

to serve as a barrier against the flood of automobile traffic and to keep the spectators from traveling this leg of the course to reach their parking spaces. It was a most formidable and efficient obstruction, but one that could be quickly and easily raised just before the racing cars were sent away.

The start of the early Vanderbilts was ever pregnant with thrills. The pacemaking car was released at the first flush of dawn, and the grey haze of the November morning and the heavy mists of Long Island Sound hung over the course like great enveloping shrouds. For several hours previous, the prologue to the spectacle had been played in darkness on a stage of confusion. Thousands of automobiles, their headlights stabbing the night with searching beams, crept by in an unbroken stream from midnight on. An attacking army of spectators, on foot, tramped the noise-ridden roads in search of grandstand seats and other points of vantage. Through these milling mobs of motorists and pedestrians, the race drivers snailed their cars and made their way to the starting line by the flickering light of farm lanterns. It was a great exodus of a speed-mad people, all seeking excitement and some inflamed by liquor; a long, cold and noisy vigil that left the nerves taut and drawn to the snapping point. And with the rising of the sun, all this chaos of the night must be instantly changed into order. A colossal job, indeed, and no small wonder some details were overlooked!

On this particular morning, I had sent about six cars away, at intervals of thirty seconds each, when I took the precaution to ask Robert Lee Morrell, the referee, if the barrier had been raised at Westbury.

Never in all my life will I forget the look of terror

that swept over his face after he had heard my question. For an instant, he stood limp, as a man about to swoon—and then dashed to the telephone switchboard in the judge's stand. Above the din of the crowds and the bark of the exhaust, I could hear him yell:

"Get Westbury! Get Westbury! And tell 'em to raise the barrier!"

And while I continued to start the remaining cars as though the course was clear, I was covered with a cold sweat and shook as with the palsy until I saw the first of the drivers—Nazzaro in his Fiat—come thundering down the homestretch to complete his first circuit of the course.

For then I knew that all was well, but not until the race was over did I learn, in detail, how narrowly we had escaped a fatality.

George Weiss, one of the founders of the Winton Company, was in charge of the Westbury control, and it was he who answered Morrell's frantic call. The telephone was at least five hundred feet from the barrier, and when he dropped the receiver to start for the obstruction, Nazzaro's car was in sight and rolling along at better than sixty miles an hour.

"George would have beaten Arthur Duffey" (then the world's champion sprinter), one of the flagmen at the Westbury control told me later in describing the dramatic race in which human lives were at stake. "His speed was nothing less than superhuman, and his strength was so great at the end that he had to fall upon the pole to raise it. When the barrier went up, there wasn't a second to spare, for Nazzaro's car swept under it while it was still swinging, only a few inches above his head."

A year later—or was it a year before—I was forced