

CHRISTIE AT HOME.

A SEQUEL TO CHRISTIE'S CHRISTMAS.

By Pansy.

CHAPTER II.

"Why," said Christie, "I suppose he wants to know where somebody lives. You go to the door, Karl." For the man was knocking, and Christie caught up the baby just in time to get her out of the whirl of wind that came in at the open door.

"Is this Mr. Jonas Tucker's place?" the gruff voice asked. The man was a new comer, and did not know the country very well, though Karl felt well acquainted with him, having watched him often as he loaded his big white covered waggon—or "prairie-schooner," as the waggons for transportation are called in the "Far West."

"Yes, sir," said Karl, "but he isn't at home. He went to the city right after dinner."

"Is there a Miss Christie Tucker in the family?"

"No, sir; Miss! Why—no—yes, yes, sir, I suppose there is."

"Well, you seem to be mighty uncertain about it; when you get your mind fully made up, I wish you would tell me. Are you sure you live here yourself?"

Astonished as he was, Karl could not help laughing over this.

"Yes, sir," he said decidedly, "I do; and so does Christie; though it seemed so funny to hear her called 'Miss,' that I thought you must mean somebody else. She is a little girl."

"Just so. Little or big, I don't know as it makes much difference to me, provided her name is Christie. I've got an express package out here for her as big as the house most, and as heavy as all creation."

Then did Christie set the baby down hastily in the farthest corner she could find, and come to the door.

"There is some mistake, Karl," she said hurriedly; "nobody would send an express package to me."

"We don't think it can belong to us," explained Karl to the man who was turning to go down the walk. "We don't know anybody who would send packages to us."

"I haven't got anything to do with that, as I know of. It is marked Miss Christie Tucker, as plain as black paint and a good deal of it can mark it, and sent to this office, and the clerk who has been here ever since there was a place says he don't know of any other Tucker within ten miles of the town, only Jonas, and you say the little girl's name is Christie, so I guess it's all right. Anyway, if the man has made a mistake and sent his bundle to the one he doesn't want to have it, why, that's his lookout, not mine. We'll bring the thing in, and you get away from the door, for it will about fill up your kitchen."

Away he tramped, whistling gayly as he went, and Christie and Karl looked at each other in great perplexity.

"It is all wrong," murmured Christie.

"They will just have to come to-morrow and take it away, and maybe it will cost father something; mother will say that we ought not to have let them bring it in. Oh, Karl, they always have to pay for express packages. They mark them C.O.D. Father was telling me about that, only yesterday, when I helped him hold that beam, you know."

"We shan't pay any C.O.D., or any other kind of fish," declared Karl, sturdily, rising to assert his manhood. "If he leaves a thing here that we say doesn't belong to us, he will get no money for it from us, that's sure."

"That's so," said Christie, relieved and admiring. "We can't tell him not to leave it, I suppose, but we can tell him that we are not going to pay for it. In fact, we couldn't, because we haven't any money!"

By this time the great roll, whatever it was, riding on the shoulders of two stout men, had reached the door, and was thumped down on the clean kitchen floor.

"My patience!" said Christie. The thing was so large that she could not help exclaiming over it.

"Look here," said Karl, still intent on business, "we don't at all think that that thing belongs to us, and we can't pay you a cent for leaving it here."

"All right," the good-natured man said, a broad smile on his face. "There isn't a cent to pay, and if I find any other Christie Tucker who wants the thing worse than you do, I'll come and take it away again for nothing at all."

And he went puffing away out of the little house, and down the walk, a smile all over his great broad face.

When he was gone the two young people stood and looked, first at the roll, and then at each other. Of course the baby crawled out of her corner, and hovered around the great bundle, and tried to push it with her little hands, and tried to bite it, and tried to lift it, and finally sat down on it in triumph, believing that she had found out its use.

"What in the world can it be?" Karl asked at last.

"And whose can it be?" added Christie, looking at the great roll with longing eyes.

"Why, it's plain enough that it is yours. Anyhow, that is your name, Christie Tucker, as large as life, and we know there isn't another Christie Tucker anywhere around. The question is, where did it come from, and what is it for?"

"Uncle Daniel never would"—said Christie slowly, thinking aloud, and leaving her sentence unfinished.

"No," said Karl, with emphasis, understanding her as well as though she had finished it, "he never would in this world. Christie Tucker, I believe in my heart it is a carpet. It is done up for all the world like the rolls that Nick takes up to the Burton's, and other places, and he says they are carpets straight from the stores. They sew

her voice, which Karl knew meant, "It has my name on it, and therefore I have the right to decide, and I decide that it is not to be touched." At the same time she lifted the baby from it in haste, and examined carefully the little flannel dress to see if it felt damp. A little woman was Christie.

Karl recognized the power in the quiet voice, and began gravely to roll the bundle into the corner.

It took every bit of strength there was in his stout young body; and before he had made much progress, an exclamation from Christie stopped him.

"Karl, there comes another waggon! It has stopped before the gate, and a man is coming up to the door; and it is loaded with all sorts of stuff!"

You see how these two people muddled the English language when they were excited. Of course Christie did not mean the door was loaded, but the waggon. Karl left his roll, and came to attend to this new and startling development.

"That is the depot freight waggon," he chuckled, "and that is Jim Pierce driving. I know him, anyhow, and he knows me."

"Halloo!" said Jim Pierce, as the door swung back almost before he had a chance to knock. "Here you are, eh? Well, is there a Christie Tucker tucked in here anywhere, that's the question. Miss Christie Tucker; can you find her?"



"HERE COMES THE BIG DEPOT WAGON!"

them all up in that straw kind of stuff, so they won't get dirty on the journey."

"Then of course it isn't ours, for we haven't bought any carpet at the stores, that is certain."

"No," Karl said slowly, and argumentatively; "but then, see here, Christie, neither have we bought anything else, and this is something, so I don't see as that proves anything. I'd like to see the inside of it, wouldn't you? Shall we rip it open?"

"Oh, no! We mustn't; mother wouldn't think it was right. It will have to go back, of course; they have sent it to the wrong town, maybe, and father would have no end of trouble in getting it sewed up again. We must just push it into the corner and let it alone; and Karl, it is time we were getting our treat ready, or planning for it, at least. Look! it has stopped snowing, and I believe the sun is going to set clear. They will have a nice ride home."

"I can't imagine what the thing is," said Karl. He did not mean the sun, nor yet the ride home. Eyes and thoughts were still on the great roll. He was not in the mood to give it up so quietly.

"I'll tell you what, Christie, I believe we ought to open it. This stuff is all damp on the outside, and it may be something that the damp will hurt. We ought to take care of it, whosoever it is."

"It won't hurt before mother and father come," Christie said, with the quiet tone in

"Yes," said Karl, laughing merrily; this whole affair was growing very funny to him. "I've got her here safe; what do you want of her?"

"Why, I'm getting her ready to set up housekeeping. There's a bedstead, and bureau, and chairs, and a sofa, and don't know what all, out in my waggon; as cunning a little set-out as ever you see, all belonging to Miss Christie Tucker. You aren't getting ready for a wedding nor nothing, are you, Karl?"

Whereupon Karl laughed again, loud and long. But Christie did not laugh; her face was pale. What did it all mean?

(To be Continued.)

A CYPRESS-VINE'S WORK.

"Rob, please take this little basket of flowers to Miss Holt for me; it isn't much out of your way to school."

Rob turned back from the gate at his mother's call and took charge of the basket. It was a matter of course with him to do his mother's little errands cheerfully, and this was a particularly pleasant one, for Miss Holt, was as gay as a lark, though, poor little woman, she was a broken-winged lark, for if she was ever able to get off the couch it was to go no farther than the window.

At Rob's light tap there came a cheery "Come in," and he presented his basket with an apology for such an early call.

Miss Holt was a great chum of Rob's, and many a merry laugh he had enjoyed with her over his school fun, or some yarn she had heard, but to-day she had a different matter in hand.

"Come sit here by me, Rob," she said, after sending thanks for the flowers; "I want to talk to you a little."

Rob at once scented a serious talk, and being, like most boys, very shy of such, he found himself in a great hurry to get to school.

"Then I will only keep you five minutes," said the lady. "I have been wondering for a long time, Rob, why you let year after year go by without becoming a member of Christ's church, and at last I have made up my mind that I would ask you about it."

The boy's face flushed and he twirled his hat restlessly. "I don't think I've been converted," he said presently.

"Haven't you asked God to forgive your sins for his Son's sake, and don't you believe he will do it?"

"Yes."

"Aren't you trying to live according to his will?"

"I hope so."

"Then, my dear boy, what are you waiting for?"

"Why, Miss Holt, I haven't had any change of heart that I know of, or new birth, or anything like that."

Miss Holt threw aside her curtain to show Rob a long, narrow box from which were climbing by interlaced vines of cypress, their delicate, long-fingered leaves already showing like a pattern of green lace against the window-pane.

"I put these seeds in myself," she said, "dark brown little knobs of things. I've watched and listened day after day and I have never heard a sound nor seen a leaf grow, and yet under the sunshine they have been born again and are climbing heavenward. That is the way God works in nature, Rob, and often in hearts too. But I see it is time for you to go to school. Good-by; don't forget my cypress."

Rob had felt his heart grow suddenly light as Miss Holt showed him by her little sermon that he need not wait for such an experience as being struck by lightning in order to be a Christian. But he couldn't find any words to say so then. It was weeks and weeks before he could muster up courage to go and tell his pastor that he hoped he was a Christian and wanted to join the church. It wasn't so hard after that to tell mother and Miss Holt, and the mother herself was hardly more happy and thankful than the poor invalid to whom, in the midst of pain and weariness, it had been given to speak the word that brought this young soldier out on the Lord's side.—Elizabeth P. Allan in *Child's Paper*.

MY LESSON.

One day my little child came to me with a request for something on which her young heart was set, but which I, from my superior standpoint of age and experience, could see would bring her harm and pain. I was forced to deny her request. The child went away with a sad face. She did not complain, but as she went around the house, quiet and subdued, her look seemed to say, "My mother does not love me or she would give me what I wish for so much. She could do it just as well as not if she chose to do so."

My darling's disappointment and her sad face went to my heart. At length I said, "My dear child, have I not always been ready to do everything I could for you that would really be for your good? Have I not given you everything possible that would add to your happiness? Can't you trust your mother now, and believe that it is because she loves you that she does not give you what you want?"

The little arms twined themselves about my neck, the dear head sank peacefully on my breast, and the sweet voice whispered, "You know best, mother." In a few minutes her happy laugh told that she was fully satisfied and that no cloud overshadowed her trust.

I took the lesson to my heart. Henceforth I will not go about my daily duties with a sad face and a troubled spirit. I will rejoice in the Lord and his ways, even if he disappoint me in my most cherished hopes. I will not grieve my dear Heavenly Father by my doubt and distrust. With his help I will try to say, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."—Ex.