

## CHRISTIE AT HOME.

A SEQUEL TO CHRISTIE'S CHRISTMAS.

By Pansy.

## CHAPTER IV.—(Continued.)

And Christie curled in a little heap at her mother's feet, and hid her head in her mother's lap, and Karl leaned on the arm of his father's chair, and Mr. Tucker, as he took a seat beside the mother, and looked around on his family, said with a curious quiver in his voice: "I reckon these are the chairs that the Governor sent to our little girl, eh, mother?"

I'm sure it was not any wonder that



"WE WALKED THROUGH THE WOODS TOGETHER."

Christie cried. Though when Karl asked her presently what in the world she was crying about, she looked up and laughed, and said she was sure she didn't know.

"Look here," said Mother Tucker briskly, trying to rise from her couch, "let's drag the carpet into the other room; this room is too full to get a good view of it, and it is chilly here, besides. I'll tell you what it is, Jonas, now that the front room is going to get furnished for us in the most unheard-of way, we must just get that stove and set it up here, and have a fire now and then, and come in and look at the things, now won't we?"

And the father, as he stooped to take hold of an end of the great roll of carpeting and help Karl drag it to the kitchen, answered that he guessed they would try for it. Ever since the Tuckers had built their little home, they had talked and planned together about furnishing the front room. Each spring the mother had cheerily said that by fall they must try to manage it; in the summer they could get along without the front room very well, because they spent so much time out of doors, and every fall she had cheerily said that the crops had not been quite so good this summer as they had hoped, and they must try to get along without furnishing the front room until spring. The winters were so cold it was more comfortable in the kitchen, anyway, and next spring they would try for it. So the springs and autumns had come and gone, and left the front room floor bare, and three chairs for the only furniture. The children had not lost faith in their father and mother, for they knew that the resolve was as strong as ever to furnish the front room as soon as they could; but they had begun to understand that with the best of intentions, the furnishing might be still a great way off, and here it had come in the night! "Dropped down in the snow-storm," said Karl, "or might as well for all that we knew about."

Oh, that carpet! How shall I describe to you what it said to the beauty-loving little girl as her father and Karl spread the glowing thing on the floor and matched the breadths and then stood back in silent enjoyment. Christie looked and laughed and said:

"Oh, mother, only see the red berries! Doesn't it seem as though we could pick them? Oh, look at baby, she is going to try!"

Sure enough, the baby, after gazing in silence for a minute, scrambled down in haste, a business-like look on her face, stepped into the very centre of the glowing carpet, seated herself and dived after a handful of leaves and berries, then looked at her empty hand in grave surprise. Everybody laughed, but there was more than laughter in Mrs. Tucker's voice as she said: "It does remind me of the woods, Jonas—of that picnic just behind grand-

father's further barn where we walked one afternoon, and picked checkerberries for grandma, and gathered leaves to press for mother. Don't you remember?"

"And promised each other to walk through the wood together, always, after that," said Father Tucker, and there was an unusual sound in his voice too. "Yes, I remember it."

"And did you always walk together?" asked Nettie, who thought it sounded like a story of which she wanted to hear the end.

Then they laughed—that father and mother—until the tears started in their eyes, but the father answered Nettie: "Yes, we did, right straight through the woods, some of them thick and dark, but after all we most always found leaves and berries."

"Always," said the mother. And the older children dimly understood, but Nettie looked from one to another with a wondering little sigh, and said, "I wish you'd take me wiv you."

"Why, we did!" said both father and mother, and then they went off again into shouts of laughter, and even Karl and Christie were a little puzzled to know what it was all about.

Altogether the Tuckers never had such a day.

To be sure before its close the mother said that it was very fortunate that such days were rare; she did not know what would become of them if it were otherwise.

Strange things happened in the kitchen. Matters that were not used to taking care of themselves ran wild, and did as they pleased. The bread sponge pleased to get light before anybody thought of such a thing, and ran over the pan, making a sticky mess of the bread blankets, and then finding itself still unattended to, it sulked and soured and had to be coaxed and patted and sweetened with soda, and tasted at last, Christie said, more like "Sarah Ann's" bread than any that she had ever eaten in her mother's house before. This was only one of the many things that happened which should not have been. The baby was busy. Who ever knew an extra day in a family with a baby, that she didn't do a hundred unexpected and distracting things? This baby tipped over a pail of water on herself, and had to be dressed "to her skin," the mother said, whatever that strange-sounding sentence means, but this did not compare with the last thing she tipped over, which was a bowl of molasses, and in that she dabbled, curly head and all, until when discovered she was a sight to behold. Besides, she bumped her head twice, and got a sliver in her finger. Altogether, I think the most of the members of the Tucker family breathed a sigh of relief when the day was done, and they felt that by the next morning they would probably awaken to take the world more naturally.

From that time for a week, much work was done. It was not the busy season on the little farm, so the mother gave herself steadily to the unusual work of putting the front room in order. The carpet was matched and cut and sewed. Everybody helped. The father, with Karl's help, matched and cut it. Karl, furnished with a large needle, carefully whipped the ends. Christie and her mother sewed steadily on the heavy seams.

Nettie threaded needles, and the baby believed herself to be assisting, when she took her small hand and gave the carpet a few earnest slaps. Nobody could understand just what that meant, until Karl suddenly rolling over on the floor, declared amid bursts of laughter that he believed that she was whipping it! After the sewing came the tacking. What a thing it was, to be sure, to get that heavy Brussels carpet laid smoothly and tacked firmly. Mr. Tucker, winter day though it was, mopped his hot forehead again and again with his handkerchief and declared that he would not have dreamt of its being such a job, and the people who ought to get the best wages going were the carpet men. But at last it was down, and beautifully down too, trust Jonas Tucker for doing well whatever he undertook.

"The last tack is in!" he called to the mother and Christie one afternoon. "Now

come and look at it; it was a job, I tell you, and I never should have got it smooth if Karl hadn't held on like a soldier. But isn't it a beauty?"

I really suppose you have no idea what a difference that carpet seemed to make in the great front room. The walls had been made very white before it went down, and of course the woodwork was as clean as hands could make it, but who would have supposed that the bright carpet would seem to set everything about it into a glow of beauty! Then they moved in the furniture. It had occupied an unused room during this time, and been carefully covered, so that really they had never half seen its beauty. But when they took their places, the couch in the pretty niche between the mantel and the south window, and a lovely table in the centre of the room, and the great chairs which seemed to fill up all the broad spaces at the right and left of the front windows, and the other chairs arranged by the tasteful hand of the mother, I am sure I wish I could give you an idea of how the room looked to them. The three-cornered piece of furniture over which Christie and Karl had wondered before it was unpacked, was still an object of curious interest to Christie. It was tall, and had what she called a steeple top, beautifully carved, and it had many shelves, and it fitted into one of the corners of the long room as though it had been made for that particular spot. But what was the name of it, and what was to go on all those pretty shelves? "They can't be for dishes," said puzzled Christie, "for people don't keep dishes in their front rooms do they, mother!"

And the mother laughed, and said some people did, she supposed, but they had none to spare for the parlor. Then she brought forth her Eastern knowledge for the benefit of her little girl who had not been outside of her own plain home.

"I know the name of it, Christie; it is a what-not; and people keep their pretty things on it—vases, you know, and shells, and treasures of any kind, and books."

"Books," repeated Karl wistfully. What the boy wanted was books.

"Books!" repeated Christie eagerly. What the girl meant to have, some day, was books.

"Well, we haven't any yet. We'll fill ours with books when we get them, won't we, Karl? But we have no vases, nor shells, nor treasures of that kind; what will we put on until we get some? I like the name of it—'what-not.' Hasn't it a pretty sound? What can we put on it?"

Then the mother stood thoughtfully looking into the days that were gone. At last she spoke: "We might bring out the big Bible, Christie, for the lower shelf, and the pictures of your grandfather and grandmother. I have one of mine; your grandfather Tucker died before such things as



MOTHER TUCKER.

pictures were known; then I have a few shells your uncle James brought from the Pacific coast. Oh, we can dress it up, I think."

"There never seemed to be any place for it," said Mrs. Tucker as she carefully took the tissue paper from the clasps. "I laid it away for safe keeping. But I always meant to get it out when we furnished the room. It fits nicely on that shelf; I like to see it." But neither she nor her daughter realized that new furniture was beginning already to work for the honor of the "Elder Brother."

(To be Continued.)

## SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT AT EASTER.

Old winter has gone at last, and left the sun at peace to his work of warming the ground and coaxing out of it the grass and flowers. But winter was icy cold this year. He stayed with us as long as he dared, kept his rough winds blowing, froze all the water he could spy out, and made the snow fall. The snow! It came falling, driving, whirling down, again and again, and so many times again, that the boys shouted themselves hoarse, and snow-balls were as common as sparrows, and commoner too, sometimes, for the sparrows lost one another in the storms. A merry old friend was winter! He kept the sleigh-bells jingling, and the boys on skates until even eight-year-old chaps learned the "Dutch Roll" and "Eights," and bad boys of all ages played "hokey." He hung more icicles than ever on our eaves and lamp-posts, and loaded the telegraph wires with ice until they broke and fell into tangles at the street corners.

But, oh! the gay parties, the sleigh-rides, the coasting (out of town), and the rollicking games that we had! The nut-crackings, corn-poppings, and candy-pulls! And then Christmas! Was there ever anything brighter than Christmas? Maybe not; indeed, I really think not. But hearken, children! The brightest part of it, half of you never saw. You listened to the old birthday story; you looked at the picture of Jesus in the manger, with St. John and the angels smiling at Him; but how many of you thought or wondered what it meant? Why does the Baby look straight into your faces, instead of turning His sweet smile to St. John or to one of the angels? Ah! that is the very bright thing you must remember. Because He was not born for the joy of St. John, or of any one in particular, but for all of us—every one—to be the Light of the World. So He smiles out of the picture into the face of whoever looks at Him, with the same love for the poorest little ragamuffin shivering at the corner or the lonely sick child lying in the hospital, or even the criminal shut in behind prison bars, as for you who have always had loving friends about you to guard and save you from misfortune. If all the children in the world could have that picture, and be told why the Baby looks into their faces so lovingly, they would grow up better men and women. Fewer of them would get into trouble; and when they did, the others would be more ready to help them out. It is well and fitting to show you now, at Easter-time, this picture of the child Jesus. You can have a better chance to think about it than at Christmas, when your toys, your fun, and your frolic make it easier to think of yourselves. It is fitting because we think now of another birth—of the new life which begins forever! Easter reminds us how Jesus began that new life; how, after all His long suffering, He rose to the life that is never-ending, and rising, pointed out the beautiful way for us all.

The grass springing up in the parks, buds coming on the trees, the little seeds swelling and bursting in the ground, and sending up leaves and stems, remind us every hour of new fresh life. Out-of-doors with you all! At the close of school, out into the fresh air, and shout for the spring. Spy out the first crocus and dandelion, and see if you can find a single one of all the bird-cottages in the parks "to let." Go into the country on holidays, and look for arbutus; open your eyes wide, and don't let a bit of the beauty escape you.

And if you should discover here and there a chance to point out bits of brightness to another whose eyes may be duller than yours, if you should see a way to help some one who is weaker, an opportunity to do any little kindly act for those less fortunate than you, seize upon the chance, and bless it for coming, for that will be the best way your young hands can take to point toward the glorious life which the old story tells us Jesus began on an Easter morning.—Harper's Young People.