

John Henry Smith

A Humorous Romance of Outdoor Life

Frederick Upham Adams

The background of the lower half of the page is a teal color. It is decorated with various purple geometric shapes, including lines, curves, and a large inverted triangle, creating a modern, abstract design.

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[Illustration: "... and I got it"]

John Henry Smith

A Humorous Romance of Outdoor Life

By

FREDERICK UPHAM ADAMS Author of "John Burt" and "The Kidnapped

Millionaires"

Illustrated for Mr. Smith by A.B. FROST

[Illustration]

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DEDICATED TO MY DAUGHTER Olive Marie Adams

TO THE READER

John Henry Smith has requested me to revise and edit his diary, and, to use his own expression, "See if I can make some kind of a book from it." It was his idea that I should eliminate certain marked passages, and disguise others, so as to conceal the identity of the originals. Since Mr. Smith is abroad I can do as I please. Aside from renaming his characters, I have left them exactly as he has drawn them. This may lead him to do his own editing in the future.

I have also taken the liberty of reproducing some of the sketches made by Mr. Smith. In addition to literary, artistic, and athletic gifts Mr. Smith has had the rare good fortune to—but I must not anticipate his story.

THE EDITOR

Hastings-on-Hudson, N.Y.

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THE CHARACTERS

JOHN HENRY SMITH, who tells the story. Heir of his father, lives in Woodvale club house, devoted to golf, becomes interested in Wall Street, and falls in love with Grace Harding

GRACE HARDING, only daughter of Robert L. Harding, visitor in Woodvale

ROBERT L. HARDING, millionaire railway magnate, who first despises golf and then becomes infatuated with it

MRS. HARDING, the matter-of-fact wife of the above

JIM BISHOP, farmer near Woodvale, who knew Harding when the two were boys in Buckfield, Maine

WILLIAM WALLACE, Bishop's hired man, later golf professional in Woodvale, and later something else

OLIVE LAWRENCE, pupil to William Wallace

PERCY LAHUME, in love with Miss Lawrence

JAMES CARTER, wealthy member of Woodvale, who knows how to keep a secret

MISS DANGERFIELD, who makes a collection of golf balls

MISS ROSS, who is very pretty

MR. and MRS. CHILVERS, and MR. and MRS. MARSHALL, estimable young people, who enter into this narrative

BOYD, LAWSON, DUFF, BELL, MONAHAN, ETC., members in good standing in the Woodvale Golf and Country Club

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JOHN HENRY SMITH

JOHN HENRY SMITH

ENTRY No. I

Miss HARDING Is COMING

"Heard the news?" demanded Chilvers, approaching the table where Marshall, Boyd, and I were smoking on the broad veranda of the Woodvale Golf and Country Club. We shook our heads with contented indifference. It was after luncheon, and the cigars were excellent.

"Where's LaHume?" grinned Chilvers. "Where's our Percy? He must hear this."

"LaHume and Miss Lawrence are out playing," languidly answered Marshall. "What's happened? Don't prolong this suspense."

Miss Ross and Miss Dangerfield turned the corner and Chilvers saw them. Chilvers is married, but has lost none of his effervescence and consequently retains his popularity.

"Come here," he called, motioning to these two charming young ladies. "I've got something for you! Great news; great news!"

"What is it?" asked Miss Ross, her deep-brown eyes brightening with curiosity.

"Another heiress coming!" announced Chilvers, with the bow of a jeweller displaying some rare gem—"another heiress on her way to Woodvale! This is going to be a hard season for such perennial bachelors as Smith, Boyd, Carter, and others I could name. You girls will have your work cut out when this new heiress unpacks her trunks and sets fluttering the hearts of these steel-plated

golfers."

"Who is it?" impatiently demanded the chorus. Chilvers has all the arts of an actor in working for a climax.

"Miss Grace Harding; that's all!" said Chilvers.

"The famous beauty?" cried Miss Ross.

"Last season's society sensation in Paris and London?" exclaimed Miss Dangerfield.

"Daughter of the great railway magnate?" asked Marshall.

"The one to whom Baron Torpington was reported engaged?" I added.

"You all have guessed it the first time," laughed Chilvers. "She's the only daughter of Robert L. Harding, magnate, financier, Wall Street general, the man who recently beat the pirate kings down there at their own game. How much is Harding supposed to be worth, Smith?"

"Thirty millions or so," I replied.

"Well, I wish I had the 'so.' That would keep me in golf balls for a while," Chilvers continued, turning his attention to the ladies. "What show have you unfortunate girls against a combination like that? And think of Percy LaHume! What will that poor boy do? Percy heads for the richest heiress of each season with that same mighty instinct which leads a boy to cast wistful glances at the largest cut of pie. He thought the heiresses had quit coming, and now this happens; but he has gone so far in his campaign for the hand and cheque-book of Miss Lawrence, that he cannot stop quick without dislocating his spine. I doubt if that poor little Lawrence girl will ever have more than five millions."

"Never mind Percy and his prospects," said Marshall. "Who told you that Miss Grace Harding is coming to Woodvale?"

"Carter told me," replied Chilvers. "Carter knows them. The whole Harding family is coming, which includes Croesus, his wife, and their fair daughter, aged nineteen or thereabouts. Ah! why did I marry so soon?"

Mrs. Chilvers was standing back of him and soundly boxed his ears.

"How does it happen that the Hardings are coming here?" asked Mrs. Chilvers, when told the cause of this excitement. "Are they Mr. Carter's guests?"

"Mr. Harding is a charter member of Woodvale," I informed her. "For some unknown reason he joined the club when it started, but has never been here, and I doubt if he has ever played golf. He is the owner of the majority of the bonds issued against this clubhouse."

"I wonder if Miss Harding plays golf?" said Boyd.

"Golf is not among the list of accomplishments mentioned by those writers who pretend to know all about her," remarked Chilvers. "I have been forced to learn from a casual reading of society events that this remarkable heiress is without an equal as an equestrienne, that she paints, sings, drives a sixty-horse-power Mercedes with a skill and a courage which discourages the French chauffeurs, and does other athletic and artistic feats, but I have yet to learn that she golfs."

"I presume," I said, "that she will take up the game, and also the turf. The three Hardings doubtless will form one of those delightful family parties which add so much to the merriment of a golf course. I can shut my eyes and see them hacking their way around the links; the daughter pretty and more anxious to show off the latest Parisian golfing costumes than to replace a divot; the father determined, perspiring, and red of face, and the mother stout and always in the way."

"Isn't Mr. Smith the incorrigible woman-hater?" exclaimed Mrs. Chilvers. "You did not talk that way before you became so infatuated with golf, Mr. Smith."

"I am not a woman-hater," I protested, "but I—I don't like to——"

"Some day Smith will meet a fair creature on the golf links and lose his drive and his heart at the same time," declared Chilvers. "That was the way I was tripped up and carried into bondage," he added, his hand wandering to his wife's waist.

"With the exception of Mrs. Chilvers," I said, and I came very near making no exceptions, Miss Ross and Miss Dangerfield having left us—"with the exception of Mrs. Chilvers, I have yet to see the woman who shows to advantage with a

golf regalia. If Miss Harding is beautiful enough to overcome the handicap which always attaches to the female golf duffer, she can give Venus odds and beat her handily."

"You will meet a golfing Venus some day," smiled Mrs. Chilvers, willing that her sex should be attacked so long as she was exempt.

"That's what he will," added Chilvers; "I'm agile, but I slipped."

"The artists who depict the woman golfer as graceful and attractive," I continued, "must draw from imagination rather than from models. In my humble opinion a woman shows to better advantage climbing a steep flight of stairs than in any possible posture in striking a golf ball."

"The ladies—God bless 'em—and keep them off the links!" muttered Marshall.

"Why, Charlie Marshall!" exclaimed Mrs. Quivers. "I shall see that your wife hears that!"

"Don't tell her; she'll beat him terribly," warned Chilvers. "Did you ever hear, Boyd, why our friend Smith is so sour when he sees a lady on these links?"

Chilvers has told that story on me many times, but Boyd declared he had not heard it.

"As you know," began Chilvers, "Smith was born on this farm. It's the ancestral Smith homestead, and Smith's relatives were very indignant when he leased it to the Woodvale Golf and Country Club. What was the name of that maiden aunt of yours, Smith?"

"My Aunt Sarah Emeline Smith," I replied.

"Yes, yes! Well, Aunt Sarah Emeline was especially incensed over this act of sacrilege on Smith's part," continued this historian, and he followed the facts closely, "and only once since has she stepped foot on the broad acres where her happy girlhood was spent. It was my good-fortune to meet her on that occasion, and I shall never forget it."

"Neither shall I," I said.

"On her visit here Aunt Sarah Emeline persisted in wandering over the links. She had on a wonderful bonnet, and through it she glared disdainfully at the members of the club who yelled 'Fore!' at her. She was headed for the old mill, which now is used as a caddy house. I was playing the last hole and thought she was well out of line of a brasse, so I fell on that ball for all I was worth. I sliced it; yes, I sliced it badly."

[Illustration: "... and threw it in the pond"]

Chilvers paused and seemed lost in thought.

"Did it hit her?" asked Boyd.

"Of course it hit her," resumed Chilvers. "Aunt Sarah Emeline is more than plump, and since it did not hit her in the head I can't see how it could have hurt her. She certainly was able to stoop down, pick up that ball and throw it in the pond—and it was a new ball. I ran toward her and apologised the best I could, and what she said to me made a lasting impression. I suppose, Smith, that it was the most expensive sliced ball ever driven on these links?"

"Very likely," I sadly replied. "The following day I received a letter from Aunt Sarah Emeline informing me that she had cut me out of her will. And you still slice abominably, Chilvers."

"Thus you see that Smith has solid reasons for his prejudice against the gentler sex as golfists," concluded Chilvers.

I entered a general denial, and the conversation drifted into other channels. As a matter of fact, my dislike of the woman golfer is based on different grounds.

A pretty woman is a most glorious creature, and I yield to no one in my admiration of the fair sex, but a woman is out of her proper environment when she persists in frequenting a golf course designed for men who are experts at the game.

When I see women on the broad verandas of the Woodvale Club, or when I see them strolling along the shaded paths or indulging in tennis, croquet, and other games to which they are physically fitted, I know that they possess tact and discrimination, but when I see them ahead of me on the golf links—well, it is different.

Women may gain in health by attempting to play golf, but they do so at the expense of shattered masculine nerves and morals. When our board of management decided to permit the ladies to have free use of the course at all times except when tournaments are in progress, I resigned as director, but what good did it do?

A woman never is so tenacious of her rights as when she is in the wrong. I wonder if that is original?

I know of no agony more acute than to be condemned to play golf with women when there is a chance to get in a foursome with good scratch men. The dyspeptic compelled to fast while watching the progress of a banquet, must suffer similar torture.

"What's the use of sitting here and talking?" demanded Chilvers. "It has cooled off; let's have a foursome. Marshall and I will play you and Boyd, Smith. What do you say?"

At this instant the head waiter appeared and said Mr. Thomas wished me to come to his table for a moment. Thomas was on the other side of the veranda, but I had a suspicion of what was in store for me and arose with a sinking heart.

Thomas is the only good player in the club who is willing to make up a foursome with women, or, as it is most properly called, a "mixed foursome." I never saw one which was not mixed before many holes had been played.

Just as I anticipated, I found Thomas at a table with Miss Ross and Miss Dangerfield. Both are so pretty it is a shame they attempt to play golf.

"We are planning a foursome and Miss Dangerfield has chosen you for her partner," began Thomas, who knows exactly how I feel about such matters and who delights to lure me into trouble.

"If you and Miss Dangerfield will give Miss Ross and me two strokes," proposed Thomas, "we will play you for the dinners."

I felt sure it was a put-up job, but what could I say?

"I did not dare choose you for my partner, Mr. Smith," interposed Miss Dangerfield. "I know it is tiresome for a good player to go pottering around the

links with women at his heels, and only suggested a game if you had no other engagements."

"Mr. Smith dare not plead another engagement," asserted Miss Ross, her dark eyes flashing a challenge. She is a lovely girl, but digs up the turf terribly.

"Smith has no game on. He has been over there talking for an hour," added Thomas, before I could say a word. I could have murdered him.

"I am delighted, and it is kind of you to ask me," I lied most effusively. "It is an easy game for us, Miss Dangerfield."

"Do not be too sure," scornfully laughed Miss Rosa. "Mr. Thomas is a splendid player."

"But he cannot equal Mr. Smith," declared my loyal partner. "Oh, Mr. Smith, I have heard so much of your long drives and wonderful approach shots! It is so good of you to play with us."

"It is an unexpected pleasure," I replied, rather ashamed of myself.

I have no patience to describe in detail the game which followed. I am usually sure on a drive, but I topped five out of the eighteen and popped half of the others into the air.

Miss Dangerfield distinguished herself by missing her ball four successive times from the tee. This is not the female record for this feat, so I am informed, but it is a very creditable performance for a young lady who selects a scratch player for her partner.

Miss Ross played my ball by mistake on two occasions, and on one of them succeeded in almost cutting it in half. It is a mystery to me why a woman cannot keep track of her own ball, when as a rule she does not knock it more than twenty yards.

The ball she hits is usually a dirty, hacked-up object, but when she goes to look for it she imagines that by some miracle it has been transformed into a clean, white, and unmarked sphere, which has been driven for the first time.

Carter arrived at the club shortly after our "mixed foursome" had started out. He