SERIAL STORY

The FLYING MERCURY

By

Eleanor M. Ingram

Author of

"The Game and the Candle"

Illustrations By

RAY WALTERS

(Copyright, 1920, by Bobbs-Merrill Co.)

SYNOPSIS.

The story opens on Long Island, near New York city, where Miss Emily Ffrench, a relative of Ethan Ffrench, manufacturer of the celebrated "Mercury" automobile, loses her way. The car has stopped and her cousin, Dick Ffrench, is too muddled with drink to direct it aright. They meet another car which is run by a professional racer named Lestrange. The latter fixes up the Ffrench car and directs Miss Ffrench how to proceed homeward. Ethan Ffrench 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 Ffrench, wanting an expert to race with the "Mercury" at auto events, has engaged Lestrange, and at the Ffrench 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 Lestrange ignores their first meeting when he appeared to a disadvantage. Lestrange tells Emily that he will try to educate her indifferent cousin as an automobile expert. Dick undertakes his business schooling under the tutelage of Lestrange. Dick is sheer grit, and in making a test race meets with an accident. Lestrange meets Emily in the moonlit garden of the Ffrench 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 Lestrange, informs her that the man is his disbarred son, whom she has never seen before being adopted by him. He claims that his son ran away with a dissolute actress, refuses to acknowledge him, and orders Emily to think of Dick as her future husband. A big race is on in the south and Ethan Ffrench takes Emily to see it. The fame of the "Mercury" is involved in the success of Lestrange and Dick running the race.

CHAPTER IX.—(Continued).

The hours passed. One more car went out of the race under the grinding test; there were the usual incidents of blown-out tires and temporary withdrawals for repairs. Twice Mr. Ffrench sent his partner and Emily to the restaurant below, tolerating his seat. Perfectly composed, his expression perfectly self-contained, he watched his son.

The day grew unbearably hot toward afternoon, a heat rather of July than June. After a visit to his camp Lestrange reappeared without the suffocating mask and cap, driving bareheaded, with only the narrow goggles crossing his face. The change left visible the drawn pallor of exhaustion under stains of dust and oil, his rolled-back sleeves disclosed the crimson badge on his right arm and the fact that his left wrist was tightly wound with linen where swollen and strained muscles rebelled at the long trial.

"He's been driving for nineteen hours," said Dick, climbing up to his party through the excited crowd. "Two hours more to six o'clock. Listen to the mob when he passes!"

The injunction was unnecessary. As the sun slanted low the enthusiasm grew to fever. This was a crowd of connoisseurs—motorists, chauffeurs, automobile lovers and drivers—they knew what was being done before them. The word passed that Lestrange was in his twentieth hour; people climbed on seats to cheer him as he passed by. When one of his tires blew out, in the opening of the first hour of his driving and the twenty-fourth of the race, the great shout of sympathy and encouragement that went up shook the grand-stand to its cement foundations.

Neither Lestrange nor Rupert left his seat while that tire was changed.

"If we did I ain't sure we'd get back," Rupert explained to Dick, who hovered around them agitatedly. "If I'd thought Darling's mechanician would get in for this, I'd have taken in sewing for a living. How much longer?"

"Half an hour."

"Well, watch us finish."

A renewed burst of applause greeted the Mercury car's return to the track. Men were standing watch in hand to count the last moments, their eyes on the bulletin board where the rested-car miles were being registered. Two of the other machines were fighting desperately for second place, hopeless of rivalling Lestrange, and after them speed the rest.

"The finish!" some one suddenly called. "The last lap!"

Dick was hanging over the paddock fence when the car shot by amidst braying, blaring, motor horns, cheers, and the clashing music of the band. Frantic, the people hailed Lestrange as the black and white checked flag dropped before him in proclamation of his victory and the ended race.

Rupert raised his arms above his head in the signal of acknowledgment as they flew across the line and swung on in complete the circle to make a slow down. Almost too spent to take the flowers and beauty offered him for the last time, his car pulled for the covered flight under his guidance—then the watching hundreds saw the driver's hands slip from the steering-wheel as he reached for the brake. Straight across the track the machine dashed, instead of following the bend, crashed through the barrier, and rolled over on its side in the green meadow grass.

"The steering-knuckle!" Bailey groaned, as the place burst into uproar around them. "The wheel—I saw it turn uselessly in his hands!"

"They're up!" cried a dozen voices. "No, one's up and one's under." "Who's caught in the wreck—Lestrange or his man?"

But before the people who surged over the track, breaking all restraint, before the electric ambulance, Dick Ffrench reached the marred thing that had been the Mercury car. It was Lestrange who had painfully struggled to one knee beside the machine, fighting hard for breath to speak.

"Take the car off Rupert," he panted, at Dick's cry of relief on seeing him. "I'm all right—take the car off Rupert."

The next instant they were surrounded, overwhelmed with eager aid. The ambulance came up and a surgeon precipitated himself toward Lestrange.

"Stand back," the surgeon commanded generally. "Are you trying to smother him? Stand back."

But it was he who halted before a gesture from Lestrange, who leaned on Dick and a comrade from the camp.

"Go over there, to Rupert."

"You first—"

"No."

There was nothing to do except yield. Shrugging his shoulders, the surgeon paused the necessary moment. A moment only; there was no protests, but he himself never left scattering of the hushed workers, a metallic crash.

From the space the car had covered a small figure uncoiled, lizard-like, and staggered unsteadily erect.

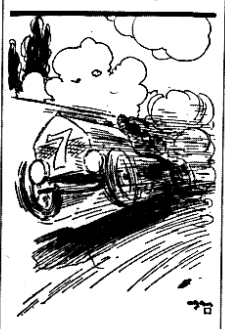
"Where's Darling Lestrange?" was hurled viciously across the silence. "Gee, you're a slow bunch of workers! Where's Lestrange?"

The tumult that broke loose swept all to confusion. And after all it was Lestrange who was put in the surgeon's care, while Rupert rode back to the camp on the driver's seat of the ambulance.

"Tell Emily I'll come over to her as soon as I'm fit to look at," was the message Lestrange gave Dick. "And when you go back to the factory, have your steering-knuckles strengthened."

Dick exceeded his commission by transmitting the speech entire; repeating the first part to Emily with all affectionate solicitude, and flinging the second cuttingly at his uncle and Bailey.

"The doctors say he ought to be in bed, but he won't go," he concluded. "No, you can't see him until they get through patching him up at the hospital tent; they put every one out except Rupert. He hasn't a scratch, after having a ninety Mercury on top of him. You're to come over to our camp, Emily, and wait for Lestrange. I suppose everybody had better come."



Reappeared Without the Suffocating Mask and Cap.

It was a curious and an elevating thing to see Dickie assume command of his family, but no one demurred. An official, recognizing in him Lestrange's manager, cleared a way for the party through the noisy press of departing people and automobiles.

The sunset had long faded, night had settled over the motordrome and the electric lamps had been lit in the tents, before there came a stir and murmur in the Mercury camp.

"Don't skid, the ground's wet," cautioned a voice outside the door. "Steady!"

Emily started up, Dick sprang to open the canvas, and Lestrange crossed the threshold. Lestrange, colorless, his right arm in a sling, his left wound with linen from wrist to elbow, and bearing a heavy purple bruise above his temple, but with the brightness of victory flashing above all weariness like a dancing flame.

"Sweetheart!" he laughed, as Emily ran to meet him, heedless of all things except that he stood within touch once more. "My dear, I told them not to frighten you. Why, Emily—"

For as he put his one available arm about her, she hid her wet eyes on his shoulder.

"I am so happy," she explained breathlessly. "It is only that."

"You should not have been here at all, my dear. But it is good to see Emily. Why, Emily, you look dreadfully tired! Rupert, where's the man who's to take this lady home? Rupert and I have got to find a hotel and we're not very active."

Emily would have slipped away from the clasp, scarlet with returning recollection, but Lestrange detained her to meet his shining eyes.

"The race is over," he reminded, for her ears alone. "I'm going to keep you, if you'll stay."

He turned to take a limping step, offering his hand cordially to the speechless Bailey, and faced for the first time the other man present.

"I think," said Ethan Ffrench, "that there need be no question of hotels. We have not understood each other, but you have the right to Ffrenchwood's hospitality. If you can travel, we will go there."

"No," answered David Ffrench, as quietly. "Never. You owe me nothing, sir. If I have worked in your factory, I took the workman's wages for it; if I have won honors for your car, I also won the prize-money given to the driver. I never meant so to establish any claim upon Ffrenchwood or you. I believe we stand even. Dick has taken my place, happily; Emily and I will go on our own road."

They looked at each other, the likeness between them most apparent, in the similar determination of mood which wiped laughter and warmth from the younger man's face. However coldly phrased and dictatorially spoken, it was an apology which Mr. Ffrench had offered and which had been declined. But—he had watched Lestrange all day; he did not lift the gauntlet.

"I Am So Happy."

"You are perfectly free," he conceded, "which gives you the opportunity of being generous."

His son moved, flushing through his pallor.

"I wish you would not put it that way, sir," he objected.

"There is no other way. I have been wrong and I have no control over you; will you come home?"

There was no other argument but that that could have succeeded, and the three, who knew Lestrange knew that could not fail.

"You want me because I am a Ffrench," David rebelled in the final protest. "You have a substitute."

"Perhaps I want you otherwise. And we will not speak in passion; there can be no substitute for you."

"Ffrench and Ffrench," murmured Dick coaxingly. "We can run that factory, Lestrange!"

"There's more than steering-knuckles needing your eye on them. And you love the place, Mr. David," said Bailey from his corner.

From one to the other David's glance went, to rest on Emily's delicate, earnest face in its setting of yellow-bronze curls. Full and straight her dark eyes answered his, the convent-bred Emily's answer to his pride and old resentment and new reluctance to yield his liberty.

"After all, you were born a Ffrench," she reminded, her soft accents just audible. "If that is your work!"

Very slowly David turned to his father.

"I never learned to do things by halves," he said. "If you want me, sir—"

And Ethan Ffrench understood, and first offered his hand.

Rupert was discovered asleep in a camp-chair outside the tent, a few minutes later, when Dick went in search of him.

"The limousine's waiting," his awakener informed him. "You don't feel bad, do you?"

The mechanician rose cautiously, wincing.

"Well, if every joint in my chassis wasn't sore, I'd feel better," he admitted grimly. "But I'm still running. What did you kiss me awake for, when I need my sleeps?"

"Did you suppose we could get Lestrange home without you, Jack Rupert?"

"I ain't supposing you could. I'm ready."

The rest of the party were already in the big car, with one exception.

"Take a last look, Rupert," bade David, as he stood in the dark paddock. "We're retired; come help me get used to it."

Rupert passed a glance over the deserted track.

"I guess my sentiment-tank has given out," he sweetly acknowledged. "The Mercury factory sounds pretty good to me, Darling. And I guess we can make a joy ride out of living, on any track, if we enter for it."

"I guess we can," laughed David Ffrench. "Get in opposite Emily. We're going home to try."

THE END.

Fitted.

"Miss Flakie Fry has such an elastic step." "Yes, and a disposition to match." "What do you mean?" "She rubbers."

VARIOUS METHODS OF PREVENTING THE RUIN OF FARM LAND BY GULLYING

An Abandoned Field, a Common Scene in Some Parts of Illinois.

By J. G. MOSIER,

Professor of Soil Physics, College of Agriculture, University of Illinois, and Chief of Soil Physics in the Illinois Agricultural Experiment Station.

No form of washing will utterly ruin land more quickly than gullying. The owner of very rolling or hilly land must be on the lookout constantly for incipient gullies and must use every means for preventing their enlargement. The fact that slopes are not uniform allows the water to accumulate in draws, thus increasing its volume and velocity and multiplying its washing power many times. Unless some means are taken to prevent it, the water soon grinds out a formidable gully.

It is a somewhat common practice to scatter straw in these draws in the fall or to build straw dams across them at frequent intervals. These serve to check the velocity of the water and catch the sediment, but frequently the run-off is so great that the straw is carried down the draw and lodges at the base. These dams are sometimes held in place by rows of driven stakes across the draw. In general straw is too fine to be used alone very satisfactorily. The water cannot get through it rapidly enough and so is very apt to wash the dams away or wash around the ends. A coarser materials used with the straw gives better results. These means are not always satisfactory.

A better plan, used a great deal in some parts of the state, is to keep these draws in grass sod, at least until they are so well filled that there is little danger. A sod of this kind binds the soil particles together, while the top growth checks the velocity of the water, causing the sediment in suspension to be deposited. In time the draw will be filled so that it may be cropped, but it should be seeded down again if there is danger of a gully forming. This method is practiced very successfully, the grass being mowed for hay. Some farmers in renting their land have a clause in the contract forbidding the plowing up of draws. Almost any grass that forms a tough sod will answer the purpose, timothy and red-top being quite satisfactory.

Dams of earth or stone are sometimes built across draws to catch the sediment and in many cases, depending upon conditions, this method may be satisfactory. This plan will work better in rather broad, shallow draws possessing little fall.

In many cases the owner of the land either does not realize the importance of preventing the formation of gullies or he is careless in this respect, and before he is aware of it deep gullies form, which are very difficult to fill. Cultivation becomes impossible and the land rapidly passes from bad to worse and in a short time the field is abandoned. Many such are found in the unglaciated area of southern Illinois and a very bad feature is that the number of abandoned fields is constantly increasing. The matter of filling gullies is a simple one, although it requires care and perseverance. If it is desirable to break the field up soon and the gullies are not too deep, they may be filled with plow and scraper in a comparatively short time and with little expense. If, however, there is no immediate need for these to be filled, a different plan may be followed and while nature made the gully she can also be induced to fill it with a little help from man. Most of the hilly and broken land of the state has been timbered and often has considerable brush growing upon it along fences and on waste places. This brush can be used to good advantage in filling these ditches and it really looks better there than decorating the corners. If the brush is too coarse, straw and old hay can be thrown in with it. This will catch the sediment and fill the gully. Some kinds of grass should be started in the gully as soon as possible to help catch and hold the material carried by the water. Red-top is one of the best, since it thrives under somewhat adverse conditions, forms a tough sod, and produces a large amount of top. If brush is not convenient it would be well to use any material at hand that will accomplish the result. Stumps or large stones do not answer the purpose so well as finer material because the water will run around them and they may actually cause more washing. Old rails with straw, corn stalks or cobs may be used, but it is well to get something growing as soon as possible and grass is better than anything else.

The gully produced by waterfalls is one of the hardest to fill, since the fall of the water gives it great power, making it very difficult to stop its undermining action. As these generally occur where the field is in grass, there is a comparatively small amount of sediment carried and consequently the filling will go on but slowly. The recession of the fall must be stopped. Straw and brush should be used to fill under the fall, weighting them down with stones or sod to prevent their being washed away. Dams of brush should be put in at intervals below the fall and even a solid dam at the edge of the field may be of much use in completely filling the gully.

HOW TO COMBAT THE MELON APHIS

By J. J. DAVIS,

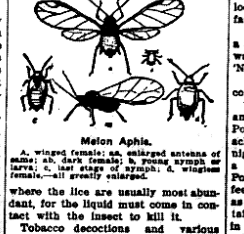
Assistant Entomologist for Northern Illinois. From the Twenty-Sixth Report of the State Entomologist, Professor Stephen A. Forbes, University of Illinois.

Although the truck gardener may not have noticed the melon aphis on his cucumber vines, a curling of the leaves is presumptive evidence of its presence in injurious numbers. It is not only a serious outdoor pest, but is often a very injurious pest to cucumbers in greenhouses.

This plant louse varies in color from pale yellowish to blackish green. It appears on cucumber and melon plants early in the season, and increases rapidly in numbers during the summer unless checked by its insect enemies or unfavorable weather. It is still doubtful whether it ever produces eggs to carry the species over winter, but it is known that viviparous females—the form found throughout the summer—may hibernate in some parts of Illinois.

Probably the most successfully used method of dealing with the aphis is by fumigation with carbon bisulphid. Fumigation on a large scale with individual covers for plants would be too expensive for profit; but an economical method is to cover a considerable area of plants with large cloths or muslin sheets, with props at the corners and center, and wherever else may be necessary. This cover being ready, dishes are placed beneath it containing the carbon bisulphid at the rate of a teaspoonful to each cubic foot of space. The edges of the cloth, which should lie on the ground, are covered with earth to prevent as far as possible the escape of the fumes. After 45 minutes to an hour the cover may be removed.

Kerosene emulsion of a ten per cent strength is the standard spray, but care should be taken to spray thoroughly the under side of the leaves where the lice are usually most abundant, for the liquid must come in contact with the insect to kill it.



Melon Aphis.

A, winged female; ae, enlarged antenna of same; ab, dark female; b, young nymph or larva; c, last stage of nymph; d, wingless female,—all greatly enlarged.

Tobacco decoctions and various soap mixtures have been recommended for this plant louse, but they are less effective than the kerosene emulsion. It is hardly necessary to say that treatment should begin at the first appearance of the lice.

Owing to the large number of its food plants, clean culture is especially important in dealing with the melon aphis, particularly the cutting and burning of weeds and old vines; and fall plowing is also advisable.

Give Growing Fowls a Chance.

Give the growing fowls every chance to make as much growth as possible during this and next month, before the hard winter sets in. Don't overcrowd, feed well and give them dean, well-ventilated quarters.

Of the Bird Kind.

"Say, pa!"

"What is it?"

"Is an aviary a hospital for aviators?"

Important to Mothers

Examine carefully every bottle of CASTORIA, a safe and sure remedy for infants and children, and see that it

Bears the Signature of *Chas. H. Fletcher*

In Use For Over 30 Years.

Children Cry for Fletcher's Castoria

Her Engagements.

Miss Vivian is very much of a flirt and she has been engaged to a dozen young men during the few seasons she has been on the eligible list. A few days ago she said to her father:

"Pa, you may congratulate me on having acquired a new object of my affection."

"I am glad to hear it," he replied. "I hope you are as happy with him as you will be with the next one."

PROOF ENOUGH.

Mrs. Love—Yes, Fred's love is cooling.

Mrs. Dove—What makes you think so?

Mrs. Love—When we were on our honeymoon he broke two teeth trying to eat my biscuits. Now he soaks them in hot tea for half an hour.

FAMILY RUNT

Kansas Man Says Coffee Made Him That.

"Coffee has been used in our family of eleven—father, mother, five sons and four daughters—for thirty years. I am the eldest of the boys and have always been considered the runt of the family and a coffee toper.

"I continued to drink it for years until I grew to be a man, and then I found I had stomach trouble, nervous headaches, poor circulation, was unable to do a full day's work, took medicine for this, that and the other thing, without the least benefit. In fact I only weighed 116 when I was 28.

"Then I changed from coffee to Postum, being the first one in our family to do so. I noticed, as did the rest of the family, that I was surely gaining strength and flesh. Shortly after I was visiting my cousin who said, 'You look so much better—you're getting fat.'

"At breakfast his wife passed me a cup of coffee, as she knew I was always such a coffee drinker, but I said, 'No, thank you.'

"'What!' said my cousin, 'you quit coffee? What do you drink?'

"'Postum,' I said, 'or water, and I am well.' They did not know what Postum was, but my cousin had stomach trouble and could not sleep at night from drinking coffee three times a day. He was glad to learn about Postum, but said he never knew coffee would hurt anyone." (Tea is just as injurious as coffee because it contains caffeine, the same drug found in coffee.)

"After understanding my condition and how I got well he knew what to do for himself. He discovered that coffee was the cause of his trouble as he never used tobacco or anything else of the kind. You should see the change in him now. We both believe that if persons who suffer from coffee drinking would stop and use Postum they could build back to health and happiness." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

"There's a reason." Read the little book, "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs.

Ever read the above letter. A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.

Have read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.