

THE MERRY WIDOW

By FRANK H. MELOON

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We all called her the Merry Widow. She said she came from Yaleville, Wis., where she had buried her husband—a big, surly brute, as nearly as we could guess—12 months before her arrival in New York. None of us happened to know just where Yaleville, Wis., was, or what kind of town it was, but I think that each of us pictured it in his own way, as shone the lights of his imagination, as a deserted village sort of place. And why? Just because the Merry Widow was no longer in and of it.

There was nothing stuck up about the Merry Widow. Her blue eyes flashed as expressively and as appreciatively on me, who seldom had a cent unless because of a lucky strike in what I won't say, as on Jake Mann, who ran the hotel and who was supposed to be independently rich and as widow-proof as a man down with rheumatic fever. The blue eyes, in fact, appeared to flash with equal favor on all of us—the Fourteen club, who gathered to play forty-fives and discuss affairs of the old country on leisure nights.

Jake Mann attracted us because of his ardent patriotism and desire for the overthrow of oppressive governments, monarchical or otherwise. Big, good-natured Jake, always ready to assist the struggling or raise the fallen. God bless him! He has never lost a dollar through any of the Fourteen club, and it's myself that's after thinking he never will. But we hardly reckoned him in the race for the heart and hand of the Merry Widow. Think of it! Fourteen bachelors and all of us willing to surrender single blessedness at a moment's notice for her sake! The Merry Widow did not come alone. An aunt, a creature full of frowns and sharp angles, was with her, watching her every movement as closely as if the Merry Widow were a little child and not able to take care of herself at all. If, in bidding her adieu

stuck to the Merry Widow like a dock-burr. She followed her upstairs and she trotted after her down. Blissfully unconscious, as it seemed, of our adoration, the widow made no attempt to rid herself of the incubus. The one consolation attending the Merry Widow's proposed departure would be that she would take Pickles along with her.

That night the Merry Widow was at her best. Never had her blue eyes flashed with so much happiness. We felt actually jealous of Yaleville, Wis. Was it possible she was glad she was going home? No, that could not be. There must be some other reason for the Merry Widow's glee. Could it chance she had left a lover behind her in the far away town? Not likely, because all the mail which had come to her had been addressed in a feminine hand. So much we forced Jake to tell us to set our minds at rest on that score.

Never was there the like of that night in Jake Mann's. Pickles played the piano tuned for the occasion, and the Merry Widow sang "Believe Me," "The Rocky Road to Dublin" and all the old songs it does our heart good to hear. Jake wanted to send the champagne around, but the old aunt objected. She said that as chaperone she could stand for nothing stronger than coffee. The Merry Widow hesitated a moment, then pointingly assented, but we all felt that the yoke of propriety in this instance weighed heavily on her. Still, we would have been gladly willing for her sake to drink dishwasher.

Pickles, too, could certainly touch up the piano. I think Jake felt a little bit ashamed of certain things he had said about the old lady behind her back, when she struck up the tune of "Watch on Rhine," while the Merry Widow announced she would sing some verses her aunt had composed on Jake Mann and German hospitality in general.

Following this, Pickles announced that as it was getting late, she would go to bed, but her niece, she added, could stay up a while longer. The Merry Widow's blue eyes included us all in their flash of appreciation, yet every man felt it was intended most particularly for himself.

The Merry Widow stayed. We conversed with her by turns. Part of the conversation was aloud, part whispered. The widow was dazzling, but no man dared overstay his limit. We all said our little say, each after his own fashion, and the widow was game to the finish. At the stroke of 11, she begged to be excused for the night. Strange to say, not one of us adjourned to the bar after she had gone.

For a while we indulged in our usual game of forty-fives, then one by one the members of the Fourteen club stole away. I know that I left, ostensibly for my room, but in reality to keep a date with the Merry Widow. It was only a five-minute chat in the hallway, but I held her in my arms, kissed her again and again, saw the lovelight burning in her eyes of blue, interchanged vows of eternal fidelity and went my way.

The next morning at breakfast time, the Merry Widow and Pickles were still in their rooms, but Jake Mann, excusing their absence, called on us to congratulate him. He announced his engagement to the Merry Widow. Amid the chorus of voices raised in surprised protest, I detected the note of anger. Otherwise I would have laughed at the preposterousness of the idea. Then, great heavens! you should have heard the rest of us claiming the honor! Did the Merry Widow propose to marry us all? Impossible.

I think I was the first to examine my roll. When flush, which was seldom, I usually carried about a thousand dollars. I breathed with relief as I felt it all there. But on opening the bill-book, I found only a wad of brown paper inside. I held it aloft. I shook it. We investigated in turn. Every man of us had been "stung." We rushed hastily upstairs. There was no sign that either the Merry Widow or Pickles had occupied the beds the previous night.

After all, I am not sure but what that five minutes with the Merry Widow was worth a thousand dollars. Jake Mann thinks his money was well spent. So far as I can find out, the other members of the Fourteen club are inclined to make the best of it. If there was such a place as Yaleville, Wis., I would certainly go there.

Yield of an Oregon Walnut Tree.
A big walnut tree in the yard of the residence of L. E. Blain in this city shows the possibilities of walnut culture in this part of the state. Though it stands on the poorest kind of land for fruit growing and has never received scientific culture the tree this year produced \$25 worth of nuts. This shows the immense profit of an acre of similar trees.

This tree is 14 years old and stands 30 feet high. It is a French walnut of the Mayette variety. Mr. Blain believes that had it been properly trimmed when young and placed in good soil, like that of the Santian bottoms in this country, it would have attained its present growth and bearing qualities in seven or eight years.—Albany Cor. Portland Oregonian.



A Five-Minute Chat in the Hallway.

—and I often pretended to take trips into the country for that very purpose—I held her hand a second longer than stern propriety would allow (and what Irish lad could help it with the blue eyes of the Merry Widow looking into his own), I would see the vinegar countenance of the aunt peering at me over her shoulder. Pickles—that was what we called the aunt.

After it was all over, others confessed to the same experience. Sporty bunch, you ask? Well, we were going some most of the time. You may wonder why the aunt permitted the Merry Widow to settle down in the midst of us. It was as plain as day. The widow was used to having her say, though nothing could discourage Pickles from "butting-in." And we all agreed that the aunt was a necessary accessory, only some of us used words both shorter and uglier.

The widow explained she had come to Jake Mann's because she had heard that those who foregathered there were strictly on the level. Even at the semi-swell hotels she couldn't be so sure of that as at Jake's. Jake's law was: Be square. And Jake enforced it much better than the statute laws are enforced in New York or anywhere else. The Merry Widow didn't pretend to have a fortune, but she said she wanted to see New York and had come east for that purpose. The Fourteen club took turns showing her.

Pickles always went along. In all fairness to Pickles, I'll admit she never made herself obnoxious except by her presence. But you felt her, like an air laden with malaria, always about you. The desire to talk to the Merry Widow alone was overpowering. Then one day came the announcement of sad news. She was going back to Yaleville, Wis. She had had enough of New York. If she stayed any longer, she would want to stay forever.

That filled us all with the wildest hopes, and there wasn't a man of the Fourteen but felt he just must ask her to stay on with him. But where was the chance to be found? Pickles

TWO INDIAN GRIDIRON STARS



AFRAID-OF-A-BEAR AIKEN

For several years Coach Warner of the Carlisle Indian school has produced football teams that have ranked very favorably with the best of the eastern university elevens. Two of Warner's stars this year are Afraid-of-a-Bear and Aiken.

PITCHERS WITH NOTHING GET AWAY OFTEN—JOSS

Star Cleveland Twirler Gives Reason Why Those Who Deliver Goods Deserve Credit.

How many times does one hear the expression in regard to certain pitchers: "I can't for the life of me see how he gets away with his games? Why, he hasn't a thing," says Addie Joss, the Cleveland twirler.

To a good many fans, and especially those who are not close students of the game, the pitcher who is not blessed with tremendous speed and a fast-breaking curve ball is always called lucky whenever he wins a game.

In reality, the twirler who can win consistently and who is not fortunate enough to have been endowed with the natural ability some of his more fortunate fellow pitchers possess, is entitled to at least as much, if not more credit, that is the other slabster.

In order to accomplish the same results he must have developed something which he can use that will even up his effectiveness to the same standard of the other twirler.

This is usually accomplished by three things: Control, a change of pace, and, last of all, plenty of nerve. A pitcher of this class is termed by the baseball fraternity "a mixer."

By not relying is meant a pitcher who is constantly mixing them up on the batter.

One of the greatest examples of the successful twirler of this type is none other than Clark Griffith, who for years was a notopener.

"Griff" was never accused of having enough speed to knock the mitt off the catcher's hand, nor did he have a wonderful curve ball. Still, he managed to win a handsome percentage of his games every year, simply because he knew how to pitch and had the nerve to hand up a slow one any time he thought he could outguess the batter with it.

There are any number of major league pitchers who depend on this style of work to win their games, and they are about as hard to beat as any one.

Instead of being called lucky, they should be given credit for the wonderful work they accomplish, and are to be complimented for the advantage they have taken of a few things nature has endowed them with, thus putting them on an equal footing with their fellow twirlers who have more natural ability.

O'Day Opposes Double Umpire System.

Hank O'Day, considered by many the best baseball umpire in the world, has come out with a point-blank statement that he is opposed to the double umpire system. He gave as his reason that he has found more trouble working double than single, as in many cases he has not only had to give his own decisions, but sometimes his mate's as well, as in the famous New York-Chicago game, which cost the New York Giants the National league pennant. O'Day was wised up to this play in Pittsburgh, when the Pirates won a game in the ninth inning from the Cubs on a hit by Wilson with men on first and third, with two out. Wilson hit, and Gill, the man on first, failed to go to second, instead cutting across the lot to the clubhouse. Evers called for the ball and asked for a decision, but neither O'Day nor his working partner was watching for it, and so could only allow the Pittsburgh run to score.

Athlete Makes New Record.

Samuel H. Mellor, Jr., winner of the Boston marathon running event recently, won a 15-mile run at Newark, N. J., and established a new American record for the distance. His time was 1:22:00, which is 5:13:35 better than the previous record in this country, and less than two minutes behind the world's record.

World's Bowling Marks Broken.

Two world's bowling records were broken in St. Louis by the Schneidert team of the St. Louis Ten Pin league. The team totaled 3,306 pins for three games, an average of 1,102. The high game was 1,183. Three of the players averaged above 341.

HACKENSCHMIDT IS AFTER ANOTHER BOUT WITH GOTCH

Foreigners Going Into Training Soon for Purposes of Winning World's Championship Title.

Late advices from England are to the effect that George Hackenschmidt, the wrestler, is going into earnest and active training soon for the purpose of meeting Frank Gotch on the mat once more and wrestling from the Iowan the title of world's championship wrestler. Hackenschmidt is at present in London, and will be in vaudeville in Great Britain for the next few months. The wrestler has been on the continent for several weeks and apparently his knee has recovered from the recent operation that was performed.

Hackenschmidt says that the match with Gotch will be his final appearance in the wrestling arena and that he is going to put up the struggle of his life. Already, according to report, he has begun to negotiate with his American rival. Arrangements at present are so uncertain, however, that it is not known whether the match will come off in England or in this country. Hackenschmidt regards the proposed meeting with Gotch as his "one last great match" before he finally retires from the game, and promises that the outcome will differ in many respects from that of the go which the two had in Chicago on April 3 last with a \$10,000 purse as the prize at stake.

While the prospect of another match between Hackenschmidt and Gotch will be a pleasing one to American followers of the sport, there are a number of wrestlers in England who are not at all delighted with Hackenschmidt's announcement that his go with the Iowan is to be the final one of his wrestling career. Several adepts at the game are hugging the trail of Hackenschmidt, anxious to face him on the mat, and the coming of Hackenschmidt into his own once more has resulted in a renewal of interest among those anxious to arrange for active doings with him.

IN THE PRIZE RING

Police Commissioner Bingham of New York has issued an order to all his inspectors in the greater city to prevent any prize fighting that is projected in the five boroughs. The order is the most drastic of the kind that so far has been issued and if carried out in strict accordance with the letter of it should put an end to prize fighting in that city. The order declares prize fighting is under the ban and that those who attempt to give a performance of any kind shall be arrested immediately. The recent combat between Leach Cross and Packey McFarland, which was attended by more than 3,000 spectators and widely advertised in the newspapers, is said to have influenced the commissioner in taking drastic steps to prevent any future exhibition of the kind.

Billy Papke is making plans for his trip to the coast, where he will meet Stanley Ketchel at San Francisco Thanksgiving eve. Harry Lewis is working hard for a bout with some of the welterweights and again is a claimant of the championship title at 142 pounds. He wants to meet any of them, and the first man he beats he will claim the honor and be prepared to defend the title. Young Mahoney, the clever middleweight of Milwaukee, was awarded the decision over Billy Rhoades, the Kansas City fighter, at the finish of a 20-round battle which was fought on the turf on an island three miles up the Missouri river from Kansas City the other afternoon. About 500 men witnessed the fight and considerable money changed hands. Mahoney fought with only one hand after the fourth round, he having broken his left hand with a swing on Rhoades head.

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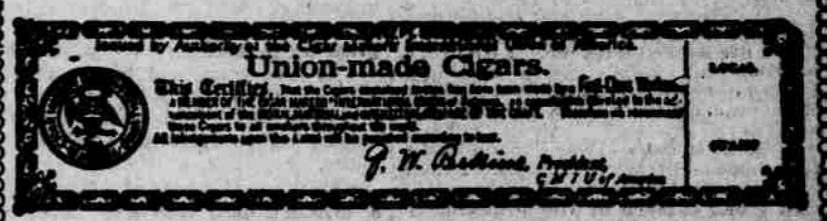
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