

SARAH P. DOUGHTY

**THE CHRISTMAS
TREE
AND OTHER
CHRISTMAS TALES**



Sarah P. Doughty

The Christmas Tree and Other Christmas Tales

Published by

MUSAICUM

Books

- Advanced Digital Solutions & High-Quality eBook
Formatting -

musaicumbooks@okpublishing.info

2021 OK Publishing

EAN 4064066381059

Table of Contents

Playing Santa Claus.
Nothing To Give.
Willie's Gold Dollar.
The Thanksgiving Party.
A Christmas Story.
April Fool's Day.
The Christmas-Tree.
A Dream.
No Time Like the Present.
The Little Match Boy.
I Forgot.
The Silver Morning and the Golden Day.
Two Sides to a Story.

Preface.

[Table of Contents](#)

A merry Christmas and a happy New Year to you, dear children! This little volume comes to you as a holiday gift, and in its pages we have endeavored to show you that true and lasting happiness can be found only in doing good to others. Let the lesson sink deep into your hearts. Even the least among you can do much good. Look around you. Do not wait for some great opportunity to offer, but with willing hearts and busy hands perform the most trifling acts of usefulness to others. Continue to do this throughout the year, and we will promise you that when another New Year dawns upon the earth, you will look back with rejoicing, giving thanks to your Heavenly Father that you have found that true happiness which can never be taken from you.

Playing Santa Claus.

Table of Contents

“Wake up, wake up, Emma!” said little Caroline Meredith, as she gently shook her sister very early one winter’s morning; “I have something very pleasant to tell you.”

“What is it, Carrie?” answered the sleepy little girl, as she rubbed her eyes, and tried to comply with her sister’s request to “wake up.”

“Do you remember what day it is, Emma? To-morrow will be Christmas; and this evening will be Christmas Eve.”

“O Carrie, so it will!” exclaimed Emma, now fully awake; “and we shall hang up our stockings; and, oh, what beautiful things Santa Claus will bring us!”

“And what fine times we shall have to-morrow!” continued Caroline. “Aunt Margaret and all our cousins are coming to dine with us.”

“Oh, it will be delightful!” replied Emma. “We can show them our presents, and perhaps they will bring theirs to show to us; and we shall play so happily together!”

“And, you know, I have made a needle-book to give Aunt Margaret; and you have a work-bag for her,” added Caroline. “I am sure she will be pleased.”

“I know she will,” said Emma; “and father and mother will be pleased with the little presents we have got for them. I like to give things away; don’t you, Carrie?”

“Yes, very much,” replied Carrie. “I should like to be Santa Claus.”

“O Carrie! what a funny Santa Claus you would make!” exclaimed Emma; and both of the little girls laughed heartily at the idea.

“How I would come tumbling down the chimney, with my bag full of toys!” continued Caroline. “I would fill your stocking just as full as it could be, Emma.”

Emma laughed again; and then she was silent for a few moments, and looked very thoughtful.

“Do you think Santa Claus fills the poor children’s stockings, Carrie?” she asked.

Carrie looked grave also, as she replied,—

“I don’t know, Emma. / would fill their stockings if / were Santa Claus. But, Emma,” she continued, after a short pause, “you know there is not really any such person as Santa Claus. It is our father and mother, and other kind friends, who fill our stockings.”

“I know that, Carrie; and this makes me afraid that the *poor* children do not have their stockings filled; because, you know, their friends have no money to spend for toys and pretty presents. Don’t you think it would be a good plan for every rich child to be a Santa Claus to some poor child?”

“O, yes, Emma!” exclaimed Carrie; “I think it would be a *beautiful* plan. How came you to think of it?”

“I do not know, Carrie; but I suppose the good angels whispered it to me. You know mother says that all our good thoughts are from the angels.”

“Well, that is a good thought, I am sure,” replied Carrie; “and I am very glad that our father is rich, so that we can play Santa Claus. And then it is very pleasant to live in such

a handsome house, and have such nice clothes and playthings; don't you think so, Emma?"

"Yes, I do," answered Emma; "and I always feel sorry for poor little children, who have none of these good things. You know little Mary and Ellen Drayton? Their mother is very poor."

"I know she is, Emma; but she always seems cheerful, and the little girls look very happy. How neat and clean they always look!"

"Yes, Carrie: but their clothes are very old and patched; and they have very few books, and no playthings but one rag baby. When mother sent me there, the other day, to ask Mrs. Drayton about doing some work for her, I stopped a few moments to talk to the little girls."

"Let us be their Santa Claus, if mamma is willing," said Carrie. "I have got two little gold dollars that I will spend for them."

"And I have two more," added Emma. "I meant to have bought a large doll; but I would rather give the money to Mary and Ellen."

The little girls now hastened to dress themselves, that they might go to their mother, and tell her of their plan, and ask her consent to spend their money in the way that they proposed.

Mrs. Meredith was quite willing, and, indeed, she was much pleased that her little daughters had thought of a way in which they might do good and give pleasure to others; and she said that she would add two more gold dollars to theirs, and would go with them to buy the gifts for Mary and Ellen.

After breakfast was over, she talked a little more with them on the subject, and told them that it would not be best to spend all the money for books and toys, because the little girls were much in need of warm clothing, and it would be doing them more good to buy some things of that kind.

Caroline and Emma were willing to do as their mother thought best; but they begged her to buy a *few* books and toys, because they thought it would make the little girls so happy. They felt very happy to find that six dollars would buy so many things. There was not only a pretty dress for each little girl, and some warm stockings and shoes, but also a dress for Mrs. Drayton; and there was still money enough left for two pretty books, two dolls, and some other toys. To these, Mrs. Meredith proposed that Caroline and Emma should add some of their own books and playthings, which they could well spare; and she said that she had several articles, which would be useful to Mrs. Drayton, which she would put with those they had bought.

The little girls could hardly contain their delight when they saw all these nice presents packed in one large basket, and another one filled with tea, sugar, pies, cakes, a roasted chicken, and some other articles of food, that Mrs. Drayton and her children might have a good Christmas-dinner.

Carrie and Emma were so happy that they could hardly wait for evening, that they might play "Santa Claus," as they called it; and they quite forgot to think about the pretty presents which they hoped to receive themselves, because they were so busy in thinking of the joy that Mary and Ellen would feel when the baskets should be unpacked.

“Let us try to be patient, and wait until the girls have gone to bed,” said Carrie. “Mrs. Drayton sits up very late to sew; and, if mother will let John carry the baskets for us, we will go and knock softly at the door, and give her the things, and ask her to put some of the toys into Mary’s and Ellen’s stockings. How surprised they will be in the morning!”

Emma readily agreed to this plan; and, as the house was very near, Mrs. Meredith was quite willing that they should do so.

We will now leave them to pass a happy afternoon in assisting their mother in some preparations which she wished to make for the entertainment of the young friends whom they expected to spend Christmas with them, while we take a peep into Mrs. Drayton’s neat but humble dwelling.

Mary and Ellen were seated close by the side of their mother, who was sewing busily on a pair of coarse overalls,—the last of a dozen pairs which she had engaged to make. Mary had learned to sew neatly enough to be of some assistance, and her mother had just given her leave to hem the bottom of one of the legs of the overalls; while little Ellen was reading aloud from a story-book, which had been given to her at school as a reward for her good behavior. The story which she was reading was a Christmas-tale; and it told of a happy family of children who gathered around the beautiful Christmas-tree.

When Ellen had finished her story, she laid down the book, and seemed very thoughtful for a few minutes. Presently she looked up in her mother’s face, and said, very gently,—

“Will you please to let us hang up our stockings to-night, dear mother? This is Christmas Eve. I should like a pretty tree like the one in the story; but it will be just as pleasant to hang up our stockings. Don’t you remember the pretty things that we found in them one year, Mary, a good while ago, when father lived in this world with us?”

Mrs. Drayton’s eyes filled with tears; and Mary whispered,—

“Hush, Ellen! you grieve poor mother.”

“No, dear, she does not grieve me,” replied Mrs. Drayton, making an effort to speak calmly and cheerfully. “You may hang up your stockings, my children; but you must remember that mother has no ‘pretty things’ to put in them. The weather is now becoming very cold, and you are in need of many articles of clothing, which I am working hard to try to procure for you. I shall take these overalls home this evening; and, if I get the money which I have earned by making them, I will try to put something useful into each stocking: but you must not expect to find toys or candies.”

Mary’s countenance brightened as she exclaimed, “O mother! I shall like a new apron better than a toy; for I have worn mine so long, and it looks so very shabby.”

But little Ellen looked sorrowful as she said, “I wish you could buy just one stick of candy, mother,—only one; half for Mary, and half for me.”

“Well, dear, I will try to do so, as it is for Christmas,” answered Mrs. Drayton; and, at this reply, Ellen’s face was also bright with smiles.

Evening soon came: and, as their mother was obliged to leave them alone while she carried home the work which

she had finished, the little girls concluded to hang up their stockings, and go to bed early, so that they need not feel lonely while she was gone. They were soon fast asleep, and dreaming of the new aprons and the stick of candy which they were to receive the next morning.

When Mrs. Drayton promised her children these things, she did not feel the least doubt that she should be able to keep her promise; for the man for whom she had been working always paid her very punctually, and on this night he would owe her nearly two dollars. Of this sum, a large portion must be spent for food and fuel; but there would be enough left to buy an apron for each of the little girls, and the stick of candy which Ellen so much desired.

“Poor children! it is not often that I can spend even one penny for them, except to purchase what is really necessary,” thought Mrs. Drayton, as she entered the shop where she was to leave the work. To her great disappointment, there was no one there but a young lad, who told her that his employer had gone away for the evening.

“You can leave the work,” he added, “and call again any day after Christmas. Mr. Williams will settle with you.”

Mrs. Drayton’s heart was very sad as she silently placed her bundle upon the counter and left the shop. She had but six cents in the world; and this must be spent for a loaf of bread, or her little ones would suffer for food on Christmas Day, when they expected to be so happy.

Her eyes filled with tears as she passed the groups of merry children, and heard them talking so eagerly of the expected pleasures of the next day, and thought of the

empty stockings which her own darlings would find when they awoke in the morning. But she was a good woman; and she tried hard to put away these sad feelings, and to believe that the Lord would do what was best for her and for her children.

“I cannot buy the aprons,” she said: “but I will take a loaf of bread which was baked yesterday,—that will cost but five cents; and, with the penny which remains, I will buy the stick of candy. That will comfort them a little.”

She went into the baker’s shop for the loaf; and the woman in attendance, who had often seen her before with her two little girls, handed her two cakes, saying kindly,—

“Your children will like a cake for Christmas.”

Mrs. Drayton thanked her, and walked homeward with a lighter step; for this would be such a treat to the little ones, that they would almost forget the promised aprons.

The last penny was spent for the candy; and she gently opened her own door, and entered noiselessly, lest she should disturb the sleeping children.

“It will be but a poor Christmas,” she said, as she opened a small cupboard, and, placing the bread in its accustomed place, looked around upon the scanty portion of food which it contained; “but we shall not really suffer from cold or hunger, and this should make us very thankful.”

As she said this, she heard a low knock at the door; and, hastening to open it, she was surprised to find Caroline and Emma Meredith, accompanied by John bearing two large baskets.

“Have Mary and Ellen gone to bed?” inquired Carrie, eagerly.

“Yes, they are both asleep, miss; but I can awaken them, if you wish.”

“Oh, no!” was the reply; “we wanted them to be asleep, and so we waited as long as we could. We are playing Santa Claus; and we have brought some things for you and the girls.”

“And we want you to put some in their stockings,” continued Emma. “Did they hang them up?”

“They did, indeed, my dear young lady; but I little thought that they would be filled. I spent my last penny for one stick of candy to divide between them.”

“Oh! there is plenty of candy, and toys also, in the baskets,” replied Emma. “Fill the stockings full; and tell Mary and Ellen that Santa Claus sent them.”

Mrs. Drayton’s heart was almost too full to speak as they wished her good-night; and she could not help weeping with joy as she unpacked the baskets, and saw all the good and useful things which they contained.

The stockings were soon loaded with toys and books, and papers of cakes and candies; the cupboard was well filled with articles of food; while the new clothes were spread upon a chair, where the children could see them when they awoke.

You may be sure it was a merry Christmas morning both at Mrs. Meredith’s and Mrs. Drayton’s.

Carrie and Emma were full of joy, not only from receiving a variety of beautiful presents, but from the thought of the pleasure which Mary and Ellen would feel when they found their stockings so well filled. And breakfast had not long been over, when the two little girls came hand in hand, with

sparkling eyes and hearts full of gratitude, to thank the young ladies for their kindness.

“Oh, we never saw so many pretty things!” exclaimed Ellen. “Mary and I are so glad, and we thank you so much! Mamma cried when she saw us jump and laugh so much when we awoke this morning; but she said she cried because she was glad too, and not because she was sorry.”

“Yes, she was *very, very* glad,” said Mary. “We needed all the things very much; and poor mamma had no money.”

Mrs. Meredith and Carrie and Emma felt very happy as they listened to these expressions of the children’s gratitude and joy; and, when Mr. Meredith heard the story, he said he would send a load of wood and coal to Mrs. Drayton, that he might have his share in “playing Santa Claus.”