

to play a less heroic but more spectacular rôle in order to start the race on time. I relate this experience with all the modesty becoming an autobiographer, for it is not my wish to bruise my chest with self-thrown bouquets but rather to illustrate the drastic measures that were sometimes imperative in order to handle the unruly crowds that thronged the Vanderbilt Cup course.

On this occasion, the Irish Volunteers, fifteen hundred citizen-soldiers under the command of Col. Crowley, had been hired to patrol the course and maintain order. They were all big, strapping sons of Erin and flawless in their military bearing, but they patterned their deportment after that of the Hessian mercenaries who fought for King George in the American Revolution. Consequently, when reveille sounded at 4 o'clock in the morning they did not heed it, and at 5:30 we realized that we could rely on the sleeping battalions for little, if any, assistance.

It was then that William K. Vanderbilt, Jr., the most illustrious patron of automobile racing, put to me a most pertinent and embarrassing question.

"How are you going to clear the course?" he asked as he surveyed the thousands that flooded the road in the vicinity of the starting line, unchecked by the bayonets of military authority and scorning the entreaties and empty threats of the few race officials who were trying to control the uncontrollable crowds on the highways.

A man's wits, I often have found, serve him best in the emergency. At least mine did in this instance.

"Just turn your back for fifteen minutes," I told him, "and I'll agree to start the race promptly at six o'clock. I'm not going to tell you what I'm going to do, except

to promise that it will not put you in a compromising position."

I added this statement knowing that Mr. Vanderbilt was averse to any procedure that might invite public criticism to himself and the classic that bore his name. "Go ahead," he replied, "I'll be blind until six o'clock."

The pits in those days were sunk in the ground, the tops being level with the roadbed, and each was equipped with a water tap and a generous length of hose for filling radiators, cooling tires and extinguishing fire, the latter a constant menace at that time.

So here was a ready weapon at my hand, and one that had the enthusiastic endorsement of prison wardens for quelling riots. I substituted cold water for cold steel, and found it a most efficient agent of subjection. The crowds retreated before the high pressure streams that we played upon them in the chill of the early morning, and at ten minutes of six the course was clear. At six, when Mr. Vanderbilt recovered his sight, he saw the first car make its getaway on the appointed second.

In justice to the thousands of deputy sheriffs and national guardsmen who have policed road racing courses, I should mention, here and now, that the Irish Volunteers were a marked exception to the general rule, and that in the main, the men who have been delegated to maintain order and protect human life along the fevered highways have served with patient loyalty and good humored efficiency under circumstances most trying.

A man's memory can be likened to a boundless gallery of innumerable pictures. Some we shamefully turn toward the wall; others we flood with the mellow light of joyful remembrance. And in my collection of such