

**SOLOMON CROW'S
CHRISTMAS POCKETS:
AND OTHER TALES**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649390182

Solomon Crow's Christmas pockets: and other tales by Ruth McEnery Stuart

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RUTH MCENERY STUART

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AND OTHER TALES

BY

RUTH McENERY STUART

AUTHOR OF

"A GOLDEN WEDDING" "THE STORY OF BABETTE"
"CARLOTTA'S INTENDED" ETC.

ILLUSTRATED



NEW YORK AND LONDON
HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS

TO
MY DEAR NIECE
LITTLE MISS LEA CALLAWAY

CONTENTS

	PAGE
SOLOMON CROW'S CHRISTMAS POCKETS . . .	3
THE TWO TIMS	23
THE FREYS' CHRISTMAS PARTY	39
LITTLE MOTHER QUACKALINA	67
OLD EASTER	91
SAINT IDYL'S LIGHT	111
"BLINK"	131
DUKE'S CHRISTMAS	165
UNCLE EPHE'S ADVICE TO BRER RABBIT . .	193
MAY BE SO	199

SOLOMON CROW'S CHRISTMAS POCKETS

HIS mother named him Solomon because, when he was a baby, he looked so wise; and then she called him Crow because he was so black. True, she got angry when the boys caught it up, but then it was too late. They knew more about crows than they did about Solomon, and the name suited.

His twin-brother, who died when he was a day old, his mother had called Grundy—just because, as she said, “Solomon an’ Grundy b’longs together in de books.”

When the wee black boy began to talk, he knew himself equally as Solomon or Crow, and so, when asked his name, he would answer: “Sol’mon Crow,” and Solomon Crow he thenceforth became.

Crow was ten years old now, and he was so very black and polished and thin, and had so peaked and bright a face, that no one who had

any sense of humor could hear him called Crow without smiling.

Crow's mother, Tempest, had been a worker in her better days, but she had grown fatter and fatter until now she was so lazy and broad that her chief pleasure seemed to be sitting in her front door and gossiping with her neighbors over the fence, or in abusing or praising little Solomon, according to her mood.

Tempest had never been very honest. When, in the old days, she had hired out as cook and carried "her dinner" home at night, the basket on her arm had usually held enough for herself and Crow and a pig and the chickens—with some to give away. She had not meant Crow to understand, but the little fellow was wide awake, and his mother was his pattern.

But this is the boy's story. It seemed best to tell a little about his mother, so that, if he should some time do wrong things, we might all, writer and readers, be patient with him. He had been poorly taught. If we could not trace our honesty back to our mothers, how many of us would love the truth?

Crow's mother loved him very much—she thought. She would knock down any one who even blamed him for anything. Indeed, when things went well, she would sometimes go sound