

CHRISTIE AT HOME.

A SEQUEL TO CHRISTIE'S CHRISTMAS.

By Pansy.

CHAPTER VI.—(Continued).

He reached for his cane, and Karl sprang to wait on him, and to offer to do the errand, and finally they went out together, and stood by the handsome carriage which had just drawn up in front of the gate, stood there and talked, first with Dennis, and then with each other, and at last walked slowly back toward the house, and then turned off and went to the barn. Christie from the window



MR. KEITH.

watched them until the great barn-door closed after them, then gave a little sigh of satisfaction. It was very nice to think of Karl and Wells Burton as having a visit in the barn together. Karl could certainly never be so much afraid of him after this as he had been, and would not look so sober, and so sort of "left out" when she told him things about that journey connected with Wells.

Mr. Keith watched her happy face. "What is the pleasant thought that shines on it?" he asked her. Christie turned suddenly and found that she was alone with the minister. She blushed a little and came away from the window, and following his motioning hand, took a seat quite near him. "How is it, Christie," he asked, "in all these happy times, and with the pretty room to sit in, and the new friends to think about, and their presents to enjoy, does the best friend seem nearer or farther away?"

"O Mr. Keith! he isn't far away. It seems to me as though he came nearer every day; and there was something I wanted to ask you, mother said perhaps you would help us. These things, you know, this pretty furniture, and the carpet, and everything, they were to be used for the sake of the Elder Brother; that is what he said, and of course I must use them so or I would not have any right to them, and I don't think I know how. Mother and I have tried to think of ways, but I can't seem to settle on any. Could you help me, sir, if you please?"

"Why, I think you have found ways already. Haven't the pretty things helped you to make a chance for me to come here and visit you, and get acquainted with your father and have a little talk with him about this friend? You know he has been busy, or away from home when I have been here before; but this afternoon he stayed at home to visit with me, and we have had a pleasant talk."

"Oh, but," said Christie, her eyes bright, "those are lovely things that we like so much; they are just helping ourselves; we wanted you to come a good while ago, but we never could fix things so that mother thought they would do. But we are just doing this for ourselves, because we like it; this isn't work for Jesus."

"You can't be sure of that, little friend; the fact is, when we really want to please him, nearly everything that he gives us to do becomes after a while such pleasant work that we would rather do it than not, just for our own sakes."

"Is that so?" she asked, surprised. "I

was looking for a hard thing to do. Are there not some hard things, sir? I thought of one that I would not like to do, and that perhaps I ought, but I don't know about it, and mother said she didn't; she said perhaps it would do more harm than good, but I might try it if I thought best, and I thought I would wait until I asked you."

"Tell me all about it," he said, sitting back in his chair. "Some things look hard on the outside, but have pleasant things hidden inside the shell, like a nut, you know."

"Well," said Christie, smoothing out her white apron, "you know those Cox people who live on the next street, back from the road a little way?"

"I am not sure that I do. Cox? I don't remember that name; the next street above here!"

"Yes, sir; well, it isn't exactly a street, it is a sort of a lane; they live in a little log house; I don't suppose you are acquainted with them, after all; they are very poor, bad-acting people, at least the father is; he drinks hard cider most all the time, and they don't ever go to church; and the children, Lucius and Lucy, are about the age of Karl and me; they are dreadful acting children, and they are not clean. Lucy doesn't have her hair combed, and Lucius has holes in his clothes, not patches, you know, but holes; they must have dreadful times! I went to the house, one day, for mother; their baby was sick, and they had sent for mother, and she sent me to bring her some things, and it was a dreadful looking place."

"And what were your thoughts about them little sister?" The minister's voice had a very gentle sound, almost a humble one, if Christie had known it; he was beginning to wonder whether God had sent him there to get some help as well as to give some.

"Why," said Christie, twisting the hem of her apron a little, in her embarrassment, "I don't know but maybe if I had them here one day, and showed them my pretty room, and all our nice things, and tried to be real pleasant to them, and treat them like company, and we got them a nice tea, warm potatoes, and good healthy things, you know, and a little bit of cake, maybe it might do them some good; but I wasn't sure, because they would have to go right back home, you see, and maybe be hungry the very next day, and sleep in that dark room off the kitchen where the baby was sick, and mother said she did not know, she was sure, whether it would do good or harm."

"And that was one of the hard things which you did not want to do? Can you tell me that side of it? I mean, can you explain why you did not want to do it?"

"Why, you see, they are not very clean, their hands and faces, and I thought maybe they would handle our things, and leave dirt marks on them, and sit down in these pretty chairs, and soil them; and oh, I don't know, there were other reasons. Karl said we would not know what in the world to say to them, and I don't suppose we would. But then we were all willing to try, if it was the right way, but none of us knew. We asked father, and he said Mr. Cox was a poor shack, and he guessed there couldn't be much made of his family, and maybe the best way was to let them alone; but then, the next morning he said that maybe that wasn't the right kind of talk, and we must do, mother and I, as we thought best, and you see we didn't know what we thought."

"I see," said the minister, and he drew out his handkerchief and wiped his face and his eyes. Then he was still for so long that Christie thought he had forgotten all about it. At last he spoke: "I believe, Christie, if I were you, I would try it; there is nothing like trying. I don't know the Cox children, nor their parents; I passed that old house last week and wondered who lived there; I am glad to find out. You are helping me, you see, and but for these pretty things, perhaps you would never have told me about the Cox children. What if you carry out your plan, and have that nice supper, with the warmed potatoes, you know, and invite me to come too?"

"Why, would you?" said Christie, too

amazed to add another word for a moment, then she said, "Well, if mother will, I will."

Then the door opened, and the two boys came in from the barn.

CHAPTER VII.

It was Christie's turn now to slip away; she remembered something that she was to do towards the coming supper; the minister and the boys were alone. "Well," he said, looking at them with smiling eyes, "what next for you two?"

"School for me, sir," Wells said, "and I shall be glad to get to studying again; I have had a longer vacation than I planned."

"Do you go to the city every day?"

"No, sir; not this term. Mamma is so nervous over the accident that she doesn't like the plan; yes, sir, they are coming out next week to stay; my brother, who is an invalid, has taken a fancy to the country, and is in haste to get back; the rest of the family think it rather dull, all but me, I like it; but mamma is not reconciled to a daily ride on the cars, so my father has engaged a tutor for me; he can teach music as well as Latin and the other things, so I shall not have to go into town for lessons. I like the plan ever so much." And the favored boy looked over at Karl, who was regarding him with wistful eyes.

"And what about Karl? Is it school for you too?"

"No, sir," he said slowly, choking down a little sigh, "not this term, father can't arrange for us just yet; we are out of the township, you see."

"I see. Well, you and Christie study at home, I suppose."

"A little," said Karl, but he did not speak as though the studies at home gave him great pleasure. He did not mean to tell those two that the great drawback was books, or rather the want of books. What would either of them say, he wondered, if they knew that there were not more than a half-dozen books in the house, counting the primary arithmetic, almost every word of which he and Christie knew by heart! Latin! It was almost disheartening to hear Wells talk so glibly about "Latin and other things." He had tried to get his father, only the other evening, to remember a Latin word until he, Karl, could see how it sounded; but not one could be thought of, save *E Pluribus Unum*, and neither mother nor father were absolutely sure of its exact meaning. Karl meant to study Latin, one of these days, but he did not expect to for some time to come, neither did he intend to tell his plans to these favored people who talked about Latin as carelessly as they might about geography. Truth to tell, Karl's present ambition was a new arithmetic, and that he meant to have very soon, but it too was a secret.

"There is one book," said Mr. Keith, "which gets neglected. If I could go back and be a boy again, I am sure I would study it most faithfully, that is, if I could take back into boyhood all the knowledge I have gathered by being a man, I should know it was the most important book to study that there is in the world."

Karl was watching him with eager, expectant eyes. It would be a Latin book, he thought; possibly not, for Mr. Keith, he had heard, understood both Greek and Hebrew, as well as Latin. It would be a thing worth remembering, what such a scholar thought the most important book in the world.

Sometime he would try for the book and study it hard. "What book is it, if you please?" He asked the question very timidly, waiting for a little, in the hope that Wells would do it for him.

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(To be Continued.)

CURIOUS EFFECT OF ARCTIC COLD.

A person who has never been in the polar regions can probably have no idea of what cold really is; but by reading the terrible experiences of arctic travellers in that icy region some notion can be formed of the extreme cold that prevails there.

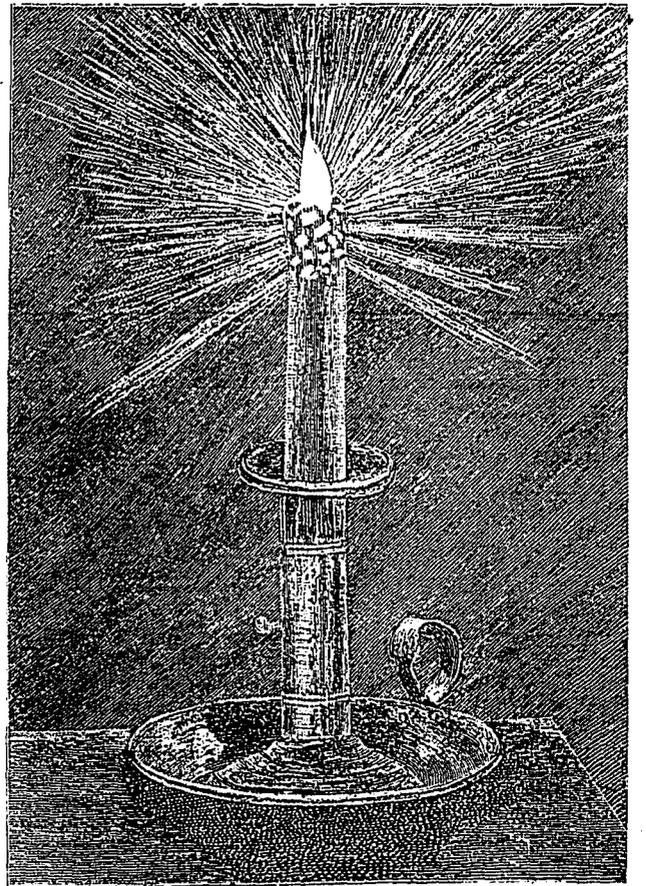
When we have the temperature down to zero out-of-doors we think it bitterly cold, and if our houses were not as warm as, at least, sixty degrees above zero, we should begin to talk of freezing to death. Think, then, of living where the thermometer goes down to thirty-five degrees below zero in the house in spite of the stove. Of course in such a case the fur garments are piled on until a man looks like a great bundle of skins.

Everybody smiles at the fib told by Baron Munchausen about the cold weather he experienced when he said he could not make a sound on his hunting-horn, because the sounds froze before they could get out; but that when he returned home and hung up his horn by the fire-place the warmth thawed out the sounds, and the horn played of its own accord all the tunes the Baron had blown into it. Of course the writer of the book was only trying to be as absurd as he could, and he was absurd enough; but, after all, some of the effects of cold are so extraordinary that there is no need to exaggerate.

Dr. Moss, of the English polar expedition of 1875 and 1876, among other odd things, tells of the effect of cold on a wax candle which he burned there. The temperature was thirty-five degrees below zero, and the Doctor must have been considerably discouraged when, upon looking at his candle, he discovered that the flame had all it could do to keep warm.

It was so cold that the flame could not melt all the wax of the candle, but was forced to eat its way down the candle leaving a sort of skeleton of the candle standing. There was heat enough, however, to melt oddly shaped holes in the thin walls of wax, and the result was a beautiful lace-like cylinder of white, with a tongue of yellow flame burning inside it, and sending out into the darkness many streaks of light.

This is not only a curious effect of extreme cold, but it shows how difficult it must be to find anything like warmth in a place where even fire itself almost gets cold. The wonder is that any man can have the courage to willingly return to such a bitter region after having once got safely away from it, and yet the truth is that the spirit of adventure is so strong in some men that it is the very hardship and danger which attract them.—*Harper's Young People.*



A WAX CANDLE IN THE POLAR REGIONS.