



**SYNOPSIS.**

At the beginning of great automobile race the mechanic 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.

**CHAPTER III.**

**The Finish, and After.**

Morning arched its golden hours across the still speeding cars, and melted slowly into noon. The weary drivers had settled to steady endurance gaits, saving their energy and their machines for the more spectacular work of afternoon and evening. At nine o'clock that night the race would end.

The Mercury car had registered ninety miles more than the Duplex, both of them being many tens of miles in advance of the other competitors. At six in the morning Stanton had gone in for a brief rest. At eight he was back, and kept the wheel until one in the afternoon. Victory was in his hands if nothing happened to his car; an hour and a half lost in repairs would transfer all his advantage to the Duplex. He was jealously afraid to intrust his machine to his assistant driver, and consequently merciless to his mechanic and himself. But Floyd made no complaint.

At half-past one, all the cars were sent to their camps while an hour was spent in having the track hurriedly mended by gangs of workmen. The road-bed in places was furrowed like a plowed field by the flying wheels. Meanwhile the afternoon crowds flowed in, filling the stands to suffocation, massing on the promenade, banking in a solid row of private automobiles behind the screen.

When at half-past two the racers were recalled to start anew, Stanton sharply scrutinized his mechanic before leaving the camp.

"I'm going to keep this car until the end of the race," he announced, not unkindly. "If you don't think you can stand seven hours of it, say so; and I'll have them find some one to relieve you. They can rush Rupert here from up the Hudson by four or five o'clock. If you get in for it, you'll finish, if I have to tie you in your seat. I'm driving to win."

The scarlet of resentment flushed through Floyd's grime-streaked pallor. "You won't have to tie me," he promised, white teeth catching his lip. "I'll not flinch. Go on."

Stanton actually laughed, bending to his levers.

"I didn't mean to tie you to keep you from running away, but to keep you from fainting and falling out," he explained. "But—"

The car bounded forward. The track had been filled in with wet mud from the infield—on the first circuit the heavy Lozelle car skidded and went through the fence at the north turn. After that, nothing could have induced Stanton to allow his machine in other hands.

Hour after hour passed. The noisy music of the band crashed out monotonously; the crowd swayed, murmuring, applauding, exclaiming, argus-eyed and kaleidoscopic in color and motion.

At sunset, when the Mercury made a trip into camp for supplies, neither of its men left their seats. The beaming Mr. Green came to shower congratulations upon Stanton, and with him the head of the Mercury Company, himself a former driver whose quiet appreciation had an expert's value. Stanton was leaning across the wheel, chatting with them, when his employer broke the thread of speech.

"What is the matter with your mechanic, Stanton?" he queried.

Stanton turned, suddenly conscious of a light weight against his shoulder. With his movement, Floyd also started erect, their glances crossing.

"Nothing," the driver briefly answered to the other's question. "Tired, perhaps; he has been working. As you were saying—"

But the glimpsed picture stayed with Stanton; the fatigued young face against his arm, the drowsy, heavy-lidded eyes flashing keenly awake, the involuntary expression of angry shame at the moment's weakness. And he would sooner have tied Floyd in his seat, after that, than have added the fine insult of offering to relieve him.

"Ready," some one called; the work-

men scattered in every direction, and the Mercury was off once more.

"Car comin'," warned the mechanic, as they shot from the paddock entrance on to the track. "Duplex ahead."

Floyd was himself again, watchfully businesslike, nonchalantly fearless.

Color and glow faded from the sky; once more the search-lights flared out around the track and transformed it to a silver ribbon, running between walls of ebony darkness except where the lamp-gemmed stands arose. Already newspapers were being cried announcing Stanton's coming victory.

Driving evenly, steadily, refusing all challenges to speed duels and attempting none of his deadly tactics of the night before, Stanton piloted his car to the inevitable result. At nine o'clock the flag dropped, and amid a hubbub of enthusiasm the Mercury crossed the line, winner.

Later, when the triumphant tumult in the Mercury camp had somewhat subsided, Stanton walked over to where Floyd was leaning against a column of unused tires.

"You've had twenty-four hours of me," he said abruptly. "How did it strike you?"

Floyd raised his candid gray eyes to the other's face, and in spite of exhaustion smiled with a glinting frankness and humor.

"If you want me to tell you—" he began.

"I have asked you."

"It struck me rather hard. But—I'd like you to like me as well as I do you."

"I need a mechanic to race with me for the rest of the season," Stanton gave brief information. "Do you want the position?"

Floyd straightened; even in the uncertain light the color could be seen to rise over his face.

"You'd take me; you?"

"Yes."

"You know—oh, I can tune up a motor, I understand my work, but for road racing—you know I can't crank your car or change a tire without help."

Stanton smiled grimly.

"I guess I am big enough to crank

The pact was made. In after time, Stanton came to wonder at its bald simplicity.

The assistant manager overtook Floyd, a little later, when that young mechanic, at least superficially cleaner and wrapped in a long dust-coat, was leaving the training camp.

"See here, Floyd; you are going to race with Stanton right along, he says."

"Yes, sir."

Mr. Green agitated his foreboding head.

"You won't get along with him," he asserted darkly. "No one does. He, he is—you'll see. But you won't leave us on the edge of a race, will you? We are entered at Massachusetts, for week after next; you'll turn up on time, no matter what he does in between?"

"Surely, sir. I would not leave any one without notice, of course."

"Plenty of notice, Floyd. For you can't stand Stanton."

Stanton at that moment was in his tent, contemplating with cynical speculation a florist's box of fragrant green leaves lying on a chair. There was no card with these, but they were sprays of laurel. In fancy he saw the message that had accompanied the orchids, the delicately engraved letters: Valerie Atherton Carlisle. Did she take him for a matinee idol, he scoffed; or, what did she want? Something, she wanted something of him. What? Only amusement, probably. He had not grown to manhood in New York city without learning that men and women in a certain set alleged their extreme wealth as a license, which freed them from the restraint of small conventionalities, and arrogantly took such diversion as the moment offered. And should he play the game to which she invited him, or decline it? Was it worth while? He was weary to exhaustion, but still he remained gazing at the box of laurel.

"You can't stand Stanton," Mr. Green was warning Floyd, by way of farewell.

And the mechanic was laughing.

**CHAPTER IV.**

**The Road to Massachusetts.**

Stanton and Floyd did not meet again for a fortnight. Their ways of life did not run parallel except when a race was due or taking place. The Mercury car had gone back to the factory for a thorough overhauling, after the twenty-four-hour grind, and it would have as soon occurred to Stanton to seek out his machine as his mechanic. Some drivers grow sentimentally attached to their cars, watching them fondly and jealously; he did not, consistently and temperamentally practical in outlook on the minor facts of life.

It was in the railroad depot, the morning he started for Massachusetts, that Stanton saw his mechanic for the first time since the Beach victory. Floyd was seated on one of the wait-

ing benches, reading a magazine; in his gray suit and long overcoat, his head with its clustering bronze curls bent over his book, he looked like a particularly delicate and pretty boy of eighteen, perhaps even a trifle effeminate. Remembering that cry from the midst of the perilous struggle with the Duplex: "Cut him closer;

he's weakening! Cut him closer!" Stanton's lip curved in amused appreciation as he crossed to the absorbed reader.

"Good morning," he remarked. Floyd glanced up, then rose with an exclamation and held out his hand, his ready color rising like a girl's under his fine, clear skin.

"Good morning; I didn't see you coming," he responded.

"No, you were reading. You are going—"

"To Lowell. The car is aboard, you know."

"I did not know," corrected Stanton with indifference. He was studying the other curiously, striving to analyze his singular attractiveness and to find the reason why he, Stanton, should feel pleasure at the prospect of having this companion at his side; he, who had never formed friendships as most men did.

Floyd laughed, his grey eyes mischievous.

"Well, I know. We've been working all the week at the machine, and we've got her ticking like a watch. You don't bother about that—I suppose you don't have to, it's up to us. But if you will take her out on the track tomorrow, I'll tune her up to the last notch."

Suddenly Stanton put his finger on the thing he sought, one thing that made this mechanic different; and voiced his thought before considering wisdom.

"You're a different class, Floyd," he stated abruptly. "You're no workman, nor descendant of workmen."

Floyd stared, startled at the brush irrelevance, then melted into a straight, direct smile as he met the keen gaze.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

**THOUGHT HIS TIME HAD COME**

Imagination Truly is a Wonderful Thing, as Kansas Man is Likely to Admit.

Every summer John Fisher, a Liberty grocer, and Frank Cockrell, a retired farmer, maintain a camp at the mouth of Shoal creek on the Missouri river, about 15 miles below Kansas City and four miles south of Liberty.

Last summer they were entertaining, among others, J. D. Taylor, a farmer of near Manola, about 65 miles northwest of Alberta, Canada. The hosts and their guest were grouped around a small camp fire, scantily attired and partaking of fried catfish with relish, when Taylor grabbed at his leg and arose to his feet with a howl that sounded like the siren of the Gunter.

"I'm a goner, boys," he groaned, as he hopped around on one leg, gripping the other powerfully with both hands and imploring someone between whiles to get a club and get busy. "There's a snake in my pants leg as big as my arm and it's squeezing and biting me to death."

Fischer grabbed one side of the trouser leg in question and Cockrell the other and they ripped with right good will, but no snake appeared. When Taylor was sans pants, however, they took the remnant from his hands, and closely merged with the interior was found the stringy remains of a small frog.

"And that's what imagination will do for you," said Taylor, as he hunted up a box and climbed upon it tailor fashion to finish his interrupted session with the fish.—Kansas City Journal.

**New Idea in Teapots.**

The tippy teapot is popular now days at afternoon teas. It may be found in Fifth Avenue homes and in the rooms of the Barnard college girls. The pots are handy for brewing tea daintily and quickly. The tippy teapot has six legs instead of feet. In the teapot is a special receptacle for the tea, with holes for the water to percolate from the main part of the pot. The tea is placed in the little compartment and then the pot is tipped on its side, permitting the steaming water to absorb the strength of the tea leaves.—New York Press.

**Drew the Line at Cats.**

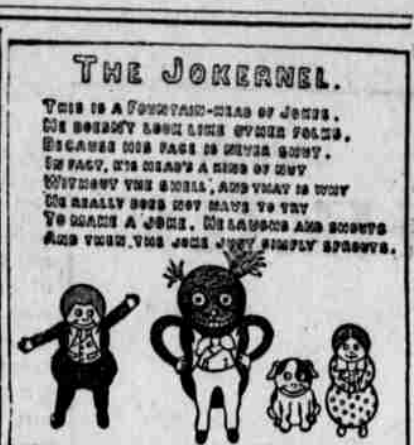
To the list of divorces for seemingly trivial causes—such as "cruelty in not taking me out riding," "cruelty in requiring me to sew on buttons," etc., has now been added a divorce granted to a man who charged his wife with "cruelty in keeping cats in the house," thereby preventing him from occupying his favorite chair. On the judge's inquiring, "Why didn't you put the cats out of the house?" the man answered, "My wife is a member of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and I was afraid she would have me arrested."

**Beans Consumed in Boston.**

Boston baked beans are known around the globe. In the city of Boston alone about 32,000,000 quarts of baked beans are devoured annually, to say nothing of the pork that goes with them and the brown bread that is also served.

**Up-to-Date Mummies.**

Occasionally one meets a man who reminds him that not all the mummies came from Egypt.



**DEWEY'S DOG IN BAD MIX-UP**

Chewed Up Two Pairs of Admiral Evans' Trousers and Destroyed Copy of Navy Regulations.

Admiral Dewey had an English bulldog of which he was very proud. So marked was his affection for the dog that an atmosphere of "love me, love my dog" had sprung up around the admiral and the canine. It is further reported that the animal came near causing trouble between the head of the navy and the late "Fighting Bob" Evans.

Admiral Dewey while on a tour of inspection when he was in command of the Pacific squadron took the dog along with him. He lost sight of his pet on Evans' ship, but in a few minutes saw him hurled skyward from the companionway as if shot from a catapult. With blood in his eye, says the New York World, Admiral Dewey rushed over to see the reason for the sudden ascent, surmising correctly



Dewey's Dog Hurlled Skyward.

that some one had kicked the dog. He saw "Fighting Bob" at the foot of the steps.

"Sir!" roared the admiral. "What do you mean by kicking my dog?"

"Sir," replied Evans in return, "I'd have kicked that dog if he had been the property of the president of the United States! He chewed the legs off of two pairs of \$15 trousers and destroyed an edition de luxe of the navy regulations."

Dewey saw the point and paid for new uniform trousers.

**Ages of the Flags.**

Curiously enough, the United States, while one of the youngest of nations, displays the oldest flag, comparatively speaking.

The American flag, in its present form, was adopted in the year 1777, and the only changes made in it since that time have been the addition of new stars for the new states as they came into the Union. Our British cousins often refer in affectionate terms to their ensign as the flag that has "braved, a thousand years, the battle and the breeze." But they forget that the Union Jack in its present form dates only from 1801.

The French tricolor was adopted in 1794; the Spanish flag, as now displayed, in 1785, while the German and Italian flags are no older than the empire and the kingdom, respectively.

**An Aged Doll.**

A man in Dundee, Scotland, has a doll which is said to be 2,400 years old. To the layman it looks like little but a worn stick, but archaeologists declare that it is a doll.

**Juvenile Books a Century Ago.**

Does the modern child count his blessings in the matter of Christmas books? What would he say if, instead of one of the healthy, brightly written stories that now crowd the booksellers' windows, he received a copy of one of the books for juveniles in vogue a century ago? The very titles of some of these old volumes would rouse the back of present day youth—"The Advantages of Education as Elucidated in the History of the Wingfield Family," Elizabeth Ann Dove's "Tales of My Pupils, or, an Attempt to Correct Juvenile Errors;" S. W.'s "A Visit to a Farm; or, an Introduction to Various Subjects Connected With Rural Economy" (this reached a fifth edition in 1811), and Sandham's "Perambulations of a Bee and a Butterfly, in Which Are delineated Those Smaller Traits of Character Which Commonly Escape Observation."—London Chronicle.

**How He Came.**

Teacher—Who discovered America? Bright Boy—Columbus.  
Teacher—That's right. Now, how did he come to do it?  
Bright Boy—He came by water.



Stanton Was Leaning Across the Wheel Chatting With Them.

my own car," he quoted at him. "You have your nerve, I can't have a whining quitter to drive with me. I make you the offer; take or leave it. But remember, I am likely to break your neck."  
"I'll chance that," answered Floyd, drawing a quick breath, and held out his slender hand. "I'll come."