

SERIAL STORY

The Flying Mercury

By Eleanore M. Ingram
Author of "The Game and the Candle"
Illustrations by RAY WALTERS
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beach, about three squares from here, watching the kiddies play in the sand. I didn't feel like driving just then. It was mighty soothing, too."

Rupert stared at him, a dry unwilling smile slowly crinkling his dark face.

"Maybe, Darling," he drawled, and turned to make his own preparations. Fascinated and useless, Dick looked on at the methodical flurry of the next few moments; until Lestrage was in his seat and Rupert swung in beside him. Then a gesture summoned him to the side of the machine.

"I'll run in again before we race, of course," said Lestrage to the motor, above the deafening noise of the motor. "Be around here; I want to see you."

Rupert leaned out, all good-humor once more as he pointed to the machine.

"Got a healthy talk, what?" he exclaimed.

The car darted forward. A long round of applause welcomed Lestrage's swooping advent on the track. Handkerchiefs and scarfs were waved; his name passed from mouth to mouth.

SYNOPSIS.

The story opens on Long Island, near New York city, where Miss Emily French, a relative of Ethan French, manufacturer of the celebrated "Mercury" automobile, loses her way. The car has stopped and her cousin, Dick French, is too muddled with drink to direct it aright. They meet another car which is run by a professional racer named Lestrage. The latter fixes up the French car and directs Miss French how to proceed homeward. Ethan French has disinherited his son, who has disappeared. He informs Emily plainly that he would like to have her marry Dick, who is a good-natured but irresponsible fellow. It appears that a partner of Ethan French wanting an expert to race with the "Mercury" at auto events, has engaged Lestrage, and at the French factory Emily encounters the young man. They refer pleasantly to their meeting when Dick comes along and recognizes the young racer. Dick likes the way Lestrage ignores their first meeting when he appeared to a disadvantage. Lestrage tells Emily that he will try to educate her indifferent cousin as an automobile expert. Dick undertakes his business schooling under the tutelage of Lestrage. Dick is sheer grit and in making a test race meets with an accident. Lestrage meets Emily in the moonlit garden of the French home. Under an impulse he cannot control he kisses her and she leaves him, confessing in her own heart that she returns his love. The uncle of Emily, learning of her attachment to Lestrage, informs her that the man is his disinherited son, whom she has never seen before being adopted by him. He claims that his son ran away with a disolute actress, refuses to acknowledge him, and orders Emily to think of Dick as her future husband.

CHAPTER VIII.

Six o'clock was the hour set for the start of the Beach race. And it was just seventeen minutes past five when Dick French, hanging in a frenzy of anxiety over the paddock fence circling the inside of the mile oval, uttered something resembling a howl and rushed to the gate to signal his recalcitrant driver. From the opposite side of the track Lestrage waved gay return, making his way through the officials and friends who pressed around him to shake hands or slap his shoulder caressingly, jesting and questioning, calling directions and advice. A brass band played noisily in the grand-stand, where the crowd heaved and surged; the racing machines were roaring in their camps.

"What's the matter? Where were you?" cried Dick, when at last Lestrage crossed the course to the central field. "The cars are going out now for the preliminary run. Rupert's nearly crazy, snarling at everybody, and the other man has been getting ready to start instead of you."

"Well, he can get unready," smiled Lestrage. "Keep cool, French; I've got half an hour and I could start now. I'm ready."

He was ready; clad in the close-fitting khaki costume whose immaculate daintiness gave no hint of the certainty that before the first six hours ended it would be a wreck of yellow dust and oil. As he paused in running an appraising glance down the street-like row of tents, the white-clothed driver of a spotless white car shot out on his way to the track, but halted opposite the latest arrival to stretch a cordial hand.

"I hoped a trolley car had bitten you," he shouted. "The rest of us would have more show if you got lost on the way, Darling."

The boyish driver at the next tent looked up as they passed, and came grinning over to give his clasp.

"Get a move on; what you been doin' all day, dear child? You've been givin' your manager sal votable to hold him still." He nodded at the agitated Dick in ironic commiseration.

"Go get out your car, Darling; I want to beat you," chaffed the next in line.

"Strike up the band, here comes a driver," sang another, with an entrancing French accent.

Laughing, retorting, shaking hands with each comrade rival, Lestrage went down the row to his own tent. At his approach a swarm of mechanics from the factory stood back from the long, low, gray car, the driver who was to relieve him during the night and day ordeal slipped down from the seat and unmasked.

"He's here," announced Dick superfluously. "Rupert—where's Rupert? Don't tell me he's gone now! Lestrage—"

But Rupert was already emerging from the tent with Lestrage's gauntlets and cap, his expression a study in the sardonic.

"It hurts me fierce to think how you must have hurried," he observed. "Did you walk both ways, or only all three? I'm no Eve, but I'd give a snake an apple to know where you've been all day."

"Would you?" queried Lestrage provokingly, clasping the goggles before his eyes. "Well, I've spent the last two hours on the Conay Island

"Popular, ain't he?" chuckled a mechanic next to Dick. "They don't forget that Georgia trick, no, sir."

It was not many times that the cars could circle the track. Quarter of six blew from whistles and klaxons, signal flags sent the cars to their camps for the last time before the race.

"Come here," Lestrage beckoned to Dick, as he brought his machine shuddering to a standstill before the tent. "Here, close—we've got a moment while they fill tanks."

He unhooked his goggles and leaned over as Dick came beside the wheel, the face so revealed bright and quiet in the sunset of glow.

"One never can tell what may happen," he said. "I'd rather tell you now than chance your feeling afterward that I didn't treat you quite squarely in keeping still. I hope you won't take it in my father; I'd; we've been good chums, you and I. I am your cousin, David French."

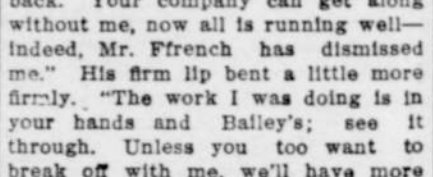
The moment furnished no words. Dick leaned against the car, absolutely limp.

"Of course, I'm not going back to Frenchwood. After this race I shall go to the Duplex company; I used to be with them and they've wanted me back. Your company can get along without me, now all is running well—indeed, Mr. French has dismissed me!" His firm lip bent a little more firmly. "The work I was doing is in your hands and Bailey's; see it through. Unless you too want to break off with me, we'll have more time to talk over this."

"Break off!" Dick straightened his chubby figure. "Break off with you, Les—"

"Go on. My name is Lestrage now and always."

A shriek from the official klaxon



"Water," He Demanded Tersely.

summoned the racers, Rupert swung back to his seat. Dick reached up his hand to the other in the first really dignified moment of his life.

"I'm glad you're my kin, Lestrage," he said. "I've liked you anyhow, but I'm glad, just the same. And I don't care what rot they say of you. Take care of yourself."

Lestrage bared his hand to return the clasp, his warm smile flashing to his cousin; then the swirl of preparation swept between them and Dick next saw him as part of one of the throbbing, flaming row of machines before the judges' stand.

It was not a tranquilizing experience for an amateur to witness the start, when the fourteen powerful cars sprang simultaneously for the first curve, struggling for possession of the narrow track in a wheel to wheel contest where one mistouch meant the wreck of many. After that first view, Dick sat weakly down on an oil barrel and watched the race in a state of fascinated endurance.

The golden and violet sunset melted pearl-like into the black cup of night. The glare of many searchlights made the track a glistening band of white, around which circled the cars, themselves gemmed with white and crimson lamps. The cheers of the people as the lead was taken by one favorite or another, the hum of voices, the music and uproar of the machines blended into a web of sound indescribable. The spectacle was at once ultramodern and classic in antiquity of conception.

At eight o'clock Lestrage came flying in, sent off the track to have a lamp relighted.

"Water," he demanded tersely, in the sixty seconds of the stop, and laughed openly at Dick's expression while he took the cup

"Why didn't you light it out there?" asked the novice, infected by the speed fever around him.

"Forgot our matches," Rupert fung over his shoulder, as they dashed out again.

An oil-smeared mechanic patronizingly explained:

"You can't have cars manuring all over the track and people tripping over 'em. You get sent off to light up, and if you don't go they fine you laps made."

Machines darted in and out from their camps at intervals, each wakening a frenzy of excitement among its men. At ten o'clock the Mercury car came in again, this time limping with a flat tire, to be fallen on by its mechanic.

"We're leading, but we'll lose by this," said Lestrage, slipping out to relax and meditatively contemplating the alternate driver, who was standing across the camp. "French, at twelve I'll have to come in to rest some, and turn my machine over to the other man. And I won't have him wrecking it for me. I want you, as owner, to give him absolute orders to do no speeding; let him hold a fifty-two mile an hour average until I take the wheel again."

"Me?"

"I can't do it. You, of course."

"You could," Dick answered. "I've been thinking how you and I will run that factory together. It's all stuff about your going away; why should you? You and your father take me as junior partner, you know I'm not big enough for anything else."

"You're man's size," Lestrage assured, a hand on his shoulder. "But—it won't do. I'll not forget the offer, though, never."

"All on!" a dozen voices signaled; men scattered in every direction as Lestrage sprang to his place.

The hours passed on the wheels of excitement and suspense. When Lestrage came in again, only a watch convinced Dick that it was midnight.

"You gave the order?" Lestrage asked.

"Yes."

He descended, taking off his mask and showing a face white with fatigue under the streaks of dust and grime.

"I'll be all right in half an hour," he nodded, in answer to Dick's exclamation. "Send one of the boys for coffee, will you, please? Rupert needs some, too. Here, one of you others, ask one of those idle doctor's apprentices to come over with a fresh bandage; my arm's a trifle untidy."

In fact, his right elbow was wet and red, where the strain of driving had reopened the injury of the day before. But he would not allow Dick to speak of it.

"I'm going to spend an hour or two resting. Come in, French, and we'll chat in the intervals, if you like."

"And Rupert? Where's he?" Dick wondered, peering into the dark with a vague impression of lurking dangers on every side.

"He's hurried in out of the night air," reassured familiar accents; a small figure lounged across into the light, making vigorous use of a dripping towel. "Tell Darling I feel faint and I'm going over to that grand-stand cafe a la car to get some pie. I'll be back in time to read over my last lesson from the chauffeur's correspondence school. Oh, see what's here!"

A telegraph messenger boy had come up to Dick.

"Richard French?" he verified.

"Sign, please."

The message was from New York. "All coming down," Dick read. "Limousine making delay. Wire me at St. Royal of race. Bailey."

Far from pleased, young French hurriedly wrote the desired answer and gave it to the boy to be sent. But he thrust the yellow envelope into his pocket before turning to the tent where Lestrage was drinking cheap black coffee while an impatient young surgeon hovered near.

The hour's rest was characteristically spent. Washed, bandaged, and refreshed, Lestrage dropped on a cot in the back of the tent and pushed a roll of motor garments beneath his head for a pillow. There he intermittently spoke to his companion of whatever the moment suggested; listening to every sound of the race and interspersing acute comment, starting up whenever the voice of his own machine hinted that the driver was disobeying instructions or the shrill klaxon gave warning of trouble. But through it all Dick gathered much of the family story.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

But in Her Case—
Woman's wit readily adapts itself to all place, and all occasions. A lecturer was delivering a practical talk on beauty and the beauty cult for the entertainment of the Woman's Professional League of New York at an interesting session one afternoon.

In the course of her lecture the speaker emphasized the point that certain measurements were fundamentally important. Unhappily, however, the lecturer herself had a form—if her unusual bulk could be dignified by such a term—that was fashioned on anything but the lines of the Keller-mann type.

Proceeding with her dissertation on measurements, she held up a very fat, round wrist, and said: "Now, twice around my wrist, once around my throat. Twice around my throat, once around my waist. Twice around my waist—"

"Once around Central Park!" exploded an irrepressible young thing out in the audience, and the storm of laughter that followed was altogether immeasurable.—Sunday Magazine.

FOR ETHEL'S LOVE

Lover Dreams He Killed Rival and Surrenders to Marshal.

By LOUISE PARKS BELL.

Bailey banged the door behind him viciously, and slung his hat into the furthest corner of the room. Up and down the narrow floor he paced nervously, his mind going over and over the irritating events of the evening.

It was a sultry night in mid-August, and when he had lounged down to the saloon on the corner he had been in no pleasant frame of mind. It had been a long day, and the whole heat of the town had seemed concentrated in the tiny dry goods store. All the most tiresome and exacting customers in the county had come in, it seemed to Bailey; a never ending stream of fretful women, worn out by the beating rays of the sun.

Supper had not been an enjoyable meal; Mrs. Wilson's baby had cried all the time, the flies had buzzed more persistently than ever, and never had food looked more uninviting. A dense pall of suffocating heat hung over the town as Bailey drifted to the bar.

He was not a drinking man ordinarily, but Ethel was out of town, and he felt a restless craving for companionship. Of course he drank too much; at the time it seemed to be the only way of cooling off. It failed of its effect, however, and before he knew it he and Calvert were engaged in a bitter quarrel. The original cause was trifling, but it was soon lost sight of, and the long-smoldering enmity between the two suitors for the same girl broke forth unrestrained. Calvert's final taunt was fresh in his ears as he paced the floor, that subtle assurance of success and peer at his pretensions.

Bailey clenched his fists again. Impotent hatred raged within him, and his thoughts were black.

Presently he calmed down a little, and the close atmosphere began to oppress him. He undressed languidly, flinging his clothes here and there, and breathing heavily. He went out in the hall when he had donned his pajamas and brought in a pitcher of water, which he put down on the table beside his bed. He poured some out in a glass and took a sip, grimacing at its tepid taste. Setting it down, he lay down on the bed and tried to sleep.

The heat-laden air pressed down on him, he turned restlessly from one side to the other, vainly seeking comfort. After an interminable time he fell asleep, an uneasy, broken slumber that was worse than wakefulness.

At last he gave up the attempt to rest, and got up to see if it was cooler by the window. He stood there for a few seconds, breathing the same suffocating air. Not a leaf stirred anywhere, the very moon loomed red and not low in the sky.

Footsteps sounded down the deserted street. Bailey leaned out to see who the nocturnal wanderer could be. With a start he recognized Calvert. Calvert swung along jauntily, and whistling the wedding march confidently.

That was the final straw. All the pent-up passions of the evening rushed to the surface, and almost involuntarily Bailey opened his door and stealthily crept down the stairs. The front door stood ajar, only the screen was hooked. Hurriedly he unfastened that, and hastened up the street after the unconscious Calvert.

As he went his mind was busy. Calvert lived on the other side of the river, and would have to cross the rickety old bridge that spanned it. If he went fast he could overtake him there, and it would look like an accident.

Bailey quickened his pace until he was almost running. His victim never turned his head, but went on whistling to his doom.

At the bridge Bailey was but a step or two behind. In the middle of the bridge he made up that distance, and dealt Calvert a crashing blow behind the ear. He dropped like a log.

Bailey looked all around cautiously. The moon had gone behind a cloud, and the placid little village lay on the river bank undisturbed. Not a sound broke the silence, not a murmur at tested that his crime had been witnessed.

He had to force himself to touch that limp figure lying there so still, but the fear that the moon might come out made him hurry. He gathered it up gingerly, and with a mighty effort flung it over the railing.

With a splash the body disappeared, and as it sank the moon came out three times brighter than before. Bailey leaned on the rail and watched the ripples, sick at heart.

He knew Calvert could not swim, and even if he recovered from his swoon at once he could not make his way to the shore. Yet somehow that knowledge did not cheer Bailey. He shuddered as he stared at the ripples, slowly dying away.

His thoughts drifted into a new channel. How would Ethel take the news, he wondered. A sudden pang smote his heart. He had pretended to love her—and yet, if she had cared for Calvert he had destroyed her future happiness. And if Calvert's words had not been true he had ruined his own chances. He could not go to her with his hands stained crimson with human blood.

Realization of what he had done swept over him like a flood. Suppose Calvert had lied—and it was possible—why had he not questioned Ethel, instead of letting his passions rule him? His love seemed a selfish and

UNHOLY THING

Scholars and Others Noted for Eccentricity.

Forgetfulness One of the "Strong Points" of Many Able and Accomplished Men—Sometimes the Result of Self-Hypnotism.

Some years ago I had to speak at a Work. "Have you any facts?" inquired my host. "The last parson we had here refused to sleep in a bed. When every one had retired to rest the whole house was roused by a hammering on the wall of our visitor's bedroom. Come and see!"

I entered the bedroom.

"See those excavations?" He pointed out two large holes in the wall, where the paper had been torn away and the plaster disturbed. "Well, the parson we had here last hammered two huge hooks into these walls to support a hammock."

I had the qualified pleasure of meeting this eccentric at dinner; some years after. "Can I serve you some soup?" inquired our hostess. "Never take soup," was the reply. Then, later: "You will take some fish?" The cleric simply shook his head. So he declined dish after dish.

"But what will you have?" inquired the now desperate hostess.

"I should like five raisins, one apple, a few nuts and some oil."

By this time every one was uncomfortable. A whisper went around that there were no raisins in the house. I suggested that he should go on with the oil and the apple. His face assumed a look of eloquent resignation. The next moment he sprang to his feet and rushed from the room.

The intelligent under-footman had brought in bicycle oil!

A delightful old clergyman, professor of Greek at my own university, had a habit of forgetting to put on his clothes. Once he walked into college chapel in an old-fashioned night-shirt. It was a misty morning early in February. An undergraduate was reading the first lesson, when this silent, ghost-like figure moved along in the dim dawn which crept in through the stained-glass windows. One of the dons took his arm and led him out.

On another occasion it was his turn to preach in the cathedral. Instead of stepping into the pulpit, he walked out altogether, and things came to a standstill.

Another old college don was a dreamer. One day he met me in the town. "My boy," he said, "I came out to go somewhere, but it's gone—gone! Can you tell me where I meant to go? I suggested that he should go back to his college. What is more, I saw him safely there."

Later in the evening he sent for me. There was the light of a great discovery in his eyes. "My boy," he said, "it has all come back to me in a flash. I never meant to go anywhere at all. I wanted to write a letter, and I must have missed my way to my library. You will have a glass of wine?" But he forgot to ring the bell. Presently he said: "Do have some more. Now, what have I done with the decanter?"

Many men's eccentricities are the result of self-hypnotism. I remember once seeing a well-known clergyman walking calmly along during a down-pour of rain, holding his walking stick up, under the impression it was an umbrella.

Absentmindedness is responsible for much amusement. An elderly clergyman, on arrival in Rome, was positive that he had lost some of his luggage, and gave notice at the office; but he was unable to say what the package was like, or even what it was.

It transpired, in the course of next day, that it was his wife he had lost. I shall not forget the interview between husband and wife.—Exchange.

ODD LAPSES OF MIND

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Wireless Sketches in Warfare.

Surprising results are being obtained by means of the new invention of an Italian youth, Francesco Di Bernocch, called the wireless iconograph, which has recently been tested between Milan and Turin. His apparatus is far in advance of anything of the kind yet recorded. Besides ordinary messages, it also transmits autographs, shorthand characters and all sorts of designs. So simple is the arrangement that the transmitter and receiver of this instrument may be applied with ease to any ordinary wireless telegraph plant. General Spingardi, the Italian minister of war, is so much impressed by the enormous advantages of the wireless iconograph for transmitting orders and conveying sketches in time of war with the utmost secrecy that steps were immediately taken to secure for the Italian government exclusive possession of the patent.

Tickets No Good.

Mrs. Brown-Jones (which isn't her name at all, nor nothing like it) has a new parlor maid. Last Thursday was Mrs. B.-J.'s day at home. Six callers were at the door, and each proffered her card.

Hilda looked the cards over carefully one by one.

"Youse ladies is all wrong!" she decided finally. "One of your tickets iss fer Mrs. Choseph Thompson, one iss fer Mrs. Miller, one iss fer Miss Chenks and Miss Mabel Chenks—and den dere's tree odders, all wrong names, yet. Try next door; goodby."

Then she went back to her mistress. "None of 'em wanted to see you," she beamed. "Deir tickets vas fer odder houses. I guess maybe dey ain't lifted here long.—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

London's Water Supply.

The eighth annual report of the metropolitan water board states that the total amount of water supplied by that body during the year ended March 31, 1911, was 82,170,000,000 gallons, representing a weight of 366,800,000 tons and a daily average of 225,000,000 gallons. The total volume of water abstracted from the Thames was 49,962,000,000 gallons, the remainder being obtained from the Lea and from gravel beds, natural springs and wells. The supply from the last named source amounted to 14,484,000,000 gallons. The month in which most water was supplied was June, the difference between the daily average of that month and that for January being 35,000,000 gallons, or five gallons per head of the estimated population of the board's area, which is 7,099,871. The average daily supply per head throughout the year was 31.57 gallons, a decrease from 331.98 gallons in 1909-10.—London Globe.