

KARINE: A STORY OF SWEDISH LOVE

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Karine: a story of Swedish love by Wilhelm Jensen & Emma A. Endlich

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WILHELM JENSEN & EMMA A. ENDLICH

KARINE: A STORY OF SWEDISH LOVE

KARINE

TALES FROM FOREIGN LANDS.

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UNIFORM IN STYLE AND PRICE.
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KARINE

A STORY OF SWEDISH LOVE

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN

OF

WILHELM JENSEN

BY

EMMA A. ENDLICH

CHICAGO

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1896

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KARINE.



CHAPTER I.

BEHOLD the Falls of Trollhätta! For ages they have thundered, — long before human ears were near to hear the sound of falling waters. Far over the rocks they scatter the glistening spray, while, below, the troubled waters seethe and toss. The child playing upon their brink becomes a man; time touches his hair with silver; and when, at the close of his life, he totters forth, leaning upon his staff, he finds them the same as they were at its beginning, — wreathed in flowers, like the spring-time; white as winter's snow.

It is well for him who would forget, to sit by the waters of Trollhätta; their roaring so stuns the ear

that it cannot hear the voices of the past. They approach, gently flowing, like the destiny of a human soul, — peaceful, transparent, kissing the nodding, overhanging grasses ; then a little eddy, a swifter motion, — imperceptible, unheeded, — yet the stillness, the clearness, have gone forever. More hastily they flow, still more hastily are driven, drawn, compelled, — until suddenly they plunge headlong into the all-devouring abyss.

When the first human beings came hither from the forests of the South, — flat-faced people, girded with shaggy skins, pursuing the reindeer with spears of flint, — the thunder of the Trollhätta was their only greeting. We know not whether it was years or centuries they dwelt upon its banks ; they left no record of their deeds. Only the waves of the Trollhätta whisper their story, — waves that were stained with the blood of these men, shed by white-faced conquerors who sailed across the Baltic in clumsy ships.

Irresistibly, uncontrollably, the nations of Europe hurried onward. Hymns of praise were sung to Odin ; and his descendants came down upon the earth to rule over Goths and Swedes. They were

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the Ynglings, and called themselves kings of Upsala. Their fame also has perished.

Again the South brought forth a revolution, new and world-stirring; and again the Baltic carried it northward. Far into the rocky fastnesses of the Snehättan flew the glad tidings of the Gospel of Peace; and a mighty race, the Folkungs, ascended the Swedish throne. Their kingdom grew great and strong; but with it grew fierce ambitions, the lust of gain and of power. Bloody wars arose; and those who held the highest places in the land were flung, crushed, into the deep, — like the foaming waters of Trollhätta.

Then, across the narrow belt of sea that parts Sweden from Zealand, came for the first time descendants of the Norsemen, who upon these islands had founded their sea-girt Viking home. A mighty hand had united the Danish people; and Sweden, shorn of its strength by internal feuds, fell an easy prey to the conqueror. At Falköping, not far from the Falls of Trollhätta, the nation surrendered to a woman, and Margaret of Denmark laid victorious hands upon Odin's descendants.

Deep and angry sounded the waters of Trollhätta,