

ENCHANTING AND ENCHANTED

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Enchanting and Enchanted by F. W. Hackländer & Mrs. A. L. Wister

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F. W. HACKLÄNDER & MRS. A. L. WISTER

**ENCHANTING
AND ENCHANTED**

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AND
ENCHANTED

FROM THE GERMAN OF HACKLÄNDER.

BY
MRS. A. L. WISTER,
TRANSLATOR OF "THE OLD MAN'S SECRET," "GOLD HERR," "GOLD
A GULL," ETC.



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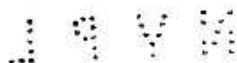
FAIRY SPELLS.

THE ELFIN TREE.

WHEN, in winter, the boughs of the trees are bending under their weight of snow, and the rude north wind whistles through the streets, when the days grow shorter, and the evenings longer and longer, the children ask each other, "How many Sundays will there be before Christmas?" And first, there are four, then three, then two, and at last only one, and then another reckoning begins, and the children count up how many times they must go to bed and get up again before Christmas ever comes. This is the way with all children, rich and poor; for even if there is no Christmas-tree for the latter, and though they may receive no rich gifts, they rejoice in the splendour of the brilliant lights which shine through the windows everywhere, and delight in the little gift, be it ever so small, which their poor parents have provided for them. But this evening is a sad one for the poor child who has neither parents nor relatives, but, living upon the charity of strangers, must see beautiful fir trees shining everywhere, and beautiful gifts given, without having any share in either, or sometimes even being allowed to look at them.

At the time when our wonderful story took place there was just such a poor orphan child living in the house of a rich tradesman, who had many children under the care of a bad step-mother, whom he had married soon after the death of his first wife, and who bore him a son, whom she petted and entirely spoiled. Although the father would not allow this bad step-mother to indulge her own son more than his other children, and saw to it strictly that they were all treated equally well, he could not induce her to treat the poor orphan boy, who was called Gustave, with love and gentleness. When he sometimes remonstrated with her upon the subject, she would say: "Well, the little good-for-nothing ought to be content with enough to eat and drink, and a place to sleep in. It is a new idea that beggars' brats must be petted and indulged." Ah! poor Gustave did not deserve that, and never complained when coarser food and clothes were provided for him than for the other children, only it grieved him sorely, and he could not understand why the other children, who were no handsomer nor better than he, should be treated so much more kindly. And particularly on Christmas morning, when the little ones were all showing their beautiful toys and gifts, and when the son of the bad step-mother would maliciously assure him that the Christ-child brought nothing for beggars' children, the poor orphan would be sad indeed, and resolve that if ever the Christ-child came in his way he would entreat him to tell him why he always forgot him.

And now Christmas-eve had come round again, and Gustave learned from the maids and men in the kitchen



that at midnight a silver bell would ring, and the Christ-child would come riding on a little ass to bring the children all the beautiful toys which they would find the next morning upon the tables and chairs. "Then," he thought to himself, "to-night I will listen for the bell, and run to meet the Christ-child and ask him humbly to remember me." And Gustave tossed upon his miserable bed in the attic, and could not sleep for expectation, but heard every stroke of the clock. At last just as it struck twelve, he seemed to hear a gentle noise in the house, something like the ringing of a little bell. He got softly out of bed, and excitement, as well as cold, made his teeth chatter loudly. He slowly went down the stairs and listened attentively, but everything in the house was as quiet as a church; he could not hear the slightest noise. At last he saw a ray of light through the chink of a door which had not been quite closed, and, peeping in, found to his sorrow that he had come too late, for the Christ-child had already ridden away, after covering the table with the most beautiful toys.

At first the poor fellow was about to slip up to his attic again; but he could not resist his curiosity, and slowly opened the door that he might see the toys more distinctly. Oh, dear, what beautiful things were there! The child stood confused and amazed, and looked about him for some time before he could quietly examine anything. On a table in the middle of the room stood a tall hemlock tree covered with wax-lights and beautiful things. On the top of the tree there were two golden flags, which waved in the draught of air that came from the door when the boy opened

it. Upon the table under the tree there were heaps of all kinds of toys. There stood a great dray loaded with chests and bales, and the driver, standing by, was swinging his whip above his head, all so naturally made that one felt convinced that if the whip would only crack the horses would gallop quickly away. And there too stood a beautiful carriage, such as wealthy, distinguished people drive,—it was painted blue and had red wheels,—and sitting in it was a wondrously beautiful little lady dressed in a white silk frock, trimmed with lace, with a myrtle crown and a long veil upon her head, and her little, round face looked so kindly at poor Gustave that he could scarcely take his eyes off her. Beside the carriage was ranged a regiment of wooden soldiers, with great bear-skin caps upon their heads and muskets upon their shoulders, looking sternly and rigidly before them. The drummers went first, holding their drumsticks, all ready to beat bravely at the word of command. On the other side of the table were pretty little houses; yes, a whole town, with churches and bridges, and a large garden besides, with beautiful trees and little fountains, and in the garden finely-dressed people were walking, and huntsmen, with their guns upon their shoulders, were spying diligently around for the hares and deer that were leaping about under the trees.

And now Gustave noticed, directly beneath the hemlock tree, a figure which at first shocked him not a little. It was twice as big as the other figures which stood upon the table around it, and had a misshapen, large, almost square head. Its mouth was even too large and misshapen for its ugly head, and was, br-