

CHRISTIE AT HOME.

A SEQUEL TO CHRISTIE'S CHRISTMAS.

CHAPTER X.—(Continued).

By Pansy.

The entire group turned and looked at the father and daughter who were having a good time without knowing that they were helping anybody. Lucy, after a steady, searching look at them, turned to Mr. Keith again and nodded her head.

"Very well. Now suppose that a bad man should come in at that door and try to get Nettie to go with him. Do you think her father would be willing she should go, and make no effort to save her?" Lucy violently shook her head.



THE FATHER AND DAUGHTER WERE AN ILLUSTRATION.

"Well, did not Christie tell you that you belong to the Lord Jesus? Nettie only belongs to her father because God gave her to him, but you belong to Jesus because he made you and keeps you alive. Now can't you see that he wants you to have a good time, since he took the trouble to make you and take care of you?"

Lucy considered. She was losing her timidity. Her fierce little heart was full of new and strange thoughts; it was time she understood some of them.

"Why don't He give me good times, then?" she asked, and her voice was fierce. "We have horrid times at our house, always."

Mr. Keith needed another illustration.

"Lucy," he said, bending toward her, "you remember that bad man whom we supposed might come after Nettie? Suppose he were here, and Nettie should want to go with him, and obey him, and her father should set her down and say to her: 'My little girl, this is a bad man; he will do nothing but harm to you, and if you will come to me I will see that he never touches you, and I will see that you get safely home to a beautiful place I have waiting for you, but you must choose which of us you will obey, or else I cannot help you,' and suppose Nettie should choose the bad man?"

Karl and Wells looked at each other, for both saw that this was the same sort of illustration which had been used for them, and had made them decide that they were fools, but Lucy did not understand as well as they had.

"She wouldn't do it!" she exclaimed in triumph. "Nettie wouldn't go with the bad man a step. She would run right to her father."

The boys laughed, but Mr. Keith sighed.

"Yes," he said, "I think she would; and that is just the difference between her and you. This Jesus who owns you, has been calling to you all your life, coaxing you to choose between him and the bad master who wants you to follow him, and you have chosen the bad master."

"I haven't," said Lucy, her dark face growing red all over, and losing every vestige of her timidity. In her rage, she stamped her foot. "I haven't, either! It is no such thing. He never said a word to me, nor the other one either. I never heard them speak in my life. And I wouldn't do no such thing as that, and you needn't say I would."

Mr. Keith bent forward and spoke low. "Lucy," he said, "will you listen to me very carefully? I want to tell you a story: There was once a little girl who had a baby

brother, and she took him out, one day, in the fields to play, and set him down by the bank, and he rolled over and got his dress and shoes all wet and muddy, and spoiled a ribbon that the little sister had laid in his lap. Now this little sister ran over to him, and as she ran she heard two people speaking to her. One said, 'Little rascal! He is always getting you into trouble, and now mother will whip you for letting him get muddy, and he has spoiled your ribbon, too. Shake him as hard as you can, and slap his arms and his hand.' The other voice said, 'He couldn't help tumbling over; he is only a little fellow. He did not do it on purpose; and he does not understand that he has hurt your ribbon. Kiss him, and tell him you are sorry he fell; and tell mother that you will take better care of him next time.' Those two voices were, the Lord Jesus who made this little girl, and the bad man who wanted to keep her away from her home in Heaven that Jesus had made ready for her, and the little girl said to Jesus, 'I won't! I won't! I'll slap him as hard as I can. I don't care if he is a baby.' Now which master did she choose to obey?"

You should have seen Lucy's face then! It was a curious study! Red, indeed, but not angry; rather astonished beyond words to express, and ashamed. She dropped her eyes to the floor, and made no answer at all, and had no question ready.

After a moment's waiting, Mr. Keith said gently:

"There are always those two voices talking to people, and they are always choosing which they will obey. The thing is that it has been left for them to choose. The Lord Jesus wants willing servants. We must decide for Him, then He will do all the rest. It is true that He told His servant Christie to ask you and Lucius to come here to-night, and to make you as happy as she could, and to tell you what He wanted of you, but He will not make you love Him whether you want to or not; you can still go on serving the bad master if you choose. But you must not blame him for not giving you a happy life, if you will not have him for a friend."

Mrs. Tucker had now come in, and Mr. Keith withdrew his chair and joined the other group. The boys looked at one another, and then at Lucy, who still had her eyes on the carpet. It was an embarrassing time. Nobody knew what to say next. At last Wells came to the rescue.

"What if we young folks should play some games together? Christie, do you suppose your mother would let us go to the kitchen?"

Christie arose promptly, giving Wells a grateful look as she hastened away to make ready the room.

I suppose the little Coxes never even dreamed of a nicer time than they had there for the next hour.

It appeared that Wells not only knew all sorts of games, but he knew how to explain them to others, and to be patient with dulness, and good-natured over-mistakes.

And you know yourselves that it is not every boy or girl either who can do these last things.

The fun grew so great that after a time the father and mother and minister came to look on. Yet through it all, Lucy Cox kept a watchful eye on the minister and on her opportunities, and when at last she stood close to him she said suddenly, speaking low:

"Who told you?"

"Who told me what, my child?" he answered, thus suddenly called from the bewilderingments of blind-man's-buff.

"That about me and Tommy in the field."

He bent toward her:

"My child, no one told me. I saw it. I was passing that way, and I saw little Tommy fall, and I saw the shaking and the slapping; and I am so well acquainted with Jesus and with that evil spirit that I know as

well as though I had heard them, that one was coaxing you to do right, and the other to do wrong. And I saw you choose to do the wrong thing."

Lucy pushed up the handkerchief from her blinded eyes and looked around her, half frightened.

"I didn't see no one," she said doubtfully.

"No, the trees hid me from your view; but I saw you and Tommy distinctly."

"But I mean them other two."

"Lucy, don't you know that you cannot see them with the eyes that you have now? They are spirits, and our eyes are not made to see spirits."

Lucy sniffed contemptuously and drew down her handkerchief. "I don't believe in nothing that I can't see!" she said, with a logic and wisdom worthy of some who are older than she, and ought to know more.

She was caught just then, and had to go through the ordeal of being discovered and taking her turn as catcher, but it took her not two minutes to lay hands on Wells, and the moment her fingers touched the nap of his coat sleeve she triumphantly announced his name: "It's that Burton boy. You can't humbug me!"

A few moments more and the changes of the game brought her back to the corner where Mr. Keith still stood.

He bent towards her: "Lucy, did you ever hear the wind blow?"

"Course!" said Lucy, utter contempt in her voice. She thought the minister was being very foolish in his talk.

"Then you are sure that there is such a thing as wind?"

"Of course I am."

"But did you ever see the wind?"

And now, for the first time, Lucy discovered where her own logic had led her.

She said not a word in reply for several minutes: not indeed until she had made the circuit of all the corners without getting

caught, and was back beside him again. Her voice had changed its tone and was almost gentle as she said: "But I can hear the wind plain enough."

"And you can hear those two, speaking plainly to you, whenever you choose to listen. They speak low."

Apparently Lucy had had all the lesson her mind could grasp. She said no more. Indeed there was little time after that. The game broke up. The carriage came for Wells and he invited the minister to ride with him, and the minister asked if there was not time for one song and a prayer. So they went back to the front room and Wells played "There's a Land that is fairer than Day," Mr. Keith taking a song leaflet out of his pocket to furnish music, and then he and Wells and Karl sang it. Christie tried to; it was one of their Sabbath-school pieces and she knew it well, but it made the tears come so to hear the familiar tune ringing out to her from the keys of her own piano, that they choked her voice. Lucy and Lucius could only listen and stare. They had never heard the song; they knew nothing about Sabbath-school.

Wells and the minister talked about that as they rode home in the carriage.

"Those little chips ought to be gotten into the Sabbath-school," Wells said. "They say they have never been in their lives. Why, they are regular little heathens! Christie says they have no clothes to wear. I must talk to my mother about that."

(To be Continued.)

SOME OF YOU little sinners are sitting around here waiting for salvation to strike you as it did St. Paul. Snow bird waiting to be hit with a cannon ball. God adjusts his ammunition to the size of the man he is after. Mustard-seed shot will do for you.



CHERRIES.

(Drawing Lesson, by Harrison Weir.)