



**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 of 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 comes 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. They agree to operate automobile factory as partners. Floyd becomes suspicious of Miss Carlisle. Stanton again visits Jessica, and they become fast friends. Stanton becomes suspicious of Miss Carlisle. Just before important race tires needed for Stanton's car are delayed. Floyd traces the tires and brings them to camp. During race Stanton deliberately wrecks his car to save machine in track. Stanton and Floyd thrown out and lose consciousness. Two weeks later Stanton awakes, and believes Floyd dead.

**CHAPTER XII.—(Continued.)**

"There is nothing at all singular in my being here, Mr. Stanton," she stated, in her cool, indolent voice. "Because I ascertained by telephone when you intended to leave the hospital, and so arranged to meet you on the train. Tomorrow I start for Europe, to remain for a long time, and it was necessary for me to speak with you first. I am sorry to see that you have been frightfully ill."

"You are too good," he answered, the old antagonism stirring him strongly. "As you observe, I was not fortunate enough to finish myself completely in the late wreck."

"One sometimes feels like that," she coincided, passing one small gloved hand across the soft fur of her muff. "I have wished for the finish, here lately, for my part. You probably did not know that I was engaged to marry Archer Ross, of the Atlanta Automobile Company?"

Stanton sat erect. All Floyd's suspicions of this girl rushed back to his mind.

"Yes," she confirmed the thought in his expression. "What you are imagining is quite correct. I tried very hard to induce you to drive for the Atlanta Company instead of for the Mercury. The Atlanta absolutely required a good racing record. But I failed. You were more than firm in your decision."

So that had been what she wanted of him. That had lain behind her polished surface of gracious admiration and had been the core of her insincerity.

"And when I would not drive for your company, you tried to prevent me from driving for my own?" He wondered incredulously.

She looked at him, and looked away again.

"I fancy you would scarcely credit me, Mr. Stanton, if I denied the fact, now. I have been very clumsy; a society woman is not trained to practical melodrama. You are unbelievably difficult to lead."

Her flawless self-possession gave an effect of unreality to the whole affair. Stanton felt a vertigo of the mind.

"You had that purpose in view when you first spoke to me at the Beach twenty-four hour race?" he questioned. "You hoped to induce me to wreck my car by fast driving, in order to leave the Atlanta a better chance of winning?"

"Oh, no!" she deprecated. "I never tried to cause your wreck—what can you think me? No, that was merely an impulsive experiment; I wanted to see if you would do as I wished. Some men have done so."

"Are you going to tell me that you drugged me at Lowell, on the eve of the road race?"

"Drugged you? That is a harsher description than I ever gave the incident in my own mind. But I poured into your coffee what Archer Ross had given me for that purpose. He said it would not harm you, only prevent you from driving next morning; he had been betting heavily on his car. But you raced, after all, ill as you must have been. I never imagined you would take such a risk, or I should have refused the responsibility. I disliked the task, anyhow. To be frank, I was horribly frightened when I saw you on the course, and when the report of your accident came in, I felt guilty of assassination."

He looked at her, at her ivory-and-gold beauty, her composed ease, his own face coldly emotionless. It did

not matter, nothing mattered, now. But yet he read that behind that apparent ease of hers heaved a sea of stormy thoughts; as always, her speech was no guide to her mind.

"I suppose, then, that you would not have been distressed if I had broken my arm when I cranked your car after driving you home from New York," he commented.

Her color changed for the first time, her eyes flashed to his.

"You angered me," she retorted. "You brutally told me that you had not raced at the Beach, to please me, nor would you do so. You were supercilious, no man had ever treated me that way before. For one instant I did hate and long to hurt you; I pushed up the spark as you cranked. The next moment I would have undone it if I could."

There was a pause, as the train halted at a station, and the usual flurry of egress and ingress ensued. When the start was made:

"Why are you telling me this?" Stanton asked. "I am not considered especially amiable and forgiving, as a rule; why chance unnecessary confession?"

"No," her lip bent in a faint smile that was not mischievous. "But you are too masculine to retaliate upon a woman. I am not much afraid, although I find myself forced to depend upon your indulgence. A net was spread for the feet of the wicked by some one more acute, or less indifferent, than the Mercury's driver. Your—mechanician set a private detective at the task of following and guarding you until after the Cup race; fearing treachery, I suppose, would be used to prevent your driving. You are surprised?"

He saw the crowded railway station, on the morning of the return from Indianapolis, and Floyd's vivid, anxious face turned to him in the artificial light. He heard the fresh young voice: "If you won't take care of yourself, Stanton—"

"There was no need, Mr. Stanton. I had no idea of interfering with you personally. But the thing was done, and overdone. The man hired to play detective was not honest; he exceeded his mission of protection and went on to investigation for his own profit. If I am telling you this, it is because you would soon hear the story from him, anyhow, and because I want you to silence him. He has offered me his silence for a price, but I do not choose to yield to a blackmail which, once commenced, would never end. I prefer to ask shelter of your chivalry."

"I will silence him," he gave cold assurance.

"You are very good. It is not the least of my humiliations to know that you could deal me nothing more contemptuous than your forbearance." She hesitated. "There is one thing more; I would like to ask whether your recent accident was in any way



"God," Breathed Stanton, and Sank into a Chair.

caused by the late arrival of the tires for your machine."

"You did that?"

"Yes, I did that. I had the express car misdirected before it left my father's factory in Chicago. I knew your car could not race on bare rims." Stanton turned to the window. So she was responsible for the last harshness he had shown Floyd; since their misunderstanding could never have arisen if the mechanic had not been absent on the trip to Coney Island. His sudden nausea of loathing for her made calm reply difficult.

"The lost tires had nothing to do with the accident," he explained carefully. "If you have quite finished, Miss Carlisle, I will change to another seat."

"It is I who am going. I am glad that the wreck and alteration in you are not my fault. It may interest you to learn that Archer Ross broke his engagement to me last week, to marry a chorus girl."

He looked at her, then. "Yes," she agreed. "Dramatic punishment, is it not? You can regale Miss Floyd with the tale. You are on your way to her, of course."

"Miss Carlisle!" She rose, drawing around her the heavy folds of velvet. He saw now the faint lines about her delicate mouth and the new hardness of her tawny eyes. She had suffered, was suffering also.

"Congratulate her from me. Mr. Stanton. At least she has known a man, whatever it has cost her."

Yes, Floyd had played a man's part. Whatever the anguish of losing him, it was a matter of congratulation to Stanton that Valerie Carlisle might have meant him, himself.

It was afternoon when Stanton arrived in New York, among the snow-sprinkled, hilarious crowds that thronged the streets. And then he first realized that this was the day before Christmas. Christmas? Holiday? With a vague impulse to escape it all, he hailed a taxicab. A girl with her arms full of holly brushed past him as he reached the curb, a man in uniform stopped him with a hastily recited plea for aid to the hungry poor. At him Stanton looked, and put a yellow bill in the outstretched hand.

"Sir!" the man cried, pursuing him with ready book and pencil. "What name? So generous—"

"Floyd," Stanton answered, and stepped into the vehicle.

The address he gave to the chauffeur was that of the quiet up-town apartment house.

The little old Irishwoman clad in black silk opened the door. He fancied she had aged, but on seeing him she broke into beaming smiles and ushered him in with eager welcome.

The girl who was like Floyd was standing in the firelit room. As Stanton paused on the threshold, she retreated against the window opposite, her fingers winding themselves hard into the draperies, her marvelous gray eyes wide and fevered. So they gazed at each other, dumb.

"You can not bear to see me?" Stanton first found voice. "I have no right to blame you—God knows I understand. Yet Floyd would tell you that it was not my fault. I did not throw away his life by recklessness."

She gazed at him still, yet it seemed to him that during a brief second consciousness had left her and returned, that now she looked at him differently, almost wildly.

"I have been near death, also," he resumed. "I have seen no newspapers, I do not know what they have told you. But the accident was pure accident; if he could have been here, Floyd would have borne me out in that. I have wantonly risked his life with mine at other times, then, no."

Her sensitive face had changed, she, too, found speech.

"I never thought of blame," she

protested unsteadily. "Never. You drove straight and best. You look so ill—"

He drew near her, long past conventionalities.

"I have been ill. I have now little strength to waste aside from my purpose. Jessica, I have come for you, as he once gave me leave to do. You have no one left, nor I. Will you marry me?"

Her fingers wound harder into the curtain, he saw the pulse beating in her round throat as she flung back her head with Floyd's own boyish movement.

"You love me?" she questioned, just audibly, grave eyes on his.

"I thought you knew. Yes." She shook her head, her smile sad.

"Me, Ralph Stanton, or Jes Floyd's twin?"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

**WALTON ON BIRDS' SONGS**

Famous Author of "The Compleat Angler" Appreciated Music of His Feathered Friends.

At first the lark, when she means to rejoice, to cheer herself, and those that hear her, she then quits the earth and sings as she ascends higher into the air; and having ended her heavenly employment, grows then mute and sad, to think she must descend to the dull earth, which she would not touch but for necessity. Now do the blackbird and the thrush, with their melodious voices, bid welcome to the cheerful spring and in their fixed mouths warble forth such ditties as no art or instrument can reach to. Nay, the smaller birds do the like in their particular seasons; as, namely, the lark, the titlark, the little linnet and the honest robin, that loves mankind, both alive and dead. But the nightingale, another of my airy creatures, breathes such sweet, loud music out of her little instrumental throat that it might make mankind think miracles are not ceased. He that at midnight, when the very laborer sleeps securely, should hear—as I have very often—the clear airs, the sweet descants, the natural rising and falling, the doubling and redoubling of her voice, might well be lifted above earth and say:

"Lord, what music hast thou provided for the saints in heaven, when thou affordest to bad men such music upon earth!"—Izaak Walton's "The Compleat Angler."

**Bishop Blames His Hair.** Father William J. Dalton of the Annunciation church tells this story of a Catholic bishop well known in this locality, but at Father Dalton's request, nameless here: "The bishop is a large man with bushy back hair," the priest relates. "He often on his tours through Kansas wears a silk hat. His crozier he carried in a large leather case. "Recently in a jerkwater Kansas town where silk hats are scarce except on the heads of traveling musicians, the bishop was just alighting from his train when the negro porter appeared at the car door waving his crozier case.

"Hey, boss!" the porter called. "I reckon you all had better take yo' fiddle wif you. De company is not 'sponsible fo' packages left in de seats."—Kansas City Journal.

**Hope Not Realized.** Dean Sumner of the Cathedral SS. Peter and Paul related the following story at the recent banquet of the Chicago Association of Commerce at the Hotel Sherman. "A little Jewish boy went to his father on Christmas day and asked him for a quarter. Upon receiving it he sauntered out into the city streets and didn't return until evening. His father called him as he came in and inquired what he did with the quarter he had been given. 'I went to the candy shop next door and changed it into nickels,' said the boy. 'Then I went to the news stand on the corner and changed the nickels into pennies. After that I went back to the candy shop and got five nickels for my pennies, and then I went to the delicatessen and got a quarter for my five nickels.'

"But why did you do all that?" demanded the father.

"I hoped that somebody might make a mistake and give me too much," replied the boy."

**The Real Grievance.** Friend—You've got to admit there's nothing in Tripoli worth fighting for. Italian Diplomat—Certainly.

Friend—Then why do you want to keep on fighting?

Italian Diplomat—We've got to punish the Turks for giving us the impression that there was.—Satire.

**Self-Depreciation Too Prevalent.** For one man who thinks too much of himself there are a hundred who think too little.—Exchange.

**CORNER FOR THE JUNIORS**

**AMUSING TRICK FOR PARLOR**

Common Men's Egg Made to Come to Life and Revolve Around Like Boy's Top.

Here is a trick which requires some skill and practice, but which causes more than enough wonder to pay for the trouble. You take a hard-boiled egg, place it on a plate or platter, give the plate a horizontal revolving movement, increasing the motion gradually, and soon the egg will come to life, raise itself till it stands on end, and then go revolving like a top and moving all round the plate.



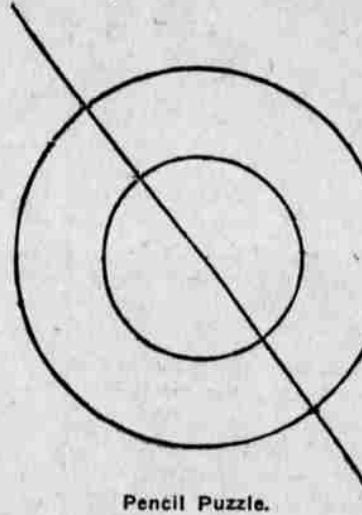
Life Into Egg.

Naturally you have to make a few attempts before you can succeed in getting the egg to obey instructions, but keep at it and you will succeed, and the effect is impressive. It is best in boiling the egg to hold it in an upright position with a spoon so that the air inside will all collect round the central axis of the egg and keep it from being unbalanced.

**PUZZLE WITHOUT ANY TRICK**

Figure Shown in Illustration May Be Drawn Without Taking Pencil Away From Paper.

Here's a puzzle which is solvable without any trick. You can actually



Pencil Puzzle.

draw this figure without taking your pencil from the paper, crossing a line or going back over a line already drawn.

**Ages of Fish.**

Fishes and animals that live in the water in many instances attain to a great age.

The carp has been known to live 200 years.

Common river trout have been confined in a well for 50 years and were still frisky when taken from the water.

The age of the whale is ascertained by the size and number of whalebones in its mouth. Records show that this sea animal has retained life for 400 years.

In 1497 an enormous pike was caught in a lake near Hallerum, in Suabia, with a brass ring attached to it, engraved on which was a statement that the fish was put in the lake in the year 1230, thus indicating that it must have lived at least 267 years.

**Too Many Places.**

"What's the matter?" asked the policeman, "haven't you any place to go?" "Any place to go?" repeated Tired Timothy, with supreme contempt. "You chump, I've got the whole United States an' a big part o' Canada before me. I've got so many places to go dat it's worryin' me dizzy to make up my mind which way to start. Lemme alone a couple weeks till I kin git a line on what it's best to do."

**Lola Was Skeptical.**

"I saw the Catskill mountains last summer," said small Sadie, who was inclined to boast of her travels. "Did you ever see them?" "No," replied little Lola, "and I don't believe they can, either. But I've seen cats kill mice."

**Something Lacking.**

Aima, aged four, had often observed her mamma, when taking nasty medicine, shiver and say "Ugh!" after swallowing it. One day she did not make the usual exclamation and Aima said, "Mamma, you forgot to make a face out loud."

**Thrift of Ozark Couple**

Sample of Extent to Which Red Tape Methods Prevail in Germany.

Germany, declares Mr. S. Baring-Gould in his book, "The Land of Teck," is absolutely swathed in red tape. In illustration, he tells an experience of his own while journeying by rail from Ober-Leningen to Owen.

I asked at Ober-Leningen for a third-class ticket to Owen, and supposing that I had got what I asked for, stepped into a third-class carriage. On these branch lines nearly everyone travels fourth. Before reaching the next station—only a mile from Ober-Leningen, in fact—the inspector appeared. "Hah!" he said. "You have a fourth-class ticket, and are in a third-class compartment. The fine is six marks."

I explained, and offered at once to pass into a fourth-class carriage or pay the difference in the price of tickets.

"That will not do. You have infringed the law, and must pay six marks," the man insisted.

"I get out at Owen, and will explain matters to the station master," I said. I did so.

"The fine is six marks," said the official, peremptorily.

"But, said I; "I demanded a third-class ticket, and was given one for which I had not asked. This was an oversight on the part of the clerk."

"You should have examined your ticket," the station master insisted.

The train was delayed five minutes while we thrashed out the question on the platform in great detail, and the other passengers craned their necks out of the windows of the carriages and listened with lively interest. At last, reluctantly, the station master

yielded; but I must pay the difference. "What is it?" I asked. "One penny."

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