

second copping \$3,000, and Pullen third, carrying off a \$2,000 purse.

It was Corona's first and last speed event.

Were you to ask me to pick the most sympathetic driver, I would name De Palma, as I have never known a more altruistic, a more considerate man. He had traits that were lovable, a heart as big and as fine as a mother's. Other drivers said that I favored Ralph. If their allegation was true, it was because I respected him, not only for his sportsmanship and tenacity but for his manliness.

Ralph has done some fine things, but nothing finer than what he did at Elgin in 1913. Just before the second day's race and as De Palma was leaving the Mercer camp, a boy volunteered to crank Ralph's car. The motor kicked back and the cranking handle broke the boy's arm. He was taken to the hospital, placed in a public ward and given only ordinary attention.

Two nights after, members of the Chicago Automobile Club tendered a dinner to the drivers and officials at which trophies were presented to the winners of the two races. De Palma, who captured the C.A.C. Cup, sent word that he could not attend. Few knew the reason why Ralph stayed away. He sacrificed an evening of pleasure that he might sit for an hour at the bedside of the injured boy and make arrangements with the hospital authorities for a private room and special nurse before he left for California to drive at the Corona meeting. I consider that act of De Palma's his greatest achievement, greater by far than his many glorious triumphs on the road, speedway and sand.

There is another pedestal on which De Palma stands alone. He was the most favored of Misfortune. He was injured in the first race he ever drove, over the

now forgotten Briarcliff course. A tire change cost him a grand prize on the last lap. After shattering record after record in the 500-mile race of 1912, he lost one of the richest purses ever offered for a speed event when only 7 miles from the finish line and then a sardonic motor played him false. His attempt to pass Bragg on the final lap of the 1912 grand prize event resulted in a collision that almost proved a fatality. No driver in the history of the sport ever had a more persistent jinx, no driver ever fought back that jinx with as much bulldog tenacity.

Johnny Aitkin was the clown of the game. He injected a laugh in every race, always had a quip or antic to relieve the most tense situation. Howdy Wilcox was Aitkin's foil; a Joe Weber to Johnny's Lew Fields; a modern Job in khaki racing suit. Duray, the Frenchman, was another comedian, always playing tricks on his team-mates and ever anticipating their tricks in turn. No one ever got the laugh on him. Billy Chandler was the game's Arlie Latham. He was a farceur that does not need a makeup to be funny. He was born with a comedian's face, a comedian's walk, a comedian's gestures. Poor Harry Endicott was another driver that relieved much of the morbidness of the sport by his good-natured bantering and spontaneous burlesque.

In the years that I have served as a starter I have been handed hundreds of laughs, but there are two retorts that I rank as the prize bon mots of all time. One, which Bill Pickens, prince of hecklers, was responsible for, is a classic through repetition. It was in one of the early stock championship races at Elgin and Barney Oldfield was running next to last. As he crawled past his pit Barney shouted to Pickens,