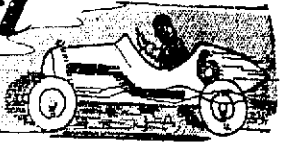


Magazine Feature Section

DARIO RESTA

The Fastest and the Slowest Man who lives to-day



Some one once said that the tiger was the Theodore Roosevelt of the fower kingdom—sturdy, staunch and virile. The shrinking violet—if a violet really shrinks—might well be termed the Dario Resta of said fower kingdom. Skim the broth from a potpourri of such words as humble, diffident, bashful, unassuming, unobtrusive, unostentatious and unpretending, and you have the composite word which best describes the world's speed king.

That word is MODEST.

"I suppose you are happy and proud," I said to Resta after he had won the 500-mile international auto derby in Chicago recently.

"I am happy—not proud," he answered.

"Not proud?"

"No; that is, if you mean in the sense that I have an overweening estimation of my own supposed superiority as an auto racer; yes, if you mean in the sense that I have a feeling of exaltation and happiness at having won first money."

Resta shifted uneasily. He very much disliked being interviewed. Most peculiar, for at that particular moment he towered head and shoulders over others basking in the spotlight of fame. And it is quite the popular thing for baskers to talk themselves hoarse to a man with pad and pencil.

HE TRIES TO SIDESTEP ALL PRAISE.

"I don't want you to print a lot of stuff about me being the greatest auto driver. You'd be libeling the other fellows who make a living in the racing game. I'm a good driver—that I can't deny." (He would if he could.) "But so are all the boys who pit their skill against mine."

"But explain why you win with such striking regularity—why you are picked as favorite in the big races?"

The good ship Modesty seemed in dire straits as this torpedo-like question was flung at her bow. But the young pilot wiggled his craft out of danger. "I win for two reasons," he said. "First, because I have the best car, and, second, because I am lucky." Not a bit of credit to himself—all to the makers of the Peugeot and to Billiken. But the ostrich who sticks its head in the sand has as much chance to hide its plump body as Resta has to conceal his wonderful skill at the wheel. In the patter of the vaudeville stage, "it can't be did."

Not so long ago a news item in an eastern newspaper told of an elevator boy winning a hundred-yard dash in ten and a fraction seconds. Nothing unusual in that except that the boy for years had operated the slowest freight elevator in his town.

"I was so plum disgusted with myself when people kidded me about it that I decided to speed up some way," he said. "I couldn't do it with the elevator, so I trained for the footrace."

Resta looks into the other end of life's telescope. The winner of the Grand Prix and the Vanderbilt cup at the San Francisco exposition, the pilot who brought home \$23,500 worth of bacon from the international auto derby at Chicago, is a tallender in the hustle and bustle of ordinary life. He will never be afflicted with Americanitis. He dresses as fast as little Willie does on the morning of school examinations; he walks about as lively as little Willie does when, on an errand, he chances to pass a dog and pony show; he eats his meals with the same alacrity as little Willie when the latter has been promised an introduction to the cat-o'-ninetalls as soon as he has finished.

BUT DON'T IMAGINE HE'S LAZY.

You must not think that Resta is lazy. Far from it. He is always doing something, but he does that something with a minimum amount of energy. He conserves this energy for use on a day when his head incased in a hood, his eyes peering from a pair of goggles, he sits in his famous "No. 6" and pursues Victory despite the warning hand of Death. On such an occasion he has cornered enough pep and energy to make a fit subject for prosecution under the Sherman-anti-trust law.

"I take my time everywhere except on the speedways," is the way Resta puts it. "Since coming to your country I have seen thousands of men and women suffering from the effects of too much haste. To be well we need a balance of both mental and physical control. If we are lacking in either we become ill. Lack of self-control of the mind is as harmful as lack of self-control of the body."

"To keep the body and mind well

every man and woman needs a certain amount of physical and mental recreation. But they should not overdo. They should not go at it as though everything depended on their putting into such physical and mental recreation all the energy they possess. My favorite game is golf."

When one learns that Resta was international figure-skating champion during 1911-1912 one becomes acquainted with the fact that he practices what he preaches. "I never went in for the strenuous game of speed skating," he said. "I derived all the exercise I needed from the sane branch of the sport." Also one becomes acquainted with the fact that auto racing is the only element of speed mania from which the intrepid Resta suffers.

When Resta told me that his bride of a few months was the sister of Spencer Wishart, the daredevil auto



Dario Resta, in his "Slow Togs," and His Bride of a Few Months, Mrs. Resta, in the Sister of Spencer Wishart, Who Was Killed in the Last Elgin Road Races. Naturally, She Fears That Her Husband May Meet the Same Tragic Fate.

driver who was killed in the Elgin road race last year, it was natural that I should scent a race track romance.

NO ROMANCE FOR HIM, EITHER.

"No such thing," said Resta. Somehow he seemed determined to evade making "good copy." "I was introduced to Mrs. Resta by Mr. Wishart, and, in the ordinary course of events, we came to think a good deal of each other. I asked her to become my wife. She accepted the proposal. That's all there was to it. Nothing could be more simple—more prosaic."

Naturally, considering the fragility that befell her brother, Mrs. Resta fears for the life of her husband every time he enters a race. He could not induce her to witness the two big classes at San Francisco. She remained at her hotel, receiving the returns by telephone.

Mrs. Resta is an expert auto driver. After the San Francisco races she piloted the famous "No. 6" to Chicago. Resta had promised her it would be his last race, and she was happy—so happy that she consented to see him win it. In her mind it was a foregone conclusion that he would be first to cross the line.

After the race Resta asked his wife to release him from his promises.

"I shall only enter a few more events," he said. "Perhaps the next shall be my last."

"Perhaps," replied Mrs. Resta. She remembered that her brother had

told her this same thing before the Elgin race. And it was his last.

Dario Resta was born in Livorno, Italy thirty-two years ago. When Dario was 1 year old his parents emigrated to England, and in later years the boy was educated in the public schools of his adopted land. It was in the Panhard shops near Paris that he first gained experience with automobile motors, and secured the knowledge which today stands him so well.

That he began his racing career by working with motors is characteristic of him. Today he knows more about his machine than any mechanic on the track where he is racing. "Engine trouble" has to be pretty serious to materially interfere with Resta's progress toward his goal.

HOW FAST CAN HE POSSIBLY GO?

Just how fast can Resta drive his "No. 6"?

He himself does not know. He traveled 500 miles at Chicago in 5 hours 7 minutes and 27 seconds, or an average of 97.5 miles an hour. That was faster than any man had ever traveled a like distance before. Given a straight boulevard from the loop in Chicago to the Great White Way in New York, Resta if he maintained this speed the entire distance, could cover the vast expanse of territory in ten hours. In other words, were he to accept an invitation to attend a New York theater he could leave Chicago at 10 o'clock in the forenoon and arrive in Gotham in time to see the curtain rise.

"But that is not the limit of Resta's speed," a well-known driver declared. "He can make even better time if pushed. Competition is as much the life of auto racing as of business."

Resta's career as a racer was begun in England in 1907. He won his first race, but was disqualified. The young pilot, undismayed by the streak of hard luck, later in the same year won three races on Brooklands and the Prix de la France.

Victory in the latter event won Resta a place on the Austin team which was sent to France in 1908 for the Grand Prix. Resta finished ninth in a field of forty-eight starters. He next joined the Errol Johnson team, but failed to finish in the Isle of Man race. In 1911 he finished third in the Coupe L'Auto. When the following year he joined the Sunbeam team he drove in the small car division of the Grand Prix, finishing one minute behind the winner, his teammate, Regal. He lost the race through an error in timing.

"Auto racing is not my only source of income," Resta told me. "I have a business in England—that of buying cars for the nobility." I wonder what reply Resta makes to a duke or an earl who compliments him on delivery of an exceptionally fine automobile. I cannot imagine him saying else than, "Well, wasn't I lucky," giving himself no credit for good judgment.

Modest, is Resta's middle name.

Tommy (who has brought a bucket into the drawingroom)—Aunt Martha, kick this bucket.

Aunt Martha—Why on earth should I do that, Tommy?

Tommy—Oh, just to please pa. He said he'd give ten dollars any day to see you kick the bucket.