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The Merry Widow

By ALBERT PAYSON TERHUNE

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A strange smile stole across her face She came very close to where he stood; so close that the faint perfume of her hair was sweet in his nostrils; so close that ber breath was warm upon his lips; so close that his bewildered soul struggled in vain to hide from the glory in her eyes. Her voice was a musical whisper as she asked:

"You'll never say to me 'I love you?" There was an infinity of allorement in the tempting words. Danilo, with a mighty effort, shook off the spell and

"Never! Never! Never!"
"That's a comfort!" she said coldly, drawing away and seeking to veil her

keen disappointment. "But," she added more softly, "why not say it if you really want to?"

"I don't want to?" he declared sulk!-

"And you promise faithfully you'll never say to me, 'I love you?'

Again she was perilously close to blm. Again his eyes tore themselves free from the pleading seductiveness of hers as he reiterated



CHAPTER III. The Garden Fete.

HE partiens of Mme. Sonia Sadown's villa, just outside Paris, were gayly decorated for a lawn fete. The grounds were dotted with laughing groups of brightly dressed men and women, for Sonia had particularly requested that all ber Marsovian guests wear their picturesque native costume, and the result was a veritable kaleidoscopic carnival of color, a perfect riot of gorgeous

bues and striking figures. Ambassador Popoff, his long, lean figure draped in vivid green, was pacing the nileys of the garden near the entrance gate, pausing nervously now and again to scan late arrivals in scarch of some one. At length be de-

know a single thing that doesn't point toward his being in love with her.

"If I may say so, your excellency." put in Nish, shuffling nervously, "I think I could tell you of a 'single' thing, or, rather," he added, chuckling, "when I say 'single' I mean 'married." "Mr. Nish," interrupted Popoff, "ff

you can stop wriggling around like an inebriated centiped long enough to talk plainly, will you do me the honor to put your blitherings into plain words?"

"Well, your excellency," stammered Nish. "I happen to know M. de Joli-don is already head over beels in love

with a lady who has a husband. He"—
"Mr. Nish," thundered Popoff, "you are demeaning yourself to the contemptible act of talking scandal! Are you aware of that, Mr. Nish? If so, go on talking it and tell me who she

"You fool?" whispered Danilo in Nish's ear. "Everybody but the am-bassador himself knows it is Mme. Popost whom De Jolidon loves. Be careful!"

"Well, Mr. Nish," repeated Popoff majestically as he eyed the squirming clerk with lofty majesty, "I'm waiting to hear the name of the lady that De Joidon is in love with."

"He—he neglected to tell me, your

excellency," sputtered Nish.

"Then," decided the ambassador, "I shall discover her by diplomatic means, and when I find who she is she shall use ber influence to lure De Jolidon away from the widow. Prince, will you help me in this?"

you help me in this?"
"Leave it all to me," suggested Danilo, with startling willingness. "Don't
try to learn her identity yourself. Let
me attend to the whole matter."

"All right," consented Popoff, "It will be a good lesson in diplomacy for you. Perhaps I can put you on the right track."

The ambassador drew an ivory fan from his pocket.

"Last night at the embassy ball," said he, "Nova Kovitch, who used to be one of my attaches, brought me this. He was crazy with jealousy. He'd just picked up the fan; said it was his wife's and that some man had written 'I love you' on one of the sticks. He was going home to beat his wife and make her confess who the villain was when I persuaded my wife to save poor Mme. Nova Kovitch by pretending the fan was ber own. Ab, but my wife is a born diplomatist! Nova Kovitch was convinced, and I pocketed the fan for future reference." Danilo took the trinket from Popoff's hands and read the penciled inscrip

"Why," he said on impulse, "this is De Joildon's handwriting! How does it happen that he"-

"Then," squealed Popoff in triumph, it is Mme. Nova Kovitch he loves. The whole thing is absurdly simple when a brain like mine is brought to

bear on it!"

Delighted with his own astuteness the ambassador pattered off to join the other guests, leaving Danilo, fan in hand, blankly facing the astounded lit-tle cierk.

To Be Continued

Feline Fishers.

seize the fish, which were then taken away by the fishermen.

Banana Skin Seap.

Banana skins are utilized in soap-making on the west coast of Africa. The skins are rich in alkali, so they are burned to an ash, and this mixed with water and paim oil goes to make a cleanser which is in demand among the whites as well as the natives.

The Mirror and Death.

"Yes, your excellency. He positively refuses to come. And when I say 'positively' refuses 1— Here he is now!" death in the family originated in the superstition that goblins, sprites, elves other uncanny creatures would crowd to the glass to look on.

> "No one can look into the face of the king of beasts," says an animal trainer, "without receiving a more or less con-scious uplift. His face is the absolute embodiment of strength, determination, power and fearlessness. He is the only hing on earth that looks the part.
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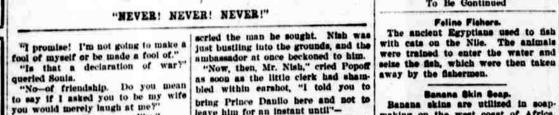
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you would merely laugh at me?" "Probably. All men are alike."
"They are not, and in time I'll prove

Before she could answer the ambasendor and several of the guests came into the room. At first opportunity off drew Danilo aside.

"Prince," said he impressively, "you have now been attached to this legation nearly four months and"-

"Few of my attachments last so long," observed Danilo.

"You refer to your love affairs? I have heard of them. They have brought you to the brink of ruin. You are almost mentiless. Here is not also are almost penniless. Here is my plan to save you, also to give you a chance to save your country from bankruptcy.

I want you to marry. "To what?" cried Danilo. "To marry—beautiful woman, my boy -twenty millions—Mme. Sonia Sadowa!

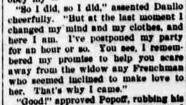
"Never!" returned Danilo, angrily, as

be rose to end the interview. "Then a Frenchman will marry her,

be ruined." "I won't marry her," repeated Danile, "and she wou't marry me. But for my country's sake I'll keep any Frenchman from marrying her."

"But how?"
"You shall see!"





"Now, then, Mr. Nish," cried Popoff as soon as the little clerk had sham-

bled within earshot, "I told you to

bring Prince Daullo here and not to

"He wouldn't let me stay," explained

giving a party-if I may say so, a

"And for the sake of a lot of pleas-

ure seeking idlers the prince refuses to obey my orders and come to Mms.

Danilo, resplendent in the uniform of

Marsovian captain of hussars, strolled nonchalantly forward, with a care

less nod that quite ignored the ambas sador's glare of reproof at his late

"I understand, prince," began Popost coldly, "that you positively refused to

"He says he won't come. He's

leave him for an instant until"-

very gay

Sonia's?"

her. That's why I came."
"Good!" approved Popoff, rubbing his
hands gleefully. "Very good! And
where do you expect to begin?"
"With the most cangerous sensor.
Who is he?"
"Well," replied Popoff confidentially,

"I've had my eye on her, and it seems to me that De Jolidon"— "De Jolidon!" exclaimed Danilo. "Impossible!"

"Why impossible, pray? I think I have as good eyes as any man. I think, sir, I can detect love when I see it. And from the way De Jolidon looks at the widow—why, man, I den't iron will withstand it.