STANTON WINS

By ELEANOR M. INGRAM

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Illustrations by FREDERIC THORNBURGH

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SYNOPSIS.

At the beginning of great automobile race the mechanician of the Mercury, Stanton's machine, drops dead. Strange youth, Jesse Floyd, volunteers, and is accepted. In the rest during the twenty-four hour race Stanton meets a stranger, Miss Carlisle, who introduces herself. The Mercury wins race. Stanton receives flowers from Miss Carlisle, which he ignores. Stanton meets Miss Carlisle on a train. They alight to take walk, and train leaves. Stanton and Miss Carlisle follow in auto. Accident by which Stanton is hurt is mysterious. Floyd, at lunch with Stanton, tells of his boyhood. Stanton again meets Miss Carlisle and they dine together. Stanton cares to track sick, but makes race. They have accident. Floyd hurt, but not seriously. At dinner Floyd tells Stanton of his twin sister, Jessica. Stanton becomes very ill and loses consciousness. On recovery, at his hotel Stanton receives invitation and visits Jessica. They go to theater together, and meet Miss Carlisle. Stanton and Floyd meet again and talk business.

CHAPTER VIII—(Continued).

The silence was long. After reading, Floyd turned his face to the window, and so remained. But at last he looked back to Stanton and nodded.

"Yes, it means that I get back my father's factory," he confirmed quietly. "I am very glad, although it doesn't do me much actual good. I have no capital to run an automobile plant, and I will not sell unless I am forced to it."

"You would like to operate it?"

The blood ran up under Floyd's fine skin, he met Stanton's eyes with a glance of fire-ardent passion and desire.

"I'd give all the rest of my life to operate that factory for one year, as my father planned for me—I'd give it for x months to justify his faith and training. You do not know, you can not know!"

"Can I not?" Stanton retorted. "Floyd, what do you think I am racing for, if I can not understand risking something for an object. I told you once that I would not live poor—I was not born to that. If I win another prize or two this season, I will have enough capital to match somewhat with your factory. We both understand the motor business pretty well; do you want, in case all goes right, to join with me and revive the famous Comet motor-cars? Don't answer now, think the thing over."

"Stanton!"

"Wait; there is time enough. We may easily lose everything we put into the venture, factory and all; or we may not."

"I'd chance my part."

"Why, so would I," agreed Stanton. "Meanwhile, you had better try me as a traveling companion before you take me as a partner. Remember we would be team-mates for a long race."

"I'm not likely to forget," Floyd made slow answer. "Remember that for yourself, of me, Stanton."

CHAPTER IX.

The Chance for Jessica.

When the assistant manager of the Mercury Company came through the train, next morning, and saw the two who were breakfasting together in the dining-car, he stopped in the aisle with an expression of one brought face to face with the disagreeable unexpected.

"Well!" he ejaculated. "Well!"

"Start it with an H, if you like," suggested Stanton, coolly amused.

Mr. Green's mouth grew thin from pressure.

"If you quarrel with Floyd, I shall not know where out here I can get you another mechanician in time," he gave stiff warning.

"All right," was the answer.

Floyd was engaged in blocking out a map with toothpicks, and did not look up; he appeared even more ridiculously young and gay-spirited than usual, in the morning sunlight. But something in the poise of his bright head echoed that "all right." Mr. Green went on, and interfered no more during the journey.

The speed carnival held upon the superb two-mile track was to extend over three days. The contests were of varied types and classes, but the Mercury was entered for at least one event and frequently several, on each day.

"Aren't there any Atalanta cars entered, at all?" Floyd wondered, on the first morning at the track.

"None," Stanton assured.

"Then I won't need to burn a joss stick."

"What for?"

"Luck," said Floyd sweetly; and refused to explain.

Their luck held good. They had neither illness nor serious accident to mar their series of victories and trials. For Stanton drove as if by inspiration, and many of the honors of the carnival remained with him.

"You've struck the perfect course, Stanton," declared a famous rival, upon offering his congratulations after suffering a masterly defeat in a five-mile contest. He did not like the other man, but he was obliged to admire him.

"How so?" queried Stanton as succinctly.

"Between recklessness and over-caution."

It was quite true. With Floyd beside him, Stanton's driving was as daringly brilliant, but characterized by some rational consideration of the possibilities of disaster. Why? No one had time to speculate.

It was commencing to trouble Stanton himself, this growing affection for his mechanician that threatened to become an absorbing need. He had never needed any one, he had been self-sufficient and self-centered; and now he felt a blank chill at the idea of losing the society of this boy-man. It chafed and fretted him with a sense of bondage; when he felt the cords draw most, he turned upon Floyd and worried him savagely.

Floyd laughed. And Floyd's laughter would have disarmed a Cossack. When he did not laugh, he flashed back, spark to powder, so that they quarreled on an average four times a day. And they spent every available moment together, until their friendship became patent even to the skeptical Mr. Green.

"We can plan out some of our factory affairs on the way home, on the train," Stanton arranged, at the close of the last day, when taking temporary leave of his mechanician at the Mercury camp.

"I'm planning a fender for each side of the Comet racing car, so that when you feel like knocking in a few lengths of the infield fence, as you did this afternoon, we'll be ready for it," mocked Floyd, his effervescent youth heady as champagne.

"Fence or no fence, we won," Stanton retorted indulgently.

"Of course! You kept right on driving the front of your car, so the rear just naturally had to climb back on the road and follow. I expected that, you were too busy to stop for a little thing like side-wiping a fence."

"You seemed to expect it," the other corroborated. He looked with interested curiosity at his nonchalant assistant. "If I am too busy to worry at such times, Floyd; you are not. Don't you ever think of what is likely to happen when we are on the verge of a smash?"

Floyd paused, turning his large clear eyes on the questioner.

"There's just one thing I'm asking," he gravely returned. "That is, that when it comes, it will be a good smash. No one minds just dying—we're sure to do it some day, anyhow—but to be mussed up and patched together again, no! Now," his irrepressible smile glanced out again, "that's why I feel so safe with you; there is a deadly finality about your driving methods—"

"That is about enough," Stanton signified. "I'll see you on the train, then."

They did meet on the train, and passed long hours of travel in work and discussion. The other passengers came to take a decided, if furtive interest in the two who sat opposite each other in absorbed conversation or argument, making drawings on envelopes and time-tables to illustrate their points and even leaving rows of figures upon the menu cards in the dining-car.

Incidentally, both men displayed a thorough training in mechanical design and construction, Stanton's far the more finished and scientific.

"I did not know—" Floyd marveled, at last.

Stanton forestalled the question by indifferently explaining.

"I am a mechanical engineer; I graduated from college at twenty-one; that was five years ago. You have dropped your pencil. What do you say to staying over half a day at Buffalo and visiting your factory?"

"Fine," approved Floyd, a trifle slowly. "A half day, not more. We have got to make ready for that Cup race."

"Three weeks off. You're getting as old-womanish as Green."

"Too bad. Still I have to be at the Mercury plant when you don't. Half a day ought to be enough."

Stanton surveyed him, irritated, yet without tangible cause for irritation. There were times when he could have imagined that Floyd evaded too close companionship with him, subtly held him at arm's length.

They stayed the half day at Buffalo, and went out to the huge, silent group of buildings that had been the Comet factory.

It gave Stanton a strange sensation to watch Floyd's assured familiarity with this place and atmosphere; to see him so naturally draw from his pocket the bunch of keys to admit them and unhesitatingly fit each to its corresponding door or gate. Yet, this was where he belonged—only there should have been busy life instead of this dead emptiness. Their voices echoed loud through the desolation, where the massive, motionless machinery stood towering above the visitor and the slight young master of the domain, the metal-spotted, roughened factory floors reverberated under their footsteps.

As they made the tour from room to room and building to building, Floyd grew slowly whiter, his explanations more brief. When they finally arrived at a glass-set door marked office, he stopped short and laid his hand upon the wall as if to steady himself.

"Go away, for a moment," he request, his voice catching. "I'll come after you. I haven't been here since my father—"

Stanton swung on his heel and went out; out to look at the mile track, where Edgar Floyd used to practice racing with little Jes tied in the car beside him, and where later the older Jes played mechanician to his father's driving. And standing there under the dull October sky, Stanton thought of many things.

When Floyd came after him, half an hour later, Stanton turned from his position against the track railing.

"Floyd, what do you figure is going to become of your sister?" he abruptly demanded.

Floyd stopped, gazing at the other with parted lips and startled gray eyes. A strong wind was blowing off Lake Erie, tossing his bronze hair and wrapping his long coat about him.

"My sister?" he repeated. "Why?"

"She is a woman, she must have some life of her own. You can't keep her like a nun until she finds herself grown old without a chance at living."

Floyd continued to gaze at him, saying nothing; that half-hour in the office had left him almost wan in the gray afternoon light.

"You know me, Jes Floyd, if any one does. You know my vile temper, my rough tongue, and that I am a cross-grained brute at best. But I think there may be enough of the inherent gentleman left in me to make me decent to a woman. If, in time, things fell out so that I'd asked you for your sister, would you be willing? Speak frankly, if you do not think me fit to be trusted with her, say so—it will not break our friendship."

"You have seen her once," Floyd recalled, as if to himself. He lisped, his surest sign of excitement. Stanton had never heard him use that soft, slurring speech except on the race-tracks; heard now in the quiet country surroundings, it infected the listener with a contagious agitation and emotion.

"I know, I know," he deprecated. "But, I might see her more, and seeing no better men she might come to bear with me. Not that there is much in me worth it—she probably never would look at me. What I am asking you, now, is whether you want me to keep away from her. Say yes, and we will shake hands and drop the subject for ever."

Very slowly Floyd held out his slender hand.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Floyd Turned Toward the Window and So Remained.

Change for the Better.

The care of the African population in the Belgian Kongo in the past has been so murderously indifferent that it is a pleasure to note a change for the better. An order has gone into effect to prevent hereafter the importation, manufacture and transportation of saccharine sweets in the Belgian African territory. Saccharine products and products sweetened with substances other than cane sugar, beet sugar, milk sugar and glucose sugar—particularly those sweetened with glycerine—shall not be imported. It is specified in the order that it is meant to include in general all synthetic chemical sweetening which does not possess food value. We wish we could believe that this tariff anxiety to protect the Kongo population against deleterious sweets was something more than an exhibition of the usual protective philanthropy which bars a competitive product to make sure the sale of something else.

Brief Wills.

Probably the briefest document ever probated as a will was a signed and dated memorandum, "Everything is Lou's," written by decedent in a railway train record book kept by him; his widows' name being Lula. The instrument was held to be sufficient as a holographic will, however, in Smith v. Smith, 70 Southeastern Reporter, 491, by the Virginia supreme court of appeals. A note reading: "Dear Old Nance: I wish to give you my watch, two shawls, and also $5,000. Your old friend, E. A. Gordon"—was sustained as a will in Clark v. Ransom, 50 California, 505; and a dated and signed memorandum, "Mrs. Sophie Loeper is my heiress," was upheld in Succession of Shrenberg, 21 Louisiana Annual, 280.—The Docket.

Woman Bootblack.

London is to have its first woman bootblack. A woman has just completed arrangements to set up a bootblacking stand at one of the busiest corners in the West End. She believes herself to be the pioneer woman bootblack in England and declares that the men in the business need not fear her competition, since she intends to devote herself exclusively to polishing the footwear of women and children.

A Polyglot Playwright.

M. Dario Niccodemi is a citizen of the world. He was born in Italy. He was reared in the Argentine Republic, where he was initiated in Spanish culture. He wrote his first play in the language of Cervantes. It was produced at Buenos Ayres and was called "La Duda" (The Doubt).

Soon after that an Italian actress in South America offered a prize for an acceptable play in her mother tongue. M. Niccodemi took the prize with his play "Per la Vita." He soon afterward wrote "L'Hirondelle" (The Swallow) in French and it is played at Brussels. At Paris he began his work by translating and adapting the English play of "Raffles."—Le Cri de Paris.

Ideal.

Teacher—There is no glass in the windows of the Eskimos.

Jimmie—Ain't that great? I'll bet the kids up there play ball the whole year round.

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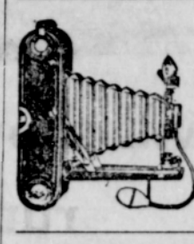

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That's what a man wants in a wife mostly; he wants to make sure o' one fool as'll tell him he's wise. But there's some men can do wi'out that—they think so much o' themselves a'ready—an' that's how it is there's old bachelors.—George Eliot.

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The Viewpont.

Golfer—"Have you seen my ball, sir?" Wounded Party—"Yes, sir; there it is, confound you. Nearly killed—" Golfer—"Jove! Bit of luck, eh? I thought it was going out of bounds."—Punch.

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