

**THE GOLDEN
WINDMIL: AND
OTHER STORIES**

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The golden windmill: and other stories by Stacy Aumonier

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STACY AUMONIER

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**THE GOLDEN WINDMILL
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THE
GOLDEN WINDMILL
AND OTHER STORIES

BY
STACY AUMONIER
Author of
"One After Another," etc.

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TO
J. G.

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PREFACE

*"Oh, that mine enemy would write a book —
of short stories."*

As you know, it is considered rather provocative to launch a book of short stories. It is asking for trouble. The least I can do is to offer a brief apology; and I cannot do this without writing a preface, which requires an apology in itself. Unless you are a Bernard Shaw you find a preface a most embarrassing business. Having written the stories I would rather talk about anything else — old furniture, for instance. Perhaps my best policy will be to start by attacking you, O Reader, friend or enemy, as the case may be. You are a most exacting fellow. Far more exacting than a reader of novels, or works of reference, or even histories; for the reason that your criticism follows a more circumscribed tradition. You are a kind of gourmet whose palate is acutely sensitive to accustomed flavors and satieties. It is always easier to be an epicure of a small repast than of a banquet. A novel is less easily digested. You may enjoy it in parts, or derive satisfaction from the matter, or from the manner of telling, but with a short story you require a *bonne bouche*. You have a most arbitrary standard. When you raise

your eyes from the last line you pass through a most peculiar mental process. It all takes place in a few seconds. In a flash you see the shape and form and color, the application of the title, the *point* of the whole thing. You demand this, and you also demand to have your senses tickled by some cunning solution, and to be soothed by something unexpected at the close. You observe it as a whole, in the same way that you would observe a water-color sketch, or a Sheraton chair. You may afterwards further examine the sketch, and even sit on the chair, but their appeal to you depends on that first glance. Otherwise you turn away, a dissatisfied and disgruntled gourmet. To-morrow you will dine elsewhere. The truth is your sense of tradition had been outraged.

Fortunately for you, and for me, tradition is a fine thing. Nothing comes out of the blue, except perhaps thunderbolts and they are not really very useful things, certainly no good to any one trying to create. Chippendale, Sheraton, or Heppelwhite were all men of strong individuality. You could never mistake a Sheraton chair for a Chippendale, or a Chippendale for a Heppelwhite; and yet they were all craftsmen who worked on strictly traditional lines. The same may be said of Turgenev, Guy de Maupassant, Joseph Conrad and Tchekoff. Please do not think that I am mentioning my own short stories in the same breath with the stories of these giants. I only want to point out to you that those of us who desire to write them have a noble tradition to follow. You may argue that the