largely depends upon our readiness to hear and promptness to obey.

Nobody ever heard of a merchant who, having witnessed his clerk's extraordinary skill at whist, or billiards, or base ball, resolved within himself, "I will take that young man into the firm." And nobody ever knew a man with a vacancy in his office, or shop, or counting-room, going to a base ball ground to select the best "bat," "catcher," or "pitcher" there to fill the situation.