

CHRISTIE'S CHRISTMAS.

BY PANSY.

CHAPTER II.—Continued.

If the young man had been bewildered when the lady spoke to him, he was too much astonished now to say a word. He just stared for a minute at the burning cheeks, as though he felt like saying:

"What in the world can you be talking about?" At last he spoke.

"There is no harm done, my little friend. I had already forgotten that you laughed. My thoughts were too busy about other things, and too sad to pay much attention to watches, or to think of anything but getting over the ground as fast as possible."

"We go very fast," said Christie earnestly.

She wanted to comfort the young man, his voice sounded so sad. He smiled faintly.

"Do you think so? It seems to me that we almost creep."

Christie caught her breath to keep from expressing too great surprise. It seemed to her that they almost flew.

He saw the astonishment on her face, and explained:

"A hundred miles from here I have a very sick friend. If I could get to her in time, I think I might help her. Do you wonder that the train seems to me to move very slowly?"

"No, Sir," said Christie, with great sympathetic eyes. "If mother were sick, I should want to fly."

She sat back after that, and the young man took a telegram from his pocket, and seemed to study it. Then he took a newspaper, and seemed to others to be reading it; but Christie saw that part of the time it was upside down. She felt very sorry for him, and could not help glancing at him occasionally with a tender smile on her face; especially as he smiled back, and seemed to like her sympathy.

CHAPTER III.

Christie had other travelling companions who interested her very much. At the first stopping-place a lady with a little fellow hardly out of babyhood came and took the seat just behind her. She had to twist herself around to get a view of the baby as he sat in a corner of the seat; but he was so pretty that she could hardly keep her eyes away from him. He had wonderful large blue eyes, and a laughing face, and he kept bobbing up and down, and making pretty little sounds out of his rosebud mouth, and once he smiled on her as though he hadn't the least objection in the world to being better acquainted. But Christie did not dare to go near him, for he was beautifully dressed, and his mamma looked as though she might

be very particular about his friends. So the little girl who had left a baby at home, looked the other way and tried to forget how much she wanted to kiss the baby behind her.

The cars were quite full, but Christie thought that most of the people looked as though they had been obliged to get up too early, and had not had a good breakfast.

"They feel cross," she said to herself, "or else they feel afraid. I wonder if there is anything to be afraid of."

Thinking which, she looked over at Wells Burton, the boy who went on the train every morning to the city. He surely ought to know by this time whether there was any cause for fear. He had his hands in his pockets, and was looking out of the window and whistling. He did not look in the least afraid, neither did he look cross.

What a thing it would be to



HARDLY OUT OF BABYHOOD.

know him, and have him tell about all the wonders that he saw in the city every day! He had been to the State House, she had heard, and Karl said the stage-driver said that the Governor was a great friend of Mr. Burton, and had been out to see him.

How much Christie would like to hear something about the Governor from one who had actually heard him talk. She

knew quite a good deal concerning this Governor. Her father admired him very much, and said he was one of the grandest temperance men in the State. And once when he went to the city to see about selling his corn, he had a story to tell about having seen the Governor standing in the door of his home, and a fine-looking man her father said he was.

Christie had a burning desire to see a real governor; or, failing in that—as of course she expected—to hear things about him:

how he acted, and what he said, and all those nice pleasant things which she believed she could tell about people if she ever had any chances.

But she must not grumble on this morning, of all others in her life, she told herself, letting the sober look go out of her face, and bringing back the happy one. Here were plenty of chances. What a long story she could tell Karl about these people on the cars. And there was that baby cooing and jumping, and—why, yes, the darling was actually throwing kisses at her.

The train stopped again. It was a very accommodating train; it seemed to stop every few minutes to pick up passengers along the road when there was no station in sight. Some junction was yelled out, but the brakeman talked in Choctaw, and of course Christie did not understand him. A gentleman came in, glanced up and down the well-filled car, then dropped into the seat beside Christie.

"I suppose you will let me sit with you?" he said, and his voice was very pleasant, and his face was bright with smiles. She made haste to say, "Yes, sir." Then he began to talk with her, or rather to her, for Christie said very little. He pointed out a log cabin as they flew past it, and told her the queerest little history about its being built there by a boy less than sixteen years old, for his mother. And how he worked day and night, and earned money enough to send away to Maine for her, and how he supported her. And how they lived in a nice pleasant house, and had cows and horses, and the mother made butter, and sold it at the highest price in market, and how she said "It can't help but be good butter, I have such a dear good boy."

Christie listened and exclaimed and enjoyed. What a thing to tell father and mother and Karl! She felt that she was piling up stories to last all the rest of the winter evenings.

She was very sorry when her pleasant friend arose at the very next station only a mile away, and bade her good-morning as politely as though she had been a grown-up lady. She wished so much that she knew his name. It would be awkward to be always calling him "the gentleman with bright eyes that looked right through you." That seemed to be the only way she could describe him.

She noticed that he stopped at Wells Burton's seat and shook hands with him. It was quite likely that Wells knew who he was.

"Now, if I only knew Wells Burton," she told herself, "I might ask him; but then I don't, and it isn't likely that I ever shall."

The pretty baby had gone to



ALL SWUNG THEIR HATS AND CHEERED.