

CHRISTIE'S CHRISTMAS.

BY PANSY.

CHAPTER VII—Continued.

Skilful fingers soon had the foot more comfortable than it had been since the accident. Wells submitted to the new helper meekly, though he made a wry face at Christie behind the piece of handkerchief that was left from the bandage.

"I don't know about liking that man," he said to Christie when the foot was nicely done up and resting on the cushions of the turned seat. "He might have walked up before and helped you



IT IS SARAH ANN!"

with that baby. He must have seen that it was a tug for you."

"Men don't know about babies," Christie answered gravely, "but I am glad that he knows about bandages. How nicely he did that! It looks just as though a doctor had been here, Well, he is a doctor."

"The mischief, he is! Then I ought to have offered to pay him."

"Oh, no!" said Christie, distressed, "I don't believe he would have liked that. He did it for kindness, not for pay. He is very pleasant, but just as sad! He gives very long sighs, right in the midst of his talk. I am sorry for him; sorrier than before he helped us."

"Why?"

"Because I am afraid he doesn't believe in God. He is not one of God's people, I'm most sure: because they never talk in that way, and it makes things a great deal harder to bear."

"Talk in what way? How do you tell people of that kind?"

"Why, he almost found fault with God! Talked as though he did not believe that God would

do the best for everybody. And you know his children never say such things."

"Don't they? I'm sure I did not know it. I guess I am not acquainted with many of them. I'll tell you what it is, Christie, I have a brother whom I would like to have you make understand things if you could. He is sick and lame, and will never be any better; and he got so by helping somebody else: doing his duty, you know. It would be hard work for you to make him believe that things are just right in this world. He thinks it is awful that he doesn't get well. And I must say it seems most too bad. He was a splendid scholar, you see, led his class in college and was going to make a great man, people thought; now it is all spoiled, and he suffers all the time, and will have to, as long as he lives."

"What hurt him?" asked Christie, her eyes full of sympathy and sorrow.

"Why, a house was burning, and he climbed a ladder when nobody else would, and went inside and saved a little baby: and part of the wall fell on him and hurt his back. The doctor says he will never be any better."

Christie's tears came outright now.

"I'm so sorry for him!" she said; "but if he only knew God, it would be a great deal easier to bear."

What a long, long, morning it was! The baby had his nap out,

and awoke and fretted a good deal, and cried outright for his mamma, and drank some more milk, and played with the old gentleman's gold headed cane, and went over to the pale-faced young man and was entertained for a while, and cried some more, and was given a cookie, and at last fell asleep again. And there that train stood immovable. It began to be certain now, and there was serious trouble. Word came, through railway men, that the track was injured a long distance ahead, and for that reason no train could get from the city to relieve them.

To add to the dreariness, it began to rain; a fierce, driving storm, and of course the mud grew deeper every moment.

"Dear, dear!" said Christie "I hope they don't know about it at home. Mother will be so worried that she won't know what to do."

"It's most a wonder that your people let you start out," said Wells. "I suppose the morning papers gave an account of the mischief done by the rain in the night: but our folks are all away, and I, like an idiot, never looked at a paper."

Then Christie, her cheeks somewhat red, explained that they did not take a daily paper, that father couldn't quite afford it yet, and so they had known nothing about trouble on the railway.

"There is always some trouble with this road," said Wells, feeling cross. "First it is a freshet, and then a landslide, or a washout, or the engine gives out, I don't know how many times we have been detained, but never so long as this. I should like to know what we are to do for some dinner? I know I am as hungry as a wolf. I didn't eat much breakfast this morning; it was so sort of stupid to be sitting in that great dining-room all alone."

It was after twelve o'clock when this remark was made. The patience of everybody in the car was exhausted, and Christie was beginning to look anxiously at the dribble of milk left in the pitcher. What should she do if the train did not start soon, or the mother come?

"That doctor of yours will have to plunge through the mud and get us some more milk, or something," said Wells at last, trying to raise himself on his elbow to get a view of the rainy world.

"What object is that!" he said as he drew back his head. "Look, Christie, there are two of them, and they are dragging a basket between them that must be decidedly heavy. How are they ever going to get through that puddle of water? And where are they bound for, do you suppose?" Said Christie, "It is Sarah Ann!"

CHAPTER VIII.

Sure enough! there she came, ploughing through the mud which had grown much deeper since morning.

The large basket that she carried seemed to weigh her down, and she made slow progress.

"Dear, dear!" said Christie. "One of them ought to have had Josiah's boots. I don't know how they will ever manage to get through the puddles. Look, baby! If you were a man, you would go right out and try to help them, wouldn't you?"

Nobody took this hint, and the two floundered along, and climbed the high step of the car platform; then Sarah Ann set down her basket, and looked curiously in at the door.

"What do you want?" asked a brakeman who appeared just then, sticking his head out of the door.

Sarah Ann spoke up boldly:

"We want the girl with the baby, who saved Jimmy from getting burned to death; mother sent her dinner, and some things for the rest, if she's a mind to give 'em to 'em."

This was bewildering news

to the brakeman. He led the girl to the woman's puzzled face. He understood the word "dinner," and there was certainly a baby on the train; who was Jimmy, and when was he saved from burning to death?

However, Wells Burton understood, and came to the rescue:

"It is all right, brakeman, several things have happened since you went for a walk. The party to whom that dinner belongs is here, and I'm inclined to think that a good many people who feel the pangs of hunger, wish they were friends of hers."

Such fun as it was to unpack that basket!

Christie did not know before that so many things could be crowded into a basket. Bread and butter, piles of it, a soup plate piled high with slices of ham, thin, and done to a crisp, and smelling, oh, so appetizing! sheets of gingerbread, great squares of cheese, a bowl of doughnuts, another bowl of quince sauce, and a pail full of milk.

"Mother said you could give some to anybody you pleased," explained Sarah Ann, who seemed to have recovered her spirits; "she said father wouldn't grudge anything to the girl who saved Jimmy from getting hurt. My! but I was scared!" she added confidentially. "Whose baby is that? Isn't he your little brother? What makes him so good with you if he don't belong? Jimmy would yell awful if a strange girl took him. My sakes! I hope his mother will find him. Do you mean to keep him always if she doesn't, and bring him up for yours?" Wouldn't that be funny, for a little girl like you to adopt a baby! Oh, wouldn't it?"

What a tongue Sarah Ann had! Wells was laughing immoderately, and pretending that it was a violent cough, to save Sarah Ann's feelings, and no peony was ever so brilliant as Christie's cheeks. She tried



THE OTHER GIRL PEEPING IN.