



Christmas Stories and Legends: Classic tales to uplift the heart and bring light to a cherished winter holiday.

Phebe A. Curtiss

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Christmas Stories and Legends is a collection of tales to restore "the real spirit of Christmas" to the jaded world of . . . 1916. Even then, editor Phebe A. Curtiss worried children, especially, might get lost in the day's creeping commercialism. She aimed the book at schools and Sunday schools, and assembled twenty bits of Christmas lore to teach a proper observance. She includes, of course, the Nativity story, but other parts of yesterday's Christmas will be much less familiar to modern readers. The song, "White Christmas," hadn't been written yet, and the expression meant something more than snow. People gave white gifts to symbolize purity. Children might have had visions of sugarplums, but the book includes the unsweetened versions of two weepers from Hans Christian Anderson: "The Little Match Girl" and "The Fir Tree." (The tree learns too late to appreciate Christmas -- on the bonfire afterward.) And little Tom has to learn he is lucky to receive new skates for Christmas, even if they're the wrong brand. The book brings back great-grandfather's Christmas as a gift for today's worriers. Christmas always came with problems. But it always came, anyway.

Table of Contents

FOREWORD

THE LEGEND OF THE "WHITE GIFTS"

HER BIRTHDAY DREAM

THE FIR TREE

THE LITTLE MATCH GIRL

LITTLE PICCOLA

THE SHEPHERD'S STORY

THE STORY OF CHRISTMAS

THE LEGEND OF THE CHRISTMAS TREE

LITTLE JEAN

HOW THE FIR TREE BECAME THE CHRISTMAS TREE

THE MAGI IN THE WEST AND THEIR SEARCH FOR THE CHRIST

LITTLE GRETCHEN AND THE WOODEN SHOE

THE LITTLE SHEPHERD

BABOUSCKA

THE BOY WITH THE BOX

THE WORKER IN SANDALWOOD

THE SHEPHERD WHO DIDN'T GO

PAULINA'S CHRISTMAS

UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN

THE STAR

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