

## CHRISTIE AT HOME.

A SEQUEL TO CHRISTIE'S CHRISTMAS.

By Pansy.

CHAPTER XI.—(Continued.)

"Why, mother, he says these are his present. That the going to school part is his mother's plan, and that it isn't a present, because it will be a good deal nicer for him than to study there alone, and that his father and mother say from what they hear of our family they would rather he would be with us than anywhere else, and that he says is just selfishness—it's the nicest kind of selfishness that I ever heard of," and Karl gave a genial laugh—"but that is the way he pretends to look at it, and these books, he says, are his present, given because he wants to give them. A good many of them are from his own library. He says he has had them so long, and read them so much, that he is kind of tired of them and will be glad to have them out of the way. So that is selfish too, I suppose"—with another laugh—"but, father, did you ever hear the like?"

"No," said Mr. Tucker, speaking slowly, and wiping his forehead with his red handkerchief, "I must say I never did in my life. And there seems to be no end to it, and nothing to say. I've used up about all the language that I ever learned, and still it keeps coming. I'll tell you what it is, my girl, it looks as though that journey which you took to your uncle Daniel's was going to be the greatest trip of your life. Well, well, well!"

When Mr. Tucker said that the family knew there was nothing more to be expected. Excitement had reached its height and he must have a chance to be quiet.

After a time Christie brought herself to the delight of handling the wonderful books, examining them inside and out. Looking at the illustrations, and the authors' names and the publishers' names; devouring, indeed, everything about them. Not the least interesting part was the story on the fly-leaf:

*Miss Christie Tucker. From her grateful travelling companion.*

*Or, Christie, from Wells.*

*Or, For my distinguished Surgeon, in Memory of many Pocket handkerchiefs.*

*Miss Christie Tucker.—From one who escaped the down train.*

These were some of the inscriptions. The boy had exhausted his invention in writing in each some reference to the eventful day when their acquaintance began. The tears which had been pushed back by excitement were creeping very near the front again, until Christie opened a large, beautifully bound volume of Abbott's delightful history and read on the fly-leaf,

*Christie.—In memory of Sarah Ann.*

Then she laughed, and the tears went back.

It was Mr. Tucker who finally found his voice again after discovering baby at the piano just as he touched the key once, making it give forth a sound that turned Christie suddenly from her books. "Look here, mother, do you suppose we can any of us do such a kind of every day thing as to eat some dinner? In case we should want to, how are we going to get it, I wonder? I hear the clock striking twelve."

Whereupon Mrs. Tucker, who had been divided between her attempts to show Nettie the pictures in a book, and to keep baby's eager hands from it, after he had been led away from the music, uttered an exclamation that seemed to mean a great deal to her, and suddenly vanished.

## CHAPTER XII.

The last thing that Karl and Christie did that night was to slip into the front room and take a parting look at their treasures. There was no fire in the stove, but both the children felt a glow all through them as they looked about the pretty room and saw the gleam of the piano keys, and the bright colors of the wonderful books.

"I feel as though I wanted to scream," said Christie. "I would shout right out now, if father and mother wouldn't hear me and be scared. What does make you so sober, Karl? I have noticed you all day."

"Don't I look glad?" asked Karl, stooping over to straighten a book that was tipping.

"Yes, you do, but you look sober, too.

There is a new look, somehow; I never saw it on your face before."

"It never was there before," he said, speaking with a sort of cheerful gravity. "I've made up my mind to one thing, Christie, and I guess it makes a difference with looks and everything; it does with feelings, I know. I'm going to be a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. I settled it this morning, early. In fact, I am a servant now. I have belonged to him all day, and I like it."

"Oh!" said Christie, drawing a long breath and making a low, sweet sound of pleasure after it, in a way that cannot be put on paper; "That is the very best thing yet of all these best times. Karl, I'm too glad to tell you anything about it. You will have to guess how glad I am. Won't you tell me all about it? How came you to decide?"

"Well," said Karl, setting the lamp on the little table, and turning so that he could look into Christie's eyes, "it is all mixed up with these things. I don't suppose I could tell you how much I have wanted to go to school and learn, and have you learn, and have books and things. I meant to do it some day, but once in a while I got in a hurry and could not see how it was ever going to be done, and I would feel as though it was too bad, anyhow. Sometimes when you would talk about these things I would think that if God thought as much of us as you said, he would plan a way for us to go to school and learn. I

there was a geography or not, God was doing it all, and I would belong to him and serve him. Yes, sir," said Karl, in excitement, bringing his strong little fist down on the table, "I said I would, whether I ever went to school a day in my life! And here this morning there came two geographies and two arithmetics, and the school and all! I never saw anything like it!" And here Karl who had not let even Christie see him cry for more than a year, dashed off two tears and choked back several more.

The door leading from the kitchen into the hall opened, and they heard their mother's voice:

"Children, are you standing in that cold room yet? You do heat all! Go right away to bed. The books won't run away before morning, nor the piano either, you may depend on that."

Wells was standing on the piazza steps the next Monday morning waiting to show the new scholars to the schoolroom. They came in ample time, their cheeks rosy with the hasty walk, the excitement, or both. They looked very neat and trim. Christie in her neat travelling dress, which her mother had concluded might be worn for the first day or two, and Karl in a neat jacket made out of his father's old coat. Under his arm he carried what was worth more to him than all the new jackets in the country—the two arithmetics and the two geographies.

"Here we are!" said Wells, gleefully opening the school-room door.

"Everything looks perfectly lovely," declared Christie, and her eyes were on the cottage piano which occupied an alcove. Wells' eyes followed hers.

"Yes, that's my piano. It has a good tone, I think; see if it hasn't," and he seated himself before it and ran his fingers over the keys in a way which made the blood tingle in Christie's finger-tips.

He laughed at the look in her eyes.

"You can play better than that in a little while, I presume. I have no talent for it. I just do it by hard drumming. Oh, Christie, what do you think! The Seaside Library woman has been heard from!—Fact!" he added, as Christie's astonished, not to say shocked eyes, were raised to his. "She wrote a long letter and tried to smooth over what she had done. She said she had been miserable; I think she ought to have been, don't you? Mamma thinks she must be very much changed, and I should hope she was, since that day we met her on the cars. She sent a message to you; what do you think of that? Said she had reason to thank you. She did not say for what, but I suppose it was the seed-cakes."

There was a gleam of fun in his handsome face, but it sobered again as he said: "I suppose I ought to be glad that she is trying to behave better, but you see I don't think I like anything about her."

"I am glad," said Christie, her eyes shining. "She knew she had been doing what was wrong, and that was what made her so cross and disagreeable. Don't you know when you have done something wrong it makes you feel cross?"

Wells had no answer to this but a laugh, and a wise nod over at Karl. He did not choose to confess how he felt when he knew he had done wrong. The entrance of the professor interrupted the talk, and set the schoolroom into a buzz of work.

Many interesting things have happened to Karl and Christie since that time, but neither of them will ever forget that first wonderful day at school.

There was somebody else who had reason to remember this day. It was just at its close that Mrs. Burton called Christie to her room and began to question about the Cox children. How old were they? Of what size? What did they need in the way of clothing? Christie described them as well as she could, and blushed over the question as to what they needed.

"I think they need most everything, ma'am," she said hesitatingly. "I don't feel quite sure what they need worst; they don't seem to have anything."

"There are two suits of Wells' outgrown clothes which would probably do for the boy," Mrs. Burton said thoughtfully, "but I don't know about the little girl. Estelle's clothes would hardly be suitable for her. Still, there are several good strong dresses which might be made over; well, I'll see what can be done. I think we will drive out there this afternoon and call on them, you and I, and perhaps your mother would go with us and see just what they need most."

Christie's eyes were beautiful just then.

"Mother will go, ma'am," she said with great eagerness. "She knows all about everything, and she feels ever so sorry for the Cox family. I will take care of Nettie and the baby and let her go. She knows how to help."

"Very well," Mrs. Burton said, smiling kindly on her. In her own mind she believed that Christie too "knew how to help," but it was very pleasant to see how wise the womanly little girl thought her mother to be.

Christie was full of the scheme when she reached home. It was the first thing she talked about after she opened the door.

"Oh mother, Mrs. Burton is coming in the carriage at four o'clock, and she says will you go with her to see Mrs. Cox and find out what they need most? She is going to fix Lucius and Lucy up so they can go to school and to church, and everything. Oh mother, isn't it splendid!"

"Go go with her in the carriage!" repeated Mrs. Tucker; "bless my heart, what does she want of me?"

But she went. Christie stood at the window with the baby in her arms, and watched with intense satisfaction while Karl helped his mother into the carriage precisely as he had seen Wells do to his mother a few days before.

(To be Continued.)



BABY TOUCHED THE KEY ONCE.

said once that if I could have books like other boys I would be ready to belong to Jesus and work for him too. I felt dreadfully that day you went to uncle Daniel's. I wanted you to go, you know, I wouldn't have had you miss it for anything, and yet I kept thinking that the money it took would have bought us a geography, and what good would the going there for just a day do? Then, when you came home and had such wonderful things to tell, something seemed to tell me that God knew all about it, and sent you there to save Wells Burton's life, and take care of that baby. And I thought maybe he knew all about everything, and was planning for us. Then the things began to come, and the more they came, the more astonished I was, and I began to feel as though it was almost certain that God was doing it. Only I couldn't understand how it was going to help about the books and the school. Then last night Wells told me he had some books for you. I was so astonished, after all, to think that God really was going to send books, that I didn't answer a word to Wells. He did all the planning about getting them in slyly, and I kept still. But I couldn't get to sleep for a long time last night; this morning I got up before it was light, and I made up my mind, whatever the books were, whether

It was a long room, built quite at the end of the large old house, and had a piazza running its entire length, with three glass doors opening from it into the schoolroom. Framed in two of these doors stood Christie and Karl and looked about them in silent delight, not unmingled with awe.

A carpet of mossy green covered the floor. At one end was a blackboard, at the other end a history chart, and all the spaces between were filled with maps; larger maps than these two had ever seen before. The long, wide centre-table was strewn with books and writing-materials, and had cunning rows of drawers—a set for each of them, as Wells explained. There were three large chairs of just the right height for the table, and into one of these Christie presently sank, with clasped hands and a look of such unutterable satisfaction on her face that Wells burst into hearty laughter.

"I hope you'll like," he said, as soon as he could speak; "I hope you'll like everything. I fixed up things just to my fancy; mamma laughed at some of my notions, but I was sure you would like them. Don't you think, for instance, that those globes look better over that green table where a fellow can get a chance at them, than they do perched on those upper shelves?"