

CHRISTIE AT HOME.

A SEQUEL TO CHRISTIE'S CHRISTMAS.

By Pansy.

"Why, no, child, of course not; they don't go in until the last thing, and they have to be rolled in flour first; what a little dunce you are about cake, to be sure; when I was of your age, I could clip into the kitchen and stir up a cake for tea as quick as the next one. But then," she added, seeing a sober look steal over Christie's face, "I couldn't have made a dress for myself to save my life, nor worked over butter, nor done a dozen of the things that you can. Of course, it is not strange that you should know nothing about cake-making when you never had a chance. One of these days, Christie, money may be easier, and I can hunt up all my own knowledge and teach you how to do things. I'll risk my forgetting; it all comes back to me this morning as naturally as though I had been doing it every day; though it must be about thirteen years since I made this cake," she continued.

But the sober look on Christie's face had nothing to do with cake. Something in her mother's talk had made her think that she was growing up a dunce about other things; things which she wanted to know much more than she did how to make cake. It came out, presently, as she thoughtfully beat the butter and sugar.

"Mother, what about school next term? Has father made up his mind?"

Then the mother sighed. "Why, as to that, Christie, he didn't have to do much thinking; he can't raise the money to pay for books and tuition, and that is the whole of it. Not this term—he thought he could, and if it had not been for that stove, I guess he would have brought it about; but that was such a chance, a second hand, to be sold so cheap, and we had wanted one for so long; and the man offered to take his pay in eggs and butter, you know; he said last night he wouldn't have bought it, after all, if he had known it would keep you and Karl back from school for another quarter; but he thought then he would get his pay for the hay this month sure."

"And isn't he going to?" Christie tried to keep her voice steady.

"Oh, no, he got word at the depot yesterday that the man couldn't pay until spring if he did then. Sometimes your father is afraid that he will never pay it."

This last fearful possibility was spoken almost in a whisper. Not to be paid for the hay meant a good deal of trouble to the Tuckers. Christie stirred away, saying nothing, not trusting her voice to speak; in fact, she was much engaged just then, in ordering back a tear that wanted to roll down her cheek. She did not mean that her mother should see tears; but it was a great disappointment. Even the Geography on which she and Karl had so long set their hearts, seemed slipping away into the dim and uncertain future. There was all that money paid for the trip to uncle Daniel's, where, after all, she did not go; should she be sorry that she took the journey? But then, there were all the lovely things in the front room, and in her room; she would not have had those if she had not gone a journey. No; but then, the lovely things would do nothing to make her less a dunce, and she and Karl were growing old so fast! But then, on the other hand, she would not have become acquainted with Wells Burton, nor had that beautiful letter from Mr. Fletcher, nor seen the Governor, nor taken care of that dear baby; perhaps the baby would have fallen from the seat and hurt himself, if she had not been there to watch and care for him; and perhaps, oh! wicked Christie to forget that—perhaps nobody would have stopped the train in time to save Wells Burton's life? Oh, indeed, she must always be glad and thankful that she went her journey, even if they had to wait another year for the new Geography.

Now another thought began to trouble her, and presently she put it into hesitating words. "Mother, maybe we ought not—maybe I ought not to have coaxed you to have this party, and make cake and all these things."

But the mother's voice was brisk and reassuring.

"Now, child, don't you go to fretting over that; it was a nice thing to think of; Mr. Keith told me himself that we couldn't any of us tell what it might do for those Cox children; and as for the expense, it won't be so very much, after all; potatoes are cheap, and we have milk enough to make

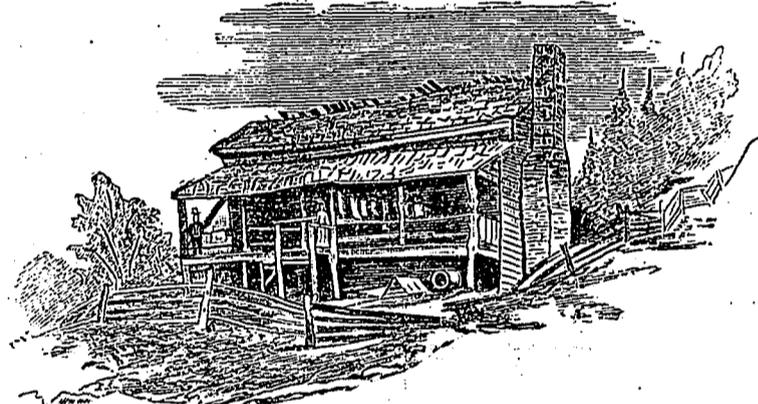
them nice; it is half in having things done nicely and making everything bright and clean, you know; the Cox folks might have nice warmed potatoes themselves if they only knew enough. Then it is as you say about the hens, they appeared to understand, and did a little extra work, and the butter and sugar we can easily save from our own things, and we sha'n't notice the extra expense at all; it isn't like paying out money downright from one's pockets. The cow and the hens have furnished the most of the things, and we won't begrudge the poor children one good supper. Run to the window, child, and see if Karl isn't coming."

Christie was glad to go; not so much to look for Karl as to get rid of that tear. Her mother knew that, too, and sent her away to help her get her happy face back. Mothers know most things, though some of them are wise enough to keep quiet about little matters that are better not spoken of.

"Here's Karl," the sister said, in a very few minutes, and the "happy" had already gotten back into her voice. And Karl came in with a gust of outside wind, and with an air of unusual importance.

"What a time you have been, child!" declared the mother. "Did you get the baking powder, and the spool of thread, and all?"

"Yes'm; I got them all, and something else besides. I guess you would have been a long time if you had had to do all the business that I have attended to since I've been away. Father sent me to the post-office for old Mr. Stuart's paper, and I thought, seeing I was there, I might as well



ask for us, and what do you suppose I have for you, Miss Christie Tucker?"

"Not another letter?" said Christie in

high excitement, every trace of anything but delight having gone from face and voice.

"Just that," answered Karl, and he dived into his deep pocket and produced a delicately perfumed bit of paper, with "Miss Christie Tucker" written on it, in what Christie thought was the very prettiest way she had ever seen. The writing was certainly not Thomas Fletcher's. Whose could it be? Mrs. Tucker left her cake for a moment and came with floury hands and a bit of flour on her left cheek and looked over Christie's shoulder and admired the dainty thing, and wondered from whom it could be, and as yet none of them thought of looking to see. "It is not your aunt Louise's writing," she said, "though your aunt is a pretty writer, too, but it doesn't look like that, somehow; what a woman you are getting to be! 'Miss Christie Tucker' the idea." She laughed as she said it, and yet it seemed to give her a thought that had a sad side to it.

"I suppose you'll grow up to that without fail, if you live," she said, and looked at her young daughter wistfully as she added: "I would like to do a good many things for you before that, though."

"Do for pity's sake open the thing!" said Karl. "If it said 'Mister Karl Tucker,' you won't catch me standing gazing at the outside all this time."

"It wouldn't say 'Mister' to you Karl."

"Why not, I should like to know, as well as 'Miss' to you?"

"Because they don't. It would say, 'Master Karl Tucker'."

"Master of what? How do you know?"

"I saw it. I saw a letter that came to Wells Burton. He took it out of his pocket to mark on, when we were on the cars and

he wanted to show me how the switch was laid, there by the junction, and he marked on an envelope, and I saw the name—'Master Wells Burton.'"

"Well, I don't care whether it is 'Master' or 'Mister,' I should get into the thing and be master of it."

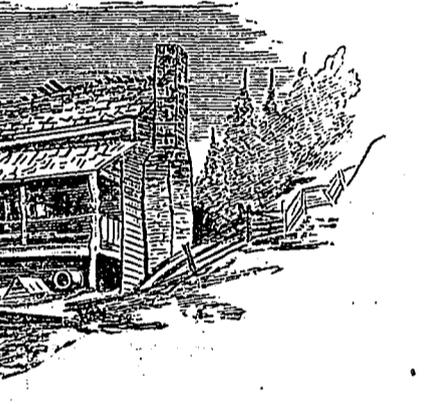
Thus urged, Christie, mindful of her former lesson, looked about for the scissors, and began to cut, then paused half-way across the end and said, "I think father ought to be here."

"Well, he won't be here until noon; he has gone to the upper lot. She can't wait till noon, can she, mother? It might be something that would need an answer right away."

"I guess I wouldn't wait, my girl," the mother said, pitying the eager faces. "Father will understand, and you can read it out to him as soon as he comes, and it will sound better after you have read it once." Oh, wise mother! There were other things beside cake-making that she had not forgotten.

You don't think anything about them now, dear girls, but the time will come when you will look back on all those little thoughtfulnesses of mother, as so many jewels which she left you.

The letter was withdrawn from its cream-tinted cover, and all three heads gazed at it curiously. Beautiful writing it was, certainly, but strange to them. The only way to discover the author was to read it. To be sure Karl said: "I guess it is from the mother of the baby," but Christie replied quickly:



THE TUCKERS' HOME.

"Oh no; she would not write such a long letter as that. There would't be anything to tell me only that the baby is well. Oh, dear, I hope he is!" This touch of anxiety quickened her fingers and she unfolded the lovely sheet and read aloud:

"MY DEAR LITTLE MOTHERLY FRIEND—
Whom I am sure I shall never forget if I live to be a hundred. And baby shall not either; I shall always talk to him about you, and how you saved his precious life, and when he gets to be a man he shall come and see you."

"Now you wonder why I have not written you before." ("No, I don't," said Christie, breaking off to look at her audience. "I wonder why she is taking the trouble to write to me now. Isn't it nice, mother?")

"I'll tell you how it was. Baby came through his day of troubles like a soldier, because he had such a nice little general, who did not let him take cold, or bump his head, or go hungry. He did not so much as sneeze after it all, but his poor silly mother could not get over her fright."

"For three nights I could get no rest at all; as soon as I would drop asleep I would dream that I had lost my baby, and was tramping up and down that track like a wild woman, and begging the people to send me on in an extra train whether there was any road to run on or not. Then I would waken in a fright, with my head throbbing so that I could not raise it from the pillow. At last my dreams frightened me into a fever, and I was for more than a week that I could not sit up. Then it took some time after that to get my strength sufficiently to go down town. I wanted to select baby's gift for you myself!"

"O, mother, she is going to send me something. What do you suppose it can be?"

"Chris, what if it should be a Geography, with nice large maps in it, you know. Did you say anything to her about one that day?"

"Not a word," said Christie, stopping to laugh; "I didn't say anything to her, hardly, nor she to me; she was so busy kissing the baby that she couldn't." Then she read on

—"because I knew just how I wanted it to sound." ("Sound! What can she mean? What in the world can it be?")

"It is a bird," said Karl, "they have them in cages. Nick says there are three at the Burtons, in the room where they keep the flowers."

"O, mother," said Christie, looking troubled, "I most wouldn't want it. I would like to open the door and let it go and live in the trees."

"They can't live in the trees," said Karl. "Can they, mother? They would starve."

"That is because they have been stolen away from their homes and made slaves of. Isn't it, mother?"

"Read on, child," said Mrs. Tucker, "perhaps it isn't a bird."

"I have chosen one that I like very much, and I can seem to see you taking comfort with it. It is the baby's very own present, and he sends it with his dear love."

"The little things that are packed in the small box are presents from baby's mamma to your dear baby at home; I hope they will fit, and the dolly is for the little sister Nettie whom you described to Mr. Fletcher. He told me all about her, and about how you made a dolly for her one day last summer out of a squash."

"Why, child," said Mrs. Tucker, "it does seem to me that you must have told those strangers in the cars everything we ever said or did in this house."

"No," said Christie, earnestly, "he kept asking me questions, Mr. Fletcher did, and when I answered them; there would be a word in about something else and he would ask about that. I didn't know I was telling things."

(To be continued.)

LITTLE LUCY.

I.

A little child, six summers old—
So thoughtful and so fair,
There seemed about her pleasant ways
A more than childish air—
Was sitting on a summer eve
Beneath a spreading tree,
Intent upon an ancient book
That lay upon her knee.
She turned each page with careful hand,
And strained her sight to see,
Until the drowsy shadows slept
Upon the grassy len;
Then closed the book, and upward looked,
And straight began to sing
A simple verse of hopeful love—
This very childish thing:
"While here below how sweet to know
His wondrous love and story;
And then, through grace, to see His face,
And live with Him in glory."

II.

That little child, one dreary night
Of winter wind and storm,
Was tossing on a weary couch
Her weak and wasted form;
And in her pain, and in its pause,
But clasped her hands in prayer—
(Strange that we had no thoughts of heaven
While hers were only there)—
Until she said: "Oh, mother dear,
How sad you seem to be!
Have you forgotten that He said
"Let children come to Me?"
Dear mother, bring the blessed Book—
Come, mother, let us sing."
And then again with faltering tongue,
She sang that childish thing:
"While here below, how sweet to know
His wondrous love and story;
And then, through grace, to see His face,
And live with Him in glory!"

III.

Underneath a spreading tree
A narrow mound is seen,
Which first was covered by the snow,
Then blossomed into green;
Here first I heard that childish voice
That sings on earth no more;
In heaven it hath a richer tone,
And sweeter than before;
"For those who know His love below"—
So runs the wondrous story—
"In heaven, through grace, shall see His face,
And dwell with Him in glory!"

A. D. F. RANDOLPH.

SOCRATES declared that, in his day, if a man was desirous of having his son, or his servant, taught the carpenter's trade, or any other trade, he could easily find a man competent to teach it; but if he wished his son or his servant to be taught uprightness (to dikasion) he knew not where to look for a teacher. In our days, it is easy to find colleges that will teach Greek, or Geometry, or Biology. But if a man desires a school where his boy may be taught gentleness, courteousness, chastity, truthfulness, true manliness; can he find it? Or is there not demand enough for these things to produce a supply?