

## The Road— The Real Tire Test

**FIRE** insurance doesn't compensate you for the inconvenience of rebuilding.

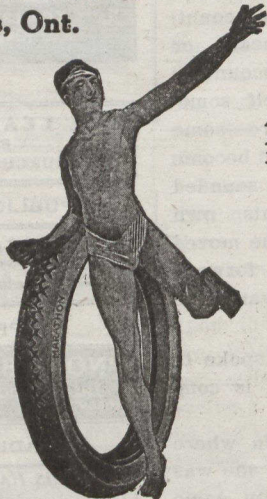
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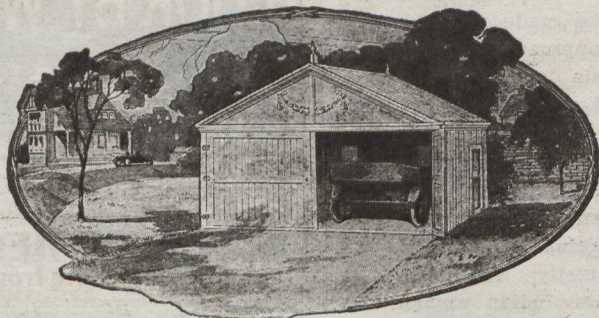


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awful sort connected him, and had connected Uncle Benny, with the Miwaka—the lost ship for which the Drum had beaten the roll of the dead. Now dread of revelation of that guilt had brought him here near to the Drum; he had been alone upon the beach twelve hours, the woman had said—listening, counting the beating of the Drum for another ship, fearing the survival of some one from that ship. Guilt was in his thought now—racking, tearing at him. But there was something more than that; what she had seen in him when he first caught sight of her was fear—fear of her, of Constance Sherrill.

**H**E was fully aware, she now understood, that he had, in a measure betrayed himself to her in Chicago; and he had hoped to cover up and to dissemble that betrayal with her. For that reason she was the last person in the world whom he wished to find here now.

"The point is," he said heavily, "why are you here?"

"I decided to come up last night."

"Obviously." He uttered the word slowly and with care. "Unless you came in a flying machine. Who came with you?"

"No one; I came alone. I expected to find father at Petoskey; he hadn't been there, so I came on here."

"After him?"

"No; after you, Henry."

"After me?" She had increased the apprehension in him, and he considered and scrutinized her before he ventured to go on. "Because you wanted to be up here with me, eh, Connie?"

"Of course not!"

"What's that?"

"Of course not!"

"I knew it!" he moved menacingly. She watched him quite without fear; fear was for him, she felt, not her. Often she had wished that she might have known him when he was a young man; now, she was aware that, in a way, she was having that wish. Under the surface of the man whose strength and determination she had admired, all the time had been this terror—this guilt. If Uncle Benny had carried it for a score of years, Henry had had it within him too. This had been within him all the time!

"You came up here about Ben Corvet?" he challenged.

"Yes—no!"

"Which do you mean?"

"No."

"I know then. For him, then—eh. For him!"

"For Alan Conrad? Yes," she said.

"I knew it!" he repeated. "He's been the trouble between you and me all the time!"

She made no denial of that; she had begun to know during the last two days that it was so.

"So you came to find him?" Henry went on.

"Yes, Henry. Have you any news?"

"News?"

"News of the boats?"

"News!" he iterated. "News to-night! No one'll have more'n one news to-night!"

From his slow, heavy utterance, a timbre of terrible satisfaction betrayed itself; his eyes widened a little as he saw it strike Constance, then his lids narrowed again. He had not meant to say it that way; yet, for an instant, satisfaction to him had become inseparable from the saying, before that was followed by fright—the

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