

## CHRISTIE AT HOME.

A SEQUEL TO CHRISTIE'S CHRISTMAS.

By Pansy.

## CHAPTER III.—(Continued.)

Father Tucker never liked to see tears, and always made all the haste he could to dry them.

"It is my opinion, mother, from the tone of that letter, that our little girl didn't say anything to be ashamed of. The old gentleman seems to have quite as good an opinion of her as though she had not talked at all. I don't believe there is anything to worry about."

"Why, of course not," said Mrs. Tucker, promptly. She liked tears as little as anybody, especially in her eldest daughter's eyes. "Whoever thought of blaming Christie? I would as soon think of myself saying anything improper as of that child! I only felt kind of curious to know how it all came about. It is wonderful, anyhow. But now I'll tell you just what will be a hard and a right thing to do; things that are right are often hard; Christie looks all tuckered out, and we ought just to wash these dishes, and straighten up the room, and get to bed, and not go near the front room until to-morrow morning."

"O mother!" said Karl. It seemed to him that he should fly up the chimney if he couldn't have a glimpse of some of those wonders in the front room before morning.

"Yes," said Mrs. Tucker firmly, "they will every one of them keep, and by daylight, when things are cleared up and comfortable, they will look as pretty again as they will to-night, and the children will enjoy it too; here is Nettie dropped asleep while that letter was being read. Christie, my girl, what do you say? Isn't it the thing to do?"

"Yes'm," said Christie rising, her face cleared. She had been astonished at and ashamed of her tears; she rarely cried unless she had something to cry for, and knew little about overwrought nerves. "I'll clear away, mother, and you can rest and get Nettie and the baby ready for bed. Come on, Karl, and carry these things out for me."

So brisk work commenced again in the little kitchen. The evening had sped away while they were looking and wondering and listening, and it was even now later than the Tucker children were apt to be awake. The brother and sister talked as they worked, even allowing themselves to guess as to what color the carpet might be, and what that sort of three-cornered thing was, that would neither stand up nor lie down.

It was not until the kitchen was in perfect order, and the cakes were set for morning, and Karl had already gone to his room, and Christie, with her shoes in her hand, was ready to slip into the little bedroom beside Nettie, that she stopped before her mother and said:

"Mother, there is one thing I want to ask you about to-night. How can I ever do as the letter says about using the things? What good can I do with a pretty carpet or bedstead?"

The mother's face was thoughtful. She had been asking herself much the same question.

"I don't know, child," she said at last, slowly, a little sadly, "I never heard such talk as that before in my life. It seems kind of queer, and yet I liked it. I don't know much about such things, nor near as much as I wish I did. There must be ways of doing that we can find out. We'll ask Mr. Keith, maybe, or we'll study something up. It is a wonderful thing to happen to you, my girl. I guess there is a good deal in it to be proud of, if the real truth was known, but we mustn't be proud. We'll try to find out. You go to bed now, and mother will come in pretty soon and tuck you up."

So Christie went to her room, and knelt down only for a few minutes, for the room was cold—just long enough to ask God to forgive her for all the sins of the day, and take care of her and all her dear ones through the night, and to thank him for the wonderful thing that had happened to her, and to ask him to show her how to use the carpets and furniture as the letter said. Then she went to bed, and her mother came and tucked her up and kissed her, and neither mother nor daughter knew that the furniture had already begun to do work for Jesus, by awakening in these children of his a desire for work.

## CHAPTER IV.

It was a wonder that the Tucker family had any breakfast the next morning! That great, bare, cold, front room, had such charms for them as were never known before. Yet they did not open a bundle nor even pull away some of the wrappings to catch a glimpse of the mysterious inside. They contented themselves with hovering on the outside of things, and saying to one another that they must wait until breakfast was over. But the younger members of the family took many trips from the kitchen to the front room to see if that bundle by the door was probably a chair or what.

"It is too big for a chair," Christie would say, "and yet it is too low for a table, or a bureau, and besides, it feels soft and cushiony; I can't think what it is."

Then Karl, in his greater knowledge of the world, would explain:

"It is a chair, you'll see if it isn't, and that one over by the south window is just like it—a great cushioned chair. They cushion them all over, arms, and sides, and back, and everywhere, so you can't see the wood at all, and would think it was made of feathers or something. I saw one at the depot. It was all done up in this yellow-brown stuff, but yet you could sit down in it, and Nick said it was a library chair that the Burtons wanted down for their parlor; he said it was all cushioned with green stuff that looked like velvet and had flowers on it."

The only answer that Christie made to this was a long-drawn sigh; it expressed her silent wonder over the lovely things that there were in the world; and her desire to see inside this great cushiony bundle was stronger than ever; but all she said was: "Oh, dear, the coffee is boiling over, I smell it!"—Then she ran.

The next visit to the front room grew out of a discussion as to whether the bedstead was narrow enough to go in that little niche between the chimney and the door, in Christie's room.

Karl believed that it was, while Christie thought not; of course the only way was to go and measure it. Karl was right, and Christie in admiration asked him how he knew.

"Why, I measured it by my eye," he said. "Men do that way, you know; I am practicing it. I measure most everything I see in my mind, you know, and try to calculate whether it will go in some place that I think of, and most always I guess it right. This is an exact fit."

Mother Tucker came in search of them to tell Karl that she needed another pail of water, and she sat down on the roll of carpeting, and helped them guess what colors were in it, and which way of the room it ought to run, until the kitchen stove took things into its own hands again, and a smell of burning potatoes was wafted in at the open door. Then they all ran.

Breakfast was over at last. Christie was surprised to discover that she was not hungry at all, and she raised a hearty laugh by asking her father if he would have a piece of carpet, when she meant johnny-cake.

"Now bustle around," said Mother Tucker, "and get the dishes washed up as fast as you have a mind to, and then we will all go in and see things. Father can get in from the barn by that time, and Karl can finish his chores and be all ready to help us. Won't that be the best way, my girl?"

And Christie, piling the cups and saucers together in haste, smothered a sigh of impatience and said "she guessed" it would. There was no family worship in the Tucker household. Away back in Mrs. Tucker's Eastern home, the family used to gather every morning for the father to read in the Bible and pray. Mrs. Tucker often thought of it, and felt sorry to see her children growing up without any such memories. But Mr. Tucker was not a Christian, and she had never learned to pray before him nor before her children. So the children who had never been away from home a night in their lives, did not so much as know of this custom which belongs to Christian families.

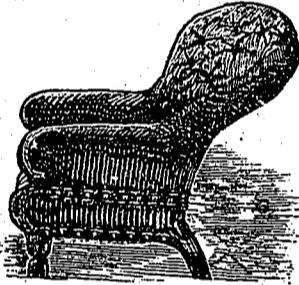
So on this morning, each one sped at once to his or her work, and made all possible haste. And at last they met in the front room, and the business of untying knots, and ripping basting stitches, and unrolling burlaps, and wrapping papers, went on briskly amid constant exclamations of surprise and delight. A bedstead with real flowers growing on it! At least that was the way they looked to Christie. A soft greenish ground, and pink fuchsias, bobbing

their heads up and down on it! A bureau to match, with a lovely glass set in an oval frame to fit on it. A charming bureau, washstand, with drawers and locks; all with these wonderful flowers growing on the polished wood. Then there were the chairs to match the other pieces, and the cunning little stand to match them all. There was a centre-table for the parlor, and a sofa, or rather couch—if they had known the proper name for it—which had the most lovely covering that Christie had ever even imagined. She stood before it in wondering silent delight, but Mrs. Tucker said: "There, Christie, now you can see brussels carpeting. That is real brussels. Don't you see the flowers all over it, just as I told you? That is the way your aunt Mary's carpet used to look in Boston."

But by this time Karl was giving a peculiar little clucking noise with his tongue and his cheeks, which Christie knew meant wonder and delight. She turned quickly, just as he said, "Chris, look here!"

He had thrown aside the wrappings of the cushiony bundle, and behold a great arm-chair, the like of which none of them had ever seen before, upholstered until it was, as Mr. Tucker declared, as good as any old-fashioned feather bed he ever saw, and covered with soft green cloth that actually had flowers stamped on it! It must certainly be much like the one at Burtons' that Nick had described, but think of it standing in their front room!

"Mother," said Christie, her face aglow, her voice in a tremble of excitement, "sit down in it; oh, mother, do. I want to see how you look."



MOTHER TUCKER'S CHAIR.

"For pity's sake!" said Mrs. Tucker, which was what she always said when she did not know how to express her feelings. "Why, it is large enough for the whole family to sit in at once. Dear me! It must be stuffed with feathers! I never saw anything softer, and it just fits into your back. I could sleep here as well as not. Come up here, baby, there is room for you."

So the baby climbed gleefully into the great, soft corner, and Nettie climbed to the other side, and behold there was room for both! But Karl had dashed at the other "cushiony bundle," and in a very few minutes he wheeled it forward and said, "Father, take a seat."

(To be Continued.)

## CONSCIENTIOUSLY HONEST.

BY MRS. M. B. BELL.

Joe Foster stood by the window of the apartment house, and looked down into the street. It seemed as if a great panorama, with many shifting scenes, was spread out before him, but although he looked at them, it was unconsciously, for, in reality, he did not see any of the minutiae of it.

The horses attached to the cars toiled along with the same weary steps that they had gone on in for many weary days, and months, and years. Here was a great truck full of beer barrels; there a butcher's boy drove with reckless haste; here a dray full of packing boxes came into view; and there a baby's funeral passed by. But Joe took no more note of them than he did of the many pedestrians who were hurrying so fast to accomplish their multitudinous errands. Instead, with one hand thrust into a pocket, and the other thrumming upon the window-sash, he was whistling softly and unknowingly.

His mother was tired, sad, nervous; and out of a very busy day she had appropriated an hour for a much needed rest. The hour meant a good deal to her just then, for the boys and girls were all out, and with the lull in the tramp of the busy little feet, there was a shadow of a prospect of rest and quiet. The buzz and bustle in the street was a far remove from quiet, but her ears

had become so attuned to all of that confusion that she did not notice it.

But Joe's tap upon the window, and worse than all his whistle, were too much; and with a dread of some of her noisy flock coming in at any moment, she had to stop it. All she said was "Joe, dear!"

In an instant the boy was alert, and before the instant had passed his arms were around her neck.

"Mother, do excuse me, I was very careless to forget that you wanted to be quiet."

"I know you did, my boy, and if you will not be offended I will add that your hugs are a good deal as they say a young bear's are apt to be."

"So they are," Joe answered. "But I did not rumple your collar much—see. I will give it a little pat, and it will be as smooth as ever. Do you want to read, mother?" he added, handing to her the book that his caress had caused her to drop.

"No, my lad, there is a history being worked out in your brain that is far more interesting to me at this moment than that of the 'United Netherlands.' Get the stool and come, your confessor is waiting, and has no doubt that full absolution can be given."

Joe brought the stool and sat down.

"Do you know, mother, that you really have too much faith in me?"

"So? I think not," Mrs. Foster answered, as she smoothed the boy's hair.

"But you will when you know that I have indulged for a moment the temptation to do, or rather to help even in a passive manner to do what is not just right."

"Give me your hand and look into my eyes, Joe, and we will pass judgment upon this matter. I do thank God that my boy has never yet been unable to look me in the eye when he has had any confession to make. You cannot go very far wrong while you can bring your words or misdeeds to be looked at by the eye of your loving mother, eh, Joe?"

"That is just what I believed, mammy dear," he answered with a kiss.

"Thank you, darling; now, what is the trouble?"

"It is the temptation, or was; for I have put it aside; my telling you will be, however, an amen for it. The other day I was at my desk in the office, addressing some letters for the mail, when Mr. Hoy (who is in the same business as our firm), sent for me. He wanted me to engage with him at a higher salary than I am getting at present."

Joe paused, and Mrs. Foster said:

"And?"

Then Joe smiled as he finished her sentence:

"And I declined."

"You must have had a good reason, Joe," Mrs. Foster said.

"I had. The temptation was rolled up in the fact that if I had more salary I could help you more, but my conscience forbade me to accept the offer."

"What was the matter, dear?" Mrs. Foster inquired.

"The matter is, that the gentleman sweats his accounts. Of course, mother, you do not know what that is."

"Yes, I do. You mean that he exaggerates the—"

"That is it. The books show one set of facts, but the actual truth tells another. I cannot bear the idea of anything that is dishonest, all must be fair and square. I do hope that you will not think that the temptation (as I called it), to go to him was any evidence that I indorsed anything that was crooked. I was only talking to myself a bit, and wondering if I could afford to work for a man who was not a strictly honest man, even though, as would be the case, I would never see his books at all. And I soon decided that I could not."

"You were quite right, Joe. In God's sight there are but two lines of action—honest and dishonest. You believe in God, therefore you are bound to remember that to be in the world, and yet to be unspotted by the sins and follies of dishonest people, you must feel as if the eye of your heavenly Father was upon you; and never do anything that you would be ashamed to have him see."

"Thank you, mother dear, you are as you always are, entirely right; and—"

The children came trooping in, and although Mrs. Foster did not hear the end of his sentence, she was proud to remember that Joe was as conscientiously honest as she could possibly desire.—*Christian at Work.*