SERENA ANN, HER FIRST CHRISTMAS KEEPING.

By MARY E. WILKINS.

Now First Published.—All Rights Reserved.

Fifty years ago Serena Ann lived in Braintree, and Christmas keeping was not yet much the fashion in New England. Serena Ann was ten years old, and she had never seen a Christmas tree, hung up her stocking, or had a Christmas present even.

Serena Ann's father was a farmer; she had a mother, and an Aunt Love, her mother's sister, who lived with them, and was to be married in February, and a brother Ebenezer.

Ebenezer was two years older than Serena Ann, and went to the district school winters. Serena Ann herself went to school only in the summer. She was a delicate little girl, and the schoolhouse was too far away for her to walk in cold weather. So she stayed at home, and her mother heard her spell every day, and she did sums on a piece of old slate, and was reading the Bible through, a chapter every morning. So her education was not neglected.

One night in the first week in December, Serena Ann was sitting beside the fire, with the piece of broken slate on her lap, trying to do a sum about ten grayhounds running a race, and how long it would take for one to catch up with the other, when Ebenezer came home from school. There was a light snow falling, and Ebenezer was powdered with it. He came in stamping his cowhide shoes and shaking himself like a dog. Aunt Love was sewing green velvet on her wedding pelisse, and Mrs. Bagley was paring apples for sauce. "Don't stamp so, Ebenezer," said she. "And don't shake the snow on my pelisse," cried Aunt Love. Aunt Love was very pretty, with smooth brown hair, and pink cheeks.

"I've got to get the snow off," panted Ebenezer. "Oh, mother—!"

"You ought to get it off in the shed then," said his mother.

"Oh, mother!"

"And not shake it all over the clean floor, and your aunt's pelisse."

"Oh, mother, Sammy Morse says he's going to hang up his stocking the night before Christmas!"

Then Serena Ann looked up from piece of slate and her grayhounds.

"I don't want to hear any such nonsense," said Mrs. Bagley.

"He says his folks are going to put something in it for him."

"If they want to be so silly they can."

"Mother, can't I hang up my stocking?"

"Yes," said his mother, "you can hang it up all you want to, but you won't get anything in it. You have all the presents your father can afford to give you, right along. Now go out in the shed and bring in an armful of that apple-tree wood for the fire."

And Ebenezer went out disconsolately. Serena Ann pulled her mother's apron. "Mother, can't I hang up my stocking?" she whispered.

"You can hang it up, but I shall tell you what I did Ebenezer. You won't get anything in it. I shan't treat one of you any better than I do the other."

"I never hung up my stocking since I was born," said Serena Ann, plaintively.

"Neither did I," said her mother. "I never thought of such a thing when I was a little girl. Now, tend to your sum."

And Serena Ann attended to her sum, but the thought of Christmas seemed to gain upon her childish mind much

TUCKED IN BETWEEN AUNT LOVE AND JOSHUA SIMMONS.

faster than one grayhound upon the other. She could not quite give up the hope that possibly, if she did hang up her stocking, somebody might put something in it. If not her mother, Aunt Love, or her father might, or even Joshua Simmons, the young man whom Aunt Love was going to marry; he sometimes gave her a peppermint. And after all her mother was a pretty tender one, and she might relent. So Serena Ann hung up her stocking the night before Christmas.

It is quite possible if Mrs. Bagley had seen that poor little blue yarn stocking hanging in the chimney corner she might have slipped at least a few nuts, and a few raisins, and a cinnamon stick of two, into it, and Aunt Love might have tucked in a bit of blue ribbon: But nobody saw it, for Serena Ann, with the want of calculation of her innocent heart, slipped out after everybody was in bed and hung it up.

At breakfast the next morning Serena Ann's mouth drooped pitifully at the corners, and she did not eat much.

"You are a silly girl to act so," said her mother. "You knew what I told you."

"I s'pose Sammy Morse has got his stocking chuck full," said Ebenezer. He felt Serena Ann's injury to be his own.

"Go out in the shed and bring in some more of that apple-tree wood, if you've finished your breakfast," said his mother, and then she sent Serena Ann upstairs to make her bed.

As soon as the door closed, Aunt Love turned to her sister. "Suppose Joshua and I take Serena Ann to Boston with us," said she.

Mrs. Bagley looked at her doubtfully. "I'm afraid she'll be in your way," she said.

"No, she won't, and it will make up to her for not having anything in her stocking. I felt sorry for her. Serena Ann is a good little girl."

"Well, I feel sorry she took it so to heart," said Serena Ann's mother, "but it's a silly custom, and I don't know how to begin it. I suppose she would be tickled to death to go with you and Joshua. She never went to Boston but once; Ebenezer's been twice."

"She must come right down and get ready if she's going," said Aunt Love, "for Joshua will be here with the chaise."

And Serena Ann was called and told, to her joy and wonder, that she was to go to Boston with Aunt Love and Joshua Simmons. "But you must be a good girl and not make any trouble," said her mother, "for your Aunt Love has a great deal to do. She is going to buy some of her furniture, and her wedding bonnet and shoes, and she is very kind to take you."

And Serena Ann promised beamingly. She had never felt so happy in her life as she did that Christmas morning, when she set forth to visit Boston, tucked in between Aunt Love and Joshua Simmons in the chaise. It was very pleasant, but cold; there was a slight rime of snow on the ground, which shone like silver. Serena Ann wore her thick wadded coat, her lambswool tippet and her wadded brown silk hood with cherry strings. She was quite warm, and her face was so pink and radiant with bliss that Aunt Love and Joshua looked at her, and smiled at each other above her head.

Serena Ann, moreover, had, tightly grasped in one red-mittened hand, her mother's silk purse, and it contained two ninepences, one of which she was to spend for herself, and the other for a jack-knife for Ebenezer. Her father had given them to her when she started. She made up

SHE HURRIED BACK—ALMOST CRYING.

her mind, as they jogged along over the frozen road, that she would spend her ninepence for an apron for her mother instead of anything for herself, because she could not go to Boston in a chaise.

When they reached the city they stopped at the Sign of the Lamb, where Joshua Simmons put up his team; then they all went shopping down Hanover street, where the fashionable stores were at that time.

Serena Ann enjoyed buying Aunt Love's and Joshua Simmons' wedding furniture quite as much as they did. She thought there was never anything quite so handsome as their haircloth sofa, and mahogany card-table, and looking glass, and she trudged after them to all the shops where they priced articles and then back to the one where they found them cheapest and best, and never thought of being tired.

But she was glad at noon to go back to the Sign of the Lamb, and have some baked beans and a piece of pumpkin pie. They seemed to her far superior to the baked beans and pie at home.

After dinner Joshua Simmons left them. He had to go a little farther to see about his own wedding suit, and Aunt Love meanwhile was to buy her wedding bonnet and shoes, and Serena Ann make her purchases. Then they were to meet at the Sign of the Lamb, and go home.

Serena Ann went with her aunt from shop to shop, and watched her try on bonnets until she finally bought a beautiful one of green uncut velvet trimmed with white plumes and white lutestring ribbon. Then they started to buy the shoes, Aunt Love carrying the bonnet in a large green bandbox.

There was quite a crowd in Hanover street that afternoon. A great many ladies were out shopping. Serena Ann could not walk beside her aunt very well, she was so jostled, so she fell behind. Now and then she took hold of the skirt of her auntie's blue delaine gown, so as not to lose her.

Nobody ever knew how it happened, but suddenly, after she had been pushed by the hurrying people and had caught hold of the blue delaine gown, the lady who wore it looked around and she was not Aunt Love. She was very pretty, but her hair was black and fell in bunches of curls, instead of smooth braids, over her red cheeks, and her eyes were black instead of blue. Moreover, she was very finely dressed, wearing a velvet pelisse, and a rich fur tippet, and bearing before her a great fur muff. The blue delaine gown was the only thing about this strange young lady in the least resembled Aunt Love. She stood looking with great surprise at Serena Ann, who looked up at her quite pale with fright, still keeping fast hold of the blue delaine.

Finally the young lady laughed, and then her face, which had appeared rather haughty, looked very sweet. "What is the matter," said she, "and why are you holding to my gown?"

"I—thought you were Aunt Love," faltered Serena Ann, and the tears began to come.

"Were you holding your aunt's gown?"

"Yes, ma'am."

The young lady laughed again. "My name is Miss Pamela Soley," said she. "Take hold of my hand; and don't cry, and we'll go find your aunt."

So Serena Ann curled her red mittened hand timidly around the kid gloved fingers of the young lady, and they went back down Hanover street. They walked on both sides, they looked in every shop, but all in vain.

The truth was that poor Aunt Love had missed Serena Ann much sooner, and had started off on a wrong tack in search.

When she had discovered that her little niece was not behind her and looked around in dismay and lost the color out of her pretty pink cheeks, several sympathizing ladies had gathered around her, and one had been quite sure she had seen a little girl just like Serena Ann in a lambswool tippet and brown silk hood, run down a side street a little way back. So Aunt Love went down the side streets, looking and inquiring of everybody.

She almost cried, as she went along, carrying her big green bandbox, looking in vain for Serena Ann. She did not know what to do. But finally it occurred to her that it was nearly the time for her to meet Joshua Simmons at the Sign of the Lamb, and that in all probability some benevolent person would have taken Serena Ann thither. So Aunt Love hastened to the Sign of the Lamb, but it took her some time, for she had wandered quite a distance.

But Miss Pamela Soley was not wise enough to think that the best plan was to take Serena Ann to the Sign of the Lamb at once, since they could not find her Aunt Love on Hanover street. She was quite a young lady, in spite of her stately manners, and not had much experience in rescuing lost little girls. She stood for some time in Hanover street, holding Serena Ann's hand, deliberating what to do. But finally a bright thought struck Miss Pamela Soley: "My brother Solomon is coming for me in our chaise to take me home to Jamaica Plain, where we live," said she. "He is going to meet me at the corner just below here in about half an hour. We will make your purchases and then we will ask him what to do. My brother Solomon always knows what is best to do. He is older than I, and carried off many honors at Harvard college. Don't cry, Serena Ann. He'll be sure to find your aunt for you."

Serena Ann was somewhat comforted, for the young lady had a way at once sweet and commanding, and she went hand in hand with her and purchased a beautiful jack-knife for Ebenezer, with one ninepence, and a piece of white nainsook for her mother's apron with the other. Miss Pamela Soley herself made two purchases—a little rosewood workbox, with scissors, and thimble, and ivory bodkin, all complete, and a doll in a very handsome spangled dress like a princess. The last purchase rather surprised Serena Ann, for she had thought the young lady too old to play with dolls, but she eyed it admiringly. She had never had a doll herself, except one which Aunt Love made for her out of a corncob. She sighed when Miss Pamela Soley tucked the doll with the rosewood workbox out of sight in her great muff.

Mr. Solomon Soley was waiting in the chaise on the corner when his sister appeared with Serena Ann and told her story. He was a handsome young man, in a very fine mulberry colored cloak.

"We must take her to the Sign of the Lamb at once," Mr. Solomon Soley said, decidedly, and Miss Pamela and Serena Ann got promptly into the chaise and they made haste to the Sign of the Lamb. However, just before they reached the tavern, Miss Pamela remembered an errand which her mother had begged her to do at Mr. Thomas Whitcomb's store, and had her brother leave her there, saying she would join them in a few minutes.

But when Mr. Solomon Soley inquired at the Sign of the Lamb, he found that Joshua Simmons and Aunt Love had driven away in their chase some half an hour before, and the hostler, who had been told, did not remember that they had merely gone to look about the city a little for the missing child, and were then coming back to the tavern to see if she had in the meantime been brought there. However, another hostler remembered that the lady carried a large green bandbox and was crying.

"That was Aunt Love," said Serena Ann, and she began to cry, too.

"Don't cry," said Mr. Solomon Soley. "You shall be taken home safely tonight."

Then he turned the chaise around, and drove back to the store, where his sister had stopped, and before Serena Ann fairly knew it they were on the road to Braintree.

It had grown very cold, and the wind blew. Mr. Solomon got out a great plaid camlet cloak from under the chaise seat,

"WE MUST TAKE HER TO THE SIGN OF THE LAMB."

and put it on over his mulberry-colored one. Then presently, because Serena Ann began to shiver a little, tucked in between the two as she was, he threw an end of the camlet cloak around her, over her brown silk hood. She was quite warm under that, and also quite hidden from sight. Nobody meeting them would have dreamed that there was a little girl in the chaise.

In the meantime, Aunt Love and Joshua Simmons returned to the Sign of the Lamb, and the hostler, who had forgotten they were coming, told her that a gentleman in a chaise had been there with the little girl and said he was going to take her home to Braintree. "Guess you'll overtake 'em," said he. "Gentleman was alone in the chaise with the little girl, wore a mulberry-colored cloak."

Aunt Love fairly wept for joy. "Oh! Joshua, I am so thankful," she cried. "I never could have told Sarah I'd lost Serena Ann. And I haven't got my shoes, but I don't care. I'll get married in my old ones. Let's start right away, so we'll overtake them."

Joshua Simmons started up the horse, and the chaise rattled out the tavern yard and down the road toward Braintree.

But their chapter of accidents was not quite finished, for as they were crossing Neponset bridge, peering ahead to see if they could catch a glimpse of the other chaise, a gust of wind took off Joshua Simmon's hat and tossed it into the river. He had a cold in his head, too. Aunt Love pulled her hood promptly. "Put this on," said she. "Don't say a word. If you don't you'll be laid up with influenza, and the wedding will have to be postponed, and that's a bad sign."

"What'll you do?" asked Joshua Simmons, hesitatingly.

Aunt Love untied the green bandbox. "Put on this bonnet," said she. "It'll be so dark when we get home that the neighbors can't see it."

So Joshua put on the hood and Aunt Love the wedding bonnet, and it happened that when they finally overtook Solomon Soley, who had not much the start, and whose horse had got a stone in his shoe and made a delay, that the occupants of the two chaises looked hard at each other and saw nothing that they were looking for.

For Joshua Simmons, who was naturally somewhat ashamed of his woman's headgear, kept his face turned well away, and both Solomon Soley and his sister, Pamela, thought there were two ladies in the chaise, and not the aunt and the young man for whom they were looking.

As for Serena Ann, she was fast asleep under the camlet cloak and saw nobody, and her Aunt Love and Joshua never dreamed she was there. Moreover, they were looking for one gentleman in the chaise with her, and here was a young lady also. He wore a camlet cloak, too, instead of a mulberry cloak, as they had been told.

So the two chaises rattled on almost abreast for quite a stretch on the turnpike, but finally Solomon Soley's forged ahead a little, for his horse was fresher.

They reached Braintree and when they were within a half mile of the Bagley farmhouse, Joshua Simmons turned into another road, which was a little shorter cut. Aunt Love was impatient to see if Serena Ann had reached home. And so it happened, since Solomon Soley's horse was a little faster, that both chaises turned into the Bagley yard at the same time, and Serena returned from her Christmas outing with something more exciting than a flourish of trumpets.

Serena Ann herself was so tired and sleepy that she could not fairly realize anything. It seemed to her like a dream; the chorus of surprise and delight, Mr. Solomon's and Miss Pamela's coming into the house and getting warm, and eating supper, and borrowing a footstove before they started on their homeward journey, and everything. She scarcely even grasped in its full measure of delight the fact that Miss Pamela presented her with the rosewood workbox and the doll when she kissed her good-by, but Serena Ann had gotten one of the pleasantest memories of her life, and had her first Christmas keeping.

MULTUM IN PARVO.

Her eyes are homes of silent prayer.—Tennyson.

What loneliness is more lonely than distrust?—George Eliot.

Who overcomes by force hath overcome but half his foe.—Milton.

To the brave and strong rest seems inglorious and the night too long.—Pope.

The best part of one's life is the performance of his daily duties.—H. W. Beecher.

Childhood sometimes does pay a second visit to a man; youth never.—Mrs. Jameson.

If we had no failings ourselves we should not take so much pleasure in finding out those of others.—Rochefoucauld.

My ear is opened and my heart prepared; the worst is worldly loss thou canst unfold:—say, is my kingdom lost.—Shakespeare.

MISSIONARY NOTES.

One hundred missionaries were sent to China by the Swedish Lutheran church in 1893.

The American Baptist missionaries in Assam have asked that twenty-two new missionaries be sent to that country.

In Korea the Protestant mission force of foreign workers consists of twenty-six married men, fourteen single men and eighteen single ladies, representing the Methodist Episcopal, Presbyterian and Anglican churches.

The first church building erected in this country was built by Protestants on Manhattan Island in 1628 by the Reformed Dutch church. This organization still exists and is the well-known Collegiate church of New York City.

EUROPE'S ROYALTY.

Miss Ethel Weedon, who was married to the marquis of Queensberry less than a year ago, has knocked him out of the connubial combination. She couldn't go the Queensberry rules.

Miss Whittier that was, of Boston, is entitled to condolences. She has become Princess Bellosolsky-Bellozersky. Perhaps she may find life endurable after she has learned her visiting card by heart.

Crown Prince Ferdinand of Roumania's little daughter, born last week, makes Queen Victoria's nineteenth great-grand child, as the crown princess is the daughter of Prince Alfred, duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha.

Prince Clodwig Carl Victor von Hohenlohe-Schillingfurst, the new German chancellor, is seventy-four years of age. He will be called Hohenlohe for short. His wife was Princess von Sayn-Wittenstein-Berleberg, and they have five children of whom the eldest is a Prussian cavalry captain.

CITY SIGHTS.

One of the conditions of membership in a New York club is that each member must give at least one hour a week to doing some good action.

The greatest theatre-goers in the world are the Italians. There are more theatres in Italy in proportion to the population than in any other country.

There may be little godliness about Chatham square, New York, but there seems to be the next thing to it, according to the adage, for a little way down Park row is a sign reading: "Society for the Encouragement of Wearing Clean Shirts."

Consolation.

"Why, what's up, Cholly?"

"Toothache, confound it! I'm going to have 'em all out. If this keeps on, I'll be dead soon, and it won't matter——"

"Oh, yes, it would. You'd need them to gnash with."—Life.

The Compensation of Adversity.

Richleigh—Lord, I wish I were you.

Poorleigh—For heaven's sake, why?

Richleigh—Why, you can have the fun of proposing to every girl you meet and be sure of being refused!

One Exception.

She—And am I, really and truly, the only woman you ever loved?

He—Well, Sylvia, no; but I hope you won't have any feelings of jealousy towards my maternal grandmother.

A Rapid Girl.

He—Great guns! She has known me only a week and she has accepted me—we're engaged.

She—You don't say so? She has known you a whole week and she hasn't married you yet?

Could Not Resist.

Husband—What on earth did you buy that pillow for? We don't need it and the price was enormous.

Wife—I got it, my dear, because it was marked "down."

Too Many Notes.

Subscriber.—I've got something here that I want you to make a note of.

Editor (absent-mindedly)—Can't do it; three in the bank now, and one going to protest!—Atlanta Constitution.

RUBINSTEIN.

The Illustrious Musician and Greatest Pianist Next to Liszt.

With the death of Anton Rubinstein, which occurred at Peterhof near St. Petersburg, one of the greatest figures in the history of music passes into immortality. Both as a composer and an instrumentalist he occupied a position so distinctive, so individual, that he may be said to have had neither predecessors nor contemporaries. He was a Hebrew by birth, a German by education, a Russian by baptism, sentiment and sympathy. His native place was Wechwotenez, a Bessarabian village. Until a few years ago he believed that his birthday was Nov. 30, 1830, but a search of the village records proved conclusively that the correct date was Nov. 28, 1829. The discovery is of so recent a date that few biographical dictionaries will be found with the correction.

Rubinstein was a year old when the Czar Nicholas issued his famous ukase which would have deprived the Russian Hebrews of all their possessions. Roman Rubinstein, Anton's grandfather, a man of great force of character, assembled at Berditscheff, in the Government of Kiew, the whole of the family, numbering some sixty persons. His authority as head of the family being recognized, he commanded them all to be baptized as Christians in accordance with the law. There were no musicians on the paternal side of Rubinstein's family. Those anxious to prove that all special tendencies are due to heredity will be gratified to learn that his mother, Clara Levenston, was a good pianist. He was only six when his mother began to teach him to play. Other teachers followed—men of eminence—but Rubinstein never forgot the first, and even at the summit of his career he valued the criticism of his mother above that of any one else.

In Moscow, whither the family had moved, Rubinstein became the pupil of Villoeng, a Franco-Russian, who had studied under John Field, the pianist and composer, who spent the greater part of his life in Russia. As a tot of ten, Rubinstein, whose industry in his piano studies had been remarkable, made his debut. The era of infant prodigies had reached what seemed then to be its apogee—it was

ANTON RUBINSTEIN.

the epoch of Palmer, of the sisters Milanolo, of Sophie Bohrer. Rubinstein was a success. His professor took him to Paris. There he tried for admittance to the Conservatoire, but was refused. He then visited London, Copenhagen and Amsterdam. After a three years' stay in Moscow, on his return he went to Berlin, where Dehn, the master of Glinka, gave him lessons in composition. In 1846, still a stripling, he was in Vienna teaching others. In 1850 he was back in Russia, and his first opera was then produced in St. Petersburg. In 1854, thanks to the patronage of the Grand Duchess Helena, wife of the Grand Duke Michael, brother of the Emperor Nicholas, he founded the Societie Musicale de Russie, of which the Conservatoire is a branch.

In 1858 he made a tour of all the European capitals. For eight years he remained in active management of the Conservatoire. Then commenced again his peregrinations, which continued till his death. This country he visited in 1872.

His personal appearance was one that left a deep impression on one's memory. Bachvogel has thus written about it: "He has the head of an inspired sphinx, upon whose face not even the paroxysms of enthusiasm call forth a smile. Did not the color of life illumine it, it might be of stone."

Head and face were leonine, and resembled those of Beethoven, while they suggested Tolstoi. His eyes were small, but piercing in expression. Beetling brows gave a touch of extreme severity to his face, softened somewhat by the beardless cheeks, lips and chin.

As a pianist Rubinstein reached his pinnacle of greatness. Liszt alone of all the great names is ranked above him. In mastery of tone, in perfection of technique and in absolute authority of style Rubinstein will ever be a standard by which others will be judged.

As a composer, in which capacity he was prolific, he never obtained a recognition equal to that he gained as a pianist. He composed in every form. It was of him that it was said that he possessed "the fatal gift of fluency." Limited success was all that came to him as a composer, and that fact embittered his life. The reasons are, perhaps, to be found in the variance of his music from the doctrines of the musical intelligence of the day.

Among his operas are "Dimitri Donskol," "Les Chasseurs Siberiens," "La Vengeance," "Tom le Fou," "Les Enfants des Bruyeres," "Lalla Rookh," "Nero" and "Ivan Kalashorikoff." His oratorio, "Paradise Lost," has been performed with great success, notably in La Salle de la Noblesse, at St. Petersburg, Dec. 17, 1876. His sacred drama, "The Maccabees," was produced at the Imperial Opera House, Vienna, in 1878.

In 1869 Alexander II. ennobled the composer, and in 1877 France decorated him with the Cross of the Legion of Honor.

DYING WORDS OF GREAT MEN.

Goethe—Let the light enter.

Tasso—Into Thy hands, O Lord.

Keats—I feel the daisies growing over me.

Herder—Refresh me with a great thought.

Alfeiri—Clasp my hand, my dear friend; I die.

Addison—See with what grace a Christian can die.

Cardinal Beaufort—What! is there no bribing death?

Sir Walter Scott—I feel as if I were to be myself again.

Frederick V. of Denmark—There's not a drop of blood on my hands.

Mirabeau—Let me die amid the sound of delicious music and the fragrance of flowers.—Christian at Work.