

## WATKIN'S QUEST.

HE traveled east in a Pullman car, on a matrimonial quest, a man of innocent, child-like mind, from the primitive, simple west. He came straight out of a mining camp, where women are seldom seen, and so, as a judge of woman kind, you'll fancy him somewhat green. He said, in his vulgar, playful way, "he had hustled and made a pile, and now he wanted to find a wife, and put on a little style." A wife with a pretty face and form, to decorate hearth and home, and a permanent decoration, too, that never would wish to roam; who could sew and darn and sweep and cook, and not be ashamed to scrub, and whose eyes would open in shocked surprise at the name of a Women's Club. For before he left his lonely camp, he'd been told by those who knew, the kind of a woman he ought to shun—that our grandfathers called a "blue;" and if on a charming woman's breast he should ever chance to see the terrible "Federation" badge, he must simply turn and flee. "For there the women are two to one," they said, "and they've grown so high, if a man would know their tricks and turns he has got to be very spry." But Watkins—that was his name—just laughed, and "Dont you forget," said he, "that if the women are two or one, they're going to smile on me!" So on he came like a hero bold, in his curious western rig, with his curling locks, and his great felt hat and his beard and shoulders big; and the girls did smile, I'm bound to say, for novelty suits them well, besides, he'd another attraction, one that never fails to tell, with silver and gold, and bills as well, his pockets were stiffly lined, while those of other youths bulged out with bills of another kind. But, ah! as I said, the ways and wiles of girls to him were new; and if made for a conquering hero—well, he was made for a victim, too. And down he went in a great limp heap, before the first sweet eyes that looked at him over a feathery fan, in a wistful and flirtful guise. Before he could think of pros and cons, the pangs of love he felt, and his was one of a hundred scalps that dangled at Madge's belt. Pretty she was, and foolish too, that nobody could deny, and there wasn't a trace of blue in her, but the blue of her laughing eye. Men she held at the turn of her hand—to blind; to elude, to snub; and he couldn't connect the thought of her with the thought of a Woman's Club. But Joe was a man of cautious mind; his head he had not quite lost; and so it chanced one day his ardor was turned to frost. He saw in the lace that nestled round the pretty white neck of Madge a silver object of strange device; it was, without doubt, a badge, the badge of a club, a flattened sphere. He didn't know what it meant, but woman's growing sphere he *felt* 'twas intended to represent. So he just dropped off to think a while, his head was in such a whirl, and he called on her cousin Matilda Brown, different sort of a girl, She was older, but fairly good looking, too, not to be won in a day. But Watkins was much to her liking—so manly, so big, and all that, with his breezy laugh and his Buffalo Bill-like hat. And so, being only a babe, you see, though somewhat largely planned, he wilted before Matilda's charm saying, "here was a girl with sand!" Sand she had, and of feminine traits a marvelous list as well; and she'd learned to cook and sew and sweep as soon as she'd learned to spell. So all went on like a pleasant dream, till he thought, "Ah, here's the rub! Suppose, (for I never asked her) *she* belongs to a Women's Club?" That very night he went to call, and asked with an artless air, if man's prerogative—club and vote—she ever yearned to share. "And what do you think of all these things, I'd like to know?" said he. "Why, of course," she said, "I want to vote. And clubs?—I belong to three!"

Now never a word Joe Watkins said, so strong was his self control, but he walked away from her house that night with bitterness in his soul. And so badly he wanted comfort, that in spite of the little badge, before a week had passed away, he was flirting again with Madge. One day as they sat together, he saw again on her breast that sphere of strange device—perhaps 'twas the family crest! "What badge do you wear?" he asked her, her eyes showed such a gleam, "Oh, that," she said, "is a football, its the badge of the college team. I love strong men! I'm *dying* to see Corbett fight, you know, but when only two are sparring, why, 'tisn't proper for girls to go, but when twenty-two are at it hard, then it isn't quite the same, and somebody's sure to be badly hurt, its a perfectly lovely game, and I often wear this little badge because it belongs to Harry: and when he graduates, I expect—he expect—we expect—to—marry." That was Madge's revenge, you see, wasn't it neat? And off went poor old Joe again, to fall at Matilda's feet, for after all if

a girl looks well, and cooks and sews and scrubs, she is good enough for east or west in spite of women's clubs.

Now Tillie was dowered with common sense and her training had taught her this, that though a man is a right good thing, he doesn't make all earth's bliss, and if he knew his mind no more than to drift from Madge to Till, and from Till to Madge and back again, he was rather too weak of will; he thought too much of his own sweet self, and needed a good take down; and if any girl were to sigh for him, it wasn't Matilda Brown. So when at her feet she had him—'twas easy to bring him low—she brought him up to his feet again with a good strong bracing "No!" He traveled back in a Pullman car, on his matrimonial quest, resolved to dwell where girls were few in his wild familiar west; he said he wouldn't go east again, for he couldn't stand the weather; and he felt that the end-of-the-century girl was too much for him altogether, for some were the wickedest little flirts, just lying in wait to snub; and when you found an all-round prize, she belonged to a horrid club.

MARION C. SMITH.

## THE OLD HOUSE.

Cold and cheerless, bare and bleak,  
The old house fronts the shabby street;  
And the dull windows eastward gaze,  
As their cobwebbed brows they raise,  
Just as though they looked to see  
What had become of you and me,  
And all the other children.

The garden at the side—you know—  
Where mother's flowers used to grow,  
Has run as wild as we'd have grown  
If we had not her training known.  
The vines she bent still twine each tree,  
As cling her prayers to you and me,  
And all the other children.

Over the eaves, wrinkled and bare,  
The gray moss floats like tangled hair,  
If we had heard these echoes flung  
Down the long halls when we were young,  
We'd have scurried off to bed—  
You and I—through the gloom o'erhead,  
With all the other children.

On our wide orbs the eyes of night  
Gazed softly with mesmeric light;  
When mother bent above our bed;  
The silver moonlight touched her head,  
And in my dreams her face I'd see,  
Madonna-like, shine over me—  
Shine over all the children.

The dust drifts o'er the garret floor,  
The little feet tread there no more;  
But o'er the stage still standing there,  
The muse first stalked with tragic air,  
And whispered low to you and me  
Of golden days that were to be  
For us and all the children.

Good-bye, old house! Thy tattered cloak  
Is fringed with moss and gray with smoke,  
Within thy walls we used to see  
A gaunt old work named Poverty;  
Yet from thy rafters' dingy bars  
A ladder stretched up to the stars—  
For us and all the children.

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