

CHRISTIE'S CHRISTMAS.

BY PANSY.

CHAPTER VII—Continued.

Suddenly Christie hopped up, her face bright, and yet doubtful, if you can imagine the two on the same face. She saw a way to do it, if only the "Seaside Library" woman would be good and help. It was very unpleasant to have to ask a favor of her, but Christie was not one to stop at unpleasant things, when they looked as though they ought to be done.

The lady's satchel lay open at her side on the seat. She was fumbling discontentedly through it, looking for something that she did not seem to find. But the thing that Christie saw, was a small white pitcher, lying snugly among the napkins, empty, and waiting, apparently, for work to do.

She went over to her in haste. It would not do to take much time to think about this thing which was so disagreeable.

"Would you be so kind as to lend me the pitcher for a little while to keep baby's milk in? I want to fill the pail with water to bathe the lame foot. It is beginning to swell very much, and I think that will help it. Mother thought it helped father."

A long speech for Christie. The lady looked so very disagreeable that the child felt a nervous desire to keep on talking, and not give her a chance to make a disagreeable answer. But she came to the end of her long sentence at last, and waited.

Wells was laughing. He was almost willing to have his ankle bathed, if it would in any way add to the discomfort of the lady.

For what seemed to poor Christie several long minutes, she stared at her as though she were some unpleasant curiosity that had not been seen before, then said: "I suppose so. What a set I have got among! The insolent boy doesn't deserve to have his ankle bathed! If he had been sitting in the cars as he ought the accident would not have happened. Why can't you throw that slop of milk away, if you want the pail?"

Christie meekly explained her fears the baby might fancy himself hungry when he awoke; and at last, with a disgusted sigh, the lady took the delicate china pitcher from its nest and passed it into Christie's keeping.

"Here," she said. "You will break it, I presume, the next thing; and it belongs to a set. I was a simpleton to bring it, but how was I to know there would be such a nuisance of a time?"

"Oh, thank you!" said Christie. "I will be very careful of it." And she tripped away with a relieved face.

The old gentleman was watching. When the milk was carefully poured into the china pitcher, what did he do but offer to take care of it!

Very grateful was Christie, for while she poured, she had wondered what she should do with the frail china thing, in order to keep it from bumping against the car. To be sure there was no motion now, but there was always the hope that the cars would start.

ankle was by this time very unwilling to be touched — and the bathing began. At first Wells' face had a flush on it that was not all caused by pain. It was such a queer thing to have a little girl, and she a stranger to him, bathing his foot. But the cold water felt so pleasant, and the touch of the small hand was so gentle and skilful, that gradually a feeling of relief and satisfaction began to steal over him.

"I did not know there was so much good in water," he said, watching her as she steadily passed her cool cloth up and down the foot.

man hasn't anything to do; we might try him. I have some matches in my pocket."

By this time he had to stop and laugh over the bewildered look on the little nurse's face.

"I beg your pardon," he said, seeing the flushed cheeks. "I'm afraid it sounds like making fun of you, and that is the last thing I am thinking of, I can tell you. I was only thinking that you had done so many things to-day that seemed impossible, perhaps you would manage a fire, to heat water. You can't think how nice the cold water feels. I hate to have you down there musing over me. You are getting drops of water over your pretty dress, I'm afraid among us we shall manage to spoil all your clothes. But my foot feels fifty percent better. I can tell you somebody who will be very much obliged to you for this morning's work, and that's my mamma."

Said Christie, "Isn't it nice that the baby sleeps all this while? If he should waken before I get your foot bandaged, I don't know what I should do!"

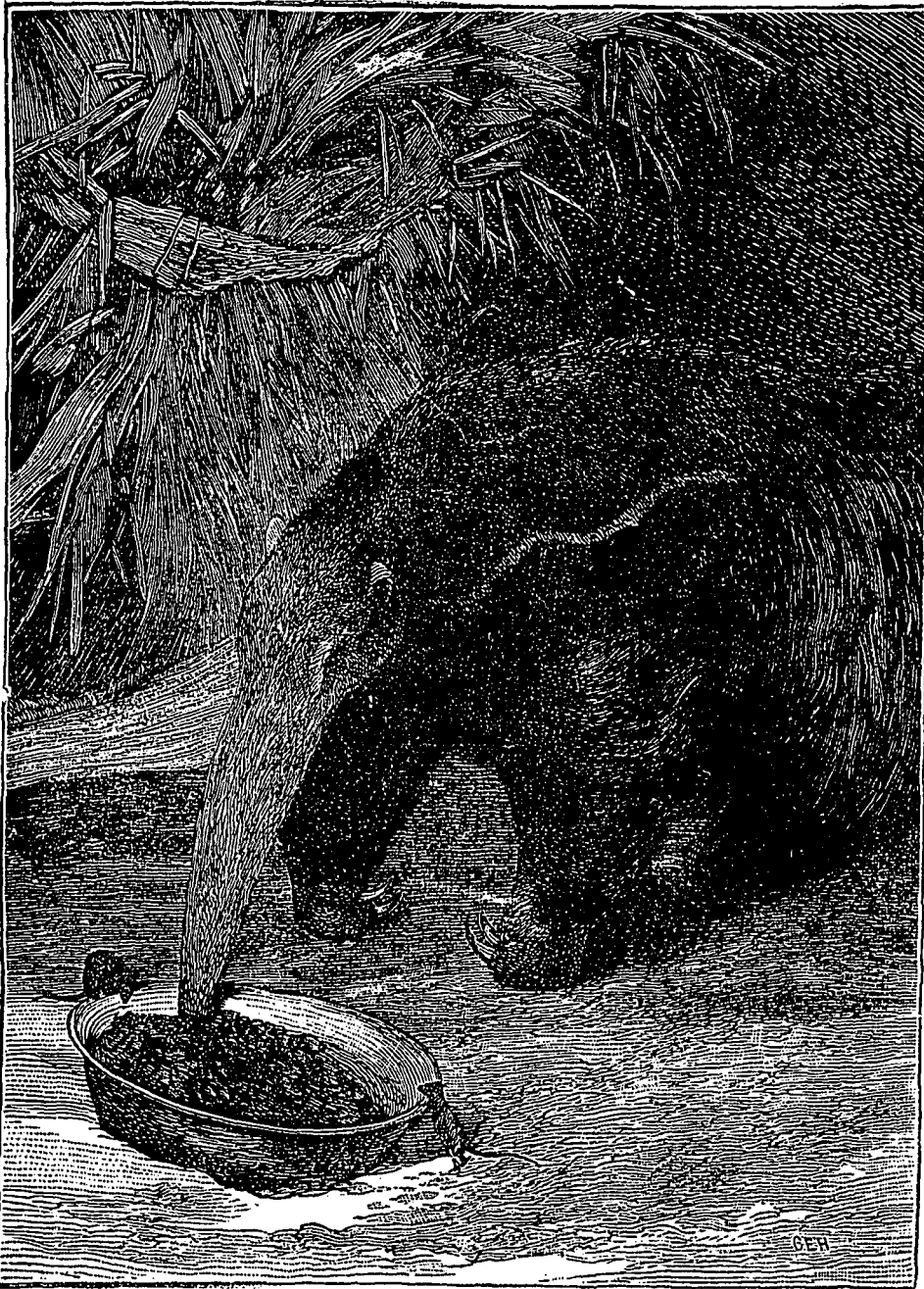
The distressed tone of motherly anxiety in which she said this, set Wells off into another laugh. He thought her the strangest little girl he had ever seen in his life. The truth was, that he was not acquainted with any little girls who knew how to do things which are supposed to belong to women. But Christie had been her mother's oldest daughter, and her only helper in the home for so many years, that she had learned many things, and had a fashion of planning beforehand, very much as her mother did.

"Bandaged!" repeated Wells when his laugh was over. "Why what will you bandage it with? I should say that was about as hard to manage as a fire."

"Oh, no! I didn't know what you meant about making a fire. I'm sure there is fire enough in the stove; if I could make a place on the stove to set this pail I could

have hot water; but I really can't do that. A bandage, though, from somewhere we must have. You see the foot must be bandaged now that it has been wet; mother thinks they swell more after wetting, unless they are bound up pretty tight. I have one other handkerchief, but it is small; still it would make a beginning, and I suppose you have one, and the old gentleman maybe has two, men often have; I think we can get enough to make quite a nice bandage."

"Are you really going through the car to take up a collection of



THE GREAT ANT-EATER.

Next the pail must be washed. For the first time in her life, Christie made her way to the water cooler, which stood in a corner of the car, and managed to learn how to make the water flow. Washing the pail was an easy matter. It was a relief to come to something that she knew just how to do, and had often done before.

She was soon at her work, a neat handkerchief doing duty as a bathing cloth. The sock was carefully, tenderly drawn from the poor swollen foot — not without help from Wells' knife, for the

Water is real wonderful," said Christie. "Mother says that half the people in the world don't know what a splendid doctor it is. Sometimes she uses it real hot, and it will stop a pain in a few minutes. Hot water would be good for your foot if we could get some. I wish we could, for I am most sure that it would make this swelling go down faster."

"We might split some pieces off the side of the car, and start a fire. I could whittle some off, maybe, or the old gentleman would. No, he can't leave his pitcher of milk. But the young