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SERENA ANN. HER FIRST CHRISTMAS-KEEPING.

By MARY E. WILKINS.

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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 gray-hounds 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 petticoat, 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 Ebenezar. "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 bunch of 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 felt 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 sixpences, 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 BURRIED 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 grand as some as their hair cloth 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 that 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 track 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 lamb's-wool 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.

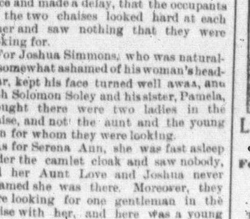
But when Mr. Solomon Soley inquired at the Sign of the Lamb, he found that Joshua Simmons and Aunt Love had driven away in their chase some half an hour before, and the hostler, who had been told, did not remember that they had merely gone to look about the city a little for the missing child, and were 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 to-night."

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 once 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.

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"By a thorough knowledge of the natural laws which govern the operations of digestion and nutrition, and by a careful application of the fine properties of well-selected Cocoa, Mr. Epps has provided for our breakfast and supper a delicately flavored beverage which may save us many heavy doctors' bills. It is by the judicious use of such articles of diet that a constitution may be gradually built up until strong enough to resist every tendency to disease. Hundreds of subtle maladies are floating around us ready to attack wherever there is a weak point. We may escape many a fatal shaft by keeping ourselves well fortified with pure blood and a properly nourished frame."—Civil Service Gazette.

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WANTED,

Information About Homeless Children and Childless Homes.

A BRANCH OF THE SOCIETY for the care of Neglected and Dependent Canadian Children having been organized in Kingston and duly recognized by the Provincial Government, it is desired that parties having knowledge of children growing up neglected or in bad surroundings will report their cases to the undersigned, or any other officer of the Society, and all such information will be kept secret when so desired. And it is further requested that those wishing to adopt said children will make known their desire to Rev. J. R. Black, 499 Johnston Street, Kingston.

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When you catch sight of our display of

FRUIT AND CANDY,

but just drop in by way of the doors, and let us show you the finest line of CANDY in Kingston.

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C. H. OTTO, BOOKBINDER AND BLANK BOOK MANUFACTURER, 197 Wellington Street, Opposite the Ontario Bank.

Send address to above number and work will be called for.

THE BARBER'S STORY.

LONG HOURS AND CONSTANT STANDING BROUGHT ON KIDNEY TROUBLE

Forced to Quit Work and Feared That He Would Have to Drop His Trade—How He, at Last, Found a Cure.

Stratford Beacon.

Among the residents of Stratford there is probably none better known or more highly respected than James E. Smith, the Ontario street tonsorial artist. Mr. Smith is also well known in Toronto, in which city he worked for several years in a Yonge street barber shop. To a reporter of the "Beacon," who is a customer of his, the affable barber recently told of his recovery from a late very severe illness. He had, he said, for some years been afflicted with a weak back, so much so that at times if he stooped he could not regain an upright position unassisted, and as for lifting anything, that was out of the question. "For years," to use Mr. Smith's own words, "I could not carry a scuttle-full of coal." He had, so the physicians whom he consulted told him, disease of the kidneys, but they failed to cure him. He grew weak at length and rapidly lost flesh. Quite frequently he would be obliged to give up work for a week and take to his bed. He lost his appetite, was pale and so unnerved that he could not possibly hope to continue longer at his trade. "Customers of the barber shop," he remarked, "do not care to be shaved by a man whose hand trembles." He had been in bed for some time undergoing treatment when one morning his wife said to him, "Jim, I've got a new medicine I want you to try." It was Dr. Williams' Pink Pills she had. He objected to more medicine, as invalids will do, but at length as sensible men usually are, he was guided by his wife. "But mind you," he said, "I had no faith in the pills; I only took them to please my wife." It was fortunate he did so, for he was soon back at work and after taking several boxes of the medicine was stronger than he had been for several years. Within two months after beginning to take Pink Pills he felt like a new man and had gained over twenty pounds in weight. There is certainly no healthier looking man in the city to-day than Mr. Smith. Since his restoration to health by Dr. Williams' Pink Pills he has recommended the remedy to many of his friends and has yet to hear of a case where the remedy faithfully tried was found wanting. In cases like that of Mr. Smith, Pink Pills furnish a speedy and effective cure, and indeed they do in all cases dependent upon a poor or watery condition of the blood or impaired nervous forces. Dr. Williams Pink Pills cure when other medicines fail. Sold by all dealers or sent by mail post paid at 50c a box or six boxes for $2.50, by addressing the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont., or Schenectady, N. Y. Under no circumstances are the genuine Pink Pills sold in bulk, but only in boxes, the wrapper around which is printed in red ink and bears the full trade mark, "Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People." Pills offered in any other form, no matter what color, are worthless imitations.

Chinese Politeness.

Whether or not the Chinese put a term insulting to Japan in their declaration of war against that country they seem to be under ordinary circumstances the politest people on earth. A German traveller who has been publishing his impressions of the Chinese people, declares that in writing a letter to a perfect stranger a Chinaman calls his correspondent "my elder brother." The letter begins with such a phrase as, "May all the blessings of life be showered upon you, such is the wish of your imbecile junior." In speaking of his own family the writer says, "We ants." The address on the top of the letter is, "From my humble cabin to the glorious Palace of Pearls of my elder brother," and the preamble is, "To my excellent and benevolent elder brother who ascends the staircase of honors." At the end is the form, "The undersigned, your most obedient monkey, raises his hands in supplication to Your Excellency in order that Your Excellency may deign to approach the miserable ruins of our house." Finally, as a further token of humility the signature of the writer is so small as to be almost illegible.—London Daily News.

Getting at the Time.

To ascertain the time at night the Apache Indians employ a gourd on which the stars of the heavens are marked. As the constellations rise in the sky the Indian refers to his gourd and finds out the hour. By turning the gourd around he can tell the order in which the constellations may be expected to appear. The hill people of Assam reckon time and distance by the number of quids of betelnuts chewed. It will be remembered how, according to Washington Irving, Governor Wouter van Twiller dismissed the Dutch colonial assembly invariably at the last puff of his third pipe of tobacco. A Montagnis Indian of Canada will set up a tall stick in the snow, when traveling ahead of friends who are to follow. He marks with his foot the line of shadow cast, and by the change in the angle of the shadow the oncoming party can tell, on arriving at the spot, how far ahead the leader is.

Dr. Price's Baking Powder never deteriorates or loses its strength. Its keeping qualities are unparalleled.

The Isle of Boredom.

As you sail through life take pains and steer
Away from the island that lies so near—
The Isle of Boredom, which all men fear.

The inland sets up like a shelf of rock,
But woe to the sailor who lands at the dock
And offers the people a chance to talk.

For they talk all night and they talk all day,
And try as you will to get away,
They pin you down and they make you stay.

They talk of the things they have done and said,
They talk you awake and they talk you to bed,
Till you almost wish they would talk you dead.

And the queerest thing, and the one to deplore,
About the dwellers upon that shore—
Not one of them knows that Isle is a bore.

So steer away from that island shelf,
That is governed, they say, by a wicked elf,
Lest you be a bore and not know it yourself.
—ELLA WHEELER WILCOX.

Ireland's Centenarians.

Centenarians have, as far as we remember, not hitherto figured among the staple productions of Ireland. According to the Registrar-General's report, however, it would seem that they exist in that country in a proportion that would probably have surprised the late Mr. Thoms, though that gentleman did not, as is popularly supposed, refuse to believe in them, but only declined to admit their claims until they had been substantiated by reasonably good evidence. It appears that among the deaths registered in Ireland during the twelve months covered by the report were 611 of persons stated to have been ninety-five years of age or more, divided into 266 men 316 women; while of these, 66 men and 78 women were returned as 100 years old and upward.—London Daily News.

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When she was a Child, she cried for Castoria.
When she became Miss, she clung to Castoria.
When she had Children, she gave them Castoria.

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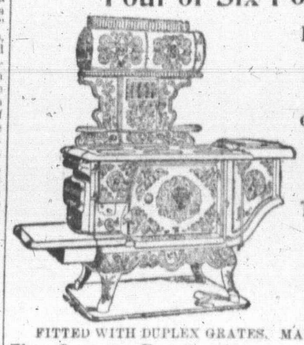

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