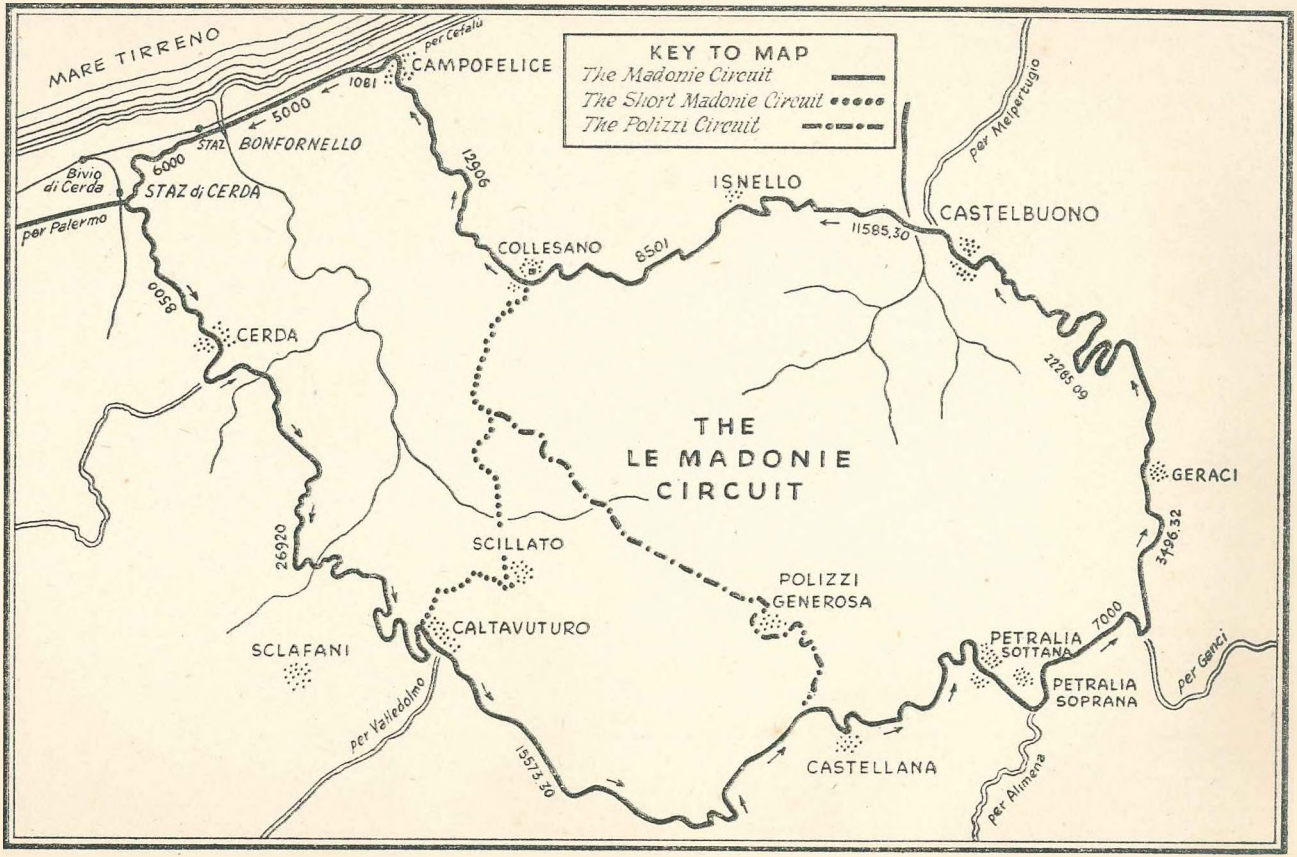
TARGA FLORIO

W F BRADLEY

TARGA FLORIO


MARE TIRRENO
per Cefalu
CAMPOFELICE
1081
5000
STAZ
BONFORNELLO
6000
Bivio di Cerda
STAZ di CERDA
per Palermo
8500
CERDA
12906
COLLESANO
8501
ISNELLO
11585,30
CASTELBUONO
per Mezzojuso
22285,09
GERACI
3496,32
KEY TO MAP
The Madonie Circuit
The Short Madonie Circuit
The Polizzi Circuit
THE
LE MADONIE
CIRCUIT
26920
SCILLATO
POLIZZI
GENEROSA
CALTAVUTURO
SCLAFANI
PETRALIA
SOTTANA
7000
PETRALIA
SOPRANA
per Gangi
per Valledolmo
13573,30
CASTELLANA
per Alimena

TARGA FLORIO

An authentic history of the famous motor race

by

W. F. BRADLEY

LONDON
G. T. FOULIS & CO. LTD.
7, Milford Lane, Strand, W.C.2

Made and Printed in Great Britain by The Marshall Press Ltd.,
Milford Lane, Strand, London, W.C.2.

Contents

List of Illustrations

Chapter 1

As usual, a substantial crowd had gathered on Palermo pier, on that delightful spring morning, to watch the stately arrival of the steamer from Naples. In every country sea travel has attached to it a sense of romance which is denied the more modern form of travelling by rail. If the friend or relative is coming by train, it is hardly necessary to greet him at the station, but if he is from overseas it is imperative to be on the dock side to watch the steamer slowly appear round the breakwater, to scrutinise its decks, delightedly to wave and cheer as the loved one is picked out, to dance impatiently as he or she comes down the gangway, and to try to break through the cordon of police and carabinieri immediately he has set foot on the soil of Sicily.

The exuberant Sicilian makes no effort to hide his emotions. Nature is in a radiant mood, life is good, and the pleasure of meeting the returning traveller should be made manifest by gesture and voice. Even the officials who attend such arrivals every morning—the dogana, the police, the port authorities—are affected by this cheerful enthusiasm; and the crafty cab drivers, keen to pick out the stranger and the foreigner, manifest a joy which has all the appearance of being genuine.

In the privileged roped-off enclosure at the end of the pier might have been observed a strikingly handsome youngster of fifteen whose excitement was not less than that of the crowd around him. And there was reason for this state of happiness on the part of Vincenzo Florio, for was not his elder brother Ignazio bringing with him from Paris the first De Dion Bouton motor tricycle to be landed in Sicily? The possession of a motor vehicle is an advent in the life of any youth, but when the year is 1898, the possession has stupendous importance.

Vincenzo Florio was the second son of Ignazio Florio, and his only brother, named after the father, was fifteen

years his senior. Ignazio Florio was a man of power, enterprise, foresight, who did more for the development of Sicily than any man of his generation. He built railways, established steamship lines not only to the mainland but to the Americas, he erected hotels to attract visitors to a country rich in interest but poor in accommodation, his fishing industries were extensive, and his exports of wines, oils, fruits and food stuffs generally had made his name known far beyond the limits of Italy.

Vincenzo Florio was only eight years old when his father died, and it was his brother Ignazio, then twenty-three, who had to assume responsibility as head of the family and to take over the management of the immense Florio business activities. Great as were his powers as a pioneer merchant, Ignazio Florio could not be classed among the self-satisfied self-made business men of the nineteenth century. The family was cultured, the fine arts were fostered, all the children had the benefit of an English governess and tutors, travel was extensive, all modern foreign languages were spoken, blood connections extended to the royal family, leaders in arts and sciences were visitors to the home, and among the guests entertained by the Florios at their Palermo residence were the German Emperor and the Empress.

By reason of his youthfulness, Vincenzo Florio was not called upon to prepare himself as a successor to his father's business activities. This task was left to his elder brother, who also became the boy's sympathetic and understanding tutor—a youthful father, as it were, who could understand and appreciate the youth's romantic aspirations. Thus, at a time when many a son of a merchant prince was being held to the rigours of the office and the counting house, Vincenzo was free to travel to a greater extent than was common among Italian youths of that period. The construction of a 1,600-ton yacht on the Clyde was justification for keeping him several months in Glasgow as " supervisor." He early learned to know and love Paris; in Monte Carlo, Nice and Cannes he was a familiar figure, while Vienna and Lower Germany saw much of him.

At an early age Vincenzo Florio had shown himself attracted to sports and competitions, and particularly those of a mechanical nature. Every new type of bicycle of Italian, French and English construction was imported as soon as it appeared on the market, the most prized of these machines being an all-aluminium Beeston Humber. Some of these machines still hang, dust-covered, from the rafters of one of the Florio barns. From the bicycle to the power-driven three-wheeler was a step taken all the more readily by the elder brother because it gave pleasure to the youngster under his charge.

When the bicycle was leading to the car and the two were to prepare the way for practical flying, the free balloon became a sport having a scientific value not always fully appreciated. As a boy Vincenzo Florio was impressed by the exploits of Pilâtre de Rozier and endeavoured to emulate him with the means at his disposal. He built a gas bag, installed a methylated spirits lamp in the nacelle below it and sent it away on a flight over Palermo. The adventure was a complete success, the balloon rising majestically and travelling before the wind with the boys in hot pursuit on their bicycles. A convent lay in its path and on the roof of this building dry linen was flapping in the breeze. The flame from the lamp set fire to the linen, the alarm was spread and the fire brigade appeared noisily, dragging their primitive hand-operated pump. But the *Superiore* was adamant. No men should cross the threshold of her secluded convent, fire or no fire, and the linen was allowed to consume itself. " Papa " Florio paid the bill.

Toy balloons, Vincenzo observed, had a considerable lifting power, and it was only necessary to unite a sufficient number of them for a boy to become an aerial traveller. Prudence suggested, however, that the experiments should begin with other living creatures, and being reluctant to sacrifice the dog, the cat or the rabbits, some dozen rats were secured, placed in a basket and sent aloft. Inevitably the airship had to touch down, and as this happened on dwellings the arrival of these rodents from the skies raised

such a storm of protests that ballooning experiments had to be ruled out of order.

With the arrival of the De Dion motor-tricycle all other sports faded into insignificance. When he purchased the machine in the Avenue de la Grande Armée, Paris, Ignazio Florio had asked for a demonstration, but he had omitted to ask what kind of fuel it was burning. Some suggested paraffin; others were in favour of methylated spirits. Petrol was so little known that nobody had heard of it. A telegram to Paris brought the required information and an engineer from the shipyards successfully undertook to bring the motor to life.

For generations the Sicilian has relied on and still shows a strong liking for mules as a means of transportation. Beplumed and drawing hand-carved *carretta* with brightly painted panels depicting tournaments, they were in a class entirely above any noisy, smelly three-wheeled piece of mechanism, and the Sicilian youths expressed their contempt by flinging over-ripe tomatoes at the De Dion. They had all the advantages, for the ammunition was plentiful and when it did reach its mark it left undeniable evidence, without inflicting bodily injury.

Florio's ambition was to compete against somebody, but this was difficult of realisation, for there were no other machines on the island. This defect was overcome, however, by organising a match from Palermo to Mondello, a seaside resort a few miles to the west, between the De Dion, a horse and a cyclist. At half distance the cyclist was seized with cramp and had to withdraw; the tricycle seemed a likely winner until on a straightaway in the Favorita Park it began to overheat, speed had to be reduced and the horse sprinted home a winner.

The tricycle was such a success that it was soon decided to secure something of a more important nature. The two brothers made a trip to Paris and in the Avenue de la Grande Armée—the world's first motor row—Ignazio selected a Peugeot with hot tube ignition and bar steering. In a very

short time this was followed by a single-cylinder Benz with underfloor engine and belt drive, having a *vis-à-vis* body with rear entrance. This was used on the more level portions of the island, for when hills were encountered the belts had a habit of slipping, or, more annoyingly, of breaking. Even some of the humped back bridges had to be taken in reverse, with the passengers pushing.

Fiat came into existence and national cars had to be added to the growing Florio collection. In reality, the world-famed name was not adopted until a few years later, the company at first being known as " Fabbrica Italiana Automobili," the initials of which formed an unsatisfactory and unpronounceable combination. These, together with other suggested titles, were placed on the walls by Engineer Marchesi, then commercial manager of the young company, when a stranger entered and added the T for Torino. This combination pleased immediately and was adopted, despite the religious scruples of certain devout Catholics. The first cars from Turin had none of the nakedness of the De Dion, but vied with the local mule carts for the brilliance of their colouring, one being yellow and blue, the other red and blue. They aroused the admiration of a visiting American to such an extent that he offered twice their value to gain possession of them. Other cars followed, there generally being half a dozen machines of various types in the Florio " stables."

Cars being hand-built, it was the custom in those days for Fiat to send an expert when making delivery to a client of any importance. His duties were to instruct the owner in the care of the machine and to see that it was operating perfectly before he left it. A new Fiat was landed at Palermo by a young man who introduced himself as Felice Nazzaro. He worked at Turin under the direction of Vincenzo Lancia, a man of about his own age. The only exploit to Nazzaro's credit was the part he had played in the winning of an important bet. At a restaurant in Monte Carlo, in 1901, the Duke of the Abruzzi and Cavaliere Colltelletti had a discussion on the respective merits of French and Italian cars. Colltelletti claimed that his 24-h.p. Panhard & Levassor,

the car which had been driven by René De Knyff in the Paris to Berlin race, could beat any Fiat over a long distance. The Duke disagreed with him and the outcome was a wager for 5,000 liras as to which would win a speed contest over a distance of 300 kilometres.

When this wager was made known to Giovanni Agnelli (later Senator Agnelli), then chairman of the Fiat concern, he was not at all pleased. The Panhard & Levassor would be a hard car to beat, and although this was a friendly match the personalities involved would cause it to receive considerable attention at the hands of the Press. A start was made on November 24, 1901, on the Turin to Bologna road, a distance of 302 kilometres, under the worst possible conditions, for heavy rain had made the road dangerously slippery. The Panhard was sent away first, before a distinguished crowd of State officials and motoring enthusiasts, and twenty minutes later the Fiat, with Agnelli and Lancia as passengers, was timed to start. By mutual consent, a second Fiat, owned by the Duke of Turin and driven by Felice Nazzaro, was timed out. It was a new car, the paint still fresh, and it had only half the horsepower of the Panhard & Levassor. The race had an unexpected ending, for by reason of the greasy state of the road, the Duke's Fiat skidded near Alessandria, hit the curb and broke the axle. Driving carefully but skilfully, Nazzaro's Fiat covered the distance to Bologna in four minutes less than the big Panhard. Under the conditions, the Duke of the Abruzzi lost his 5,000 liras, but the outcome was really a victory for Fiat, and Felice Nazzaro had scored what was to be the first of a long series of racing victories.

Of the same age, both passionately fond of motoring, a deep sympathy sprang up between Vincenzo Florio and Felice Nazzaro. The young man from Turin was the son of a coal merchant who had been introduced to Fiat at the age of 15, had been accepted as an apprentice, and had been put in the chassis test department under the management of Lancia. Quiet, thoughtful, very gentlemanly in manner and appearance, he had a wonderful mechanical gift and a

delicacy of touch which amounted almost to fastidiousness, which enabled him to get the maximum out of a car without submitting it to any undue stress. He had an affection for his machine akin to that existing between human beings. No detail could be overlooked ; everything must be perfect. He handled his cars as a violinist his instrument—perfectly atuned, but brought to life by a hidden fire. It was doubtless because of this combination that the cars handled by Nazzaro so rarely failed and so frequently cut the line ahead of all others.

Realising the value of the man who had been sent from the factory, Vincenzo Florio proposed:

" Felice, why not stay in Sicily to look after my cars? "

The offer was accepted and Felice Nazzaro, later to become the most brilliant race driver of his period, then a car manufacturer and still later a Fiat race driver, was enrolled as Florio's " chauffeur."

During the four years he remained in this capacity, Nazzaro had plenty of opportunities to examine and test all the best European cars, for no sooner was a new model announced than one was purchased and sent to Palermo. In Paris, the astute Charley, who was responsible for Mercedes sales, offered his cars to privileged clients at one thousand francs (£40) per horsepower. The 40-h.p. model which Ignazio Florio selected for his own use thus cost £1,600, while the 60-h.p. car desired by Vincenzo called for a payment of £2,400.

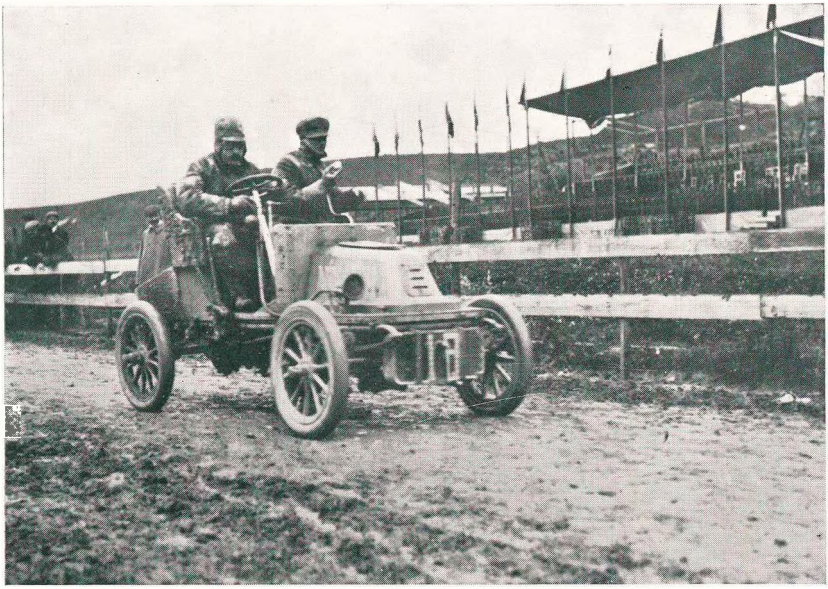
Felice Nazzaro received his training as a race driver during the few years he served as the Florio " chauffeur." Delighting in competitions of all kinds, Florio made a practice of organising private races in the Favorita Park, with his friends and his " chauffeur " as his competitors. The cars had to be as nearly alike as possible and it was understood that the competition had to be genuine, it being strictly forbidden for anybody to ease off towards the end of a keenly disputed race in order to allow the " padrone " to come in a winner. From time to time they went further

afield, even including the Semmering hill-climbs, where Florio and Nazzaro drove against one another.

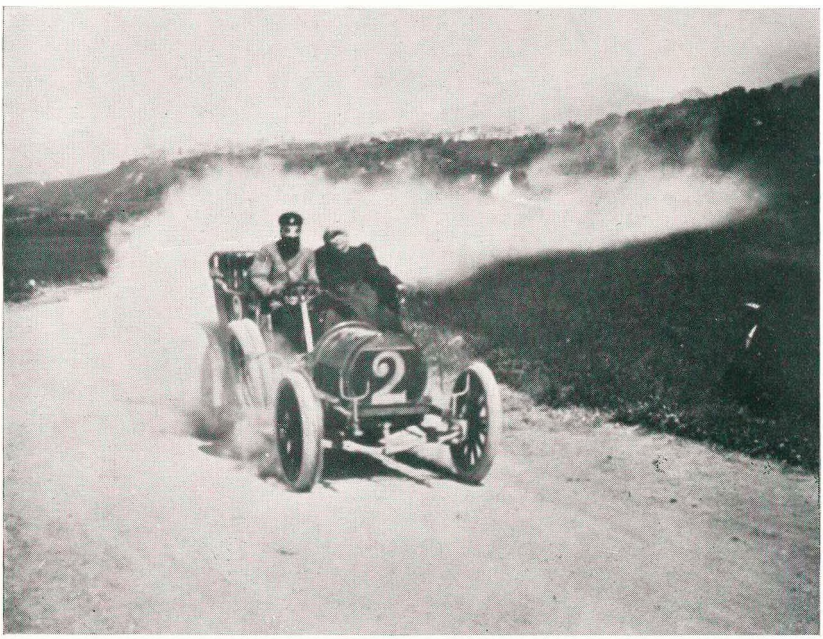
If motoring was popular, it was not the only sport indulged in at Palermo. Shooting and fishing, horse-racing and yachting were prominent, while, by reason of the family shipping interests motor-boat racing received attention at a very early date. One of the marvels of the Mediterranean at that time was the 1,600-ton yacht built by Scott, on the Clyde, to the order of the father, in 1897, and named the " Aegousa." This was later sold to Sir Thomas Lipton, who used it to convoy one of his " Shamrocks " across the Atlantic for the American Cup race. During the war it became a hospital ship and was torpedoed off the Island of Favignano, close to the town from which it had taken its name. Ignazio Florio, who at one time was the owner of the famous racing-yacht " Valkyrie," was recognised as one of the best racing skippers on the Mediterranean.

For a time Vincenzo Florio became possessor of " Ursula," doubtless the most successful racing motor-boat ever built by Saunders, of Cowes, and fitted with two Wolseley engines. Although the property of the Duke of Westminster, Florio obtained it on charter through the builder and brought it to Palermo for races. Just how near that magnificent craft came to disaster was never known to the Duke. Racing in the bay, one of the buoys to be rounded was only a few yards from the rocks on which Villa Igiea was constructed. A few seconds before the wheel had to be put hard over for the turn, it was found that somebody's coat had become entangled in the steering gear. By a desperate effort it was torn out and " Ursula " was prevented from dashing herself on the rocks by the narrowest of margins.

On the occasion of one of the races the Duke of Westminster was in Sicily and was disappointed to find that by reason of the charter arrangement made by Saunders he was not able to pilot his own boat. Florio endeavoured to appease him by offering him his boat " Jeannette," which



One of the single-cylinder De Dions in a mud-plugging Targa Florio.



Le Blon and Madame on a stripped Hotchkiss in the first Targa Florio.

Louis Wagner, Vanderbilt Cup winner, on a Darracq.

did not have the speed of "Ursula," and which, of course, was beaten. It was decided that there should be a handicap match between the two boats, the Duke of Westminster piloting "Ursula" and Florio being at the helm of "Jeannette." On the day fixed for the race Florio was urgently called away to the mainland and the contest never took place. Florio was never able to convince the Duke that this call was a genuine one.

Chapter 2

As a youth Florio's greatest ambition was to take part in a really important road race. He was nineteen years of age and he had had opportunities of training with all the best and fastest cars existing up to that year 1902. On the road between Bovolerto and Padua there existed a straight-away of 15 kilometres, and on this timed speed tests were to be held on distances of 1 and 10 kilometres. If only he could secure a Fiat racing car, Florio felt that he would be able to prove his ability in open competition. An appeal was made to Agnelli, at Turin, with bitterly disappointing results, for the head of Fiat was doubtful of the ability of the young enthusiast, and he also realised that it would be a great responsibility to encourage a young man who had not come of age, and who was a member of the most prominent family in Sicily.

Both disappointed and annoyed at the refusal, Florio determined that he would find a car somewhere. A friend in Milan put him in contact with the firm of Outhnin & Chalandre, then the leading agents for Panhard & Levassor in the Paris district. Taking the train to Paris, Florio was shown a dismantled racing Panhard which was available at the price of £2,000. The next day the car was ready and with Teste at the wheel was taken into the near-by Bois de Boulogne where, on one of the quiet avenues, it was claimed to have attained a speed of 60 m.p.h. The car having been purchased, it was sent to Padoua and Nazzaro was instructed to prepare it for the race. Among the prominent drivers in this race were Lancia, Cagno, and Sorel, the first mentioned driving for Fiat. The day proved to be a wonderful one for Florio, who had the satisfaction of beating all comers by attaining a speed of 67 m.p.h. for the flying kilometre and 62 kilometres over the 10-kilometre stretch. Lancia came second. It was too much to expect a young man to accept such success with nonchalance. Florio immediately went to Turin to inform Agnelli that if he had

only shown a little more confidence and foresight, one of his cars might have been first, instead of the French machine. Always a true sportsman, Agnelli offered his congratulations.

From the very outset of the motor movement French enthusiasts sought to prove the value of the invention by organising races from town to town. Originally these were based on the long-distance bicycle races, such as Paris to Bordeaux, Paris to Brest, etc. But while these were purely sporting events, lacking general utility, the car races from the capital to distant points in the provinces inaugurated a new era and revealed unexpected possibilities. But when these races were extended outside France, to Vienna, Berlin, Amsterdam, popular imagination was fired. There was something captivating in the sight of a number of cars assembled at the gates of the capital which, entirely under their own power, would some hours later enter a distant capital and that in less time than the journey could be accomplished by any other means of transportation. There was romance and adventure in such journeys, something which fired popular imagination as no test on a track or a road could have done.

When, in 1903, the French club decided that the next race should be to Madrid, enthusiasm had reached such a pitch that 300 cars were enrolled, for every manufacturer was desirous of proving the value of his product and not a few private motorists wished to demonstrate their ability by making the trip by road to the Spanish capital.

Among these enthusiasts was Vincenzo Florio who, as a result of his connection with Panhard & Levassor a year earlier, arranged for the purchase of a special racing car and secured the services of Teste as his co-driver. While the car was being prepared in Paris, Vincenzo returned home, intending to come up again for the start. Up to that time Ignazio Florio had rather encouraged the motoring activities of his younger brother, but when he heard of the intention to compete in the race to Madrid, his responsibility as guardian weighed on him and he laid plans to thwart the young man's intentions.

Tunny fishing was about to start off the island of

Favignano, lying a short distance to the west of Sicily. This was not fishing as it is understood by the manipulators of line and rod, but a trapping of the giant fish into a small space and a butchering and clubbing of them in a highly colourful manner—a spectacle calculated to arouse the enthusiasm of any spirited youth. When the time came to return to Palermo, Vincenzo Florio discovered that, on the order of his brother, no boat was to be allowed to leave. The elder brother having complete authority over the whole of the island, the decree had to be accepted with as much grace as possible. He was allowed, however, to send a message for Nazzaro to proceed to Paris and to join Teste in driving the Panhard to Madrid. Thus, when Charles Jarrott headed the line of more than 300 racing cars and motor-cycles which set out from the gates of Versailles at dawn on that May morning of 1903, Vincenzo Florio had to follow them in imagination. News came in very slowly; telegrams to Paris were not answered, and it was only after connection had been made with Madrid that something like a complete story could be pieced together of accidents, deaths, disaster, and the decision of the French Government to refuse to allow the race to continue beyond Bordeaux.

Town-to-town races were ended, and they were abolished because mechanical construction had advanced faster than road-maintenance ; because the water-bound macadam highways of the day were unsuited for fast travel, because popular enthusiasm had got out of hand, because the authorities had not learned how to handle irresponsible crowds. From that time forth, races had to be conducted on closed and guarded roads.

A year later, in 1904, Mercanti organised the first of a series of races at Brescia. Frustrated once by the action of his brother, Vincenzo determined to meet ruse by ruse. He entered his 60-h.p. Mercedes, but made arrangements for his name to be kept out of the papers until the night before the race. To avoid any suspicion, he decided not to use Nazzaro, but to enter him as driver of his own Panhard. His friend Ricardo Biglia, at Turin, was the owner of a big fleet of modern cars entrusted to the care of a very skilled

mechanic, and Florio made arrangements for this man to be lent to him, in complete secrecy, to act as mechanic in the race.

Staying on the Adriatic with a friend, Ignazio Florio took up his morning paper and to his amazement read that his brother was among the competitors in the Brescia race due to start in a few hours. Rushing to the railway station, he boarded the first train for Brescia, in the hope of arriving before his impetuous brother had started. Meanwhile the race had begun. Arrangements had been made for all level-crossings to be neutralised, the cars being held for a few minutes before and a few minutes after the passage of the trains. Running at high speed on a straightaway, Florio observed a big dog in the middle of the road. Spectators on the left called it to them and those on the right did the same, with the result that while the animal was reflecting as to which party it owed allegiance, the Mercedes hit it head on. The shock was terrific, but more appalling to the spectators than to the driver, who did not slacken speed. On reaching the closed gates of the level-crossing, Florio instructed his mechanic to examine the car for possible damage. He reported that the starting crank had been doubled backwards, so that it was quite impossible to use it. Had the engine been stopped, it could not have been started again, while to keep it running with the car stationary caused it to overheat. In consequence the mechanic ran backwards and forwards with buckets of water which he poured over the radiator.

While these cooling operations were in progress, the train rumbled by and among the passengers at the windows Florio caught sight of his irate brother, endeavouring to convey his disapproval by violent gestures. Before the gates were opened Florio wrote a note stating:

"I'm enjoying myself wonderfully; don't you worry."

When opposite the grandstands, a short distance ahead, he steered with one hand, to the consternation of some of the spectators, and ostensibly threw the note out with the certitude that it would be picked up immediately and carried to his brother. The race was won by Lancia on a Fiat at

about 72 m.p.h., Teste was second on a Panhard, and Florio was third on his Mercedes. Duray brought his Darracq into fourth place, followed by Nazzaro on Florio's Panhard, and by Cagno on a Fiat. This race was run under maximum weight limit of 1,000 kilogrammes. Friends declared that the first two cars were overweight and urged Florio to lodge a protest. He refused to do so, stating that he had no desire to spoil a perfect day.

Having become of age, Florio was free from this time from the guardianship of his brother and was able to indulge in racing to his heart's content. He was seen in many of the races and hill-climbs on the French Riviera, in the Emperor's Cup race, on a Darracq, and in the first French Grand Prix race, held at Le Mans, in 1906, where he was a semi-official member of the Mercedes team. Running at high speed on one of the fast straightaways, a tyre burst and came off the rim. By the time the car had been brought to a standstill the rim was flattened to such an extent that it was impossible to fit a new cover, and as neither detachable rims nor demountable wheels were used, the Mercedes had to be left by the roadside.

In the United States W. K. Vanderbilt, junior, had offered the Vanderbilt Cup which was competed for several times on Long Island. In Paris, James Gordon Bennett, a founder member of the Automobile Club de France, donated a cup which was to be competed for under the unique condition of three cars per nation. It was only after this cup had been won by S. F. Edge, and brought to England (more exactly to Ireland), that it assumed international importance. Always individualistic and eccentric, James Gordon Bennett had imposed an unusual condition, at that period, in insisting on three cars per nation, for he knew that while France could have presented a dozen teams, other nations would have difficulty in offering more than one. Another peculiarity was that in Mr. Bennett's own paper, the *New York Herald,* the trophy was the "Coupe Internationale," while everywhere else throughout the world it was the Gordon Bennett Cup. This might cause bewilderment among *Herald* readers, but Mr. Bennett was unique among

newspaper proprietors in not caring what his readers thought. Another idiosyncrasy was that the donator of the cup never attended any of the races.

Inspired by these examples, Vincenzo Florio decided, in 1904, to offer a permanent challenge, the Coppa Florio, which was first competed for at Brescia, in 1905. Now held by Bugatti, this trophy is still in competition.

After attending the last of the Gordon Bennett races in Auvergne, in 1905, Florio was brought in contact, in Paris, with Henri Desgrange, editor of the daily sporting paper *L'Auto*. This publication had been financed by the Automobile Club de France in order to further the development of the motor movement and had quickly become a very successful institution. A peculiarity was that its editor-in-chief was not a motorist and never learned to drive a car, but was specially interested in cycling and had as his ambition the production of a superman-cyclist. Nevertheless, Desgrange was fully alive to the importance of motor racing and had definite opinions as to the future of the whole movement, and in course of the conversation he remarked:

" Why do you not have a race in Sicily? "

Somewhat taken aback by the question, the young sportsman replied:

" Why we have no roads."

Compared with France and other European countries which he knew so well, the Island of Sicily was indeed deficient in highways, for roads are not easy to build in a mountainous region and the agriculturalists, who formed the great mass of the population, were satisfied with primitive means of communication. The suggestion, however, took root, and before the year was out the announcement had been made that a Targa Florio was about to come into being.

Chapter 3

It is impossible to attend and participate in motor races without learning something of their management, and in this respect Vincenzo Florio was particularly well qualified, for he had been present at every big race on the Continent for five years, and he had driven in an important number of them.

To announce that there would be a Targa Florio race in 1905 and to give instructions to a leading Paris goldsmith to prepare a solid gold plate—the Targa—as the trophy was the first and the easiest stage in the programme. Conditions in the mountainous island of Sicily presented such peculiarities as to make the organisation of a race both easy and particularly difficult. Free to roam around Europe, and taking full advantage of that liberty, Florio had to confess that he was not as fully acquainted with the hinterland of the island as might have been expected of a native. After much research, his agents reported to him that a circuit could be laid out, starting by the side of the sea, near the village of Cerda, 30 miles to the east of Palermo, climbing into the mountains until it attained a height of 3,670 feet, then dropping down to sea level until, after a distance of 149 kilometres it ran straight and undeviating to the starting point. More than 90 miles of the most crazy highway it was possible to imagine, with the road struggling painfully to attain altitude, twisting, doubling back on itself as if giving up in despair, then resolutely attacking the vertical mass in a rage of determination to reach the fortified village towering above it. The road had been engineered, of that there was no doubt, engineered by successive generations whose very existence depended on reaching some dominating point and entrenching themselves there: no scattered farms, no isolated buildings, but compact groups of dwellings cunningly constructed on ledges. From the high ground

the shimmer of the sea was visible to the north; to the east Etna reared its grey-fringed mass.

The road surface was considered passable—passable for mule carts, for in 1905 other means of locomotion were practically unknown in Sicily. The railroad had spread itself over from the mainland, but it had kept to the shore strip and even there was only a single track. To this day the highlands have retained their independence. When the surface became too rutted, a few stones were dumped; occasionally water was brought and a stamper was used; more often rain supplied the moisture and the cart wheels did the rolling. Under a more pampered civilisation there would have been one long sign, 90 miles from end to end, with the word D-A-N-G-E-R inscribed upon it in blood-red letters. A paternal motoring association would have warned travellers that there was no petrol, no garage, no service station for 30, 40, 50 miles. As all this was beyond the bounds of possibility, the drivers were to discover the outstanding danger spots for themselves and to endeavour—unsuccessfully—to learn all the intricacies of this wild, sun-kissed, flower-bedecked or snow-capped Sicilian circuit.

At the starting line all was grace and beauty. Festoons of oranges and lemons formed the main theme of the decoration; splashes of geraniums, eucalyptus trees, an immense variety of cacti bordered the road. In the background was the railway, with the shimmering Mediterranean in ever-changing tints of blue. Towering above the scene was the mighty mass of San Caltogero, a benevolent guardian, green to its 5,200 feet summit. Soon the driver began to ask himself, " Will this road never straighten out?" It presented no real danger, but it writhed as a tortured soul, freed from remorse for a few hundred yards, then again stricken with rage or fury which caused it to twist back on itself, to dash forward in despair, only to find there was no outlet in that direction and once more to double on itself. In the village of Cerda, five miles from its railway station, it consented to run straight for at least six hundred yards, then doubling back it climbed above this cubist village, giving us a view of its gently sloping roofs, its houses without chimneys, its

straight, narrow streets, formed by a series of steps. So directly was it below us that a stone might have been flung on to any selected roof.

A pleasant country, laid out in irregular patches of green from the soft English meadow in spring to the dark Italian olive, interspersed with the mauve tints of luscious clover and splashed here and there with the vivid yellow of gorse. Up and up climbed the road, with occasional respites as it sought a deep valley as if to secure strength for a still further effort. The dark green of asparagus fields, a slope covered with prickly cactus and behind it a vertical wall of brown rock so finely polished that no seed could find root on its smooth surface. Topping the cliff the ruins of a castle.

After the villages of Caltavuturo and Castellana had been negotiated, Petralia came into view at 3,000 feet. In reality this was Petralia Sottana, or Lower Petralia, for its companion, or rival, Petralia Soprano, occupied a higher peak only a mile or so away. The Petralias were built not on the mountain, but IN the mountain. In ages long forgotten, earlier races had selected this highest mountain ridge and had hewn into the face of the rock until dwellings were constructed, a terrace had been formed, a church had been built; wrought iron railings protected the edge of this balcony, from which boulders might have been rolled—and doubtless were rolled—on any undesirables who attempted to climb the track cut into the face of the cliff. With the passing of years the track had become a road—a ledge-road with a vertical drop on the right and the uninviting vertical walls of the dwellings on the left. Facing south, the natives looked from their windows into a deep, sun-kissed valley, where goats found footing, where sheep grazed and crops were raised on the small patches, enabling the Petralians to manufacture the macaroni for which they had become famous. As full of interest as it may be, let it not be supposed that Petralia has done anything to attract the tourist. Picture postcards and souvenirs could be looked for in vain; no garage has defiled its narrow streets; it possesses no albergo or dainty restaurant, and he who would partake of afternoon tea must bring the beverage with him.

But there is another height to be scaled, and it came just before Geraci, at 3,670 feet above sea level. There the ridge came to an end and the road dropped away into nothingness, or so it seemed. Instead it swung sharp left, and we found ourselves looking up at the back of Geraci, if any town can claim to have a back and a front when it is built on the razor edge of a mountain ridge. To the right, a sheer drop gradually easing until it reached a deep sheltered valley, with an occasional building, vegetation, signs of crops. Then it climbed up again to another ridge, the same height as our own, with a gap of nearly three miles between us. That ridge seemed bare rock until the eyes grew accustomed to the outline and the glasses confirmed that the peak had been transformed into a cluster of houses—the village of Santa Mauro—with a yellow string like an antenne laid on the flank of the mountain and representing a road. On the skyline a solitary umbrella pine formed a landmark and still further to the left another ridge with houses hewn into its face. Truly these Sicilians are sky dwellers. For more than 10 miles we ran downhill on a gradient steeper than any of those we had climbed to reach Geraci: an easy winding descent for the unhurried tourist but a terrible brake test for the racer trying to save fractions of a second. The tourists, on all occasions, appear to be absent and only an occasional mule was met. A solitary sign post in this great natural calmness, disturbed only by the whispering of the wind, announced that somebody's sewing machine was the best. Had these mountaineers been converted to American mechanical methods?

As the descent continued, the wild grandeur gave way to more luxurious vegetation: olive groves, lemons and oranges, fields of artichokes until, in the well-paved streets of Castelbuona, narrow and without footpaths, splashes of geraniums and rose-filled gardens met the eye. While there was width for two cars abreast in this twisty, elongated village street, he would have been a bold driver who would have attempted to pass a rival. On the race day the natives would be kept behind barricades and light bridges would give communication from one side of the street to the other.

Through the lowlands, more tortuous roads, climbs alternating with descents until, after Isnello and Collesano, there came a long, easy descent to the happily named town of Campofelice, a hundred feet or so above the fertile strip bordering the Mediterranean. As a recompense for the arduous work in the hills, the road ran straight and wide for a distance of five miles.

Brigands will have to be dealt with it was declared when the first Targa Florio race was announced, for a Sicily without brigands was inconceivable. Also there will be the Maffia. From the birth of history successive civilisations have swept over the island—Phœnicians, Carthagians, Romans, Byzantins, Arabs, Normans, Angevins—have fought for and gained possession of the whole or parts of the island, traces of their passage still being clearly visible. Under this intense struggle the mountains became fortresses and remained strongholds for generations. Vincenzo Florio lightly dismisses all danger of brigands. " I once met one," he explained, " without really knowing it. We had stopped by the roadside for a picnic lunch when a body of horsemen approached us. One of them was a very handsome man and I wished to take a photograph of him. He strongly objected to this, constantly moving around on his fiery little horse and leaving me no time to get him into focus. The men explained that they were guardians of the surrounding property. When they had gone the elder brother enquired:

" Do you know who that man was? "

" No."

" Well it was Galioto, the famous brigand."

So brigands did exist in Sicily. Outstanding proof of it is to be found in the adventure of the British Consul, Mr. Rose, who, driving through the country with his wife, was called to a halt by a group of armed horsemen. One of them approached and remarked very politely, " Signor Cavaliere, I must ask you to accompany me."

Instead of invoking the might of the British Empire and threatening recriminations the Britisher replied in the same tone, " Naturally I am at your entire disposal, but I assume

you will grant me a few minutes to take leave of my wife? " Then the unprotesting official was led away to the fastness of Santa Mauro, 4,000 feet above sea level, a retreat which could not be stormed by the most dashing Alpine troops and against which artillery was practically useless. For four days the representative of the British Government was treated with the utmost consideration and when the ransom had been paid Mr. Rose and Brigand Leoni had become close friends, the Britisher declaring that he would never forget his stay in the mountains and Leoni swearing that the Consul was his friend for life and could rely on him for protection under all circumstances. This spirit of chivalry was not always evident between the natives themselves. There was the case of the village of Valguarnera which for several generations had waged war with its neighbour, each one raiding, looting and burning the other with varied success. The last word was with Valguarnera. Some of the members of the community had worked in the United States, and they arranged with their compatriots for a complete exodus to the land of the free, where there were always railroads to be built, bridges to be constructed, or the Chicago streets to sweep. Secretly arrangements were made, possessions were packed on mules and the entire population wended its way to Palermo to embark for America. When the unfriendly neighbours again swept on Valguarnera, they found to their mortification that only bare walls and roofs remained for them to destroy. But they did not destroy them; instead they left the deserted village with rage in their hearts.

Then there was the Maffia. Its exact composition never has been clearly defined, but its existence was a reality. To be in its ranks, or under its protection meant that the gold sent from America by father, brother or husband reached its destination; crops were safe and sheep and goats prospered. If there was trouble with the authorities over such a trivial matter as military service, the carabinieri were quite incapable of finding their man. How could they take these mountaineers by surprise when from their peaks they dominated the entire countryside and had every road and

track under observation? Defy the Maffia and the post failed to bring any letters ; crops were not safe ; cattle had an unfortunate habit of straying and disaster followed disaster. It was not until Mussolini came on the scene and applied harsh, ruthless methods, which did not exclude mass shootings, that the power of the Maffia was broken—at any rate partially.

But when this first race was announced the cunning of the brigands and the power of the Maffia would have to be contested—or so it appeared to outsiders. Press Photographer Meurisse, the world's first motor photographer, who had become fascinated by the movement and had followed the early racers from St. Petersburg to Madrid, from Ireland to Austria, creating a pictorial record which has never been equalled, was sent to Sicily to secure views of the new circuit. Vincenzo Florio supplied him with a car and assured him the service of Victor Rigal, professional race driver, then acting as successor to Nazzaro, to take him into the mountains. It was winter and even in Sicily winter storms can be severe at altitudes of three to four thousand feet. Petralia having been reached, it was realised that it would be impossible to go any further until the storm had blown itself out. Petralia boasted no hotel, no inn, no restaurant. The arrival of a car in mid-winter, with two Frenchmen aboard, the two of them not possessing more than a dozen words of Italian, created such a sensation that they were brought into the presence of Baron Pottino. Undoubtedly the Baron wielded supreme power over the village and the surrounding country; he greeted the two visitors with the true dignity of a mountain chief, assuring them of food, protection and shelter as long as they desired to remain under his roof. The dimly lit room into which they were ushered had the solemnity of a cathedral and the dimensions of a public hall.

Nervous and romantic, Meurisse had visions of a midnight attack, of robbery, of daggers and of bodies being dropped out of the window to lie for ever in some cleft hundreds of feet below. Precautions must be taken and the method which most readily suggested itself was to attach the thumbs of the two men by a long string. If either one had

suspicions during the night, he would jerk the string and arouse his companion. Instead of suspicions, Meurisse had nightmare and the jerk he gave was so violent that Rigal seized his revolver and fired shots in the dark.

With true courtesy, the incident was not even mentioned by the Baron and his staff and after three days the snow-bound travellers began to appreciate the qualities of this feudal lord. But when the race started was there not danger of some unruly mountaineer loosening a boulder and sending it crashing to one of the ledges below, carrying with it death and destruction? With as much circumspection as possible, the Baron was asked what he would do when racing cars invaded his territory. With calm dignity he replied, " When progress comes to my land I allow it to pass." The fact remains that for 50 years motor races have been held over these Sicilian highlands and not one instance can be discovered of armed attack or even of unfriendliness. The word had been given by the chiefs that progress should be unmolested, and it passed, freely.

There are still feuds, quarrels between families and occasionally between village and village ; an individual may defy the law and hold it at defiance for weeks and months, but brigandage has disappeared. When General Patton's troops landed in the south and began their push northwards towards Palermo and Messina, certain die-hard German troops realised the possibility of holding up an entire army by establishing themselves with a few machine guns in some mountain fastness. Instead of sending men forward in the old-fashioned skirmishing and outflanking movement, the Americans withdrew and sent a message back to their air force. A dive bomber, knowing that he would have to meet with no real opposition, dropped his load on a spot which had been pin-pointed, and a few hours later the army resumed its forward march. Can any brigand, no matter how bold and daring he may be, risk being attacked from the air?

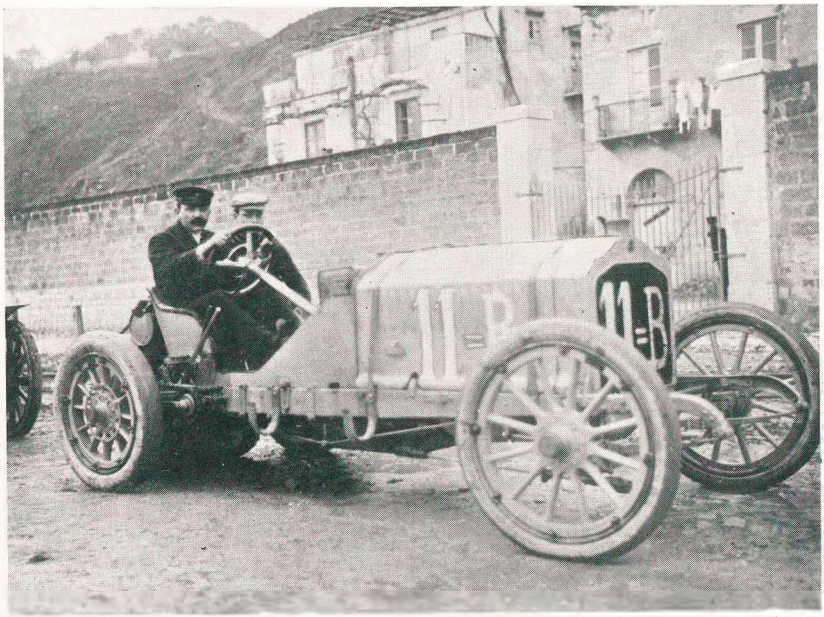
Chapter 4

Road racing conditions of 40 years ago had little in common with those of to-day. As a reaction to the town-to-town events, the circuits had to be as far away from centres of habitation as possible, although the proximity of a town to the starting line was an advantage; they had to be long —30, 40, 50 or more miles round—and they had to avoid villages as far as that was possible. To avoid inconvenience to other road users, the starts had to be made as early as possible in the morning, not infrequently at dawn.

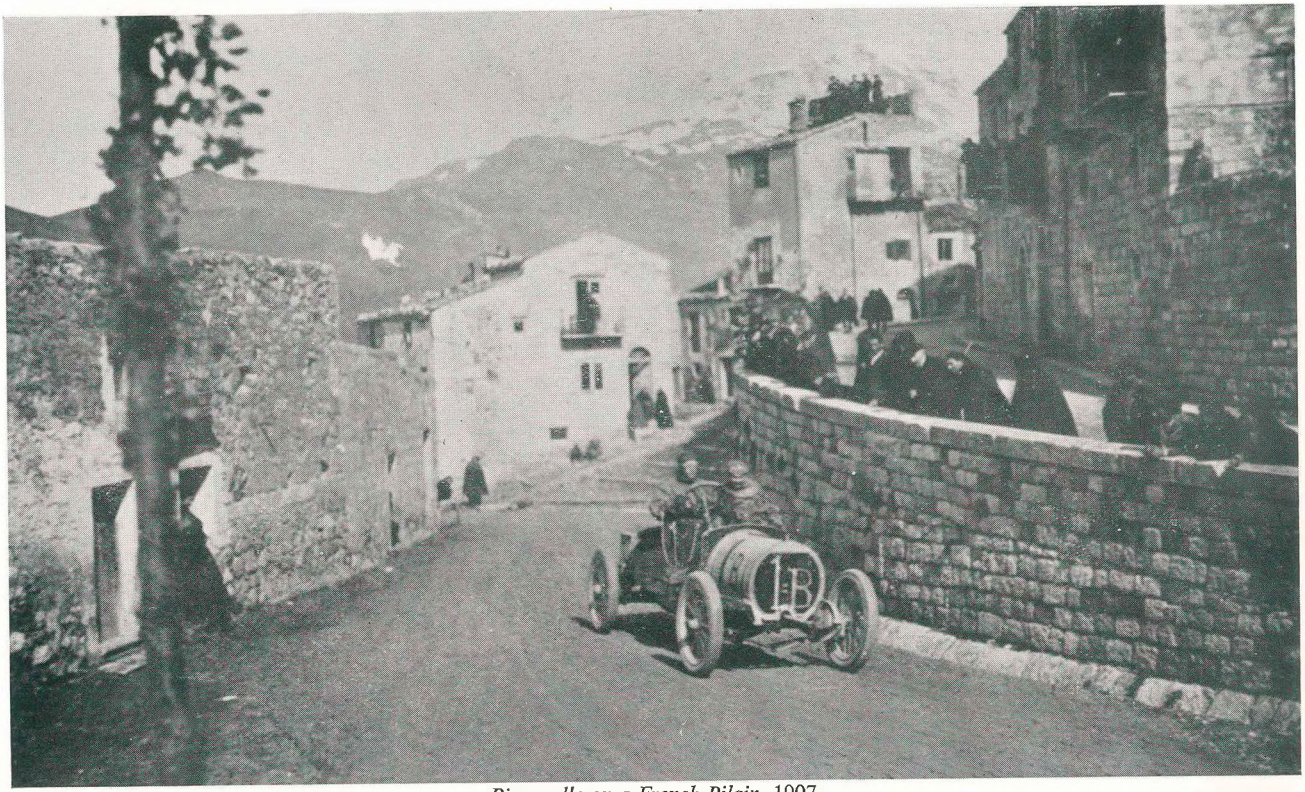
All this did not tend to attract huge crowds and the man, or group of men, who undertook to organise a motor race knew full well that the enterprise would be a costly one for them. Much as the French club has been criticised for its racing policy, nobody has taken the trouble even to estimate the vast amounts it spent on the organisation of its long series of famous Grand Prix road races held in various parts of the country.

The first Targa Florio race, held on Sunday, May 6, 1906, united all the material advantages as they were then known. The circuit, starting from a road a few yards from the sea, was practically 90 miles round—90 miles into the wild mountains to an altitude of nearly 3,700 feet, with few villages, no telegraphic or wireless communication, no trains, no linkage with the outside faster than that of a mule. The race was to start at 6 o'clock and Palermo, the only important town, was 30 miles away with no other connections than a single-track railway and a dusty, rutted highway. Did this damp enthusiasm? Not in the least. To see the start it was necessary to rise long before dawn, to consent to be packed in an uncomfortable railway carriage, or to spend a couple of hours on the road, with the certainty of swallowing much dust and the possibility of vigorous exercise in changing and inflating tyres. Each racing car would pass by at intervals of about two hours, leaving plenty

Lancia on a big Fiat (1907). *The boy by his side is Pictro Bordino.*



Gabriel, winner of Paris-Madrid, on a Lorraine Dietrich in the 1907 *Targa Florio.*



Pizzagalle on a French Pilain, 1907.

of time for speculation as to what was happening in the highlands; and when all was over and the winner had been proclaimed, cheered, kissed, had told his story and related his adventures, the spectators had to fight for places in the trains blocked on the siding or to struggle with one another on the highway in a fog of *polveri*. A second day had dawned before most of them reached their homes, but already they had decided that they would be present on the following year.

Perhaps the drivers were little concerned with the historic wealth of the country through which they were to race. When excavations were made for the grandstands, bronzes and potteries were unearthed revealing a settlement here which went back to several centuries before the Christian era, but this was only a slight link in the chain of civilisation along the Mediterranean shores. Twenty-two stalwarts had inscribed themselves to win this solid gold plate inscribed "Targa Vincenzo Florio 1906," but strikes in France and a hold-up of shipping at Genoa reduced their numbers to ten. Victor Hemery and Hanriot waited in vain for the steamer to arrive with their Darracqs; a Mors was missing and a Mendellsohn was absent. Officially the race was for standard cars, for the regulations stipulated that at least ten of each type should have been built. But look at their dimensions: four cylinders of 130 by 140 for the Italas, of 125 by 150 for the Fiat driven by Lancia, while the "small" Clement Bayards had cylinder dimensions of 100 by 120 mm. Side chains had not lost their supporters; detachable wheels were unknown, although detachable rims had a limited use; tyres had to be inflated with a hand pump, and it had not even been imagined that brakes could be fitted elsewhere than on the rear wheels and the transmission.

Among the drivers there were men who had already made history. Big, blond, joyful Henri Fournier had distinguished himself by winning the Paris to Berlin race in 1901 on a Mors. A native of Le Mans, he was working in his father's shop as a mechanic when H. O. Duncan discovered his qualities as a racing cyclist and backed him first as an amateur and later as a professional. Released from military

service he learned to ride De Dion tricycles supplied to him by Charron. As early as 1896 he went to the United States with one of these machines and was giving music-hall exhibitions in San Francisco when an enthusiast offered to buy the machine providing it was delivered to him immediately after the evening's display. The American doubtless imagined that in this way he would avoid being saddled with a " dud." The price agreed on was $2,000, and this was paid at the stage door in coins of ten and twenty dollars representing such a weight of metal that Fournier could not put it in his pocket, but had to carry it to his hotel in his hat, fearful that he might be attacked by early morning footpads. Sent to England to initiate Major Laycock into the mysteries of motor driving, he advised that gentleman to purchase a racing Mors and to lend it to him for both the Paris to Bordeaux and the Paris to Berlin races, in both of which Henri came home first. Later he was to take up the general agency in France for Itala cars, but in 1905 he had been entrusted with a Bayard-Clement, while his brother Maurice, who never figured so prominently in the public eye and was later killed at Le Mans, had a similar machine.

Fiat was already well embarked on a racing programme and sent her chief tester, the burly, cheerful Vincenzo Lancia, to drive it. Itala, a Turin firm then full of promise, sent five cars, one of which was driven by Pope, the English representative, who calmly started away smoking a cigar. Cagno, who was later to join Fiat and remain there permanently, had another of the Italas. Victor Rigal, who had succeeded Nazzaro as Florio's chauffeur, had the third Itala, Baron De Caters had the fourth, and Graziani was on the fifth. Then there was Paul Bablot, who had been a prominent member of the Brasier team in the Gordon Bennett events, now driving a Berliet, with the Franco-Italian Jean Porporato, later to be prominent in the Isle of Man Tourist Trophy races, as his mechanic. A year earlier the Hotchkiss gun company, a French firm founded by an American, had extended its activities to motor construction, which naturally included racing. One of their cars was entrusted to bearded Le Blon and that it was a standard model was

evidenced by the four-seater open body and the brackets from which the huge acetylene headlights had been removed. Madame Le Blon, clad in a long white dustcoat, with veil and goggles, accompanied her husband as mécanicienne and proved her endurance by remaining with him more than twelve hours on that difficult, groggy, mountainous circuit.

What happened during those twelve hours, those three laps of the mountainous circuit, those 365 miles? Only the drivers and their companions could tell the full story, and Time has removed most of them. Pope broke his petrol pipe and lost his fuel in a region where motor spirit was unknown. The impetuous Henri Fournier collided with a boundary stone and damaged his rear axle. Lancia, who never was particularly tender towards the cars he drove, suffered a leaky fuel tank, then lost all compression on two of his cylinders. A strange adventure occurred to both Rigal and to Bablot, at the primitive replenishment stations up in the mountains. In each case somebody seized a can marked " benzina " and dumped its contents into the rear tank. But some dumb-head had filled that can with water, as the drivers were to perceive before they had travelled 100 yards. Amid curses and perspiration the tanks were emptied and flushed, then refilled after an immense loss of time. Le Blon and Madame were dogged with tyre trouble. To-day the changing of a tyre, even without the aid of pit attendants, is a matter of seconds. But in 1906 the car had to be jacked up, the defunct tyre levered off (sometimes it was cut off with jack knives), a new tyre fitted, the tube inserted, care being taken to see that it was not nipped by the lugs (Oh, those lugs) and then inflated by hand pump. Thoroughly exhausted by these strenuous 20 minutes under a scorching sun, watched only by a silently circling eagle, the driver would vault into his seat and hurl himself down the ledge-like road in a hair-raising manner.

But there was one man who did not meet with adventure. It was the quiet, unsensational, non-demonstrative Cagno on one of the Italas. He finished first on the initial lap, he was passed on the second by his team-mate Grazani, and he finished the race 33 minutes ahead of him. The race won,

the gold plate his to be carried home, Cagno's pent-up emotion got the better of him, for he applied the brakes with such fierceness that he completely stripped the crown wheel. He could not have run another yard, but it was not necessary to run another yard, for he had won the first Targa Florio race at an average of 29.07 m.p.h

Are you preparing to smile, dear Reader? If so, take your modern car, with its highly efficient overhead valve engine, its modern carburetter, its unfailing ignition system, its easily changed gears, its four-wheel brakes, its perfect balance, its scientific streamlining; place it on the seashore road below Cerda, then proceed to scale the heights to Petralia. From there fling yourself down the winding road to the sea; and when you are once more among the orange groves, start out instantly again to scale the heights; having done that set out a third time for a round of this beautifully wild circuit. You may have fleeting impressions of gorgeously magnificent scenery, of dangers passed so quickly that they have hardly time to impress themselves; the mountain air may have intoxicated you, but if your average speed for the full distance—if you go the full distance—stands higher than 30 m.p.h. you may congratulate yourself on having a good car and assure yourself that you are no mean driver.

Chapter 5

Under modern standards, a race with ten starters, six finishers, and an average speed for the winner of rather less than 30 m.p.h. and about 23 miles for the last man home, would be considered a failure. Standards of appreciation were different, however, 40 years ago, for it was realised that this Sicilian race constituted a supreme test of both men and machines and that the quality of the winner could not be doubted. Thus, when the second race was announced, under practically the same conditions, for April, 1907, there were 50 contestants.

A glance down the list of makes evokes glorious memories: Fiat, De Dietrich, Isotta Fraschini, Bayard Clement, Itala, Darracq, Daimler, Gobron, Zust, Benz, Berliet, and others of lesser importance who failed in a keenly competitive world. The drivers too, were the most brilliant of the period. The dissimilar but equally successful Nazzaro and Lancia, both of whom were to become car manufacturers a few years later; the boyish Arthur Duray at the wheel of his big Dietrich, having as a team mate the subdued Gabriel who had established himself by winning the first and only stage of the Paris to Madrid race and who was destined, years later, to perish in an air raid on the suburbs of Paris; the acrobatic Louis Wagner, issue of a family which had refused to live in Alsace after the 1870 war; his companion Hanriot, three years later a successful aeroplane manufacturer; blunt-spoken ex-seaman Victor Hemery, who had a chain-driven English Daimler, built under licence at Naples; Fritz Opel and Erle from Germany; the aristocratic Sorel piloting an equally aristocratic Isotta Fraschini; Victor Rigal, later to become associated with Sunbeam, and others who just flitted across the stage of motordom.

This invasion of fifty machines and several hundred men more or less associated with their operation created an acute housing problem. Geographically Cerda was the nearest

town to the starting line. But Cerda did not possess and still does not possess either hotel or inn, boarding house or garage, petrol station or repair shop. Termini Immersi, established by the Phœnicians, destroyed by the Angevins in the thirteenth century, rebuilt and possessing all its medieval characteristics in this twentieth century, had the Grand Hotel des Thermes with its marble-walled natural hot-water baths which would have been considered a marvel in our over-commercialised countries. But the monastic stone bedrooms and dining hall of the leading hotel offered limited accommodation and few attractions to visitors. A solution was found by turning the management of the entire hotel over to the Villa Igiea, Palermo's palace hotel and one of the best in Europe. Warehouses and sheds were hired everywhere, and in place of stacks of sulphur, quantities of macaroni, supplies of olive oil, tunny fish, oranges and lemons, racing cars and racing equipment filled the town. In all cases the factories were hundreds of miles away, thus necessitating liberal supplies of parts; tyre wear probably would be high, thus 30 per car was considered a minimum.

Old world Termini Immersi was completely transformed. The cobble-paved streets without footpaths but with long easy steps leading from the harbour to the top of the cliff, were deserted by their usual mules and echoed to the roar of open exhausts. Gesticulating half-clad bambini clustered around the doors of the improvised garages and with the agility of monkeys sought to secure admission to this new world of mechanics.

The once gloomy, silent Hotel dei Bagni was filled to such an extent with drivers, team managers and their supporters that shake-down beds had been placed in the stone corridors. At dinner group merged into group—the Fiat contingent, the Isotta team, Darracq, Daimler, Lorraine-Dietrich. All languages were spoken, but there was only one subject—racing cars—and this was discussed with such vehemence that the noise was deafening. A sweepstake was organised. Fifty liras for Lancia. Who is buying Lancia for more than fifty liras? One hundred for Nazzaro. How much for Wagner, for Minoia, for Duray? Bids came rapidly,

noisily, with cheers and comments on the ability or characteristics of the various favourites until, finally, those considered to have outstanding chances were knocked down at fabulous prices.

As on the previous year starts were given individually; indeed no other system was possible on a circuit of this nature, but in view of the greater number of cars the intervals were reduced to three minutes. Under the rules cars of 120 to 130-mm. bore were admitted, with a minimum weight of 1,000 kilos. If the bore exceeded 130 mm. an extra weight of 20 kilos per millimetre was imposed. It had not then been decided whether chain or shaft drive offered the greater advantage. Fiat, Lorraine-Dietrich, Zust, Clement Bayard, Benz, Radia, Gobron, Daimler, Isotta Fraschini, and Berliet pinned their faith to side chains. Darracq, Itala, and Opel constituted a minority with what was supposed to be the more delicate shaft drive. As to tyres, a few were daring enough to use detachable rims, but the majority clung conservatively to fixed rims with the use of lugs to hold the casing in position.

On this long uninhabited mountainous Targa Florio circuit there were difficulties quite unknown to the competitors of the short circuits of to-day. For 90 miles, that is for at least two and three-quarter hours, the driver would be all alone with no means of knowing how he stood in relation to his rivals. To fix a pace and increase it or decrease it according to circumstances was impossible, for somebody might have fixed and maintained a higher pace, and that would not be known until it was too late. Occasionally a driver might catch sight of another car on the opposite mountain side, but this would not necessarily be the dangerous rival; the mechanic might report a car closing up astern, but all this was of little assistance. The only rule was to drive all out, to accept every risk, to take each bend at the maximum compatible with keeping on the road. Then, at the end of the lap, after one-third distance had been covered, the driver would know whether his effort had been rewarded or not.

Perhaps spectators were endowed with more imagination

than we of to-day, for they could be enthusiastic at seeing a car start, at watching it flash past—or limp into the pits on two occasions and speculating on how it would finish, or if it would finish at all. Keyed up to concentrated excitement, we should now consider such races dull, but in the early nineteen hundreds it was realised that men who set out on the Targa Florio circuit had embarked on adventure and that they were submitting themselves to the supreme test. Was it not at the end of his first Targa Florio race that the great Lancia enunciated his truism: "The first condition for winning a race is to stay on the road"?

In this 1907 event the struggle lay between Italy and France. Italy with Fiat, Itala, Isotta Fraschini, and a few smaller and now unknown makes; France with Darracq, Bayard-Clement, Gobron, Dietrich, and a sprinkling of hopefuls. The drivers who stood out most prominently were Lancia and Nazzaro, the former bulky, jovial, dominating his car by brute force, the latter slim, elegant, distinguished, delicate of touch, burning with enthusiasm. France placed the athletic, acrobatic, outspoken Louis Wagner as the best of her drivers of the period; but there was a lot of attachment to the cheery, youthful, Franco-Belgian-New Yorker Arthur Duray, with his impressive Lorraine Dietrich. His team-mate Gabriel had faded into the background since his Paris-Madrid exploit, while the three men on the Bayard-Clement team did not really stand in the front rank.

At the end of the first lap the outlook was bright for the Italians, with Fiat, Itala, and Isotta in the lead, followed by Darracq and Dietrich. The impetuous Lancia covered this initial round in 2 hrs. 43 mins. 8 secs., or 14 seconds ahead of Cagno's Itala. As Trucco's Isotta Fraschini was third, Nazzaro's Fiat in fourth place, and Minoia's Isotta Fraschini in fifth position, the French with Wagner's Darracq sixth, five and a half minutes behind the leader, appeared to have an inferiority complex. Then Wagner decided that it was time to make a still greater effort: he passed both Cagno and Lancia and closed up to within three minutes of Nazzaro, while Duray was only two minutes behind Lancia. Truly it was a battle royal between the Italians and the French.

Running in the third and final lap with high hopes of catching the fleety Nazzaro, the Darracq engine suddenly roared away without transmitting any power to the rear wheels. " Slipped out of gear," exclaimed the Frenchman.

But no, the gear was properly engaged.

" Propeller shaft gone." But from under the car the mechanic called back, " Il n'y a rien."

Jacking up the rear and engaging a gear it was found that the wheel spun freely: the half-shaft was broken at the outer end. Reduced to impotence, the great French driver sat by the roadside and watched his more fortunate companions go by, picturing to himself the scene, 40 miles away, as the winner roared up in a blaze of glory and excitement. That man was Felice Nazzaro, on his powerful Fiat, a national and a local favourite, for had he not spent three years in Sicily as " chauffeur " to the universally esteemed Vincenzo Florio? Behind him came his companion Lancia, then an Itala, thus giving first three places for the Italians, with France's Lorraine-Dietrich, driven by Duray, in fourth position. How keen had been the struggle was shown by the fact that fourth, fifth, and sixth cars all finished within the same minute.

One hour and fourteen minutes had been clipped off the previous year's time, over the same circuit, the same distance and with the road surface only slightly improved. This could be attributed only to mechanical progress, for at that period changes were great from year to year.

If we admit that on this long circuit there were a thousand bends, nearly all of them on climbs or descents, one thousand points at which a driver could lose or gain a second or a fraction of a second, the regularity of the first two drivers was really remarkable. Between his first lap with a standing start, and his second, Nazzaro's variation was 23 seconds and between the second and the third, on which he had to change a tyre, the difference was five minutes. After his initial burst of speed, Lancia settled himself to a more steady pace, with a variation of only nineteen and one-fifth seconds between the second and the last lap. Cumbersome and unwieldly as they now appear to us, these cars of 40 years

ago had wonderful reliability and the marvel is that men could be found to drive them with such regularity.

We put forth motor racing as a sport, and a sport it is. But behind it all there is a highly competitive commercial spirit. The French industry had been beaten in a race which, in the brief period of a few months, had acquired a reputation as one of the world's classics. And among the defeated was Alexandre Darracq, who refused to accept the results of the contest with equanimity. One of the earliest to take part in speed contests, Darracq did not claim to be a " sportsman." Races were organised to prove superiority —his superiority, if possible. The duty of Chief Engineer Ribeyrolle was to design cars faster than those of other firms. Race drivers were paid to win, and if they failed to win they should be replaced by more competent men. There was no false sentiment, no sympathy for the man who ran off the road or who injured himself.

" No brakes on this d—— car," ejaculated Wagner coming back from a test run.

" Young man, you ought to understand that we build cars to go, not to stop ; let us hear no more foolish talk about brakes," retorted the irate Alexandre Darracq.

The defeat in the Targa Florio had to be explained. " We shall have to announce that the drivers ran off the road," declared the head of the company.

" But that is not true," retorted the angry Wagner. " You know very well that there was a mechanical failure ; the same part broke on both my car and that driven by Henriot. Your rotten machinery is no good. If you state that I ran off the road, you are damaging my reputation."

" But the reputation of a motor manufacturer is much more important than that of a race driver," was the answer.

" Well, if you put the blame on me you will regret it," retorted Wagner.

This was a period when successful race drivers were none too plentiful and when firms were prepared to pay big premiums to secure the services of good men. Usually they had a standing salary, a premium for every race they started in and a handsome reward for every race they won. As a

counterpart they had to forfeit an important sum if they passed to the services of a rival before the expiration of their contract.

Fiat had need of another good driver and through an intermediary had made it known to Wagner that if he wished to leave Darracq a position would be awaiting him at Turin. Thus when the French firm publicly made it known that their two cars had failed to finish in the Targa Florio because of driver faults—faults which might be excused in view of the difficult nature of the circuit, Wagner passed the word along that he was willing to talk business. Within a few days it was settled: Fiat would double the driver's earnings; the forfeit due to Darracq would be paid by them.

Then the storm burst: a competitor, a rival, a foreigner, had enticed the crack driver away. A " pont d'or " had been constructed to allow this driver to pass from one camp to another. The expression " Golden Bridge " attracted the newspapers, which seriously discussed whether a man was entitled to sell himself to another firm to the detriment of the national industry of his native land. The matter was brought before the Automobile Club which discussed the question in due solemnity, for Darracq had declared that he would withdraw from all racing if he could not be protected against the pilfering methods of foreign rivals. The storm raged for several months; then like all storms it blew itself out.

Chapter 6

Perhaps it was a reaction against the ever-increasing size, weight and power of both ordinary and racing cars that the " voiturette " came into existence. At the outset they were charmingly simple little cars, usually with a single-cylinder of 100 to 120-mm. bore, sometimes having the primitive chain drive, and nearly always with open two-seater bodies. Voiturette enthusiasts extolled the merits of the single-cylinder, doubted if the twin offered any real advantages and dismissed the four as useless luxury with complication. With multi-cylinders the ordinary motorist was not always sure that each one was doing its fair share of work, although petcocks in the cylinder head, allowing the flame to shoot out into the open, were wonderfully efficient in detecting a laggard. There was no such complication with the single; either it was working or it was idle, and when it was in a healthy condition there was real pleasure in listening to its steady rhythmic beat.

Motoring then being a combination of both sport and transport, the voiturette quickly became a racing machine, and Vincenzo Florio, who seems to have spent all his life in competing or causing others to compete in every form of human activity, announced his first voiturette race around the Sicilian circuit as early as April, 1907, only a few days before the big event for the Targa. France was the biggest producer of these little cars and the racing versions—to-day we should call them sports models—were in the hands of only two or three firms, notable among them being Sizaire & Naudin and Peugeot. Because of the distance and the expense, not many of these could make the long journey to Sicily, but Florio overcame this by purchasing eight De Dion Boutons, driving one himself and persuading his friends to take the wheel of the seven others.

There was real adventure in taking these small cars, not at all designed for racing, pitting them against the profes-

sionally driven Peugeots and Sizaire-Naudins and sending them away on a circuit which the crack drivers of the day considered the most difficult in the world. As a concession they were required to cover only two rounds, whereas in the Targa Florio the big cars had to travel three rounds of the circuit.

Ignoring the expression streamlining, the little cars were stripped to the utmost. Florio's De Dion was a chassis with two bucket seats. There was neither dashboard nor bonnet; wings were absent and the floorboards were incomplete, so that in addition to the rain from above driver and mechanic were liberally sprayed from the pools below them. Naudin the professional and Florio the amateur sportsman struggled in the rain and the mud, the wind and the fog, the Frenchman eventually winning by 16 minutes after having been on the road nearly eight hours. There was a team of Peugeots, comprising Georges Boillot, destined to become the national champion a few years later, but they all failed to cover the distance.

It was not long before these voiturette racers became freaks. The rule limited the cylinder bore to 100 mm., but left piston stroke free. As a result this increased from 120 to 140, 180, 200, and finally 250 mm., giving engines of such a height that drivers could not see over them and had to get their view of the road either to left or right.

Most prominent in this development was Sizaire & Naudin —the two brothers Sizaire and the two brothers Naudin. Georges Sizaire drove the cars; his brother Maurice designed them; one of the Naudins spent his time on the road, while the other was responsible for production. With a wealthy sportsman as financier, it appeared a happy combination and probably would have been had the firm ever known whether they were selling at a profit or at a loss.

The Sizaire & Naudin's introduced independent front wheel suspension, apparently without realising its advantages; certainly they never advertised it as a novelty. They had no gearbox, but a rear axle giving three direct drives by means of one pinion and three concentric crown wheels. Georges appeared to be the only man who could make silent

changes. The ordinary owner just pushed or pulled on the lever which imparted the double movement to the pinion and felt happy if one change in ten did not sound like a load of scrap iron coming down a chute. Maurice Sizaire led the way in the long stroke movement and perfected balance to such an extent that the engine would gently plop, plop, plop in a subdued manner with just a slight rocking of the frame. He discovered the virtues of castor oil as a lubricant and of ether as a tonic for weary petrol. When professional engineers scoffed at his ideas he disarmed criticism by remarking:

"Well, perhaps they are crazy; you see I am not an engineer, I am only an architect, an architect specialising in the restoration of historic buildings."

Peugeot, or Lion Peugeot at the time, was the great rival and their policy was to engage specialised engineers to get more and more power out of these Jack-and-the-beanstalk engines. They seemed to have reached perfection when they came with the Verdet, which had no fewer than six valves arranged circularly around the cylinder head. Even with this the engineer found means of slipping in a couple of sparking plugs.

Week after week, year after year, the two rival makes faced one another with alternating success. In the second voiturette race, held in 1908, still involving two laps of the big circuit, Naudin made a brilliant start, but after covering 30 miles took a flying leap from the hedgeless road and stopped 20 yards away in the midst of an artichoke field. His team-mate Georges Sizaire made a lap in just a few seconds more than two hours, which was equal to the time of many of the big racing machines with five times his piston displacement, but had the misfortune to skid too wildly on a bend and reduce the gearbox-cum-rear axle to scrap metal. The budding Georges Boillot lasted only one lap; Vincenzo Florio broke a wheel, and finally it was ex-motor-cyclist Guippone, on one of the small chain-driven Lion Peugeots who came in the winner.

The third race for these small cars was held in 1909, these being the very long stroke freaks with six valves per cylinder,

with a variant in the twin-cylinder V-engine entrusted to Jules Goux. By reason of money stringency, the Sizaires stayed at home. Undoubtedly the fastest car was the single-cylinder model driven by Guippone, but in the excitement of the race this driver miscalculated his petrol consumption and found himself stranded in the mountains with an empty tank. Unusually under these conditions, he learned that petrol could be obtained at a point three miles away. He walked or ran that distance, borrowed a bicycle, and with a can on his shoulders made his way back to his stranded car. This delay cost him so much that despite the fact that he had lapped 20 minutes faster than Goux, it was the latter who came in a winner on the twin-cylinder model. There were protests and threats of disqualification for Guippone, but in the absence of any ruling on the matter it was argued that he covered the entire distance by his own very strenuous efforts and he was allowed to remain.

The last race in which the voiturettes appeared was in 1910 and produced an unusual result. Entries were so small for the Targa Florio that it was decided to combine it with the Voiturette Cup race, the conditions being the same for the two types of cars, namely, two rounds of the big circuit. Probably afraid that he might be beaten in the Targa Florio race, and certain of winning in the voiturette class, Georges Boillot refused to enter in the former race. This was unfortunate for him, for he finished 1 hr. 4 secs. ahead of the fastest Targa Florio car, and all three Peugeot voiturettes were ahead of the Targa Florio winner, a Franco driven by Cariolata. The voiturette order was Boillot, Guippone, and Goux—truly a fitting climax for these delightfully freakish machines.

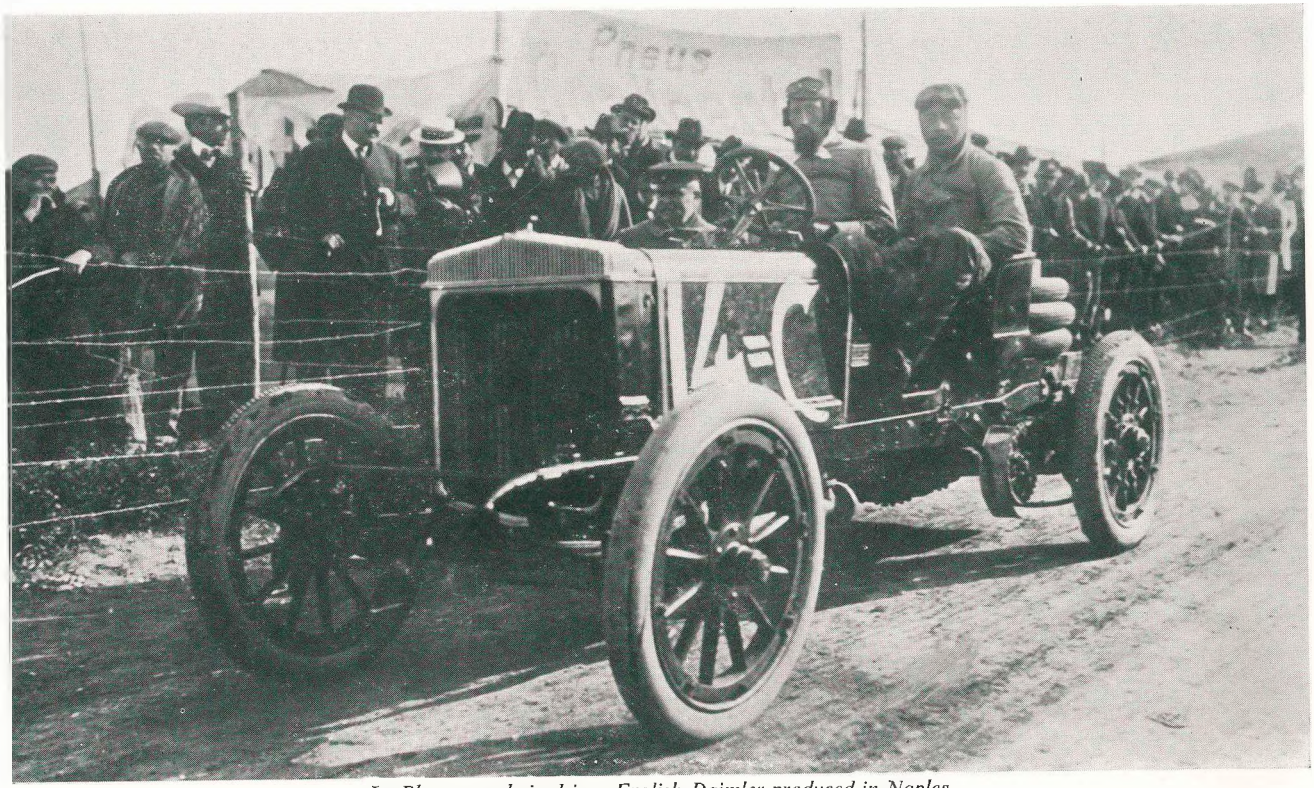
Chapter 7

First held in 1906, the Targa Florio is the oldest speed contest in the world and the only one which has been held uninterruptedly (war periods excepted) since the date of its origin. While Indianapolis shares its continuity, it came on the scene a little later, and while the French Grand Prix appeared in 1906, after the Gordon Bennett series had been interred with honours, its career has been marked by several gaps. Whatever the difficulties and however unfavourable the circumstances, Vincenzo Florio succeeded, year after year, in holding his race, even if that obliged him to change from his role of organiser for that of competitor and to induce his friends to compete with and against him. Thus we have a long series comprising some of the most brilliant races in history, competed for by men whose names are written in gold and races which cannot be considered of more than local interest.

Labour disturbances restricted the success of the first race in 1906; but in the following year the Targa Florio immediately became of international importance, not merely on account of its picturesque and romantic setting, but because, more than any other, it emphasised the value of man and machine. Another year brought us to 1908 with only 13 starters, prominent among them being Lancia and Nazzaro on Fiat, three Isotta Fraschinis, two Spas, and one Itala. The only French car was a Berliet, driven by Jean Porporato. Marius Berliet was not prepared to maintain a racing team, but he turned over a corner of his works to Porporato, told him he could have everything he wanted within reason, providing he did not disturb the general routine of the factory.

For the first time Nazzaro's brilliance was tarnished. He prepared his cars with such minute care and he handled them with such delicate skill that he rarely suffered a breakdown in competition. As an instance of his minuteness, he had

(*Top*) *Louis Wagner, on a Darracq, in action in a mountain village* (1907).
(*Centre*) *Diatto-Clement in the* 1907 *race.*
(*Lower*) *An Isotta Fraschini going through Petralia Sottana*, 1907.



Le Blon on a chain-driven English Daimler produced in Naples.

observed that a tyre valve might slacken off and cause a slow leak. The remedy for this was a tiny blob of solder on the valve after correct inflation. In this 1908 race his initial lap was brilliant, being covered in the record time of 2 hrs. 33 mins. 3 secs., or 16 seconds faster than Lancia on a duplicate chain-driven 130-mm. Fiat. Then a steering pivot broke, an accident for which Nazzaro could in no way be held responsible, and the race appeared to be turned over to Lancia. But the more tempestuous Fiat driver stopped to change tyres when this operation was not essential, and an Isotta Fraschini driven by Trucco came in a winner.

Early in 1909 Italy was afflicted by the Messina disaster, which reacted on the Targa Florio to such an extent that entries dropped to a meagre 13. Even these were obtained only by enlisting the services of a number of amateurs, many of them on De Dion Boutons, a make of car which never had been built for racing. As Fiat could not come, Vincenzo Florio picked out one of his own cars of that make and presented himself at the starting line for one round of the big circuit, this reduction in distance having been made as a concession to spectators. All they saw of the race was 13 cars on the starting line and 2 hrs. 43 mins. later a red machine roaring towards the finishing line. It was a Spa, driven by Ciuppa, and it had beaten Florio's Fiat by one minute. Probably the drivers were thrilled by their day's sport, but it can hardly be imagined that the spectators, left to follow the race in imagination, found it an outstanding attraction.

The following year, 1910, conditions were no better. Having suffered several defeats, French makers were so discouraged that many of them abandoned their racing programmes, the French Grand Prix races were withdrawn, other countries had to follow suit, and as flying had then become practical many were convinced that the days of motor racing were over. At least a score of well-known drivers abandoned the steering wheel for a position behind the joy stick.

Even Florio was thrilled by the new sport of flying—for at that period it was nothing more than a sport—and in

September, 1910, he organised a flying meeting at Palermo, for which he engaged every man capable of taking a machine into the air and keeping it there for a few minutes. Many of these were men who had already distinguished themselves in car races. Instead of the calm atmosphere and brilliant sunshine which ought to have prevailed in Sicily at that time of the year heavy clouds and angry winds swept over the town, causing the pilots to seek the shelter of their tents. The natives had been informed that for the first time in their lives they would see the air alive with flying machines. But when they saw only flapping canvas and low scudding clouds, their impatience turned to anger and with drawn knives and cries of " Morte il comitato," they advanced on the hangars. Urgently, Florio got the pilots out of danger, put them on a steamer and sent them on a round trip to Naples. On their return both the weather and the fickle natives had changed to sunshine and the delayed flying meeting was a huge success.

To overcome the paucity of entries, the race for the Targa Florio was run at the same time and under the same conditions as that for the Voiturette Cup, all cars having to cover two rounds of the big circuit. Conditions were no better the following year, 1911, only 13 cars being presented, and no outstanding name figuring in the list of drivers.

Then the scene changed. It had been suggested that too big a share of the meagre funds allocated to road improvement was being drained away for the Madonie circuit in which Florio was interested. To oppose this, it was decided that the 1912 Targa Florio should become a Giro de Sicilia —a 600-mile race around the island. If, at the present time, a run of 600 miles is not beyond the ability of the ordinary motorist, it must be remembered that the Sicilian coast roads were of an exceedingly winding nature, rough and dusty, infested with mule carts, often a wallowing place for fat sows, a wandering ground for nonchalant goats, that they were non-guarded, non-policed, and that warning signs were an invention which had never been heard of. If cars had attained a considerable degree of reliability, their road-holding ability was not of the best, their high-pressure tyres

made them uncomfortable, their brakes left much to be desired, and night driving had to be carried out with the help of acetylene lamps. The life of tyres was such an unknown quantity that no driver would start away with less than four spares, and some cautious men had a stack of eight piled up on the platform behind the bucket seats. If any of the eight had to be brought into service, they would have to be fitted by hand and inflated manually.

Evidently this type of race offered attractions, for there were 26 entries, the cars being of all types, the Italians dominating, with a sprinkling of Americans, among them being Fords and Overlands. It was a time when motor manufacturing firms were springing up like mushrooms, for comparatively little capital was required to start a business, faith in the movement was strong and prospects were bright. A glance over the list of competitors reveals many names which have since disappeared and which in many cases were never even known to present-day motorists. For instance, the appearance of a Florio car sounds strange, but Vincenzo Florio had been attracted by the engineering skill of a citizen of Turin named Cravero and had offered to finance him and to lend his name to the cars he proposed to build. The cashier and commercial manager of the new company was a pushful young man named Valletta. The company was short-lived, but the commercial manager was destined for great things—at the present time he is managing director of the huge Fiat organisation.

This first round-Sicily race started from the centre of Palermo on a gay May morning and was enlivened by the unexpected arrival of a Huissier with a writ to seize one of the cars. As the car in question had just started and was still in sight, the spectators released all their witticism in encouraging the official to race after it and pin his blue paper on its tail. After having exerted all his energy on organising the event, Florio could not resist the temptation to become a competitor. He carried in his open Mercedes a journalist and two friends who were to be co-drivers, each man taking three-hour spells at the wheel. One of the drivers excused himself on the ground of fatigue and Florio continued

beyond his allotted time. Perhaps he too was fatigued, for after following the tramlines for some time he failed to notice that in order to bridge a dip the lines were built up on props, while the road itself swung to one side. The Mercedes was driven straight ahead, but as its wheels failed to fit the lines it dropped through with results which are easy to imagine.

Among the competitors was Cyril Snipe, a young Englishman who had gone to Turin to work with Ceirano at the time when Italy's motor industry was just coming to life. Whether his Scat car was better than any of the others, or whether the Englishman had more vim than any of the Italians it would be difficult to say, but the fact is that in the early morning he had more than two hours' lead on any of his rivals, but was so overcome by the desire for sleep that he flung himself to the ground and declared emphatically that no power on earth could make him go a yard farther. Finito il giro. In vain his companion Pardini tried persuasion, shaking, shouting, for Snipe slumbered on or responded to the more violent assaults by grunts or curses. Two hours elapsed; rival cars were reported to be creeping up and in desperation Pardini seized a bucket of water and flung it over his sleep-sodden companion. The result was instantaneous, Snipe leaping to his feet with wild cries of anger, vaulting into his seat and with water dripping from him roared away and finished first with the advantage of half an hour over a Lancia. And his average speed was only 24.3 m.p.h.: proof that the race round Sicily was no mean test of a man's endurance.

Realising that a run of 600 miles around the coast line of Sicily was too great a strain on drivers, it was decided to run the 1913 race in two stages, with a *parc fermé* at Agrigenta. Among the 37 to come to the starting line was Felice Nazzaro on a car of his own make. After a most brilliant career as a racing driver for Fiat, Nazzaro had decided to follow the example of his companion Lancia and establish himself in business at Turin as a car manufacturer. This Sicilian race was the first appearance of a Nazzaro car in a speed contest, and it is proof of the quality

of his machine and of the care with which he prepared it that he came home first more than an hour ahead of the second machine, an Aquila Italiana. Further, he increased the average from 24 to 31 m.p.h.

For the third successive year the Targa Florio was held around Sicily and was won by Ceirano on a Scat, while the Florio Cup race was run over three rounds of the big Madonie circuit, with Nazzaro a winner on his own make of car. Then the 1914 calamity settled over Europe, and although Italy was not immediately plunged in war motor racing ceased everywhere.

Chapter 8

With the return to peace, America as the least internally disturbed nation was the first to resume racing, the Indianapolis event being held in May, 1919. Sicily had not suffered materially, but Europe generally was in such a disorganised condition that it was not until November that it became possible to resume the series of Targa Florio races. It was decided to abandon the coast road and to return to the mountains, taking a rather shorter circuit, popularly known as the Polizzi circuit, which had to be covered four times. For the drivers there was really no diminution of the difficulties, but the fact that the grandstands and pits were removed from the seashore straightaway to a point at the foot of the hills, near Cerda, helped to increase the average.

When the war clouds swept over Europe, undoubtedly the finest racing team of the period—probably of any period—was that of the Peugeot Company. Run independently of the main Peugeot factory, the responsible members of this team were Georges Boillot, Jules Goux, Paul Zuccarelli, and the Swiss engineer Henry. The cars, with their high-speed overhead camshaft engines, were an immense advance on anything existing at the time and were the most copied racing cars ever built. They beat Fiat at Dieppe, they won Indianapolis in 1913, and although they were beaten there by Delage the following year, this was more due to tyres than to mechanical inefficiency. Indeed this defeat was more than wiped out by a privately owned 3-litre Peugeot coming in second among cars nearly twice its piston displacement. The series of successes was a brilliant one and was only marred, on the eve of war, by the Mercedes victory in the 1914 French Grand Prix at Lyons.

The Peugeot management never appeared to have realised the technical value of their racing cars, for no sooner had war been declared than they entered into negotiations for the sale of all their racing material to Americans. Cars, parts,

tools, all crossed the Atlantic and not only were they raced there for two years, but exact duplicates were built with American material. Georges Boillot became driver to General Joffre, but soon transferred to the Flying Corps; Goux took his place in the Army as an artilleryman; Zuccarelli had been killed a little before the outbreak of war; and Henry, being a neutral, found himself out of work.

The leading proprietary engine manufacturer in France at that time was Ernest Ballot, an ex-marine engineer who found it appropriate to adopt the anchor as his coat of arms. Never having built a complete car, Ballot decided, in 1918, that he would endow France with the finest set of racing cars she had ever possessed, in fact the finest the world had ever known, for allied with an iron determination, Ballot possessed a self-confidence amounting to arrogance and a contempt for all who might present themselves as his rivals. He engaged Henry, who during the last two years of the war had been attached to a firm producing Bugatti double-eight aviation engines; he placed René Thomas in the position of No. 1 driver and secured the services of Louis Wagner and Paul Bablot.

Although Henry could work on the drawings while war was in progress, no structural work could be performed until after the Armistice. Even then, after four years of war, during which all the northern portion of the country had been occupied and the enemy on two occasions had reached the very doorstep of Paris, difficulties were enormous. Raw materials were scarce; machining facilities were so difficult that frequently journeys of 500 miles had to be made by car to obtain a crankshaft, a camshaft, or some particular type of ball-bearing. Despite all this, a set of three racing cars had been built and were ready for road testing in the unprecedented period of 90 days. The straight-eight engines revealed Bugatti influence; the shape of the combustion chambers, the valve gear, the lubrication system, the flexible mounting of the engines in the chassis were all features found in the pre-war racing Peugeots. By the end of April, 1919, the cars were on their way to Indianapolis, with Thomas in charge of them and Engineer Henry to back

him. Undoubtedly they were the finest cars ever seen in the United States up to that time. They ought to have won ; but they failed. Disagreements between Thomas and Henry regarding the final gear ratio ; an attempt to reduce this ratio by changing pinion and crown wheel ; a compromise by the fitting of smaller wheels of American construction ; brittle spokes which snapped during the race, and the Americans defeated the Frenchmen. The Yanks had learned a lot from the Peugeots they had bought in 1914. Ballot accepted the news of his defeat with a " C'est bien ma poisse," and tried to convince himself that there was such a thing as injustice in motor racing.

But he would win the Targa Florio, held, exceptionally in 1919, towards the end of November, and although he entered but one car, he entrusted it to René Thomas and he made the journey to the island to assure everything possible being done for victory.

While Georges Boillot was covering himself with glory in the period preceding the 1914 war, showing that he was not only a superb driver, a man of ideas, and possessing the *gestes* which endeared him to the public, his younger brother André occupied a somewhat obscure post as car demonstrator at the London depot. Georges, in a somewhat vainglorious effort, went in single-handed to attack seven German Messerschmits, with the result that a bullet through the head sent him crashing to the ground. A second brother fell in an infantry attack. André spent four years in the French Flying Corps and was released to civilian life with the knowledge that he was unknown, that even his brother's name had been forgotten and that his supreme sacrifice was only that of thousands of others. If André Boillot was to make a name for himself, then he must continue with the spirit which had prompted him to say " une croix de guerre ou une croix de bois."

Peugeot sent him to America with a set of hastily built cars which revealed themselves full of basic defects. In 1914 Peugeot had built three racing cars of 2½-litre piston displacement for a race in Auvergne over much of the former Gordon Bennett circuit. But on the day of the race two

great armies were facing one another along the whole length of the Marne, the new cars were in storage, and probably because America had never heard of them they remained unsold. André Boillot persuaded Peugeot to let him have the use of one of these cars for the tenth Targa Florio race, where it would have to meet the straight-eight Ballot driven by Thomas.

A second and similar Peugeot was brought to Sicily by M. Réville, the son of a French senator. He had paid £4,000 for it in 1914, but had to wait five years before he got an opportunity to use it. The Ballot, the only post-war car in the race, might be considered the most dangerous, for it had a maximum speed of 125 m.p.h., it had lapped Indianapolis track at 104 m.p.h. and climbed Gaillon hill at 103 m.p.h. However, the two Peugeots might also be considered pre-war cars, for although built in 1914 they never had been raced. The Ballot with its straight-eight engine of 75-mm. bore, undoubtedly developed more power than the Peugeot with four cylinders of 74 by 120 mm.

But there were others which could not be ignored. Itala had sent two rotary-valve models, one of which was in the hands of the daring Moriondo. There were two Grand Prix Fiats sponsored by a then unknown driver named Ascari, father of the present racing champion. These cars had been prepared for the 1917 Indianapolis race and were on their way to Genoa when the news was flashed that America had declared war and that there would be no more racing in the United States until peace had been signed. Then a car dealer in Milan, Ascari, bought these two cars and sent them to Palermo for their first try-out. Among men later to become famous were the brothers Masetti, pure amateurs, who bought their cars, asked for no appearance money, and raced them at their own expense. Count Masetti had a Fiat and his brother an Aquila-Italiana.

This first post-war Targa Florio was to be probably more a contest of men than of machines. It is generally accepted that fine weather will prevail in Sicily at the end of November. But this year Nature was in a wild mood. It had rained the whole of the day preceding the race. The

night was marked by thunder, lightning, hail, rain, and snow, followed by a gale of wind in the early hours of the morning. The hills were capped with snow, rain clouds hung low and it was realised that at 3,000 feet terrible conditions would be met. There might be oranges and lemons, cacti and olives near the starting line, but only a few miles away there would be mud, snow, rain, and mist.

Two drivers stood out from among all the others—two men of entirely different natures. René Thomas could be considered a veteran. He had come through the hard school of motor-cycling. Almost at his début an accident at Canning Town had put him into a London hospital, from which he was discharged four months later with a permanent limp and a punctured purse. He raced for various firms ; he became chief test pilot for the Antoinette Aeroplane Company ; he won at Indianapolis ; he successively joined Peugeot and Delage teams, but through it all he remained cautious, calculating, painstaking. To him motor racing was not a glorious sport, but a hard, cruel business, and the man who wished to be successful in it must learn to keep out of accidents ; to run off the road or to break up a car was a sign of incompetence.

André Boillot was young, daring, reckless, somewhat romantic and slightly tinged with vanity. War had been his introduction to life ; there he had lost his two brothers and he was inclined to hold his own life lightly. This Targa Florio race was his opportunity and he was going to make the best of it, cost what it might. A feature of racing on this 67-mile mountainous circuit is that the driver is on his own ; he has no pit manager to guide him, to signal him fast or slow, to call him in for fuel or tyres. If he is determined to win he must drive all out from the moment the start is given, only to find when it is too late to alter his tactics that he either has been outclassed or that he has made an unnecessary effort. Ascari adopted the all-out tactics—for the first 30 miles—then went thundering down a ravine, falling to such a depth that he was not discovered until a search party went out when the race was over. He was not seriously hurt, but he was unable to climb out unaided. Steady,

reliable Thomas had reason to be satisfied with himself, for during the first of the four laps he had passed the six big cars which had started ahead of him, and he could not imagine that anybody in the rear was driving faster than he. But 50 miles astern André Boillot was acting like a demon. He had been off the road six times, but this did not cause him to slacken his pace. Few spectators witnessed these daring, reckless exploits, but one incident stood out distinctly to the grandstand spectators. In the climb towards Cerda, on the last left-hand bend which would take him out of sight, the Peugeot skidded violently, hit the bank, jumped three feet in the air, then dropped down on two wheels. It wobbled for fractions of a second—fractions which appeared to be minutes to the spectators—as if debating whether to go over or remain on the road, then settled on its four wheels. Before the few excited spectators could rush up, the driver and mechanic had jumped out, pushed the car clear, and it was roaring up the hill. The rain, mud and snow made goggles useless, most of the drivers using wire-gauze masks. After one lap numbers were unreadable ; drivers and mechanics were so thickly coated with mud from the crown of the head to the waist line that except for two red lines indicating the lips they could hardly be recognised as human beings.

It was not until three of the four laps had been covered that Thomas could be warned that he was being beaten by the Peugeot. Only 67 miles to go, and seven minutes to make up. But the Ballot had a higher maximum speed and better acceleration and might wipe out this lag, particularly in view of the fact that the weather had changed with Sicilian suddenness to bright, hot sunshine which quickly dried up the roads. Boillot realised the advantage this would give to his rival and stopped to change all four-non-skid tyres for smooth treads.

When the Peugeot came into view at the end of the fourth lap, it needed no calculations to show that Boillot had beaten Thomas' Ballot, for the latter had started 15 minutes ahead of him and was not in sight. But Boillot was exhausted by his desperate eight-hour effort. As the finishing line came

into sight he applied his brakes harshly, skidded on the rather narrow, greasy, shaded road, spun three times, and charged into the flimsy wooden grandstand. The car was dragged out backwards and two soldiers and a civilian were picked out of the welter of splintered tables and chairs and a score of willing hands attempted to push it over the finishing line. But the race was not won, for the line was 30 feet away. We pushed back the yelling voluntary assistants, picked up the two mud-covered bundles representing Boillot and his mechanic and dumped them into their seats, and in reverse gear the Peugeot went over the line, winner of the tenth Targa Florio race.

Then a cry went up from the crowd " disqualificato, indiretto "—" disqualified for finishing in reverse." Of course, it was ridiculous, for there was no rule that a car should always run with its radiator in front, but the man who immediately summed up the situation was the beaten, disappointed Ernest Ballot, the man who had the reputation of being hard and contemptuous of all rivals. He helped to lift Boillot and his mechanic back into their car, told them to drive 30 yards down the road, turn, and come back front face. As he cut the line a second time Boillot fainted, but just before he lost consciousness we heard him murmur " C'est pour la France."

Yes, the steady, trustworthy, reliable Thomas had been beaten by the daring, dramatic, youthful Boillot. When the belated speed-up call was given he responded, but on one of the 1,500 bends he overshot the mark and ran off the road. " A driver who cannot keep on the road in a race is an incompetent, and that is just my case," he declared angrily when asked what had happened.

Boillot had averaged 34.19 m.p.h. for the full distance of 268½ miles and had beaten the big Itala, driven by Moriondo, by just over half an hour. Only eight of the twenty-three starters survived. Among those who failed to go the distance was Jack Scales, driving the English-built Eric Campbell. He drove 50 miles over the mountains with only one front wheel under control, the left-hand steering arm having broken off almost flush with the pivot.

Chapter 9

If all the Targa Florio races had romance, it cannot be claimed that they were equally thrilling. One had a sense of romance in that climb up to Polizzi, or Polizzi Generosa to give it its full name, which for twelve successive years was the culminating point of the medium circuit in the Madonies. Its altitude of 3,000 feet is not reached by a steady climb, as would be the case in the Alps, but by a climb, followed by a long, winding descent into a deep valley, through which a rock-strewn stream wended its way, then by a steeper, more winding climb as if, this time, the road really was determined to reach the ruined castle peaked immediately above us ; again the road would turn away, then set out resolutely to scale the height, until finally it ran along the shoulder of a ridge, and at the end of that ridge was the Norman-built village of Polizzi. Unlike most of these mountain townships, Polizzi possessed what might be described a level village square, across which there was an ancient aqueduct. From the square it was possible to see the cars approaching, in a fantastic game of hide and seek, appearing round a bend, disappearing, coming into view again until they roared on to the square. From this point they literally threw themselves downhill into the next valley over a magnificently engineered road having a vertical mass of earth on the right and to the left a stout stone wall, beyond which was a drop of impressive depth. It was only necessary to pass through one of the arches of the aqueduct to see them emerge from the shadow of the vertical wall and, several hundred feet below, approach a bridge over another mountain stream, swing left, then disappear amid pleasant olive groves.

There was no need to erect a grandstand for the spectators—nature had provided that in such a way that cars could be kept in view for nearly ten minutes and the drivers' actions examined under varied conditions of high-

way. Naturally this half-way station was appreciated as a *rifornimento,* an observation post which enabled the team manager to judge how his cars stood in relation to the others and, when radio came into use, a headquarters from which the race could be directed.

If the tenth race had been thrilling, the eleventh was dull —at any rate for the spectators. Battling for eight to twelve hours with wind and rain, it could not be dull for the 17 competitors, all of whom, with the exception of Campari, were unknown to the outer world. The burly Alfa-Romeo driver was supported on the team by Enzo Ferrari, years later to become Italy's greatest racing-car producer, who distinguished himself by coming in second in this 1920 Targa Florio race, eight minutes behind the six-cylinder racing Nazzaro driven by Meregalli. Under the weather conditions the pace could not be fast, the winner averaging nearly three miles an hour less than in the preceding year.

From 1921 to 1936 the annual Targa Florio races reached their height of brilliance. Professional teams gave to the races a keenness and an interest it is hard to obtain from private owners. The teams were the best in the world: Mercedes, Fiat, Alfa-Romeo, Itala, Delage, Sunbeam, Ballot, Peugeot, Bugatti, and the drivers were all proved champions. Further, some of the amateurs were capable of matching themselves with the professionals, as witness Count Masetti, a winner on two occasions with two different makes of cars, and the wealthy French amateur André Dubonnet.

After an absence of seven years and her military defeat in the first world war, it was in accordance with Mercedes policy to return to racing by indirectly entering one man to act as a scout. A formidable scout indeed, for the driver was Seiler and the car entrusted to him was a six-cylinder overhead-valve model of 105 by 140-mm. bore and stroke. Its origin dated back to 1913, when it showed itself to possess the serious defect—not uncommon at that period—of engine " thrash "; in other words periodic vibration. Only such a " tough " driver as Lautenschlager could handle

it for any distance. One of these cars was bought by an American publisher and entrusted to Ralph de Palma for the 1914 Indianapolis race. During practice De Palma realised that something was wrong with the car. Telegrams were exchanged with Stuttgart, but the replies were of a trivial, almost childish nature. Obviously a manufacturer could not admit that his product had an inherent defect. Convinced that it would be dangerous for him to attempt to race on the crowded Indianapolis track with such a car, De Palma laid all the facts before the technical committee and asked to be allowed to withdraw. Reluctantly this permission was granted, for De Palma at that time was at the height of his popularity and was the man, above all others, who could raise an American crowd to a frenzy of excitement. Undoubtedly, since then the engine had been improved, for it formed the basis of the aero engines with which Germany went to war in 1914. Among the changes to the car was the adoption of front-wheel brakes, a moderate adoption as we know it to-day, with drums of small diameter, and not linked up for simultaneous all-round application by pedal. The announcement that it was coming threw something like consternation in the Italian camp, for the best they could pit against it were four-cylinder Alfa-Romeos of 50-60 h.p., driven by Ascari, Campari, Sivocci, and Ferrari. Officially the Fiats were in the touring-car class, with a model known as the " 501," having four cylinders of 65 by 110 mm. Even the rotary-valve Italas, handled by Moriondo, Foresti, and Nineve, were standard cars.

But there was an Italian amateur whose value was not fully appreciated. He was Count Masetti, a wealthy motorist of Florence, who, more than any other, was free of all trade connections, and he was in possession of a 4,400-cc. Grand Prix Fiat. This car had an interesting background. In 1914 Fiat built and entered a set of cars for the French Grand Prix at Lyons. When they were examined for piston displacement, the French engineers announced:

" You are oversize."

" Impossible," declared the Italians. " We gave instructions to our engineers to build right up to the limit, not over, but not one fraction under."

A message was sent to Turin for the engineers to come up with their own measuring instruments, when it had to be admitted that the tolerances—or lack of tolerances—the Fiat engineers had set themselves were too close and the engines were minutely oversize.

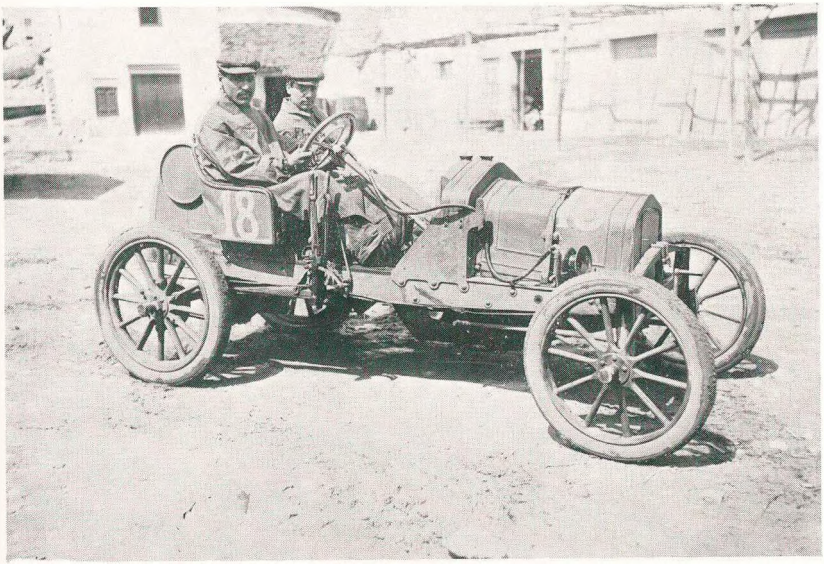
The Automobile Club of France always has been most scrupulous in its application of rules. Certainly René de Knyff, then president of the Sporting Commission, would not have tolerated the least écartade, even if his own firm had been involved.

The decision of the French was " You can start, but if you win your engine will have to be stripped and measured before your rivals and you will be disqualified."

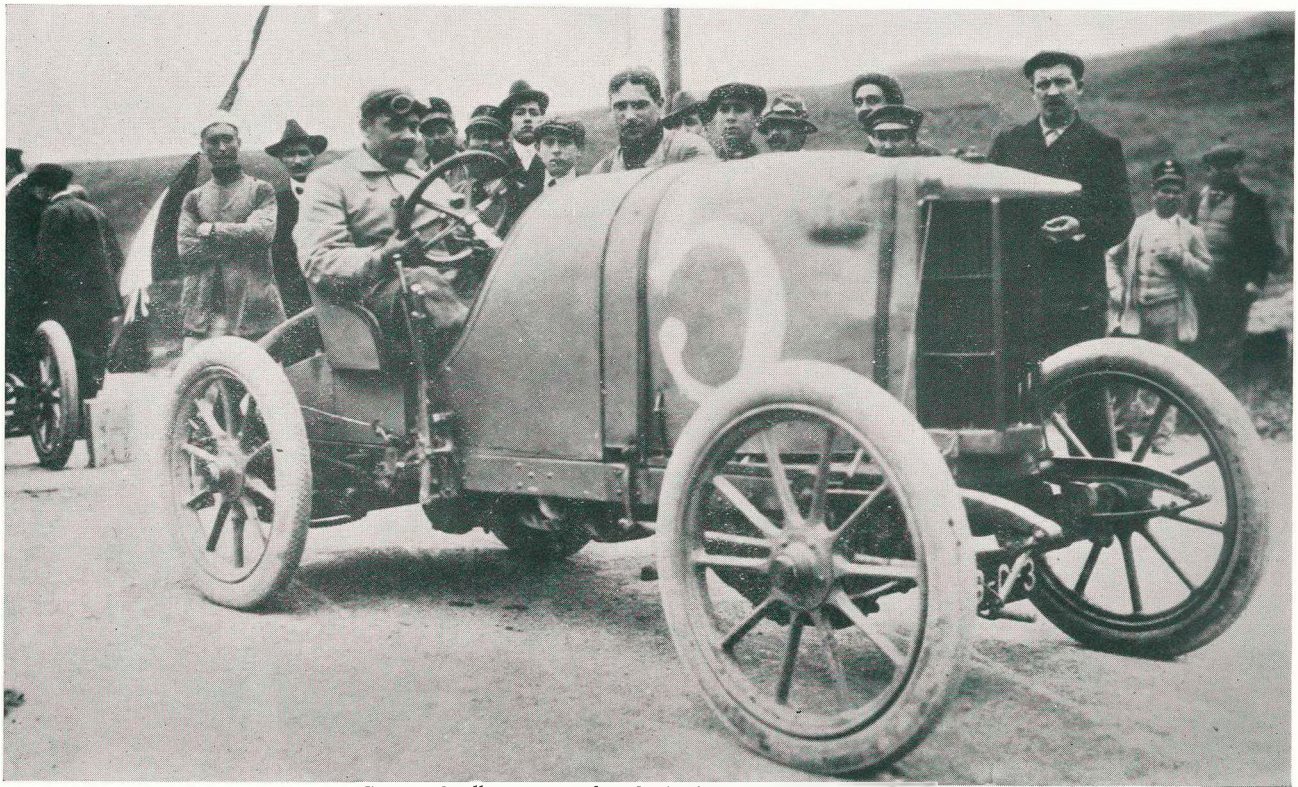
Fiat accepted the condition. The cars did not win, and probably this was the only race in the world in which a prominent firm was not anxious to get the chequered flag. Modified, fitted with steel cylinders as the result of experience gained in aviation production, they would have been sent to Indianapolis had not the United States joined in with the Allies, and finally this pre-war Fiat, driven by an amateur, came face to face with the pre-war Mercedes handled by the most daring, skilled, and even reckless driver Germany could produce at that time.

It was obvious that although there were 38 starters the real interest of the race was going to be centred on these two men, Masetti and Seiler. On the first lap the German had the advantage by the unusually narrow margin of 21 seconds. But when another 67 miles had been covered, Count Masetti had changed this to his advantage and had a lead of 2½ minutes. But Seiler was not defeated, for on the third round of this Polizzi circuit he closed up to 58 seconds of the Italian. On the fourth and final lap Masetti surpassed himself and incidentally proved that on a circuit comprising on an average 25 acute bends per mile,

Burly Henri Fournier on a 1907 *Itala.*



Naudin on a single-cylinder Sizaire-Naudin, 1907. *Even at that date it had independent front-wheel suspension.*



Georges Boillot on a single-cylinder long-stroke Peugeot freak.

the smaller dimensioned Fiat had an advantage over the bulky Mercedes, for he finished with a lead of 2 mins. 11 secs. All records up to that time were broken, with an average speed of 36.2 m.p.h. Several years had to elapse before it was fully realised that on the Sicilian circuit a well-balanced car was much more desirable than one possessing only brute force.

Chapter 10

While motor development and motor-car racing follow an evolutionary rhythm, there are such marked stages in this evolution that we are inclined to call them revolutionary. Such a one came with the thirteenth Targa Florio race, held in April, 1922, when we saw the last clash of the big bores against the little bores, in other words between the massive cars powered by comparatively slow running engines having big diameter cylinders and smaller, lighter, handier cars with small, high-speed, high-efficiency engines. Mercedes stood out as the representative of the " brute force " class, with big, heavy, powerful cars of the early Grand Prix type which impressed not merely by reason of their size, but by reason of the obvious physical effort which was necessary to hold them on the road. If the cars were powerful, the driver also had to be powerful. Even Mercedes, however, was evolving rapidly, for in addition to the cars which we popularly designate Grand Prix models, they had two very advanced 1½-litre sports models with manually controlled supercharger and front-wheel brakes. These came into the class which were then favoured by Fiat, and which only a year later were to dominate the racing world. In this class also we had the 2-litre Ballots, a development of the revolutionary pre-war Peugeots, the small Austro-Daimlers showing the handiwork of Porsche. As an indication of the gradual but certain change from big to small engines, Fiat had a straight-eight, driven by Biaggio Nazzaro which, a year earlier, at Brescia, had been responsible for the Wagner-Fiat drama. In this event Wagner was pestered by rear tyres which persistently deflated. These frequent changes exasperated the chauvinistic crowd, and when a particularly loose-tongued Torinese had climbed on a box and declared that this foreigner was robbing Fiat of her victory, the reaction was so strong that the usually phlegmatic Chief Engineer Fornaca had to hold a tattered tyre aloft as proof

that these changes were really necessary. The mystery never was fully solved. Was it the fault of Lampiano who, leaning over the side, had reported a flat tyre when it was merely " squashed " on the bend, or had Wagner called for changes when they were not really necessary? Fornaca was uncompromising and Wagner was most punctilious when his reputation was at stake, with the result that the connection which had been held since 1908 was abruptly broken.

Having explored the field a year earlier, this thirteenth race was to be a supreme effort for Mercedes. One month before the event they had 20 drivers and mechanics on the course, and they had six men in their official team, excluding Count Masetti who was driving independently. The six were all champions: Lautenschlager and Salzer, the former twice winner of the French Grand Prix, had modified versions of the 1914 Grand Prix racers, these modifications comprising magnesium-alloy pistons, special valves, an increase in engine revolutions to 5,000, and front-wheel brakes. Seiler and Werner had the six-cylinder model of 105 by 140 mm., with a vertical blower at the front which could be brought into operation as desired. Finally, two entirely new types were the overhead-valve 1½-litre sports models, also with a blower, entrusted to Minoia and Scheef.

All the leaders of the German industry appeared to be present: tyre makers, magneto manufacturers, steel and ball-bearing producers, engineers of all grades had come to hail Germany's return to racing supremacy. A liner on a Mediterranean cruise had unloaded several hundred Teutonic enthusiasts who had all obeyed the suggestion that they should come out to Cerda to witness this great racing event. Among the list of starters was a name which at that time did not attract great attention. It was that of Alfred Neubauer, who was to start last and finish nineteenth at the wheel of a small Austro-Daimler. The young man in the Austrian car was in a few years' time to become famous as the Mercedes race team manager. At the head of the Austrian team was the genial Count Kolowrat, who had the power of amusing us immensely by his wonderful imitations

of car noises, from the chug-chug and whining gear noises of the early De Dions to the sharp crackle of the high-speed overhead-valve Fiats.

As usual, the starts were at two-minute intervals, the small cars going away first, but one had not long to wait to realise that this was going to be a merciless battle of men, machines, and tyres. When the score could be made up, at the end of the first lap of 67 miles, it placed the Florentine Count Masetti on his privately owned four-cylinder Mercedes, at the head, followed by Goux's 2-litre Ballot, and Biaggio Nazzaro's straight-eight Fiat. On this first lap Masetti had overtaken both Seiler and Werner on the more powerful six-cylinder supercharged Mercedes, thus proving that he was their superior under conditions calling for the highest degree of skill and precision. The four great German drivers—Lautenschlager, Salzer, Seiler, and Werner—had the power of impressing the spectators. The cars were not docile machines to be handled with delicate skill, but wild brutes constantly at war, but constantly dominated by the Teutonic giants at their wheels. Masetti, on his red Mercedes, was less impressive, and because he skidded less on the bends, threw up a smaller quantity of stones and did not battle constantly with his wheel, he gave the initial impression of being slower, until the stopwatch proved the contrary. Goux drove in the same general manner: his bare arm over the side of the car, a quiet concentration, precision gear changes and accurate placing of the car for each and every bend.

Biaggio Nazzaro, nephew of the great Felice, and a recruit from motor-cycling, was unnecessarily wild. Third at the end of the initial lap, he entered a bend too fast on the following lap and capsized with slight injuries to himself and his mechanic. A too-eager Paris newspaper correspondent exaggerated this almost trifling incident to a fatal accident and telegraphed the death of " Nazzaro " to his paper. The message was " lifted " by other papers throughout the world, with the explanation that this was the Nazzaro who had been famous in Grand Prix, Gordon Bennett, and Vanderbilt Cup

days. Italy was unaware of the disaster until messages of condolence reached the family from far and wide.

On the Targa Florio circuit the grandstands and replenishment pits were on a bend, the pits being a side road, parallel to the track, but a few feet above it, to which an unnecessarily large number of people obtained access. There was little order and plenty of excitement, to which the German drivers contributed in no small degree. The iron discipline of Neubauer had not come into effect, and Lautenschlager in particular howled for everything and wanted that everything at once. Contrary to a general belief, a German, when hard pressed, throws away all the discipline he has been taught and becomes a wild, howling fiend. And the Germans were being hard pressed. When Seiler and Masetti came in together, the oil man rushed at the white Mercedes and endeavoured to pour lubricant into the dashboard tank without the use of a funnel, with the result that the tank received a small quantity and the mechanic was left with the task of mopping up the pool. An enthusiast whipped off the radiator cap, but a friendly rival was first with the water and when he had topped up yelled madly for the " d—— fool " who had gone away with the cap. The decided fool had been pushed to the outside of the crowd and was wildly struggling forward to replace the missing cap. Masetti, being the Italian favourite, suffered more than the others from these attentions. A newspaper man, quietly taking notes, was suddenly seized with the fever and flinging paper and pencil away, rushed in to throw his weight on the jack inserted under the red Mercedes. Had the rules been applied, if there were any rules on this point, everybody would have been disqualified for receiving outside assistance.

That cars and drivers were being stressed to the limit was indicated by the work which had to be done. Even on the smaller cars tyres were in ribbons after less than 80 miles had been covered ; on the wheels left behind it was seen that spokes were loose or had been pulled out ; brakes were failing or had gone ; exhaust pipes had come adrift and Foresti had to use vast quantities of wire to replace the

broken steering column bracket on his Ballot. The scientific drivers were getting their reward, with Goux, Masetti, and Giacconi in first three positions when the last lap was entered on. Of the more wildly spectacular Mercedes men, Seiler was the best in sixth position, with the others a long way down the line.

With one lap to go, Goux had the advantage of 67 seconds; but the tortuous nature of the course had been responsible for the practical elimination of the rear wheel brakes. With only the front in action, Goux found that he had to make an immediate choice between a block of stone, trees, or soft earth. He chose the earth at the cost of a broken cross-frame member and a leaky radiator. With only 60 miles to cover, the ill-luck which dogged the Ballots for years again came to the fore in the shape of a burst front tyre. While this was being changed it was seen that the red danger strip had appeared on both rear Palmers. The last lap should have been the fastest; instead it had to be the slowest, Goux driving over the loose stones with as much physical pain as if he were passing over them barefooted. Further to the rear Giacconi was having a still more bitter experience with his small Fiat, for he had no spares and when the front tyre began to leak he had to pump it up on four occasions by hand.

Thus Count Masetti, on his red Mercedes, roared home a most popular winner—and a winner for two years in succession, with an advantage of less than two minutes over Goux's Ballot and Foresti, who had profited by Giacconi's malheur, in third place. Alfa-Romeo had not yet come into its own, but the semi-professional Ascari got fourth place, ahead of all the works Mercedes, the best of which was Seiler in sixth place. As to the pace, it had jumped up to 39.2 m.p.h., which meant that one hour and a few seconds had been clipped off the best previous performance.

Chapter 11

There were two races on the Sicilian circuit in 1922. The Targa Florio had been held in April. The Coppa Florio, a challenge which had existed since 1905, was put up for competition by its holders, the Peugeot Company, and it was decided that the race should be run in November over the same circuit and under the same conditions as the Targa.

In one of his hops from Paris to London and Wolverhampton, in connection with the S.T.D. organisation, Louis Coatalen declared, " We'll have a shot at this Sicilian trophy."

" Excellent idea," said Kenelm Lee Guinness. " And as we are going to Stiges and Barcelona, why not put everything on my yacht—cars, crew, equipment—and make the entire journey by water. No hotel accommodation to seek ; no troubles about shipping cars ; no worries about them straying if they take to the road ; everything under our hands, under perfect control. Then the charm of a Mediterranean trip, from West to East, in delightful autumn weather."

" Agreed."

K. L. Guinness possessed a yacht which he had transformed from a trawler into a roomy, luxurious, very seaworthy craft, quite capable of making the journey from Southampton, around the coastline of Spain and Portugal into the Mediterranean and on to Sicily. An efficient navigator, he would assume responsibility for the entire expedition. The dates fitted in well: after the two races in Spain there was ample time to proceed to Palermo.

Usually the Mediterranean lives up to its reputation ; but occasionally it will work itself into a fury. This happened when the vessel was to the south-west of Sardinia. To seafaring Guinness it was just an incident, something that had to be accepted with the best possible grace. Chassagne, who in his youth had deserted his inland home to serve three years in the French Navy, was not unduly impressed by this

blow. But Louis Coatalen, although a Breton des Bretons, decided that it was the worst tempest the world had ever known and pleaded with Guinness to run for safety.

" There is a little port there on the southern tip of Sardinia, but it has no harbour lights and we shall have to enter it in darkness ; it is going to be dangerous."

" It cannot be any more dangerous than this," replied Coatalen.

They entered without mishap and laid up under the shelter of the sea wall.

" That was an awful experience," exclaimed Coatalen after they had been safely moored. There were times when I was lying on the wall and the ceiling was vertical. She was over at 45 degrees."

" Come, Patron, not 45 degrees, surely."

" Well, let's say 41, and I'll not take a single degree off that."

When the storm had blown itself out they proceeded eastward to Palermo and then along the coast to the ancient port of Termini Immersi, but a few miles from the circuit. Could anything be more delightful? They lay at anchor in the quiet waters of the well-protected harbour in company with gaily painted local fishing craft or small coastal vessels loading up with sulphur, olive oil, lemons, or pasti. Around them majestic mountains ; almost on the water's edge natural hot-water baths ; a country steeped in history to centuries before the Christian era ; sunsets and sunrises which made one wish to be a painter ; a climate of incomparable douceur. The racing cars were housed in a warehouse from which the drums of olive oil had been removed and were watched by the prying eyes of young and ancient Sicilians. Had a test run to be made after carburetter or ignition adjustments had been carried out, then a special road had been made by nature and by man, wriggling up the cliff from the water's edge to the fifteenth-century church on the summit of the cliff, with cacti as floral decorations. One man at the bottom and another at the top to shut off intruders—they were only mule carts and they were never in a hurry—and the acceleration track was perfect. From a deck chair on

the yacht they could be watched and timed; no need even for the Patron to go ashore.

Unfortunately the ethics of the young Sicilian are not always of the highest, and when some youth had either swum out or rowed out to the yacht, passed a brown arm through a port hole and dexterously seized a couple of gold watches, some of the charms of Termini were dispelled.

Rather late in the afternoon, Segrave, who formed the Sunbeam team with Chassagne, set out with his mechanic Moriceau for a run round the 67-mile circuit.

" It's rather late," warned Vincenzo Florio, when he met them on the piazza. " Better wait till morning; night falls quickly at this time of the year."

" Plenty of time," answered Segrave cheerfully.

Perhaps there would have been plenty of time had a water connection not broken when they were 3,000 feet up the mountains. After Moriceau had spent an hour repairing the damage it was so dark that it would have been madness to have attempted a run down the mountain side on a Grand Prix racing car devoid of any lighting system. No village was in sight, for the district was sparsely inhabited, but a solitary dwelling some distance off the road might at least offer shelter for the night. Segrave's knowledge of Italian was meagre and his acquaintance with the Sicilian patois was nil, while Moriceau knew nothing but his native French. No sooner had they entered the primitive dwelling than Segrave realised they were without money. Two foreigners entering a highland dwelling in the darkness, obviously asking for food from reserved and suspicious natives, and with nothing to offer in return. Segrave searched in his pockets and produced two gaudily printed Spanish lottery tickets. He carefully uncreased them and laid them on the table:

" Multo valori, multo precioso, multo, multo," and in a jargon of French, English, and Italian he sought to convey to them that these valuable notes were a guarantee of their good faith, that they were more valuable than the whole house, and that on the morrow they would come back and

redeem them, after paying for the food and lodging they hoped to receive.

The natives expressed their willingness to succour the stranded pair. They produced eggs, bread, highly flavoured cheese and goats' milk. They reserved a portion of the living room as their sleeping quarters.

Meanwhile, at Termini, anxiety grew as night advanced and the car failed to return. Undoubtedly there had been an accident; perhaps the car had dropped down a ravine; the men might be injured—perhaps killed. A search party must set out. The interpreter who was put aboard the touring car insisted on taking arms, for he had visions of brigands. But the sight of a foreign car with projecting rifles defeated its own object by driving the natives into reticence and suspicion, the result being that the search party returned without having discovered any trace of Segrave and his mechanic.

In the race the two 4,900-cc. Indianapolis-type Sunbeams had to meet two sleeve-valve Peugeots handled by André Boillot and Becquet, three Diattos, and a couple of O.M.s, a meagre field of nine starters, sent away under the gaze of ex-King Constantine and the ex-Queen of Greece (sister of the ex-German Emperor). Peugeot made use of the $2\frac{1}{2}$-litre racing chassis built in 1914, but fitted it with the Knight-type sleeve-valve engine, as a model in which the firm was then commercially interested. These cars had been used in the French Fuel Consumption Grand Prix. Although the field was small, competition was keen, Boillot driving with his usual recklessness—a recklessness which eventually was to cost him his life, while the 3-litre Diattos, particularly the one driven by Meregelli, were dangerously fast.

Taking a bend at much too high a speed for safety, Meregelli overturned his Diatto, the mechanic being killed and the driver suffering minor injuries. This was the first fatal accident to occur on the Sicilian circuit. Starting first, Chassagne was the first to come past the grandstands, but when Boillot appeared it was seen that the Peugeot had beaten the Sunbeam by .54 seconds. Segrave had not had sufficient practice to be at home on this difficult circuit and

he created amusement when, in view of the grandstand spectators, he overlooked a left-hand bend and shot straight ahead on a by-road leading to the railway station. At the Sunbeam pits the red flag was hoisted as a signal to Chassagne that he had to speed up. He responded to such effect that half a lap later he had wiped out the 54 seconds lag and put himself two minutes ahead of Boillot.

High up in the mountains, some distance from Polizzi, a flying stone broke the Sunbeam oil pipe and allowed all the lubricant to escape. The cry went up for

"Olio."

But to the Sicilians there was only one kind of "olio," the brand obtained from olives. With nothing else available, Chassagne accepted this, repaired the broken pipe, made his way to the pits, where the engine had to be drained and a permanent repair effected. This cost him so much time that at the end of the third round Chassagne was down to fifth place, the two Peugeots were leading, and although Segrave was third he was rather more than an hour behind Boillot. Profiting by his earlier mishap, Chassagne carried a spare can of oil with him. It was a wise precaution, for the exposed oil pipe was fractured a second time. This accident threw him back to such an extent that he was unable to finish within the time limit. Warming up to the contest, Segrave got ahead of Becquet's much battered Peugeot, but was a very poor second to André Boillot who by his second win on the Sicilian circuit left the Coppa Florio in Peugeot hands. Compared with the April race the pace was not fast, the average being 37.5 m.p.h., whereas the racing Mercedes had averaged 39.2 m.p.h.

Chapter 12

It seemed to be a rule that the value of the Targa Florio races should fluctuate: an event of outstanding international merit being followed by one of only local interest. A series of classical races might be followed by two or three years of indifference, during which it was difficult to get enough competitors together to interest the public. But whatever the successes or the reverses, the race was never allowed to lapse. In extreme cases Vincenzo Florio would buy cars and entrust them to his friends. And he was always ready to forsake the role of organiser and become a competitor. This Sicilian sportsman was never so happy as when competing or pitting others in competitive events. If motor racing attracted him more than any other sport, he also organised or competed in such other sports as flying, yachting, motor-boat racing, shooting, cycling, motor-cycling, swimming, aqua-cycling, surf-riding, floral displays, decorated Sicilian carts, photography, local costumes. The ladies were designing dresses for some local or national demonstration: immediately it was decided that there must be a competition of a purely sporting character in which the pleasure of competing outweighed all considerations of prizes and trophies.

The fourteenth Targa Florio race was one of the dull races, with only 15 starters, little foreign competition and a reduced average speed. It was marked by the steady rise of Alfa-Romeo, cars of this make securing the first two places with Sivocci and the coming champion Ascari. But burly Campari failed to finish, and Ferrari, who was to earn more fame as a racing-car manufacturer than as a driver, was also among the missing.

Another year and all was changed for the fifteenth Targa Florio, with which the Coppa Florio was combined, four rounds of the Polizzi circuit having to be covered for the former and five rounds to secure possession of the Cup.

Thirty-six entries were secured and more important still several works teams figured among the starters. As if dissatisfied at having won the Targa with the help of an Italian amateur, Mercedes sent their own champions, the tall, thin, subdued Werner and the burly athletic Lautenschlager, providing them with the 2-litre, six-cylinder, supercharged model. Added to the team was Alfred Neubauer, later to become the universally known manager of the firm's racing department. Also present was the quiet, kindly Dr. Porsche, then attached to Mercedes, who in a few years was to become famous as the designer of the Auto Unions and, under Hitler, the man who conceived the Volkswagen. Peugeot came officially with the sleeve-valve engine in a racing chassis, the drivers being Boillot, Foresti, and Dauvergne. Ballot, the eternally unlucky, had a 3-litre racing car (it was described as a sports model) for Goux, and a 2-litre job for Hamovici. Alfa-Romeo had strengthened their position by taking on such crack drivers as Campari, Wagner, and Ascari, with the unrivalled Count Masetti as their amateur driver.

Fiat came officially with the lightweight 1,500-cc. supercharged models which had created such a sensation in the French Grand Prix at Tours until their compressor blades snapped and they were defeated by the Sunbeams. Two of these ultra-modern racing machines should have started, one driven by Bordino, the other by Salamano. But during practice Salamano suffered two burst rear tyres on a bend and his car shot down an 18-foot embankment. The car was less damaged than the driver and after repairs Felice Nazzaro offered to drive it, but a few practice laps convinced him that this light, powerful racer, with its hard springs and shock-absorbers screwed up tight, was beyond his possibilities. Pastore, one of the firm's testers, was given the " 519 " model, which really was a sports car.

This fifteenth Targa Florio marked the direct move towards the small-piston displacement high-speed motor, as adopted by both Mercedes and Fiat. One man, however, remained true to big bores. He was André Dubonnet, wealthy Parisian, at that time having no connection with the industry, but interested in motor sports and having a brilliant

record as a war pilot. Later, Dubonnet backed Engineer Chedru and successfully put the Dubonnet independent suspension on the market, selling it to General Motors at a time when " knee action " was frequently referred to as a freak. Probably as a result of his war-time aviation experience, Dubonnet purchased one of the new Hispano Suiza chassis produced by Birkigt—six cylinders of 110 by 140 mm.—and asked the Nieuport Aviation Company to build a special lightweight body for it. Despite the fact that the engine was entirely of light alloy, that the body weighed only 12 cwt., and that wings had been dispensed with, it was too heavy for its tyres on this particular circuit.

Under weather conditions such as only Sicily can supply in the month of April, a record crowd comprising a big proportion of the 50,000 Germans who had landed on the island only a few days earlier, and a set of cars and drivers unsurpassed for efficiency and skill, a hard, keenly contested, even cruel race was assured.

Dubonnet, carrying No. 1, was the first to leave the beflagged orange and lemon decorated grandstands, followed by André Boillot on the sleeve-valve Peugeot, then by Werner on the spitefully crackling supercharged Mercedes. The pace was fast, sensationally fast, with a record of 41.8 m.p.h. for the initial round to the credit of Masetti on the twin-carburetter six-cylinder sports Alfa-Romeo. But Dubonnet was only a matter of 13 seconds behind him, while in the same minute were to be found Werner, Boillot and Ascari. Such a close fight had never been known in this mountain race.

Inevitably incidents began to take their toll. The Peugeots found that their tyres were not standing up as in practice, the consumption being so high that they had to take casings from reserve and practice cars, and even borrow from another competitor. Then the oil supply ran short and eight minutes were lost at the pits while helpers searched for a further stock of the precious liquid. Boillot came into an unexpected bend at too fast a pace and realised that he would have to spin his car, to the almost certain loss of both rear tyres, or plunge into a bean field, six feet below the

level of the road. He chose the beans, and when his team-mate Dauvergne came round a few minutes later he witnessed the extraordinary sight of the Peugeot ploughing its way through the greenery to the highway and the mechanic running behind with the starting crank in his hand.

The mechanic riding with Minoia on a Steyr, was so overcome by the heat, the shaking and the violent cornering that he lost consciousness and even after medical aid had been given, he was in no condition to continue. Pietro Bordino, Fiat's favourite, the small, wiry, indomitable Piedmontese, who had the privilege of taunting the engineers with the remark, " Give me a car that will not break up under my driving," now found that he had a car which was breaking him. He pulled into the pits for supplies, driver and mechanic vaulted from their seats and without warning Bordino dropped like a log. Restoratives had no effect. Standing by was Felice Nazzaro, veteran driver who had been in his prime 18 years earlier.

" The race is being lost," exclaimed Felice, and taking the place of the youthful Bordino, he raced up the road he had known so well two decades earlier. Within half an hour he was brought back, the car having been left on the roadside in a damaged condition. Goux, following another car into the dust of a bend, found his accelerator pedal wedged and shot off the road to a position from which only mules and men could extricate him. Reaching the highway, he drove round to the pits and withdrew.

Pit scenes are always thrilling in the Targa Florio. Built on a bend, on rising ground, the pit apron consisted of a very wide road parallel to the track and slightly above it. To the left were the replenishment stations, merely positions under a viaduct on the top of which spectators had access. Innumerable assistants, official and unofficial, found their way to the apron and gave vent to their enthusiasm by assisting or endeavouring to assist every driver who came in for supplies. If there was a rule regarding the number of helpers, it never was applied: to have done so would have caused everybody to be disqualified.

Mercedes had a simplified form of tyre changing. As

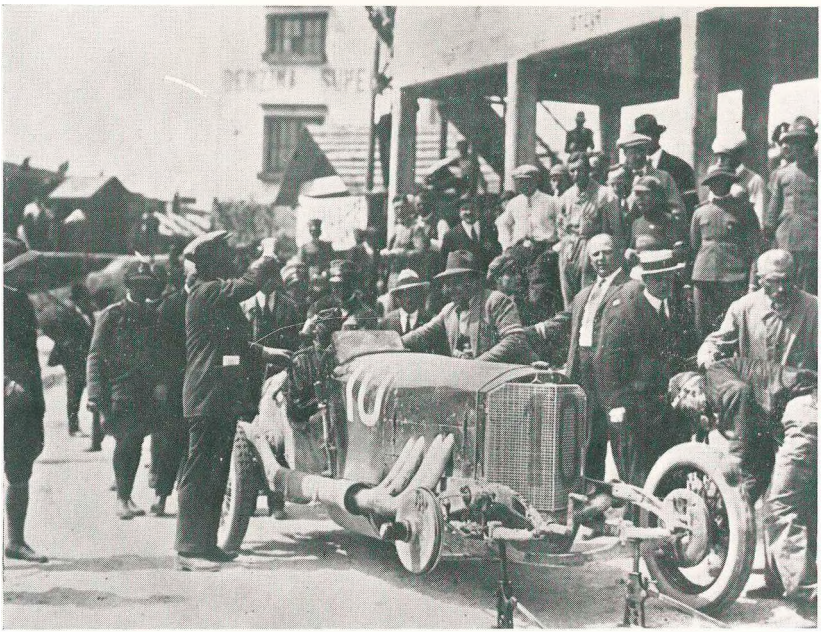
soon as a car came to a standstill two husky Germans laid hold of each wheel and the eight of them lifted the car off the ground while other men slipped jacks under the axles, all this being done in a fever of excitement amidst a milling crowd. From time to time athletic bersaglieri and officious carabinieri endeavoured to eject those who had no badge or were not in a sufficient state of undress to suggest that they were in active service. Then the civilian element would have its revenge when the real pit manager, amidst wild excitement and deafening cries, led a charge against the military and evicted them with no measure of tenderness.

The race became a battle between Mercedes and Alfa-Romeo, or rather between Werner's Mercedes and the Alfa-Romeos of Ascari and Masetti. Lautenschlager was not at his best on this giddy circuit, and Neubauer never reached a forward position. Werner drove magnificently, getting the lead on the second round and holding it for the third, fourth, and fifth rounds, although hard pressed by Ascari and Masetti, to eventually win both the Targa and the Coppa, at an average for the former of just over 41 m.p.h.

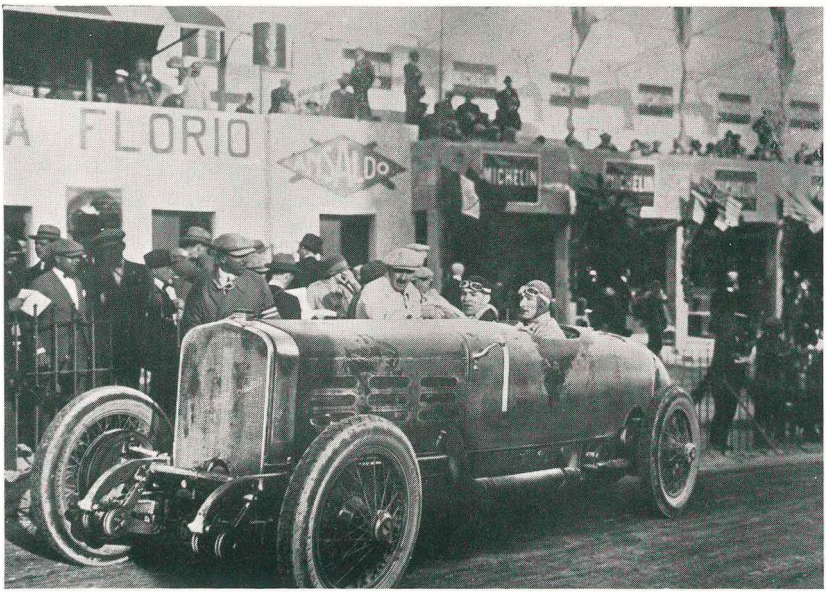
While the result was still in doubt, a gun fired from the watch tower indicated that a car had entered the long, straight seashore stretch. It was too far away to be distinguished, but it was announced to be red. Thus it could only be Ascari, and he had won the Coppa Florio by seconds. The crowd roared itself hoarse as the low-built Alfa-Romeo swung round the easy left-hand bend in front of the stands and only 50 yards from the finishing line. Then an awed silence fell on it, for the car suddenly spun wildly and stopped dead—the engine had seized solid. Defiant of all regulations, flouting danger, a score of official and unofficial persons rushed across to the car with the vague idea of helping Ascari, who was struggling with the starting handle. It was impossible to turn the engine; it was equally impossible for driver and mechanic to push the car up the rise to the nearby finishing line. Finally, helped by more mechanics and only too-willing outsiders, the Alfa-Romeo was pushed

Christian Dauvergne on a sleeve-valve Peugeot.

Jules Goux in the Targa Florio race. He finished second.



Christian Werner keeps his seat while wheels are being changed on his Mercedes (1924).



Andre Dubonnet, the rich Parisian amateur, on the Hispano-Suiza he had equipped specially for the Targa Florio (1924).

over the line, only to be beaten by the Mercedes, and later, when the excitement had quietened down, to be disqualified.

But the excitement at the grandstands was not over. Delayed by small mechanical defects, Wagner was hurrying his Alfa-Romeo to a finish when, on coming into the last easy bend, he found an Italian soldier directly in his path. Stationed at the pits, the trooper had evidently decided that it was time for him to gain the outside of the circuit, and without looking to the right to see if the road was clear, he crouched, his rifle at the trail, and sprang forward as he had been taught to spring in an infantry advance under fire.

Wagner found the soldier directly ahead of him, less than 10 yards away. To brake was impossible. If he swung to the right he would run into the crowded grandstands; swing to the left and he would crash himself and his car against a vertical wall of rock. With the instinct which comes of long experience, the driver gripped his steering wheel still tighter and went straight ahead. Thrown into the air, the soldier fell on the car bonnet and rolled to the road.

"Get a bucket," yelled the Peugeot team manager by my side.

But a bucket was not necessary. A stretcher was used to carry the man away, a doctor attended to him, and one week later he was passed out of the hospital fit for duty. These Italian peasant soldiers are resilient.

Chapter 13

Then Bugatti came. With the return of Alsace and Lorraine to France, Ettore Bugatti, artist-engineer, established in the German village of Molsheim, found himself in a position to give full play to his talents. France offered a more receptive market than could have been found in Germany, it opened the way to foreign fields, and it gave him the opportunity of developing the sporting aspect of motoring which had attracted him from the day when, a mere youth in his teens, he had produced his first car.

The Targa Florio of 1925 was a double-barrelled affair, four laps of the Polizzi circuit having to be covered for the Targa and an extra lap to win the Coppa challenge. Racing by works teams was reaching its peak with, in addition to Bugatti, such firms as Fiat, Alfa-Romeo, Delage, the Sunbeam-Darracq combination, Peugeot, Ferrari as a newcomer and Maserati who occasionally raced officially, but preferred to supply his cars to private motorists. The supercharger had come in, but Bugatti was still opposed to it, declaring that he could get all the power he needed without forced induction.

This sixteenth Targa Florio could be considered almost a Bugatti family affair, for the team was headed by Meo Costantini, a native of Milan, who had followed Bugatti to Molsheim where, if his official standing was not clearly defined, he undoubtedly was a member of the family. He had with him the two brothers Pierre and Fernand Vizcaya, whose father had been largely instrumental in causing Bugatti to settle in Alsace.

Most dangerous of the opponents of the 2-litre racing Bugattis were four sleeve-valve Peugeots handled by Boillot, Wagner, Dauvergne and Rigal, all of them experienced on this circuit and having the advantage—if advantage it was going to be—of practically twice the piston displacement, in reality 3,990 c.c. The others were private owners in Fiat,

O.M., Alfa-Romeo, Tatra, and Itala cars, and were completely overshadowed by the two works teams.

It was by no means a walk-over for Bugatti, for Peugeot was particularly interested in winning the Coppa outright, and as this would be decided at the end of the fourth lap, pace had to be maintained from the beginning. Comparatively little known at the time, Costantini quickly proved himself a master driver under these exceedingly difficult conditions. Certain sections of the public judge a driver's ability by the thrills he provides: great apparent physical exertion, struggles at the wheel, tyre-slipping acceleration, wild skids, usually corrected in time, but obviously providing an important element of danger. By such standards Costantini would not be considered a great driver, for he was so completely in sympathy with his car, his estimate of speed was so precise that there was no unnecessary braking, and his gear changes were made with such wonderful accuracy of timing, that he did not give the impression of moving really fast. Time him over a given stretch, however, or, better still, get behind him in a car of equal power, and it was quickly realised that he was an uncommonly hard man to cope with.

It was the impetuous Boillot, his eyes on the Coppa Florio, who led on the first round, and he was supported by Wagner and Christian Dauvergne, in second and third positions, with Costantini fourth, Rigal's Peugeot being on his tail. As to the Vizcaya brothers they were still too young to threaten these racing giants. Tyre trouble held Boillot back, but it only served to put Wagner first. Then Dauvergne took a turn too fast and overturned. The mechanic was thrown clear and lay stunned on the road, while the driver was pinned under the machine, which began to burn. As Dauvergne felt the flames creeping up his leg, he began to shriek for help, with the result that the mechanic was brought back to consciousness and with the help of peasants who rushed in from the fields, struggled to liberate the imprisoned man. Wagner came by at this time and stopped to give help, Christian Dauvergne was freed in a horribly burned condition, but had to lie by the roadside until an

ambulance could be found in this thinly populated district. These incidents delayed Wagner and allowed Costantini to finish with a lead of nearly five minutes. It was evident, however, that these new cars from Molsheim were specially adapted for this tortuous Sicilian circuit, and that it would be necessary to produce both a better car and an even more skilled driver to defeat them.

A year later the programme was repeated: the same circuit, the same distance, the same divisions by piston displacement, with five laps for the Targa and four for the Coppa, for although having won outright, Peugeot put the Coppa Florio up as a perpetual trophy.

Again Costantini presented himself, but this time with a stronger team, for he had enrolled Jules Goux and Minoia as co-drivers, both of them men having long experience of the circuit. They brought the 2,300-c.c. straight-eight model, which for years was recognised as the Targa Florio type. Bugatti's reputation was so thoroughly established that a number of promising amateurs had purchased his machines. André Dubonnet had discarded his expensive Hispano-Suiza for the more handy 2-litre Bugatti, and several of the 1,500-c.c. models were in the hands of lesser-known drivers.

But there was real competition for the Alsatian team: Maserati had a new 1,500-c.c. eight-cylinder driven by brother Ernesto; Peugeot had two cars with Wagner and Boillot. Most formidable of all was the Delage team of twelve-cylinder 2-litre supercharged models, entrusted to Thomas, Benoist, Divo, the three works drivers and all men of the highest class, and a fourth car purchased by Count Guilio Masetti, twice a winner of the Targa. The Florentine sportsman had ordered a racing Darracq, but this not being ready in time, he was able to secure one of the much-coveted Delages.

On paper it looked as if the Delages would be more than a match for the Bugattis, with Masetti as a probable winner. But taking to the road while the race was in progress, we soon realised that the twelve-cylinder models did not have the road-holding ability of the Bugattis. While Costantini appeared to be a unit with his machine, showing compara-

tively little physical effort, placing it exactly where it should be, braking vigorously and firmly, never skidding wildly and accelerating with marvellous rapidity, René Thomas came by gloomily, clearly indicating that he was not happy, while Benoist was fighting with the wheel in a manner not usual with him.

We stopped behind the Maserati, while driver and mechanic changed a wheel, engine running, then started on the final climb which would lead us to Polizzi. Swinging left to enter a short, level straightaway, a car was seen upside down on the road. It was No. 13 (not an unlucky number in Italy) with which Masetti had set out alone only an hour earlier. No signs of a struggle. It was just as if some malicious giant had taken the car and placed it face downwards on the road, without even scratching the paint. Everything seemed to be intact—everything, indeed, with the exception of a broken drop arm. On the top of the banking a solitary carabinieri guarded the body of the gallant sportsman. Had the main steering arm snapped? It is possible. But it is more likely that owing to the time lag in the action of the brakes—a defect of which the other drivers complained—the Delage had charged up the steep stone-faced banking then rolled over and slipped back to the road in an inverted position.

Lying unguarded by the side of the road, the overturned car cast a gloom over the drivers. Thomas came in and moodily said, "Fini." Benoist followed, then Divo, who had been the fastest of the works team, came to the pits and shut off his engine. It was a complete Bugatti victory, Costantini and Minoia taking the lead at the outset and never being headed. At one time André Dubonnet got his 2-litre model into third place, giving Bugatti the first four positions. Then Materassi with the Hispano-Suiza-engined Itala got in front of him and the final result was Bugatti one, two and three, the drivers being Costantini, Minoia and Goux. To make the victory more complete, the average speed was raised by more than a mile an hour.

Chapter 14

When he returned to Sicily for the third time, Costantini had vacated the driving seat to become team manager, or more correctly race manager, for his services were at the disposal not only of the men from the factory but of the many owners who had purchased Bugatti cars and entered them for the one race in the world where they could prove their all-round ability. This 1927 Targa Florio race was dominated by Bugatti cars, for of the eight to finish within the time limit, five, including the first two, were from Alsace, two from Italy, and one from France.

Given an opportunity of driving round the circuit while the race was in progress, the outstanding impressions were the struggle between the two Parisians, André Boillot in a sleeve-valve Peugeot and André Dubonnet in a 2-litre Bugatti, the one a hardened professional, the other an enthusiastic amateur; the wonderful driving display by Minoia, and the first appearance of that greatest of women drivers, Madame Junek. The only Peugeot representative, Boillot was really handicapped with his 3,860-c.c. engine in a car having a total weight empty of one ton, for to accelerate and decelerate this mass one thousand times in 67 miles did not tend to raise the average. When he set out, four minutes behind the Peugeot, Dubonnet remarked, "I'm going to catch that scamp Boillot on the first round, or there will be something wrong." He caught him, but there was something wrong—for both of them. Dubonnet was only five seconds behind the leader, the crack Minoia, and both of them had beaten the previous year's record, but the Bugatti had developed mysterious misfiring and the Peugeot had lost one half of its exhaust pipe and left the other half in a very wobbly condition.

The Polizzi station, 3,000 feet above sea level, formed a wonderful setting for an artist: a hillside clothed with cactus; vivid patches of red, yellow or blue supplied by the

shawls of the natives; a rich brown mass of rock towering vertically; the rectangular blocks of grey-brown cubist houses; the ruins of a castle from which centuries ago the Saracens had surveyed the coast line as far as the straits of Messina; a Grecian aqueduct having behind it the grim mass of the mountain streaked with snow, although it was the end of April. Polizzi was also the main Bugatti replenishment station, and at it we saw the car driven by Materassi come to a stop for a change of all four wheels, a new set of brake shoes, oil, petrol, and water, all of which were attended to in one minute.

Minoia came in afoot, having left his car by the roadside after it had suffered a broken torque arm, followed by a broken universal. We took him aboard our car and, delving into his vast experience, he explained that the surest way to go fast was to know where to go slowly—a lesson which several had to learn that day. Another driver begged a lift back to the grandstands. It was a Parisian engineer driving under the name of Sabipa, who stated that he had abandoned his car a mile or two away.

On a right-hand bend, near the bottom of a hill, Sabipa remarked:

"I went over here."

We looked around in vain for any signs of a car or for traces of a car having skidded off the road. We had reached a fertile valley, with olive groves and cultivated patches, the road, unlike most of the circuit, being hemmed in with bushes. Sabipa found a gap in the bushes and pointed ahead to his car standing 50 feet below in the rich brown soil of a garden, with fruit trees in full blossom as a framework. He had forgotten where to go slowly, for on this bend he hit a boulder, burst a front tyre, leaped a three-foot ditch, then executed a beautiful vol plane to the soft ground of the garden, where the car came to a standstill on its four wheels with little perceptible damage and no injury to the driver.

For the first time in history, a lady attempted to win the Targa Florio and although Madame Junek never succeeded in her ambition, she proved herself superior to many male drivers and undoubtedly the most brilliant female driver of

this or any other period. On this first attempt she finished the initial lap in fourth position, only 1 min. 10 secs. behind the leader, and the four men ahead of her were such stalwarts as Minoia, Dubonnet, and Materassi. Then the steering gearbox fractured on the lady's Bugatti, causing her to run off the road with the loss of a wheel and damage to the body.

Madame Junek came to Sicily with her husband, a banker from Prague, and the only 2,300-c.c. supercharged Bugatti in the race. The project was that they should form a team, the lady driving for the first three rounds, the husband replacing her for the fourth round and Madame taking over for the fifth and final round. Whatever prejudices one might have against lady drivers, they all dissolved on coming in contact with Madame Junek. A vivacious, smiling lady, her connection with racing cars did not cause her to lose any of her delightful femininity, nor did she ever claim any superiority because of her undisputed skill at the wheel. Instead, she revealed a remarkable modesty in the presence of the proved and tested drivers, and as an indication of the low rating she gave herself, she decided that one month was necessary to learn the tortuous circuit. Accompanied by her husband, Madame Junek made a practice of driving round the circuit every day, sometimes indeed covering five laps, representing eight to nine hours at the wheel. As if this were not enough, they covered the entire 67 miles afoot, at the rate of 12 miles a day so as to memorise every bend and appreciate every gradient. Perhaps one of the greatest difficulties of the Targa Florio race is the isolation the driver feels: there is no opportunity of comparing oneself with others, practically no encouraging or warning signals to be received, no officials to indicate danger ahead, so that when spectators are met with their ovations become all the more important. Doubtless a woman is more sensitive to these than a male, but a feature of Madame Junek's comportment was that she never let natural feminine vanity detract from the work in hand.

Again, and for the third year in succession, Bugatti proved the winner with Materassi at the wheel of the super-

charged 2-litre model, Count Conelli coming second with the supercharged 1,500-c.c. type, and still the average went up, slowly but surely, until in this year 1927 it reached the record of 44.15 m.p.h.

When we set out to follow the racers on that early May morning, for the eighteenth Targa Florio we knew that we were going to witness a battle royal between the Bugatti and the Alfa-Romeo teams. The former had as its champions the chubby-faced Divo, who had obtained his racing experience as mechanic to Thomas and Chassagne ; the boyishly joyful Louis Chiron from Monaco ; the 42-year-old veteran Minoia, and the Italian Foresti who by long residence in London had become half British. But there were other Bugattists who if not on the official team were equal to these drivers in skill: Count Conelli, Materassi who had won a year earlier, burly Count Brilli Peri of the much-battered face, and a man whose name was just beginning to impress itself on the public, Tazio Nuvolari. There were two lady drivers in the race: Madame Junek, who two or three days earlier had driven the five rounds of the circuit just to test her endurance, and Countess Margot d'Einsiedel. Both had Bugattis. After starting their career as spark-plug manufacturers, the Maserati brothers had grown until in this year 1928 they had really a dangerous team with the ever cheerful Fagioli, the effervescent Borzacchini, and the rather staid Ernesto Maserati, one of the three brothers in the firm.

Campari, the *capo* of the Alfa-Romeo team, had all the attributes of the Roman gladiator. Burly, swarthy, possessing a genial bonhomie, with secret ambitions of becoming a famous singer, his performance at the wheel recalled Lancia of 20 years earlier, for like that great Fiat driver he handled his car as if it were a bucking bronco which must be tamed, subdued, made to comply with his will. Supporting him was Marinoni, another of the daring, spectacular types of drivers. Then taking racing very seriously, Alfa-Romeo had come with the six-cylinder supercharged model which only a few weeks earlier had won the Mille Miglia. It was not a pleasing looking car with its cut-off tail, its exposed petrol tank, and its batteries and emergency oil tank

and a single spare wheel at the rear. Alfa-Romeo had decided to run without a mechanic, placing its reliance on four or five small tyre stations dotted around the circuit.

Divo started in this race under a handicap, for his car should have been handled by Pietro Bordino. At the last moment the Frenchman was asked to take the place of the Italian and it was with very meagre knowledge of the circuit that he set out to find that he was going to be very hard pressed by both Madame Junek on the yellow and black Bugatti and by Campari on the red Alfa. That struggle between the hardened male professional and the lady amateur was one of the features of the day. For 270 miles there was never more than a mile between the two cars, and on many of the zigzag sections it was possible for Divo to look back and realise that despite all his efforts he was not succeeding in drawing away from the lady competitor. It was not until the fifth and last round that masculine endurance manifested itself and Madame Junek had to drop back from second to fourth position.

A few hundred yards beyond the village of Polizzi the road described several hairpins before taking the final plunge to the deep valley. On one of these tongues of land it was possible to stand directly above the cars and watch them brake into the curve, swing around it and accelerate away. Immediately below us a white Bugatti with Countess d'Einsiedel at the wheel and a mechanic by her side, came into view. Every movement could be followed in detail. As she approached the bend the lady lifted her foot off the accelerator and gripped the wheel more firmly in preparation for full lock to the right. But she had miscalculated by the merest fraction of a second, there was loose gravel on the road and while the Bugatti was on its four-wheel slide to be arrested only by the stout outer retaining wall, the lady threw up her hands and uttered a loud shriek. This was proof to the mere man that when in a tight corner a lady driver is likely to lose her self-control. Only a hundred yards behind came Minoia's blue Bugatti; the driver accelerated out of one bend, braked to enter the next, with nothing to warn him that around the corner there was a

disabled car, a frantic lady, and two excited carabinieri. With the calmness and precision acquired as the result of 20 years' racing experience, Minoia braked a little harder, swung close in to the right, gave one glance back at the car against the wall and accelerated rapidly, having lost only two or three seconds. When the car had been dragged away from the wall, it was found that the damage was limited to the body and the Countess drove off soberly and probably in a more subdued mood.

Our own adventure came when suddenly two carabinieri and a Fascisti jumped into view and with levelled carbines brought us to a sudden stop with an important transfer of rubber from the tyres to the road surface. Mussolini had extended his rule of power and persuasion to indisciplined Sicily, the persuasion taking the form of inscriptions in these mountain fastnesses to the effect that " the man who curses reveals himself as a brute," or " You show that you are more than an animal by keeping yourself clean." In our case we met with power, for there was nothing external to prove that we, journalist and photographer, had the right to be on a road closed to all but racing cars. A few years earlier, under similar circumstances, a local official had taken the initiative of telephoning back to the grandstands that " a driver was ' not playing the game.' " Under Mussolini's régime the guns held us, much to the disgust of Florio's chauffeur, and it was only after long and angry argument, backed by the production of irrefutable *documenti,* that the carbines were lowered and we were given *passagio libero.*

Despite all his efforts, Campari could not keep his 1,500-c.c. supercharged Alfa-Romeo sufficiently ahead of the 2,200-c.c. Bugatti to win the race, and although he was the first to finish, he was one and a half minutes behind his rival Divo, who averaged 45.6 m.p.h. Louis Chiron is one of the few men who appears to enjoy himself from beginning to end. When Florio increased the distance to five rounds he thought he was reaching the limits of human endurance and most drivers agreed with him. Chiron came in fourth with his Bugatti, nearly seven minutes behind the winner, then continued up the hill. When he reached the mountain

stations and found the mechanics gone or packing up, he realised that the race was over. Coming round to the pits after covering six rounds, he sought out Vincenzo Florio and declared, " Yours is a fine race, but why don't you wave a flag to tell us it is over?"

Whatever might happen elsewhere, Bugatti appeared to be unbeatable on this mountainous Sicilian circuit. For four successive years he had won ; twice he had captured first and second positions, and on one occasion he had held first three places. The cars were just right for these conditions ; Costantini's management was perfect ; the firm had the finest drivers and many of the private owners were men—and women—of exceptional merit.

Then came the 1929 race, the twentieth of the series, run over the Polizzi circuit, for both the Targa and the Coppa, four laps for the Cup and an additional 67 miles to win the Targa. Again Bugatti finished first and second, with Divo and Minoia, capturing both the Targa Florio and the Coppa Cup.

It was a race to destruction, for of the 19 starters only six went the distance, and one of these did not come within the time limit. When we set out from the intoxicating atmosphere of the orange festooned and geranium bedecked grandstands, our observation car had Madame Junek aboard, for by reason of a family bereavement the lady from Prague had decided not to compete again. The struggle lay between Bugatti and Alfa-Romeo, the former with Divo, Minoia, Wagner, Foresti, and Conelli as the official drivers, and the latter having a team of equal merit with Campari, Brilli-Peri, and Varzi. In addition there was the Maserati team with Borzacchini and Ernesto Maserati, plus a few amateurs and drivers of small cars who were really no more than *figurants*. At a point on the mountainside we could look across the great divide and watch the cars approaching fully ten minutes before they passed in front of us ; or rather we saw them intermittently, for on the down run they would disappear occasionally behind clumps of olive and diminutive oak trees and on the climb they would momentarily be hidden by the mountain mass out of which the road had been

cut. But their whoop, whoop, carried up to us all the time, so that we could live with their every movement. A red car with a burly driver at the wheel could be none other than the 1,750-c.c. Alfa-Romeo driven by Campari. Two or three miles behind it was a blue car with a ball of a man at the wheel and a slim youth at his side. This undoubtedly was Divo. The Italian Campari had started first, 12 minutes ahead of Divo. He was the national favourite, a man whose very physique inspired confidence, for he appeared to be possessed of superhuman strength, and he had shown his skill by a long succession of victories. But this day he was not in the best of his form ; he admitted that he had made mistakes—mistakes which nobody else witnessed—and as he expressed it, " the rev counter went faster than the car." Divo, on the other hand, was in a happy mood. The fact that he had Campari in sight, sometimes on a ledge below, sometimes on a ledge above, was indisputable proof that he had gained on him, and he was determined to be not only first in time but first in actual position on the road. It was the third lap—a little more than half distance. Divo was straining every nerve. He used second where normally third would have been employed ; he braked just a little later on each bend ; the rev counter went into the red just beyond the 5,000 mark, and the mechanic anxiously watched the thermometer creep beyond the 100 Centigrade mark, with the comforting knowledge that Prestone does not evaporate until about 180 degrees. Yard by yard the Bugatti closed up on the Alfa-Romeo until, just after a hairpin bend, the Frenchman flashed past the Italian. The only spectators, and hardened to such scenes, we could not suppress a cry of admiration. Out in front, Divo felt that he had nothing more to fear, for he was backed by his team-mate the tough Minoia, and this allowed him, as he expressed it, to drive " à la Papa."

Up at the old-world Polizzi replenishment station Bugatti pit work was perfect. A thump of the fist and the radiator filler cap flew open ; two thumps at the rear and the petrol tank caps were off, one releasing air and the other ready for the pipe from the drum mounted high on trestles. Three

more punches and all caps were closed. Front and rear were raised almost simultaneously; the wheels were whipped off, then the brake shoes, new wheels and shoes replacing the old ones; the driver was given a drink of water and the mechanic was accorded the opportunity of gulping down a half glass of champagne (order from General Costantini). Nobody spoke (also orders from the General), but when the car had gone after losing only 57 seconds, the mechanic expressed his satisfaction by sprawling himself all over the tail and as they gathered up their tools the mechanics relieved themselves by uttering a word made famous at Waterloo.

A Fascisti official, who had discarded his rifle for a much more efficient swish, spoke to the olive-eyed youngsters munching dry bread and beans, bean, pod and stalk, using soft-sounding honeyed words, as he innocently closed up on them. Then the swish went into the air and with incredible swiftness descended on their bare legs, leaving the ground free and deserted.

We did not escape attention. A man in black approached our car and asked where we had come from. If the ordinary Fascisti distinguished themselves by their elaborate uniforms and multiple decorations, the men really at the top disdained such frivolities. Our driver drew himself to attention and remarked, "I am Mario." In Palermo this would have been sufficient. There may be thousands of Marios in Palermo, but in connection with the Targa Florio race there was only one, and he was Vincenzo Florio's trusted chauffeur.

But this official was a new man, probably one of those who had been sent to stamp out the Maffia. He might have been one of those who a week before had condemned 20 men to death at Trabia. Sharp, harsh words fell from his lips, sounding like the crack of a whip, for Italian has the double quality of being the most melodious and the most incisive of spoken tongues.

"Mario, who is Mario; and what is Mario to me?"

Careful explanations followed: Here was the *journalistico inglese,* sent specially from England; the photographer was

from Paris, a *photographico celebro,* and the lady? Surely he knew the famous signore corridore, the lady who on two occasions had nearly won the Targa Florio?"

Yes, the official understood. With a wave of his cane the guard—six men in all—was called up. They saluted us; they broke into a cheer ; the crowd of men joined them, for women are not allowed to participate in such important events as this, and we moved off on a wave of glory, with ripples of satisfaction coming from Mario.

Despite all their efforts, the two Alfa-Romeo stalwarts were unable to catch up with the two Bugatti leaders. The men were on an equality, but the Italian cars did not have that superb road-holding ability which characterised the Bugattis. The lap record was broken again and again, by Divo, by Minoia, and by the impetuous Borzacchini on the straight-eight Maserati. The pace took its toll: piston heads caved in on Wagner's Bugatti ; a rock rolled down from the mountain and eliminated Conelli; Lepori broke numerous valve springs. He was sitting idly at the pits when Bittmann came in completely exhausted. " I'll take your car and finish for you," exclaimed Lepori. He did so, but his sporting spirit was not rewarded, for the rules said that reserve drivers must be nominated in advance. Thus they were whittled down until only four finished officially, the two Bugattis and the two Alfa-Romeos. Bittmann's Bugatti completed the distance but was disqualified, and when Foresti came in scowling and tired, it was to find that he had exceeded the time limit.

Chapter 15

IT'S A BLUE

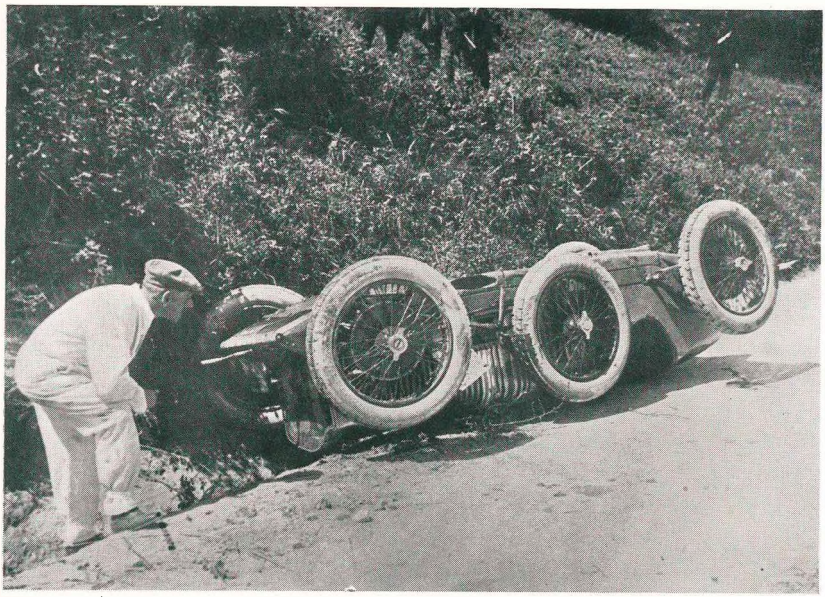
But it had to end. For five successive years Bugatti had dominated the Targa Florio, beating all other cars and humiliating a Fascisti Italy which refused to admit that it was inferior to anybody or anything. The spell must be broken ; Italy must win, cost what it may, and the manner in which she won cannot be better related than in the description of the race supplied by the author to *The Autocar.*

" E una azzuro " (It's a blue).

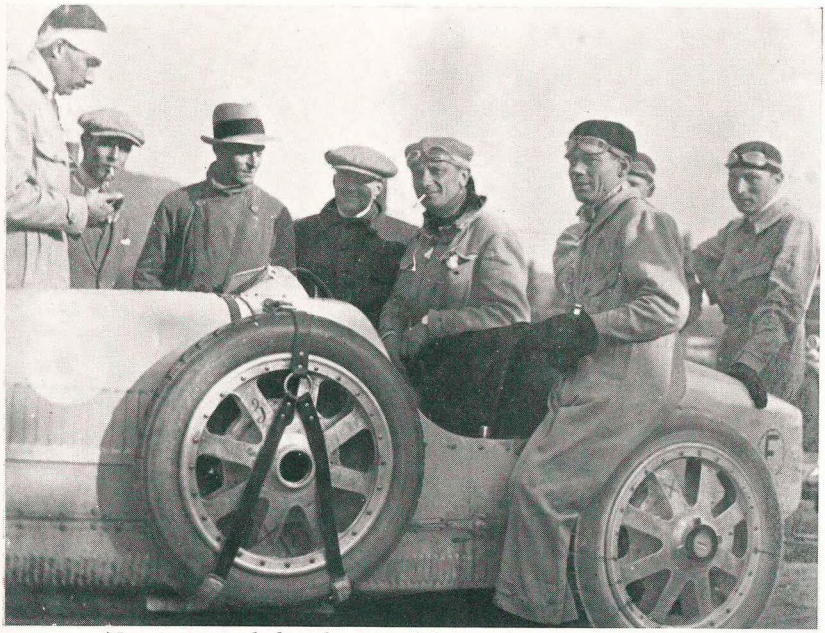
No pen can interpret the disgust, the mortification, the defiance contained in those three words as they were uttered by the swarthy Sicilian on the heights above the cubist village of Cerda.

This twenty-first Targa Florio was the battle of the Blues and the Reds—the Blues being represented by French Bugattis and the Reds by the Italian Alfa-Romeos, O.M.s and Maseratis. We tried to explain to the native that if the Bugattis were sky blue, the builder of the cars was a native of Milan, and that despite 20 years' residence in Alsace under German domination and a further ten years under French rule, Ettore Bugatti and his family had retained their Italian nationality. But he listened to us impatiently. It was blue and therefore French and foreign, and must be beaten by one of these flamboyant red cars handled by some glorious, invincible Italian demi-god.

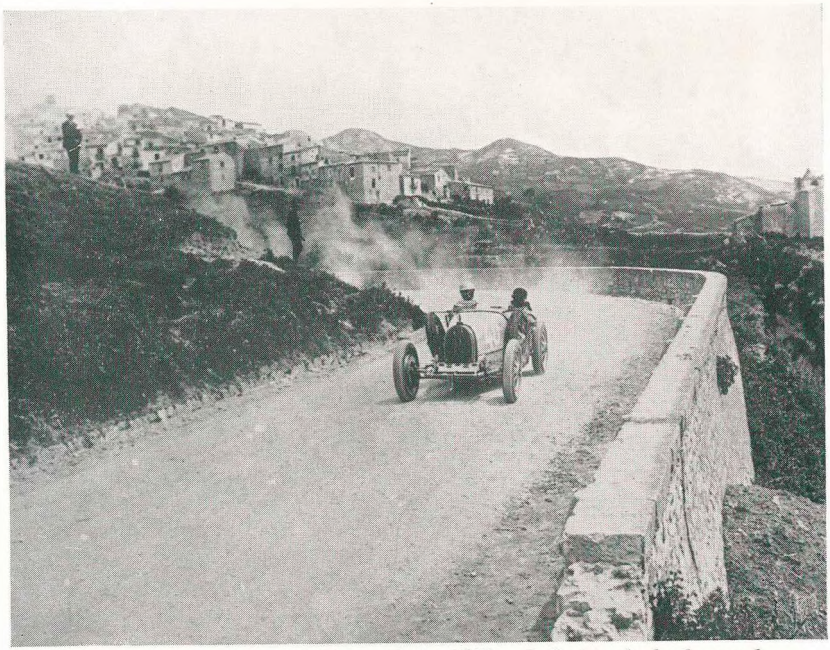
A religious fervour seemed to have gripped the island. For five successive years the Targa Florio race—without doubt the most difficult in the world and the one demanding the highest driving skill—had been won by French Bugatti cars ; the Italian Costantini had captured the event twice and then took his place as team director and manager ; Materassi had scored a brilliant victory for the Alsatian car ;



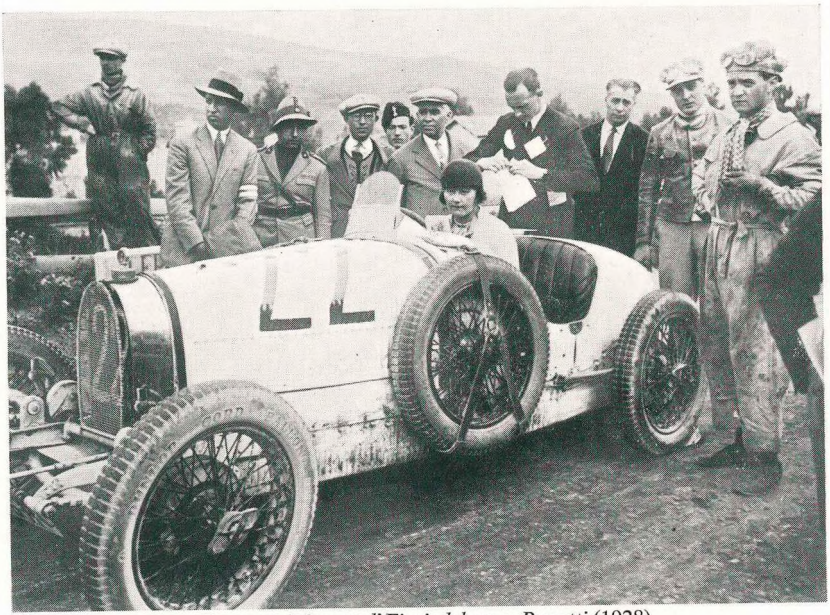
The author examining Count Masetti's Delage after the fatal accident.



Neo Costantini before the start of the race he was to win (1925).



Chiron on a Bugatti, 19*th Targa Florio*, 1928. *Polizzi in the background.*



Countess Margot d'Einsiedel on a Bugatti (1928).

then the Parisian Divo gained two successive races, each time breaking records. Now Italy *had* to win or stand as an inferior nation, and inferiority is not a popular attitude in the peninsula at present.

Thus when we drove away from the gay grandstands, within sight of the sea, bedecked with geraniums and festooned with oranges and lemons, we knew that we were going to watch the most keenly contested and probably the most thrilling race Sicily has seen for years. Not only were we going to watch it, but, in a certain measure, we had the privilege of taking part in this wonderful Franco-Italian struggle, for we were driving round the circuit while the race was in progress.

" Viva Mario, Avanti Mario, Sforsa Mario, Ciao Mario," roared the enthusiastic crowds massed on the green banks or encamped in commanding positions among the purple clover or on the edge of fields of tender artichokes. Driver Mario accepted their ovations with the bonhomie and the dignity worthy of the head of Signor Vincenzo Florio's motor department, while we of *The Autocar* staff basked happily in his reflected glory.

Through the long, straight, main street of Cerda, with its square, chimneyless houses, its natives at the doors and windows, its horses and mules tethered, its lazy pigs, and its countless children denied their usual liberty, we slipped at a rapid pace; we climbed the hill until we looked directly down on the town and beyond it to where the sea and sky merged into a common blue, broken presently by a puff of white smoke. It was the " Bomba " indicating that the first car had entered the seashore stretch immediately after Campofelice.

Then there appeared a streak of red on the multi-tinted green of the mountainside. It was high above us and several miles away, but we knew that the driver of that car was roaring down that dangerous road with every fibre of his body stressed to the utmost, and that presently he would be upon us. It was Borzacchini, the driver of the 2,500-c.c. straight-eight Maserati, the first to start in the race, who flashed past us. Following him hard and gaining on him

was Morandi with a 2,200-c.c. O.M. But if Morandi was faster than Borzacchini, the Frenchman Divo on No. 6 Bugatti was gaining on them both and doubtless would catch them before the mountain fastness of Caltavuturo. It was this fact that had provoked the native who had joined us by the roadside.

Downhill through sombre olive groves, across a bridge over a chasm, then uphill with numerous curves marked "Scolta pericoloso"—the peril seemed so obvious that it hardly needed a sign to indicate it—we followed the three leading cars to Caltavuturo.

At the foot of a vertical cliff topped by a ruined castle, its lower slopes covered with cactus, we stood and watched the cars, at first mere specks five miles away on the opposite mountainside, gradually increasing in size as they came nearer to us in their irregular course.

The chief centre of interest was Varzi's 2-litre Grand Prix Alfa-Romeo, carrying No. 30. Two of these cars had been entered, but they were so fast, so difficult to handle on such a circuit and they roasted their crews to such a degree that even the Herculean, gladiator-like Campari was reluctant to start. The decision was, therefore, taken by Engineer Jano to scratch one of these cars, to transfer Campari to a 1,750-c.c. model and to hold Ghersi in reserve if, as was imagined, Varzi was unable to drive the entire five rounds of the 70-mile circuit.

Varzi's handling of the big racing Alfa-Romeo was marvellous. He had started 12 minutes behind Chiron, but he soon passed the three intervening men, and in the first 20 miles gained a minute on the French champion. He finished the initial round in 1 hr. 21 mins. 21 3/5 secs., which was 3 mins. 54 secs. faster than the Targa Florio circuit had ever been lapped, and equal to 49.5 m.p.h.

Campari's driving was the most spectacular. Huge of girth, he gave one the impression of a powerful cavalier flogging a bucking bronco, and of causing it to buck and plunge just for the pleasure of mastering it. Nuvolari, on the other hand, was a startling contrast, both in physique and in method of driving. Campari is 39 years of age and

looks it. Nuvolari is only a few months younger and has the physical appearance of a youth of 16. But his slim frame is composed of muscles of steel—of steel of the finest quality, as he proved when he covered a thousand miles on the open road at 63 m.p.h. in the recent Thousand Miles race. Varzi, 26 years old, and, like Nuvolari, a racing motor-cyclist, would pass for a yachting hand at Cowes or Torquay, if put in a blue jersey. The fact that he could handle this racing Alfa-Romeo, geared *down* to 118 m.p.h. because no lower ratio was available, and at which Ascari looked askance, classes him as the finest driver Europe possesses at present.

Above Caltavuturo, at 2,700 feet above sea level, the wind blew cold in spite of the brilliant sun. Etna's peak was visible in the far distance, and at frequent intervals the road appeared to be running to a void, towards which the competitors bore with the accelerator pedal right down. Pressure on the brakes came at precisely the right moment, and instead of dropping six feet into bean fields or hundreds of feet on to cruel rocks, the car remained on the road.

After swinging round one of these bends we were in time to see four or five carabinieri righting Archangeli's Maserati No. 14. With a seized brake when on the bend, the car had shot into a field, rolled over three times while the men remained in their seats, but on the last roll Archangeli had been thrown on soft ground.

"Capite, Mario," exclaimed Archangeli, when both he and his car had been returned to the hard road. "Capite? niente"—and he swung his hands one over the other to represent a car rolling over itself, then flattening his palms he smoothed everything out—"niente; Ferma rifornimento; niente, niente."

It needed no knowledge of Italian to understand that this meant "You understand, Mario, this roly-poly business never happened; we just stopped at our supply station; everything is first-class." We delivered the official message as requested, but we never promised not to tell the real story afterwards. This sporting spirit was typical of the race.

Three miles away, clear cut on the skyline, stood Polizzi,

its houses built on ledges chiselled out of the face of the rock, with their back windows dominating a dizzy drop of several hundreds of feet and affording a view of the Mediterranean 3,000 feet below and 25 miles away.

Bugatti and O.M. had elected to establish their replenishment stations at this mountain fastness rather than at the main grandstands. Divo was due. We waited for him. We espied him three miles away by road, at the point where Archangeli had performed his circus trick. We watched him streak along the mountain backbone and pull up with marvellous precision between two boards laid out on the ground to mark his position. A bevy of mechanics swarmed around. In 58 seconds the four tyres had been changed, the fuel and oil tanks filled, and a little water poured into the radiator and Divo's Bugatti No. 6 was roaring at a hair-raising speed down the road cut out of the vertical face of the mountain. Of all the thrilling sections of the Targa Florio course, this undoubtedly is the most exciting, and it is one which cannot be seen by the public, for not even a goat could find footing on this wall of rock, and the ledge is too narrow and too winding to allow a car to stand.

While the roar of the Bugatti exhaust was still in our ears, Morandi's O.M. dashed up, skidding so wildly that it almost cleared away the Bugatti station, and was pounced upon by a band of enthusiasts. When the front wheel had been removed, somebody let the jack slip, allowing the axle to drop down on the brake drums, which so exasperated one of the helpers that he thumped the culprit in the chest and sent him sprawling into a pool of mud, petrol, and oil.

But if there was not much order there was plenty of vim, and in an incredibly short time the O.M. engine was again in action. With the roar from the exhaust there came another roar from the crowd—a huge shout first of amazement then of jubilation. Immediately behind the Bugatti pits was a centuries-old viaduct which doubtless carried water across a gap to the town built on the edge of the rocky promontory.

Sprinting through the mud to the arches of the viaduct, we looked down, far away in the valley and saw a blue car against a granite wall. As seen through field glasses, the car seemed to be partially overturned, but a man in white—probably Divo—was walking around the front of it.

" Divo's had an accident; go and help him; take him some wheels," screamed the Bugatti pit manager, for ours was the only car which could go on the road. But our crew was scattered. We roared for Mario, for the photographer, for the artist and, unceremoniously bundling them aboard, we threw ourselves down that mountainside with the tyres going zim-zim-zim, as we skidded around the bends, risking a lot to reach the disabled car. But Divo and his mechanic were not hurt. As we raced towards them we saw them working like beavers, and when our Fiat ran alongside the Bugatti at a point which in a popular French cinema film is depicted as " le virage de la mort," Divo was about ready to move away and only had time to explain, " I was a fool; I missed the bend; only a broken wheel."

From the carabinieri who were present we learned what had happened. When coming off the bridge spanning the deep chasm, Divo turned his head, apparently deceived by the pronounced echo into believing that a car was just behind. This momentary inattention was sufficient for him to lose control on coming out of the second arm of a short S immediately after the bridge and to run up a 45-degree stone wall which formed a miniature Brooklands banking on the outside of the road.

As it struck the top of the banking, at least six feet above the level of the road, the car's right front wheel went to pieces, then the machine slipped down and came to rest in the stone gully. Unfortunately, in addition to the wheel the stub axle was bent and after getting round to Cerda, Divo had to abandon the race.

Never was a road race so keenly contested. It was known at the outset that the pace would be fast, and the lap record would be broken, and three members of the Bugatti team—Chiron, Divo, and Conelli—all broke it. But three members of the Alfa-Romeo team—Varzi, Nuvolari, and Campari—

broke it with still bigger margins and Varzi was 2 mins. 6 secs. ahead of the best Bugatti at the end of the first round.

Another round of the circuit and Varzi had increased the Alfa-Romeo lead to 3 mins. 18 secs. Divo was out, and the Franco-British Williams (Captain William Grover), who had never previously raced in Sicily, was displaying visible signs of fatigue. Alfa-Romeo, on the other hand, had two men in reserve if their drivers failed. Now it was up to Chiron, and the lad from Monte Carlo responded brilliantly, driving more daringly but without losing any of that nonchalance which characterises him. He passed both Nuvolari and Campari, moving from fourth to second place, and almost equalling Varzi's record lap, he closed up on the big Alfa-Romeo.

Leaving the scene of Divo's mishap, we ran through sweet-scented orange and lemon groves over the road of a thousand bends, a road gently downhill, the longest straight stretch of which did not measure more than 50 yards.

The heavy rains of this spring had completely washed the road away at two points between Collesano and Campofelice. The highway had dropped about six feet and moved about 15 feet to the right. Hastily the damage had been repaired, but the surface at these points was rough, even for touring cars and terrible for the racing machines. These conditions caused the spare wheel on Varzi's car to come adrift and to fall on the road after having rubbed a slight hole in the petrol tank. The wheel had been set in the tail longitudinally, and was held by a strap, but as the attachment and not the strap had broken, the last two laps had to be run without a spare, Varzi knowing that Chiron was gaining little by little and that a single puncture would destroy all his chances. Meanwhile the lost wheel was travelling around the circuit between the bonnet and the mudguard of our Fiat.

At Campofelice, an ancient town of Arabian origin a few yards from the sea and the beginning of the only straight stretch of the circuit, we watched Chiron go by, then waited for Varzi who had started 12 minutes after him. The difference between the two was 31 seconds to the advantage

of the Alfa-Romeo, but as the latter car had to stop at the pits for tyres and petrol, whereas Chiron had filled up at half distance, there seemed to be a slight advantage in favour of the Bugatti.

Campari was handicapped by reason of his third gear, which slipped out of engagement, while Nuvolari, who had a pleasing manner of driving fast without any apparent effort, lost place after a front spring eye fractured. This allowed Conelli first to pass Campari and later to get ahead of Nuvolari. There is something gentlemanly in the way Count Conelli handles a racing car, and if he dropped back at the beginning it was because he was convinced that a lap time of 1 hr. 25 mins. was sufficient to win. The more daring Alfa-Romeo professionals proved that this time could be improved on by nearly three minutes.

Warned too late of the Alfa-Romeo threat astern, Chiron was in a desperate condition. He had wasted time in the early part of the race and now he had to regain it at all costs. His young Alsatian mechanic, who was racing for the first time, was in a groggy condition and rolled about helplessly in his seat, hindering the driver. The thought came that it would be better to drop him at Polizzi, together with the two spare wheels, and make one wild dash with the car lightened, risking everything to win.

But the team manager's final orders had been to play safe, and in consequence Chiron endeavoured to infuse some life into his mechanic by making him look out for imaginary cars. Prudence had been thrown to the wind; where third had been used formerly, second was now engaged, and the rev-counter needle was kept on and beyond the 5,000 mark. The giddy Polizzi descent was entered with the engine shrieking at 5,000 on second gear to get better acceleration out of the bends. Seeing the revolution counter so high, the mechanic pumped oil.

" Nom d'un chien, don't pump downhill," roared Chiron, and the better to enforce the order he knocked the mechanic's hand off the pump and gave him a vicious dig in the ribs.

Here fate caught Chiron, for the bend was covered with

loose stones, the tyres were worn smooth, and the Bugatti skidded on all four wheels, crashing into the outer retaining wall. The left front wheel had crumpled, the tyre was punctured, and the left spare wheel had been torn away from its support.

Working like fiends the two men changed the front wheel and were about to move off when Chiron noticed that three spokes of the left rear wheel were fractured. This was changed. The damaged wheels, the jack, and the tools were abandoned on the roadside, and, tumbling aboard, Chiron raced away in a wild frenzy.

Behind, another drama was being enacted. When Varzi left the pits after changing tyres, at the beginning of the last lap, he knew that he was half a minute behind Chiron, and he knew too that Chiron was straining every nerve to win. He had no spare wheel, his fuel tank was leaking and he might run out before he got round. Popping through the carburetter indicated that the supply was getting low. Grabbing a can of petrol from one of the many stations the firm had established around the circuit, the mechanic endeavoured to pour its contents into the tank while running. Much of the fuel spilled over the tail, some of it dropped on the hot exhaust pipe, and wicked flames began to play around the car. They reached Varzi's neck, but he refused to stop. Crouching forward and edging himself sideways in the seat, he gave his mechanic all possible room to fight the flames with the seat cushion.

The fire was extinguished, but the incident had caused the loss of nearly a minute. Now Varzi was worked up to fever pitch. He roared through Campofelice and entered the five-mile straightaway by the seashore—the only portion on which top gear could be used and where his Grand Prix racing model gave him an advantage. The rev counter crept up to the danger line of 6,000, to 6,200, to 6,300, and finally to 6,500. Something must go ; it seemed that something *must* give way—but this was no time for caution. As he flashed around the curve on which the grandstands were built, Achille Varzi knew from the wild roar which went up from the grandstands that he was the victor of the twenty-

first Targa Florio. He had won the sum of £1,000, plus cups and medals by the narrow margin of 1 min. 48 2/5 secs.

Campari fought hard for third place, but was beaten by a matter of seconds by Count Conelli. Handicapped more and more by his broken front-spring eye, Nuvolari dropped back to fifth place. With a car of very normal and simple design, Morandi brought his O.M. to sixth place. Williams, not completely recovered from his crash at Rome last year, was so worn out that he had to turn his car over to Divo for the last round. Twelve finished out of 18 starters, which is a most wonderful tribute to cars and men under conditions of such intensity and such natural difficulties. But most important of all, the Reds had won and Italy was wildly triumphant.

Chapter 16

Bugatti was beaten; Italy had replaced France as the Targa Florio champion. For five successive years the blue cars from Alsace had carried all before them; and for five more years Alfa-Romeo was to be supreme in this Sicilian race. This did not mean that Bugatti competition had faded away, but that it had assumed a more personal character, centring itself on Tazio Nuvolari and Achille Varzi.

These two men had been team-mates, but so much jealousy existed between them, there was so much bickering, that Engineer Jano, then at the head of the Alfa-Romeo organisation, decided that one of them must go—and that one was Varzi. To be turned off a team which was just beginning to reveal itself as the best in the world was not a decision which any spirited driver would accept with equanimity. Bugatti had decided not to race in Sicily in 1931, but his friendship with Costantini enabled Varzi to secure a car with which he could compete privately. Best of all, it would enable him to show that he was the equal of Nuvolari, if not his superior. To show that this was an Italian entry, the sleek Bugatti appeared in the very unusual brilliant red; but the driver paid a compliment to the maker of the car by dressing in French blue overalls. He was a lone wolf, starting ahead of a pack of five official Alfa-Romeos driven by such experts as Nuvolari, Borzacchini, Campari, Archangeli, and D'Ippolito, having 25 mechanics at their service, a fleet of 11 racing and practice cars, and the advantage of 15 days' practice and tuning up. The chief engineer was present to control them and, unlike the early days when drivers were really isolated, wireless telegraphy linked up the outposts and general headquarters. Technically the Alfa-Romeos were in a favoured position with the straight-eight supercharged model which had proved itself in the Thousand-Miles race a little earlier.

One usually and correctly associates the Targa Florio race

with sunshine and heat, brilliant colouring, exotic conditions, in fact. But the mountains can be fickle, and this spring a cyclone swept over the highlands, carrying bridges away and destroying 10 miles of highway, so that the decision had to be taken to revert to the longer and more difficult circuit through Petralia, adding 700 feet to the height and giving a length round of just over 90 miles. As only four rounds had to be covered, the total distance was not appreciably greater.

Running at the head of the pack, Varzi kept the Alfa-Romeo hounds two minutes behind him on the initial lap, held it on the second lap, kept them in the rear on the third lap, but this was only done by almost superhuman efforts. On the first round he set the record for the day ; the second lap was slower, for he had to stop for tyres and plugs, but as the others also had to pull in, the net result was to put Nuvolari on his tail in place of Borzacchini ; on the third lap the time was lower for everybody, but Varzi still held his two minutes' lead with the five howling Alfa-Romeos right on his tail.

With the last lap purgatory began for the Bugatti driver. If it was gloriously fine in the lowlands, it was quite otherwise on many portions of the mountain. Black clouds rolled in from the east; an occasional rumble of thunder was heard, mist settled down ; visibility at times was reduced to 20 yards, and instead of a hard surface the road became soft and greasy with mud on some of the bends, sometimes the available width being reduced to such an extent that it was difficult to overtake.

Engineer Jano had foreseen what was going to happen and at the last moment had ordered a right-hand wing to be fitted to his five cars. Varzi had no such protection. As he passed us on the road such quantities of mud and stones were flung up by the wheels that the bright red of the Bugatti had completely disappeared ; the numbers were obliterated ; the driver and mechanic became unrecognisable. Varzi threw away his useless goggles ; he sat in mud, he swallowed mud ; he was blinded by it at a thousand points where he needed full visibility.

Had the weather been clear he could have looked back

across the mountains and seen his rivals, thus judging how he lay in relation to them. But in this Scottish-like mist no such aid was available. The Alfa-Romeo men on the other hand were completely informed. They were being stressed as they never had been stressed, but they knew that the punishment inflicted on Varzi was much greater than their own, and Nuvolari was aware that if he failed there was still Campari and Borzacchini to take his place. As to Archangeli he was down at the pits, his left eye a mass of red on a mud-stained cheek, pacing backwards and forwards in a fever of excitement and physical pain. Zehender took over with no great enthusiasm, but it was beyond his ability to finish within the time limit. As to Dreyfus, on the Maserati, he realised that the task was hopeless and drew into the pits to abandon in a rage of despair.

Outside an inn at Castellana we came upon a gloomy and bandaged Fagioli and his mechanic, who had no need to tell us that they had crashed. A mile or so away we came upon their battered Maserati. The scene was easily reconstructed. At the foot of a steep hill a sharp bend had brought them on to a bridge over a raging torrent: a skid, a crash into a boulder, and the rear axle was torn off and assumed the shape of a U. Fagioli had lost most of his front teeth, but once aboard our Fiat he found that he could eat our provisions " in reverse," as he expressed it, and his natural cheerfulness speedily returned.

Castelbuono, a village which had been built when pack mules were the only means of locomotion, had streets without footpaths, with a width just sufficient for two cars abreast, but precluding any possibility of overtaking at speed. The natives were confined to their balconies, where they had a magnificent view of all that was passing below them. For 10 hours they had accepted to be cut off from their neighbours except by calls and cries. Nuvolari dashed up this narrow granite-paved street, swung sharply right on to a tiny piazza, swung left to a bigger piazza, roared down another equally narrow street and in a few seconds was out in the open country again. Borzacchini was even more spectacular:

he had never driven with such abandon as during the last two rounds of this Targa Florio race.

The finish was a scene of tragedy and triumph. Having started first, Varzi finished first, but as they lifted him out of a car so thickly coated with mud that he might have been immersed in a bath of it, he realised that the pack had caught him, on time if not in position. While they were tearing off his once-blue overalls and his sodden jersey, wiping his face and placing a cigarette between his lips, only a few yards away a wild, surging crowd was holding aloft a slim figure in dirty, red overalls. Nuvolari was gripping the thick black hair of a stalwart, with the other hand he waved a bouquet of flowers, while his face radiated with the word "Victory." A double victory, indeed, for Alfa-Romeo, for during that last, cruel round Borzacchini had closed up and put his car into second place, five minutes ahead of Varzi. On the straightaway the cars had been running at 115 m.p.h., but with the low-gear ratio it was necessary to cut out from time to time to avoid the dangers of over-revving. One hundred and fifteen maximum. And the winner's average was 40.29 m.p.h. That is the Targa Florio.

Mussolini was at the height of his power in 1932, and as weather vagaries were likely to render the big Sicilian circuit unusable at short notice, Florio made an appeal to him for Government aid in the construction of a loop road which would eliminate elevated Petralia and picturesque Polizzi and form what became to be known as the short circuit, a little more than 44 miles round. Interviewed privately, robbed of his bodyguards and officials, Mussolini lost his usual stage dignity and pomposity, showed that he had real knowledge of motoring and racing and ordered work on the new road to be undertaken immediately. A shorter distance round added interest for the spectators and the reduced altitude made the race easier for the drivers, but as Vincenzo Florio has a theory that drivers should always be stressed to the utmost, he tried to overcome this by ordering eight laps to be covered, bringing the total distance up to 354½ miles.

Again Bugatti declined to send an official team, but Varzi and Chiron decided to run as independents, three others of lesser fame brought the little blue cars from Alsace to the starting line; Alfa-Romeo had a powerful team of five with Nuvolari, Borzacchini, Ghersi, Brivio, and D'Ippolito; Maserati had Ruggeri and Fagioli, and there were two small Fiats and an O.M., handled by amateurs who are always drawn to this fascinating race. For the second year in succession Nuvolari proved to be the winner, his average speed for the eight laps being 49.3 m.p.h. Comparisons are difficult, for this circuit was being used for the first time. It is interesting to note, however, that it was not until three years later that this record was beaten by a small margin.

At the very beginning Nuvolari's No. 10 Alfa-Romeo pulled away from its rivals, being 1 min. 43 secs. ahead of Borzacchini and Chiron and a slightly greater distance ahead of Varzi, three other Alfa-Romeos and a Maserati. The wiry, dynamic Italian never was in better form and never seemed to enjoy himself so much as on this occasion. At one point a stout stone wall formed a protection against a giddy drop. There was sufficient room for us to climb on the outside of this wall, lean on the top of it, and be so close to the racing cars that without much effort one could have touched the cheeks of the drivers as they went by, cutting in so close to save inches, that their right-hand wheels seemed likely to graze the stones. Those few fleeting seconds of close-up were sufficient to show that Nuvolari was jubilating. There was none of the tense, nervous concentration one so often observes in a driver endeavouring either to hold his leading position or gain on a rival, but rather a complete abandon, a joie de vivre, an exuberance which did not express itself in useless gestures, but rather in facial expressions, in shouts, as if he would fain have others join in his glory.

Nuvolari had reason for satisfaction. At the outset he set a pace which neither his team-mates nor his rival Varzi could equal. He covered the initial lap in 1 min. 43 secs. faster than both Borzacchini and Chiron, a driver who always appeared to be particularly happy on this circuit, and

he left three Alfa-Romeos and a Maserati still further in the rear. Under the tremendous stresses to which it was submitted, Varzi found that his Bugatti gearbox had developed defects. The day was terrifically hot and Chiron, not being in perfect physical condition, wilted under it, and had to ask Varzi to replace him. The cause was lost for the Bugattis, however, for Nuvolari finished 5 mins. 39 secs. ahead of his team-mate Borzacchini, and he left the Chiron-Varzi combination 9 mins. 38 secs. in the rear. This was the longest race ever run on the short Madonie circuit, but it was the fastest. and was to remain the fastest for several years.

Chapter 17

Two men, more than any others, have left their impress on the Targa Florio races. They were Achille Varzi and Tazio Nuvolari. Team-mates, rivals; friends, opponents; members of the same profession; having a common origin but widely different destinies; equally matched in racing skill, but adopting different techniques; physically dissimilar and widely separated temperamentally.

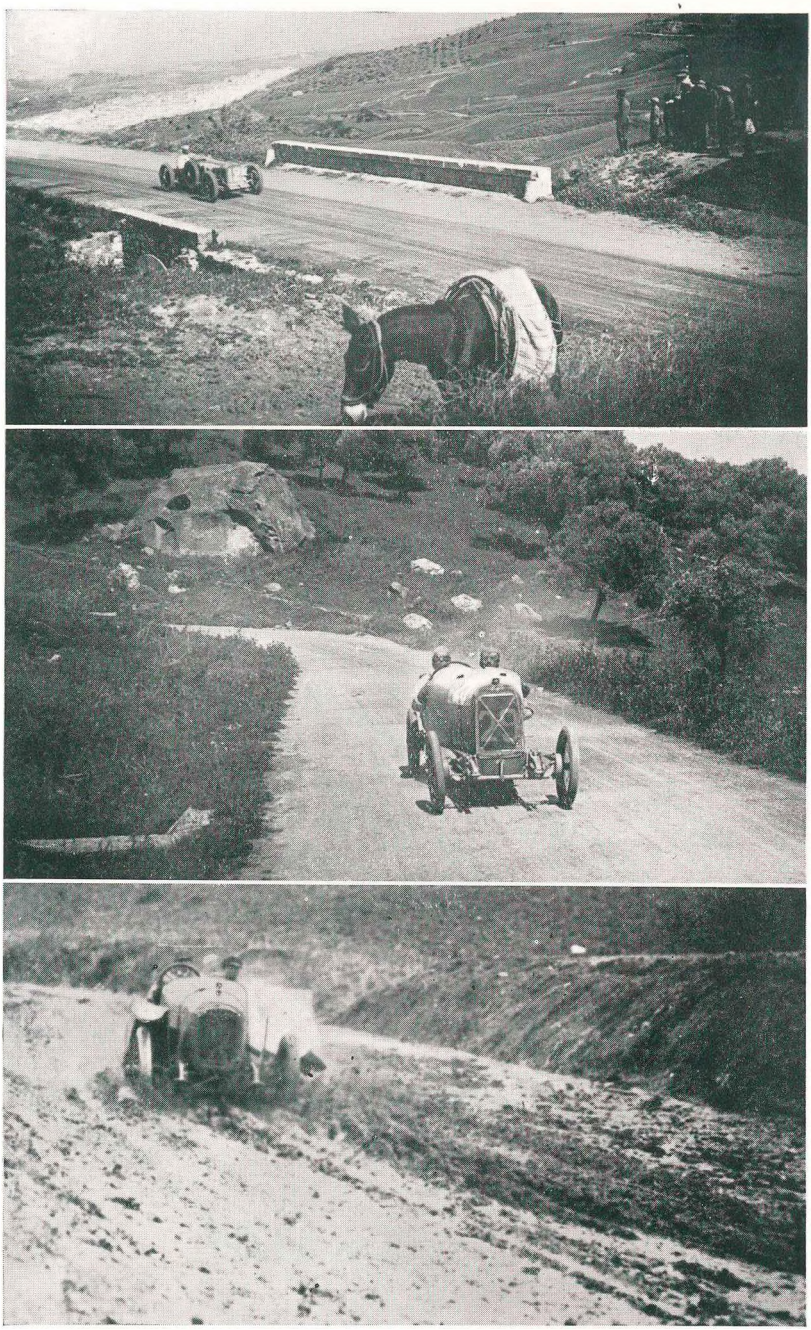
Varzi was ice. Nuvolari was fire, and the two elements will not combine. Varzi's piercing steely-blue eyes indicated grim determination, an iron nerve, steadiness, ruthlessness, and his well-knit body supplied the physical strength to back up his strong will power. There was something so Nordic in his composition that he might have been mistaken for a Scandinavian. He was always self-controlled, usually grim and rarely displayed any of that exuberance we associate with the Latin character.

Nuvolari was pronouncedly Italian. Slim, of less than average height, olive-complexioned, dark eyes and jet-black hair, he did not seem to have the physical strength which one usually considers necessary for international racing. But a look into those kindly eyes revealed a spirit which could rise to the heights of glory, or equally plunge him to the abysmal depths of despair. That spirit caused him to live—to live intensely.

Nuvolari was born at Casteld' Ario, a village seven miles from Mantova. This village was also the birthplace of Ascari, Senior. His father, Arturo Nuvolari, together with his uncle Giuseppe, were brilliant Italian racing cyclists, competing against such cracks as Tomaselli, Pontecchi, and Buni. From them Tazio inherited his love for speed. Varzi was born at Galliate, in the Province of Novara, 12 years later than Nuvolari, and first came in contact with him as a racing motor-cyclist.

There is no better school of training for car racing than

Madame Florio, Madame Juneck, Vincenzo Florio, and the late Comm. Mercanti.



(Top) Divo on a Delage on the heights above Cerda. The mule is tethered, and the spectators stand well back from the road.
(Centre) A Salmson among the olive groves.
(Lower) Rough going.

the saddle of a two-wheeler, but it is a hard school, as Nuvolari was made to realise when, prior to 1914, he got astride such machines as Fongri, Indian, Norton, before he got himself accepted as a member of the Bianchi team. His impetuosity involved him in innumerable crashes, but he treated them with indifference. He never showed any signs of fear, because, as he expressed it, " I never think of death."

He graduated slowly from motor-cycles to cars and for a number of years raced on both types of machines. He was seen at the wheel of Chiribiri, Scat, Bugatti, Spa cars—any machine he could pick up, irrespective of its possibilities of winning a race. The motor-cyclists at Monza made it a practice to take the bends so high up that their gloves scraped on the outer retaining wall. Nuvolari went an inch higher by placing the palm of his hand on the inside and letting the scrape be taken by the handle bar grip.

In 1925 Nuvolari was entrusted with an Alfa-Romeo for a race at Monza track, but the steering gear having failed when he was about to take the fast banked turn, he shot straight ahead, his car travelled a distance of 50 feet through the air, while the driver was caught in the barbed wire, which had the effect of reducing the violence of the shock, but did not prevent him being sent to Monza hospital, where it was announced that he was in danger of death. Ten days later the international motor-cycle championship was to be run at Monza and Tazio decided that he must take part in it. With arms and legs swathed in bandages, he came to the line on his Bianchi and won the race against the two English cracks Handley and Simpson.

Nuvolari made his first appearance in the Targa Florio in 1928, driving a 1,500-c.c. Bugatti, with which he failed to finish. If he appeared at the wheel of a car, whenever he could secure one, his main activities were with motor-cycles and despite a fair share of success, punctuated with visits to the hospital, he found that this was not sufficient to keep him out of financial difficulties. He unburdened himself to his friend Guglielmo Carraroli, who recommended him to Engineer Jano, then at the head of the Alfa-Romeo racing organisation, after a long period with Fiat. Varzi was

already a member of the team—a very powerful team which comprised, or had comprised Campari, Ascari, Wagner, Brilli Peri.

At this time Bugatti was at the height of his fame and all attempts to defeat him had proved unavailing. In 1929 Varzi failed to finish, but the following year he broke the Bugatti spell by bringing his Alfa-Romeo into first position, while Nuvolari on a similar machine finished fifth.

Discipline was severe in the Alfa-Romeo organisation. Indeed, this has always been a feature of the Italian racing organisations and has contributed in a large measure to their success. The drivers were selected with care; they were appreciated; they were highly paid; they were under close contracts, but their position was clearly defined and implicit obedience was expected of them. When a car went into the Alfa-Romeo shops the driver remained outside. His observations were carefully listened to and his remarks were analysed, but the shops were under the control of the chief engineer and his assistants, and it was not until all the necessary work had been done that the drivers were admitted. This was in direct contrast to some of the earlier and equally successful teams, notably Peugeot, where the drivers ruled the engineers.

Although Varzi and Nuvolari accepted the team discipline, it was soon evident that their natures were so wide apart that they never would become team-mates, and Jano found himself faced with the very difficult task of reconciling conflicting demands. Having wrested the Targa Florio from Bugatti, while Nuvolari had only secured fifth place, Varzi secured a strong moral position and became more exacting in his requirements. He insisted on the best car being reserved for him; he demanded all the mechanical assistance he considered necessary; his personal requirements were so exacting that frequently he would spend an hour adjusting his seat and steering wheel, millimetre by millimetre. For Nuvolari everything was right. He would accept the car that was given him and he had no personal idiosyncrasies. But when aroused to anger his short bursts of temper took the form of wreaking vengeance on his opponent by fling-

ing tools, spark plugs and everything which came under his hand. Varzi looked with askance on any promising newcomer as a man likely to rob him of his prize money. To Nuvolari the promising driver was a man to be welcomed, for he was a man he probably would have the pleasure of defeating. Popular and a good companion when his racing interests were not at stake, Varzi became jealous, cunning and intriguing as a driver, fearful that even his team-mates should have any advantage over him.

In the twenty-second Targa Florio, run exceptionally around the big Madonie circuit, Nuvolari was at his best, driving with a verve which really alarmed his team manager. When the car was about to start on the last lap the manager pleaded:

"In the name of the Madonna, Nuvolari, take it easy; you are leading; you are a quarter of an hour ahead of everybody."

"But who is second?"

"Borzacchini."

"Borzacchini? Alfa-Romeo! Then everything is safe for the team. Now I can go out and break the record."

He broke it and won the race.

There was something in the way Nuvolari handled a car entirely different from that of any other driver. Costantini was remarkable for his precision. Nuvolari had the same degree of accuracy but allied to it was a successful daring which no other driver possessed. Pietro Bordino, who had been trained under the somewhat reckless Lancia, had ridden by the side of the faultless Nazzaro, and had the reputation of a man who flouted danger, exclaimed:

"But this is something new. We shall have to start from the beginning and learn it all over again."

Yes, there was something new. This man did not drive for the money to be earned, nor for the plaudits of the crowd, but because the handling of a racing car gave him deep-rooted pleasure. The thought of an accident never entered his mind. He rarely made mistakes, but dangers were accepted as an inherent part of the game, and whenever he was injured he was most impatient to get back to the road.

Driving at Alessandria, in 1934, he suddenly found the road blocked by Brivio, whose car had got out of control. To avoid crashing into it he selected a roadside tree on which to throw his car. Very seriously injured, he was taken to hospital where once again the doctors pronounced that his life was in danger. Fifteen days later he was hobbling down the corridors, swinging the crutches which ought to have been under his arms and making arrangements for another race, in which he started without the use of his legs.

His rapidity of decision was so surpassing as to be uncanny. In one of the Mille Miglia races he found he was approaching a bend too fast to get round it with safety. There was an escape lane, but it was barred by two petrol pumps, the distance between the two being insufficient—or so it seemed—for the passage of a car. Nuvolari went through, slowed down and returned to the highway without having left a scratch either to left or to right. Unable to believe their eyes, the attendants measured the distance between the two pumps to find that it was just a fraction of an inch less that the width of the car. The apparent miracle had been performed by Nuvolari tilting the car at the precise moment, so that it went through on the two left-hand wheels.

Nuvolari's attitude when racing was one of exuberance. He would shout and sing, gesticulate and whistle and, watching him at close quarters, I have frequently seen him beating the side of his car with the palm of his hand, when taking a hairpin bend, as if urging it to greater effort. " When I begin to make a noise," he explained to his youthful and rather inexperienced mechanic, " just get down there under the scuttle." The youth obeyed and was forgotten until Nuvolari realised that there was nobody on the seat by his side. Reaching out with his left hand, he grabbed him by the hair and pulled him back with the remark, " Do you think this is a rabbit warren?"

A prominent London journalist with a keen eye for a sensational story, requested to be allowed to ride with Nuvolari on one of the Thousand-Miles racing cars. This was agreed to on condition that the driver be allowed to select his own time.

It was at 2 a.m. that an excited waiter pounded on the journalist's bedroom door with the cry, " Signor Nuvolari, he awaits you." The first reaction of the writer was to condemn the driver to Hades, but his companion, also a journalist, advised:

" You asked for this, you agreed to the conditions and you must abide by them, even if it is two in the morning. Then think what a wonderful story you will lose if you do not go."

Aboard the car Nuvolari declared: " Now I shall not say anything; just you watch me." Then in voluble French, a language he spoke with fluency, but with a delightful Italian accent, he explained every movement—how to get the best acceleration, the niceties of gear changing up and down, methods of cornering, how to reduce speed by provoking a series of skids when the brakes had lost their efficiency. The writer returned thrilled and amazed, if not dazed. But his main thought was, " Why did he select such an hour for the demonstration?"

" That's simple," replied his companion. " This district is infested with bandits; and think what a ransom they could have enacted if they had captured the world's greatest driver."

" Yes; but what about me?" ejaculated the horrified scribe.

Nuvolari's fame had become world-wide when he was selected by Alfa-Romeo to drive for them in the Vanderbilt Cup race, held on a specially constructed crazy track on Long Island, close to the scene of the original cup races of the beginning of the century. This colourful, daring Italian provided excellent " copy " for the New York dailies, who discovered that he was " The Man who made a pact with the Devil," the " Death Dodger," etc., although in reality, no man was less Satanic in his nature. The Italian element of New York crowded to the docks to see him land and greeted him with vocal and instrumental music. Naturally the advertising experts were active. He was offered a huge number of dollars to inaugurate the " Nuvolari Cap," to testify that somebody's cigarettes kept his nerve steady, that a certain make of chewing gum enabled him to face danger

unflinchingly and that his thick mass of hair had been kept in condition by the use of somebody's cream. All these offers were turned aside.

"But, Tazio, you are just throwing good money into the gutter," expostulated one of his friends.

"Yes, I know; but in this city there are so many Italians sweeping the streets, making roads, selling ice cream, that we must let these Americans know we have some dignity."

Of a timid nature, self-effacing as if conscious of his physical insufficiency before the *altier* self-confidence of the wealthy Americans he would have to meet when the dollars were distributed (that he would win the race was something he never doubted), Nuvolari prepared himself for this ordeal as carefully as he trained himself for the race. Standing before the mirror, he spent hours practising putting his hand out to take the handshake proffered him by the great William K. Vanderbilt, receiving the money nonchalantly, crumpling the notes in his hand without looking at them, and stuffing them into his pocket, the action punctuated by a slight bow.

"We are Wops; but we must show them we are somebody."

Preparing for a race was a mental as well as a physical matter. Frequently on the night before such an event as the Targa Florio, he seemed to be in a trance. Remarks addressed to him would bring forth a monosyllable emitted so negligently that it was evident the observation had created no impression. He was lost to the world. He was living in advance the scenes which would be enacted in a few hours' time.

Contemporary stars in the motoring world, competing in the same events, success being first with one and then with the other, Varzi and Nuvolari may be said to have run on parallel tracks. Their end came in entirely different manners. Practising for the European Grand Prix at Berne, in 1948, Varzi made one small but unpardonable mistake and in a fraction of a second had passed from the full vigour of manhood to eternity. He was only 44 years of age.

Forced into inactivity by the war, Nuvolari raced com-

paratively little after the return to peace. He was then 52 years of age, his health was failing but above all he was affected by the death of his two sons at the age of eighteen. Knowing that he had entered on a path from which there was no return, he quietly and methodically prepared himself for the end. The mass of trophies he had won were to be turned over to the Automobile Club. He discussed with the priests and his wife all the details of his burial. His body should be clothed in the familiar yellow jersey, with his gloves and goggles in their proper place, and the lying in state should be such that the mourners would enter at one end of the garden, pass before him and leave the grounds with the least inconvenience. The clergy on Mantova showed their appreciation by placing an inscription across the full width of the Cathedral bearing the words:

Correrai più veloce per le vie del cielo,
" Thou shalt run faster in Paradise,"

and the same inscription was engraved on the family tomb, to which he was followed by a procession of mourners more than a mile long.

Chapter 18

Because of its unique setting, because of the exacting nature of the circuit, the Targa Florio races could never lose their attraction. But if the cars were all of the same make, if there was an absence of keen personal rivalry among the drivers, international interest was bound to lessen. This is exactly what happened after 1932. Nuvolari won the race twice for Alfa-Romeo, but he had to battle against his personal rival Varzi and the Bugattis were still a real menace. But in 1933 Alfa-Romeo had the race entirely in their own hands, Brivio finishing first at an average well below that set up a year earlier by the wizard Nuvolari, with four other Alfa-Romeo cars astern of him and the Bugatti threat reduced to a few hopeful amateurs. The following year Nuvolari was absent which allowed Varzi to win without much difficulty, with Alfa-Romeo holding the first seven places. In 1935 it was Brivio who won for Alfa-Romeo, with the Milan firm securing seven out of the first eight positions. By 1936 Alfa-Romeo had disappeared from the stage, and Engineer Jano having transferred his talents to Lancia, that firm secured first four positions in a December race held over but two rounds of the circuit.

Very rightly the Targa Florio races are associated with a picturesquely wild mountainous circuit testing every feature of the machine and eliminating all but the most experienced drivers. However, in 1937, Vincenzo Florio ceased to hold any official position in the Sicilian Automobile Club, and that body declined the difficult task of staging the race around the mountains. It was agreed, however, that the club should be allowed to use the title Targa Florio for races to be held in the Favorita Park on the western edge of Palermo. Picturesquely laid out in a rich valley with the imposing mass of Monte Pellegrino rising vertically on the north and a black range of mountains to the south, the circuit was short, level and fast, and the race was as far

removed from the romance of the Madonie circuit as a model yacht race on the Serpentine is from an ocean passage. For four years, from 1937 to 1940 inclusive, Maserati had these short-distance races in its own hands, winning at averages which rose from 66.8 m.p.h. in 1937 to 88.4 m.p.h. in 1940, the last of the series.

The Maserati Brothers, who had started their engineering careers as very modest manufacturers of sparking plugs, devoting special attention to racing-car requirements, had gradually extended their activities to racing cars, building them first in units, then in bigger quantities, until they were in a position to face international competition. In these Favorita Park sprints—for they only once exceeded 150 miles—they secured first three positions for four successive years.

After the spring of 1940 war conditions put an end to racing activities throughout Italy, and with the Allies in Northern Africa the Island of Sicily found itself unpleasantly near the zone of operations. Vincenzo Florio decided that Rome would offer greater safety not only from the bombs of the enemy without but from the fanatical searchings of the Ally within. Once in the Capital no return to Palermo was possible and the acute problem had to be faced of finding means of subsistence. This was met by the selling of Madame Florio's jewels, a fact which was duly reported to the ever-vigilant Gestapo. The natural German interpretation of this was that these sales were being made to finance the Royal Family, and additional weight was added to this suspicion by the fact that several of Florio's relatives had been closely attached to the Court. The fear which came with the certainty of defeat manifested itself in wholesale arrests on the flimsiest of pretexts, or often with no pretext at all, and Vincenzo Florio and his wife found themselves thrown into an overcrowded prison in Rome. Naturally they protested against such treatment and insisted that the charges against them should be made known.

An Italian street sweeper nonchalantly pushed his little cart down one of the streets of Rome, stopping occasionally to use his brush, to shovel up some di .., lift the lid and dump

it inside. He was weary and completely disinterested in the work he was doing, for why clean a street which was used only for German patrols? A platoon appeared in the distance. The street cleaner glanced towards them, lifted the lid of the refuse cart, closed it and slowly walked away. He must have spied the word " vino " down the side street. But no sooner was he out of sight of the Municipal refuse cart than he sprinted. There was nothing unusual in that: many an Italian had occasion to sprint during those long weeks when the Allied Forces were creeping up the peninsula at a tortoise-like pace. The timing was perfect, for the bomb exploded when the platoon was directly opposite the refuse cart. Under the prevailing rule of proportions there had to be 30 hostages for each private soldier killed, the rate increasing when officers were involved. The hostages were to be taken from the prison in which Vincenzo Florio and his French wife had been held for 40 days. Fortunately, when the armed guard came the pair had been released an hour earlier.

The return to peace did not allow of an immediate revival of the Targa Florio series. The rapid march of General Patton's troops across Sicily had not been accomplished without much destruction. Carpet bombing had wiped out the whole of the buildings along the seafront at Palermo. Although lacking any military value, the grandstands near Cerda had been blown up. The tower from which the race could be controlled had been pulled down to provide immediate road making material. Pillagers had done their work with thoroughness, even carrying away eucalyptus, olives and mimosa. Long neglect had left the roads in poor condition, with no available funds to repair them. Under these conditions it was decided to allow the " Targa " to be attached to the races held round Sicily, a distance of 671 miles, in 1948, 1949, and 1950, the winning cars being Ferrari in the first two years and Alfa-Romeo in the third year.

Then, in 1951, the Targa Florio was taken back to its home, the short Madonie circuit, deserted since 1936, and the event became one for sports cars. Not since Bugatti had

been eclipsed had the race been won by other than an Italian car, but on this occasion it was not France but England which supplied the winning machine, a Frazer-Nash driven by Franco Cortese, a professional driver who, however, had no connection with the maker. Comparisons are not easy to make, for weather conditions varied and the distance was not always the same. However, the 47.5 m.p.h. average of the sports Frazer-Nash compares very favourably with the 50 m.p.h. put up by Brivio on the racing Alfa-Romeo in 1935, over a shorter distance, and with Nuvolari's 49.3 m.p.h., also with a racing Alfa-Romeo, in 1932, while it was exactly the same as attained by Brivio on Alfa-Romeo, in 1933, with a distance one lap less. All of which reveals that the post-war sports car had become the equal of the pure racing machines of 20 years earlier.

In 1952 Lancia had embarked on a racing programme beginning with sports cars and extending to pure racing mounts. On this occasion the firm took first three places, with Bonetto at the head. The following year the race had regained its old importance, with more than 40 starters, with Lancia, Ferrari, Maserati, Jaguar, Fiat, and Porsche among the contenders with such drivers as Maglioli, who won, Taruffi (who lost by a stupid pit mistake), Fangio, Bracco, Cortese, and Wisdom from England. 1954 was still another win for Lancia, when Taruffi attained the record average of a fraction under 56 m.p.h., or a higher rate of travel than had been attained by any other in what were practically free-for-all races.

Thirty-eight races for the Targa Florio, covering a period of 48 years, all but a very few of these races being held under the most exacting conditions in the world—such a performance has not been equalled. More than any other races in the world, these for the Targa Florio have encouraged the all-round development of the motor vehicle. No racing rules have yet been devised which could be continued for more than half a dozen years without developing freaks. European nations have had vast experience in this connection. When a maximum weight was imposed, the biggest possible engines were fitted in featherweight chassis. When the

cylinder bore was limited, the piston stroke was extended to such an extent that soon drivers could not see the road ahead. By limiting the amount of fuel, such an inflexible type of engine was produced that no ordinary man would want to drive it. When limits were put on piston displacement engine speeds very rightly went up and the supercharger and costly special fuels came into use until it became necessary to call a halt—without anybody knowing exactly how this should be done. Most tracks and circuits tend towards a specialised type of car, the most striking example being the now defunct American board tracks for which cars comprising all engine with practically no brakes or gearbox were produced. Indianapolis, the most successful race track in the world, is responsible for freaks which could not be used anywhere else and would be beaten by much slower machines over an ordinary European road circuit.

More than anywhere else the conditions prevailing on the Sicilian circuit weed out the eccentric and the outré, and call for a well-proportioned and perfectly balanced car. A powerful engine in itself will not suffice. It must be backed up by a reasonable fuel consumption and most vigorous acceleration. Steering must be perfect; balance is of primary importance; gear ratios must be carefully selected and the gears must be capable of transmitting power almost indefinitely without failure; as to brakes, they are never too good. The only feature in car development which is not emphasised is streamlining.

It is futile to urge that progress would have been made without racing. But it certainly would have been much longer in coming. Ettore Bugatti understood this when he wrote, " The importance of your race lies in the fact that the geographical constitution of Sicily allows a long-distance race to be run under an enormous variety of road difficulties. Any manufacturer taking part regularly in your race acquires a mass of information which he could not secure elsewhere, even on the track or in the laboratory. To compete with any success it is absolutely indispensable that the car should possess all the qualities required by the ordinary

user. In the first place is security in the broadest sense. This means the absence of breakdowns either because of faulty material, poor design, or construction. Then follows safety by reason of the ease with which the car can be handled and its road-holding ability; a really good car should give the impression of being held to the road. The Targa Florio has contributed very largely to these two qualities. Then comes rapid acceleration, an absolutely essential quality for the ordinary user, particularly for town service, which has become a succession of stops and starts. Then there is a sure and constantly reliable braking system, and your race has done more than any other to develop these qualities necessary for the safety of the driver and his passengers."

Chapter 19

Vincenzo Florio's name is naturally associated with the series of races which he initiated, financed, organised and sometimes competed in, around the Madonie mountain range in Sicily. Less known to the public is the fact that for a few years he took over the management of Monza track, near Milan, on the pressing request of the National Automobile Club. It would be impossible to discover conditions more widely separated than those near Palermo and those on the suburbs of Milan. The former was what we still describe as the " old-fashioned " type of road race, with standing starts, a long distance, a comparatively small number of spectators imbued with such enthusiasm that they were prepared to spend from six to nine hours in one spot for intermittent glimpses of the cars in action.

Milan, with its own important motor industry, with the great manufacturing centre of Turin only a couple of hours away and a string of towns in the neighbourhood, could draw on several hundreds of thousands of spectators to watch a race, or a series of races which had to be made thrilling and sensational from beginning to end. Certain incidents stand out during the Florio period of management. It seems to be a characteristic of all town dwellers that they are imbued with the spirit which draws men to the circus in the hope of seeing the lion tamer devoured by the lion. At Monza track this took the form of daring Milanese arming themselves with wire cutters and penetrating through the barbed wire to a point recognised as dangerous but which would give them a close-up view of cars and drivers. They congratulated themselves on their initiative which had given them a view of the race denied to all others—until a car got out of control on the bend and crashed in their midst, with disastrous results.

Under Italian law the manager of a race is criminally responsible for injuries sustained by spectators, and with a

number of dead Florio found himself in an unenviable position. He sought an interview with Mussolini and laid the case before him in detail. Fortunately he had instructed a number of photographers to take pictures of all police and carabinieri who were failing to do their duty, and notably photographs of groups who were being allowed to congregate in positions closed off as dangerous.

With this testimony in his possession, Il Duce gave his decree: "These people were sanguinary minded. They deliberately cut down wire in order to enter a position marked off as dangerous with the morbid idea of being first-hand witnesses of a crash. They were the victims of their folly and they have been justly punished."

One of the dangers of Monza is the sudden presence of oil on the track, arising either from a crash or from the passage of a connecting rod through the crankcase. Earl Howe was a victim of this nerve-racking experience when he drove his Delage in 1932. Coming round a bend he found before him a pool of oil which could not possibly be avoided. The wild skid which followed threw him against a tree a few yards off the track in such a manner that the chassis formed a U with the engine lying horizonally on one side of the tree and the axle vertical on the opposite side. So complete was the union that it was utterly impossible to think of removing the car. Arriving on the scene, one look at the car was sufficient to convince us that the driver must either be killed or very seriously wounded. Instead, we found the Earl quietly smoking a cigarette and looking in an amused manner at what had once been his car. Unable to believe our eyes, we passed our hands over him as if to find that some part of the anatomy had been displaced without the victim being aware of it. But all that we could discover was a tear in the racing overalls. Probably what had happened was that as the car struck the grass verge Earl Howe had been thrown out, and the empty car had then hit the tree and formed itself into a staple.

The only possible way of removing the car was by sawing through the main frame members, or cutting them with a torch, and thus making it into two parts. This presented

many difficulties and disadvantages, and it was asked if the wrecked car and tree could not be taken away as a whole. Monza track was built in an ex-royal park and was under the control of the Fine Arts Department, which had stipulated that no blasting should be done and that no trees should be felled. The blasting restriction was overcome by waiting until it was festa when, amid the fireworks which so delighted the populo a few dynamite explosions passed unnoticed. Regarding the wrecked Delage, Vincenzo Florio was appealed to and he authorised the tree to be cut down and presented to the English Lord, together with the car so closely embracing it. The Fine Arts duly protested but had to accept the fait accompli with as much grace as possible.

Always highly appreciative of " colour," Vincenzo Florio had been attracted by the American race driver Léon Duray who, in 1928, had suddenly decided to come over to Paris, bringing with him a couple of cars, one of them a front-wheel drive model, and startle the Europeans.

Duray's origin was somewhat obscure. It was known that his family name was George Stewart and after some barnstorming on dirt tracks he had swaggered into the office of a race promoter and remarked:

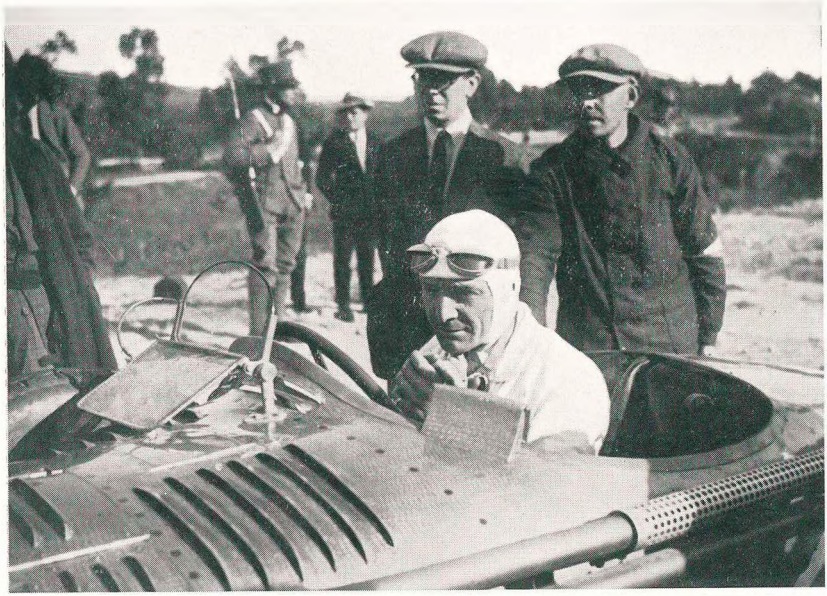
" I'm starting in your race Saturday."

" Now, is that so?" answered the promoter, to whom the newcomer was a total stranger.

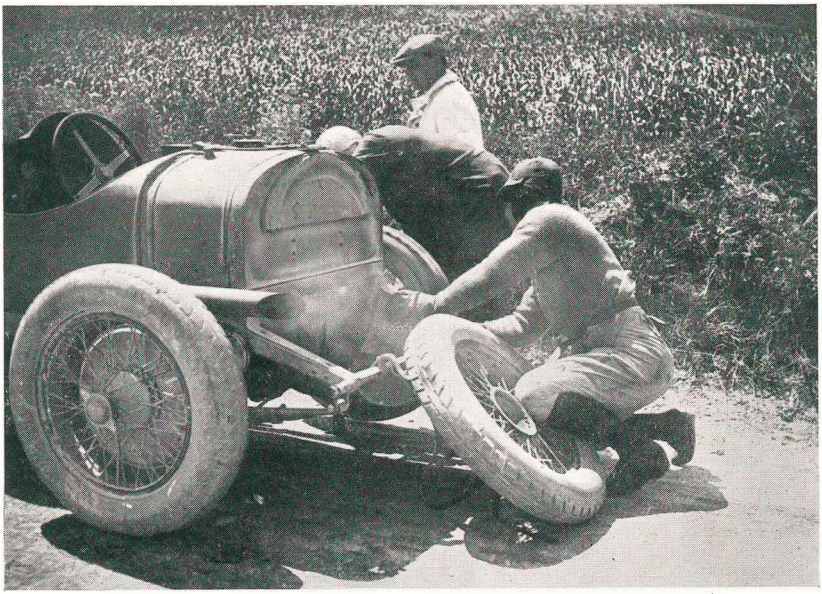
" Name?"

" Léon Duray."

The man whose business it was to interest the American public knew enough motoring history to be aware that there was a French driver of the name of Duray who had taken part in a few American races and who had distinguished himself at Indianapolis by winning second place with a " baby " car—only half the size of the others. This might or might not be the French Duray, but in any case his tall, straight figure, his dark scowling features, and the air of supreme confidence which emanated from him, marked him as a man who could appeal to the crowds. Thus George Stewart became Léon Duray.



Robert Benoist on a Delage. During the war he was strangled at Buchenwald as a British agent.



With the engine running Ernesto Maserati changes a rear wheel.

(Top) By a wayside shrine this unfortunate amateur is left to his meditations.
(Centre) The balconies of Campofelice formed ideal grandstands.
(Lower) Fine cornering by Benoist on a 12-cylinder Grand Prix Delage.

His tactics at Indianapolis was the quite special one of capturing lap prizes. Undoubtedly a fast driver, he would take the lead at the outset, maintaining it for ten, fifteen, twenty laps, each lap netting him one hundred dollars until there was the inevitable engine failure when he would wave his hand and retire satisfied with his morning's work, leaving it to the " suckers," as he expressed it, to drive for five hours or more and fail, possibly, in the last quarter of an hour.

When he came to Paris, Duray had the childish idea that he would break a few records then put the car on exhibition in some public hall and " watch the pennies roll in." But he discovered that records were not particularly easy to break; that the accessory firms were not inclined to pay premiums, that the Parisians showed no interest in this car from across the Atlantic and that if it had been put on display nearly all the receipts would have gone to the Government in the form of entertainment tax.

But if the French were not interested in the car, they were immediately attracted to the man. They had seen such figures in Wild West movie scenes, but it was a novelty to come in personal contact with this " Black Devil " for he was clad in black from his skull cap to his boots, who swaggered in an amusedly contemptuous manner before all those around him, who did not carry a six-shooter, but who retrieved this deficiency by expectorating on a target drawn on the garage wall with such precision that nearly every shot was a bull's-eye. His remarks were pungent and not calculated to lose anything in the translation.

" Power? All the power in the world—and them some."

" Speed? Anything you like."

The French engineers smiled indulgently. But they were impressed.

Vincenzo Florio felt that the " Black Devil " must be introduced to the Italian public.

It is a testimony to the power of advertising that the mere announcement of the appearance of the American driver created some consternation among the Italian racers. Brilli Peri, who had the reputation of being tough, sought out Vincenzo Florio to protest vigorously: " This americano is

going to take away all the prizes. His low, wide car will take the bends faster than we can take them; he is getting unknown power out of his engine, and you are just robbing the Italians to give the prize money away to a foreigner."

Race day came and the " Black Devil " did create a sensation, but not of the kind expected by his rivals and the public. He was slow off the mark, which was not surprising, for a centrifugal blower has to revolve at very high speed to provide real power. But once in action it looked promising —for a time. Immediately opposite the grandstands the Monza track provides what may be described as a dual carriageway, over which the cars run in opposite directions, the dividing line being a series of wood black and white cones, standing some 12 inches above the level of the ground. The race was just becoming interesting when the " Black Devil " ran over the complete line of cones, splintering them and sending up into the air a spray of black and white wood and leaving behind him only an irregular line of wreckage to indicate the limits of the two parallel tracks.

Whoops of delight and derision arose from the surprised and happy crowd which had never imagined that a comic element could be introduced into such a serious sport as motor racing. Nothing kills so quickly as ridicule, a fact which the American had the intelligence to realise, for on the next round he failed to reappear.

Probably the appearance money he had paid was considered by Vincenzo Florio to be a good investment, for the following year the American was again present with two Miller-engined racing cars. Unfortunately, in the interval, he had acquired a greater attachment to the bottle than the abstemious wine-drinking Italians considered advisable, with the result that the trans-Atlantic competitor no longer inspired any fear if he did raise queries as to what would happen.

It took the unexpected form of a demand, the day before the race, of immediate payment of appearance money, " right now, and no checks; no dough, no race." It was Saturday afternoon and the banks were closed. Even if the money could have been collected native pride was opposed

to giving way to the first strike probably ever staged by a race driver. Skilled diplomacy won the day, for while Florio and his committee flatly refused to submit to the demands, an American was found to come forward with the money necessary to bring the " Black Devil " to the starting line.

Again the centrifugal blower caused the car to be slow in getting off the line. It had covered half a dozen laps and was beginning to close up on the leaders when a puff of smoke gave sure indication of a caved-in piston head.

Abandoning his car by the side of the track, pulling off his black skull cap, Duray stalked away with the remark, " Shucks, I was just getting set to go by that guy Campari like he was parked." Vincenzo Florio made no further efforts to secure " colourful " American drivers either for Monza or for the Targa Florio races.

FIRST TARGA FLORIO RACE, MAY 6, 1906

Three laps of big Madonie Circuit, 277.3 miles

		hr.	min.	sec.
1.	Cagno, Itala	9	32	22
	(Average, 29.07 m.p.h.)			
2.	Graziani, Itala	10	5	32
3.	Bablot, Berliet	10	20	5
4.	Rigal, Itala	10	25	8
5.	De Caters, Itala	10	38	26
6.	Le Blon, Hotchkiss	12	9	23

Maurice Fournier, Clement Bayard, finished after the time limit. The following failed to finish: Lancia, Fiat; Henri Fournier, Clement Bayard; and Pope, Itala.

SECOND TARGA FLORIO RACE, APRIL 22, 1907

Three laps of big Madonie Circuit, 277.3 miles

		hr.	min.	sec.
1.	Nazzaro, Fiat	8	17	36.6
	(Average, 33.4 m.p.h.)			
2.	Lancia, Fiat	8	29	29.6
3.	Fabry, Itala	8	32	47.6
4.	Duray, De Dietrich	8	39	7.4
5.	Cagno, Itala	8	39	16.2
6.	Gabriel, De Dietrich	8	39	46.2
7.	Tamagno, Isotta Fraschini	8	41	45.6
8.	Weillschott, Fiat	8	42	52.4
9.	Sorel, Isotta Fraschini	8	52	10.6
10.	Minoia, Isotta Fraschini	8	53	19.4
11.	Garcet, Clement Bayard	8	53	41
12.	Maggioni, Zust	9	0	7.4
13.	Yson, Daimler	9	1	22.2
14.	Dureste, Gobron	9	10	24
15.	Erle, Benz	9	11	15.6
16.	Gremo, Junior	9	13	38.4
17.	Spamann, Benz	9	15	56
18.	Buzio, Diatto Clement	9	20	5.4
19.	Gaudermann, Clement Bayard	9	29	0.4
20.	Le Blon, Daimler	9	31	32.2
21.	Conti, Zust	9	37	55.4
22.	Collinet, Clement Bayard	9	39	17.2
23.	Gallina, Rapid	9	50	10
24.	Di Boiano, Benz	9	53	8.4
25.	Da Zara, Zust	9	58	53.6
26.	Hemery, Daimler	10	16	15
27.	Gasté, Radia	10	33	25
28.	Marnier, Radia	10	49	12.8
29.	Faure, Gobron	11	17	15.6
30.	Pizzagalli, Pilain	11	41	53

The following failed to finish: Wagner, Darracq; De Martino, Junior; Ceirano, Rapid; Donnet, Gobron; Fritz Opel, Opel; Trucco, Isotta Fraschini; Hanriot, Darracq; Cariolata, Rapid; Tolotti, Junior; Rigal, Berliet; Porporato, Berliet; Hieronymus, Suddeutsche; Salvion, Pilain; Caspar, Ajax; Hube, Suddeutsche; Cappuggi, Zust.

VOITURETTE RACE

Two laps of circuit, 184.8 miles

		hr.	min.	sec.
1.	Naudin, Sizaire & Naudin	7	47	9.8
2.	Florio, De Dion	8	3	24.6
3.	Stabile, De Dion	9	10	45
4.	Mollica, De Dion	11	39	13

THIRD TARGA FLORIO RACE, MAY 18, 1908

Two laps of big circuit, 184.8 miles

		hr.	min.	sec.
1.	Trucco, Isotta Fraschini	7	49	26.6
	(Average, 37.2 m.p.h.)			
2.	Lancia, Fiat	8	2	41.4
3.	Ceirano, Spa	8	9	13.2
4.	Porporato, Berliet	8	22	23
5.	Giovanzani, Isotta Fraschini	8	38	27
6.	Tamagni, Junior	9	56	9.6
7.	Pizzagalli, Itala	10	6	6.2

The following failed to finish: Cariolata, Franco; Raggio, Spa; Maggioni, Zust; Nazzaro, Fiat; Minoia, Isotta Fraschini; Venezia, Spa.

VOITURETTE RACE, MAY 10, 1908

Two laps of big circuit, 184.8 miles

		hr.	min.	sec.
1.	Giuppone, Peugeot	6	31	30
2.	Cammarata, De Dion	6	50	49.6
3.	Tasca, De Dion	7	8	7.4
4.	Airoldi, De Dion	7	11	39
5.	Olsen, De Dion	8	7	6.6
6.	Duvernoy, Peugeot	8	40	25

The following failed to finish: Georges Sizaire, Sizaire & Naudin; Naudin, Sizaire & Naudin; Florio, De Dion; Boillot, Peugeot; Mollicia, De Dion.

FOURTH TARGA FLORIO RACE, MAY 2, 1909

One lap of big circuit, 92.4 miles

		hr.	min.	sec.
1.	Ciuppa, Spa	2	43	19.2
	(Average, 34 m.p.h.)			
2.	Florio, Fiat	2	44	19.2
3.	Airoldi, Lancia	2	55	25
4.	Cortese, Spa	3	20	40
5.	De Seta, Itala	3	21	56
6.	Stabile, De Dion	3	31	32
7.	Olsen, De Dion	3	34	55.4
8.	Ribolla, Berliet	3	37	57.2
9.	Giaconia, De Dion	3	58	46

The following failed to finish: Scaletta, Berliet; and Baldoni, De Dion.

VOITURETTE RACE, APRIL 29, 1909

Two laps of big circuit, 184.8 miles

		hr.	min.	sec.
1.	Goux, Peugeot	6	48	3.4
2.	Giuppone, Peugeot	6	52	32.4
3.	Olsen, De Dion	7	47	55

The following failed to finish: Ravetto, De Dion; Boillot, Peugeot; Craviolo, De Dion.

FIFTH TARGA FLORIO RACE, MAY 15, 1910

Two laps of big circuit, 184.8 miles

		hr.	min.	sec.
1.	Cariolato, Franco	6	20	47.4
	(Average, 29.1 m.p.h.)			
2.	De Prosperis, Sigma	8	2	39.8

VOITURETTE RACE RUN AT SAME TIME

		hr.	min.	sec.
1.	Boillot, Peugeot	5	20	43
2.	Guippone, Peugeot	5	25	35
3.	Goux, Peugeot	5	31	25.6

SIXTH TARGA FLORIO RACE, MAY 14, 1911

Three laps of big circuit, 277.4 miles

		hr.	min.	sec.
1.	Ceirano, Scat	9	32	22.4
	(Average, 29.1 m.p.h.)			
2.	Cortese, Lancia	9	58	20.4
3.	Soldatenkoff, Mercedes	10	23	23.4
4.	Sandronnino, Scat	10	50	44
5.	Tamagni, Ford	11	39	33.8

The following failed to finish: Franchini, Alfa-Romeo; De Prosperis, Clement; De Ponte, Berliet; Stabile, De Dion; Ronzoni, Alfa-Romeo; Scaletta, Berliet; Olsen, Lancia; Mollica, De Dion; Masini, De Dion.

SEVENTH TARGA FLORIO RACE, MAY 26, 1912

Round Sicily, 599.6 miles

		hr.	min.	sec.
1.	Snipe-Pardini, Scat	24	37	19.8
	(Average, 24.3 m.p.h.)			
2.	Garetto-Guglielminetti, Lancia	25	7	38.6
3.	Giordano-Ascone, Fiat	25	41	4.6
4.	De Moraes-Ostengo, Deutz	25	52	8
5.	Lopez-Tirreno, Fiat	26	56	37
6.	Fracassi-Gugliuzzo, Ford	27	12	43
7.	Olsen-Travaglia, Lancia	27	24	26
8.	Trombetta-Trombetta, Fiat	29	45	20
9.	Arnone-Rizzo, Isotta Fraschini	30	30	14
10.	Cravero-Bellini, Florio	30	41	39
11.	De Prosperis-Maravigna, Sigma	31	42	51
12.	Losa-Catalano, Nazzaro	32	16	26

		hr.	min.	sec.
13.	Lombardo-Lombardo, Overland	33	9	33
14.	Conti-Raineri, Isotta Fraschini	33	32	7
15.	Primavesi-Indennii, Primavesi	39	24	0

The following failed to finish: Ceirano, Scat; Zavagno, Fiat; Vannucci, Fiat; De Matteo, Isotta Fraschini; Sandonnino, Scat; Berra, De Dion; Florio, Mercedes; Carreca, Metz; Sordi, Florentina; Baldoni, Alfa-Romeo; La Farso, Fiat.

EIGHTH TARGA FLORIO RACE, MAY 11-12, 1913

Round Sicily in two stages, 599.6 miles

		hr.	min.	sec.
1.	Nazzaro, Nazzaro	19	18	40.6
	(Average, 31.04 m.p.h.)			
2.	Marsaglia, Aquila-Italiana	20	43	49.2
3.	Gloria, De Vecchi	21	44	3.2
4.	Berra, De Dion	22	22	56
5.	Giordano, Fiat	22	26	4
6.	Sivocci, De Vecchi	22	47	31
7.	Lopez, Overland	23	12	42
8.	Bordino, Lancia	23	43	26
9.	Diana, Isotta Fraschini	23	45	50
10.	Stabile, Minerva	23	59	46
11.	Turner, Renault	24	30	40
12.	De Prosperis, Sigma	26	39	12

The following failed to finish: Beria d'Argentia, Aquila-Italiana; De Romase, Fiat; Conti, Isotta Fraschini; Tangazzi, Fiat; Sabatini, Mercedes; Snipe, Scat; Ceirano, Scat; Barraia, Scat; Trombetta, Fiat; Sofia, Ford; Fracassi, Ford; Musmeci, Nazzaro; Baldoni, Lancia; Vigo, Mercedes; Amato, Sigma; Lo Faso, Fiat; Minoia, Storero; Olsen, Aquila-Italiana; Chiesa, Sigma; Trombetta, Fiat; Napoli, Metz; Negri, Itala; Ingelese, Mercedes; Comella, Flanders; Garetto, Scat.

NINTH TARGA FLORIO RACE, MAY 24-25, 1914

Round Sicily in two stages, 599.6 miles

		hr.	min.	sec.
1.	Ceirano, Scat	16	51	31.6
	(Average, 38.94 m.p.h.)			
2.	Gloria, De Vecchi	18	41	53.8
3.	Lopez, Fiat	19	45	26.2
4.	Colombo, Scat	19	45	53
5.	Cortese, Nazzaro	19	58	11
6.	Lucca, Elka	19	58	42
7.	Trombetta, Fiat	20	1	6
8.	Rigoletti, Diatto	21	49	1

The following failed to finish: Tortora, Renault; Berra, De Dion; Campari, Alfa-Romeo; Marano, Ford; Musmeci, Martini; Conti, Peugeot; Beccaria, Beccaria; Nazzaro, Nazzaro; Lanza, Isotta Fraschini; Steimvender, Benz; Baldoni, De Dietrich; Negro, Caesar; Marsaglia, Aquila-Italiana; Galati, Alda; Sivocci, De Vecchi; Franchini, Alfa-Romeo; Scuderi, Beccaria; Diana, Nazzaro; Snipe, Scat; De Manaud, Caesar; Costantini, Aquila-Italiana; Fracassi, Alfa-Romeo; Beccaria, Beccaria; Zeuli, Aquila-Italiana; Poni, Scat; Ruggerone, Aquila-Italiana.

TENTH TARGA FLORIO RACE, NOVEMBER 23, 1919

Medium Madonie Circuit, Four laps, 268½ miles

		hr.	min.	sec.
1.	André Boillot, Peugeot	7	51	1.8
	(Average, 34.19 m.p.h.)			
2.	Moriondo, Itala	8	21	46
3.	Gamboni, Diatto	8	33	28
4.	Masetti, Fiat	8	41	19
5.	Negro, Nazzaro	8	42	5
6.	Masetti, Aquila-Italiana	9	13	3
7.	Sivocci, C.M.N.	9	26	35
8.	Baldoni, Nazzaro	9	59	47

The following failed to finish: Thomas, Ballot; Ferrario, Lancia; Campari, Alfa-Romeo; Landi, Itala; Fracassi, Alfa-Romeo; Zamaritti, Fiat; Franchini, Alfa-Romeo; Bozzi, Fiat; Ascari, Fiat; Gallanzi, Gallanzi; Lopez, Fiat; Ghia, Diatto; Réville, Peugeot; C.M.N., Ferrari; Scales, Eric Campbell; Snipe, Eric Campbell.

ELEVENTH TARGA FLORIO RACE, OCTOBER 24, 1920

Medium Madonie Circuit, Four laps, 268½ miles

		hr.	min.	sec.
1.	Meregalli, Nazzaro	8	27	23.8
	(Average, 31.7 m.p.h.)			
2.	Enzo Ferrari, Alfa-Romeo	8	35	47.6
3.	Lopez, Darracq	9	19	25.4
4.	Piro, Fiat	9	22	13
5.	Maravigna, Fiat	9	55	27
6.	Airoldi, Itala	9	58	20
7.	Tagliavia, Itala	11	50	10

The following failed to finish: Restelli, Restelli; Campari, Alfa-Romeo; Peyron, Diatto; Di Paola, Diatto; Tarabusi, Scat; Lancillotto, Scat; D'Avanzo, Buick; Veronesi, Isotta Fraschini; Baldoni, Nazzaro; Tasca, Itala.

TWELFTH TARGA FLORIO RACE, MAY 29, 1921

Medium Madonie Circuit, Four laps, 268½ miles

		hr.	min.	sec.
1.	G. Masetti, Fiat	7	25	5.4
	(Average, 36.2 m.p.h.)			
2.	Sailer, Mercedes	7	27	16.2
3.	Campari, Alfa-Romeo	7	30	4.6
4.	Sivocci, Alfa-Romeo	7	31	43
5.	Ferrari, Alfa-Romeo	7	33	43
6.	Foresti, Itala	7	34	37
7.	Moriondo, Itala	7	39	34
8.	Minoia, Fiat	7	47	46
9.	Landi, Itala	7	55	43
10.	Ceirano, Ceirano	7	59	12
11.	Bergese, Fiat	8	6	34
12.	Arnone, Ceirano	8	11	11
13.	Trombetta, Fiat	8	35	53

14.	Febo, Fiat	8	36	59
15.	Ninive, Italia	8	38	7
16.	Ghia, Diatto	9	5	15
17.	Morano, Ford	9	47	55
18.	Pellegrino, Fiat	10	3	35
19.	Tuccimei, Chiribiri	10	23	2

The following failed to finish: Piro, Fiat; Gismondi, Ceirano; Tarabusi, Scat; Mocca, Scat; Lopez, Itala; Gamboni, Diatto; Baldoni, Alfa-Romeo; Angelini, Scat; Tagliavia, Itala; Fracassi, Ford; Carusa, Immera; Ascari, Alfa-Romeo; Albanese, Aquila-Italiana; Romieux, M.R.; Bordino, Fiat.

THIRTEENTH TARGA FLORIO RACE, APRIL 2, 1922

Medium Madonie Circuit, Four laps, 268½ miles

		hr.	min.	sec.
1.	Masetti, G., Mercedes	6	50	50.4
	(Average, 39.2 m.p.h.)			
2.	Goux, Ballot	6	52	37.6
3.	Foresti, Ballot	7	4	58.2
4.	Ascari, Alfa-Romeo	7	6	48
5.	Giaccone, Fiat	7	11	23
6.	Sailer, Mercedes	7	12	8
7.	Hieronymus, Steyr	7	15	41
8.	Werner, Mercedes	7	16	12
9.	Sivocci, Alfa-Romeo	7	16	25
10.	Lautenschlager, Mercedes	7	17	50
11.	Campari, Alfa-Romeo	7	19	32
12.	Moriondo, Itala	7	20	17
13.	Salzer, Mercedes	7	24	0
14.	Lampiano, Fiat	7	32	36
15.	Rutzler, Steyr	7	40	14
16.	Ferrari, Alfa-Romeo	7	40	58
17.	Sacommani, Ceirano	7	43	14
18.	Ceirano, Ceirano	7	49	6
19.	Neubauer, Austro-Daimler	7	49	54
20.	Scheef, Mercedes	7	52	46
21.	Arnone, Ceirano	7	59	47
22.	Kula, Austro-Daimler	8	19	46
23.	Silvani, Steyr	8	21	8
24.	Pocher, Austro-Daimler	8	21	37
25.	Rebuffo, Itala	8	41	41
26.	Lopez, Itala	9	9	42

The following failed to finish: Count Kolowrat, Austro-Daimler; Gasparin, Fiat; Cercignani, Wanderer; School, Wanderer; Minoia, Mercedes; Tuccimei, Chiribiri; Tornaco, Bugatti; Bergese, Fiat; Meregalli, Diatto; Massola, Diatto; Sandomino, Itala; Clerici, Alfa-Romeo; Tarabusi, Alfa-Romeo; Wild, Itala; Cattaneo, Ceirano; Brilli Peri, Steyr; Avanzo, Alfa-Romeo; B. Nazzaro, Fiat; Landi, Itala.

FOURTEENTH TARGA FLORIO RACE, APRIL 15, 1923

Medium Madonie Circuit, Four laps, 268½ miles

		hr.	min.	sec.
1.	Sivocci, Alfa-Romeo	7	18	0.2
	(Average, 36.7 m.p.h.)			
2.	Ascari, Alfa-Romeo	7	20	52.4
3.	Minoia, Steyr	7	32	40.4
4.	Masetti, Alfa-Romeo	7	35	4
5.	Becchi, Nazzaro	8	1	5
6.	De Seta, Fiat	8	51	54
7.	Bodendik, Chenard	9	0	22
8.	Lenti, Bugatti	9	6	38
9.	Modo, Diatto	9	26	12

The following failed to finish: Pucci, Fiat; Antonelli, Bugatti; Milio Fiat; Siercke, Steyr; Campari, Alfa-Romeo; Maserati, Diatto; Ferrari Alfa-Romeo; Brilli Peri, Steyr; Boillot, Peugeot; Rutzler, Steyr.

FIFTEENTH TARGA FLORIO RACE AND COPPA FLORIO RACE, APRIL 27, 1924

Medium Madonie Circuit, Four laps for Targa, Five laps for Coppa, 268½ miles

		hr.	min.	sec.
1.	Werner, Mercedes	6	32	37.4
	(Average, 41.02 m.p.h.)			
2.	Masetta, G., Alfa-Romeo	6	41	4
3.	Bordino, Fiat	6	46	34
4.	Campari, Alfa-Romeo	6	46	51
5.	Boillot, Peugeot	6	47	1
6.	A. Dubonnet, Hispano-Suiza	6	50	24
7.	Rutzler, Steyr	6	52	44
8.	Foresti, Peugeot	6	52	45
9.	Wagner, Alfa-Romeo	6	55	58
10.	Lautenschlager, Mercedes	7	7	18
11.	Brilli Peri, Steyr	7	10	55
12.	Maserati, Diatto	7	11	3
13.	Dauvergne, Peugeot	7	13	45
14.	Majer, Steiger	7	26	56
15.	Neubauer, Mercedes	7	33	19
16.	School, Aga	7	40	48
17.	Sandonnino, Itala	7	44	30
18.	Gastaldetti, Fast	7	57	33
19.	Gamboni, Amilcar	7	59	7
20.	Tarabusi, Fast	8	1	16
21.	Pagani, Aga	9	27	59

COPPA FLORIO RESULTS, 335½ miles

		hr.	min.	sec.
1.	Werner, Mercedes	8	17	13
2.	Masetti, Alfa-Romeo	8	26	3
3.	Campari, Alfa-Romeo	8	29	21
4.	Boillot, Peugeot	8	30	11
5.	Dubonnet, Hispano-Suiza	8	36	18

		hr.	min.	sec.
6.	Rutzler, Steyr	8	36	23
7.	Foresti, Peugeot	8	39	40
8.	Wagner, Alfa-Romeo	8	39	44
9.	Lautenschlager, Mercedes	9	0	16
10.	Brilli Peri, Steyr	9	3	6
11.	Maserati, Diatto	9	4	2
12.	Dauvergne, Peugeot	9	7	55
13.	Neubauer, Mercedes	9	30	29
14.	School, Aga	9	36	22
15.	Sandonnino, Itala	9	41	56
16.	Gamboni, Amilcar	10	0	51

The following failed to finish: Kaufmann, Steiger; Goux, Ballot; Moriondo, Itala; Mucera, Ceirano; Lopez, Nazzaro; Minoia, Steyr; Haimovici, Ballot; Rebuffo, Itala; Kolb, Steiger; Pagani, Aga; Pastore, Fiat; Phillips, Aga; Caruso, Bianchi; Tagliavia, Fast; Antonelli, Mercedes.

SIXTEENTH TARGA FLORIO RACE AND COPPA FLORIO RACE, MAY 3, 1925

Medium Madonie Circuit, Five laps for Targa Florio, 335½ miles; Four laps for Coppa Florio, 268½ miles

		hr.	min.	sec.
1.	Costantini, Bugatti	7	32	27.2
	(Average, 44.48 m.p.h.)			
2.	Wagner, Peugeot	7	37	20
3.	Boillot, Peugeot	7	40	33
4.	Vizcaya, Bugatti	7	53	12
5.	Balestrero, O.M.	8	21	18
6.	Ginaldi, Alfa-Romeo	8	52	41

The following failed to finish: Dauvergne, Peugeot; Rigal, Peugeot; Plate, Chiribiri; F. Vizcaya, Bugatti; De Vitis, Itala; Gockerell, Gockerell; Piro, Fiat.

SEVENTEENTH TARGA FLORIO RACE AND COPPA FLORIO RACE, APRIL 25, 1926

Medium Madonie Circuit, Five laps for Targa Florio, 335½ miles; Four laps for Coppa Florio, 268½ miles

		hr.	min.	sec.
1.	Costantini, Bugatti	7	20	45
	(Average, 45.77 m.p.h.)			
2.	Minoia, Bugatti	7	30	49
3.	Goux, Bugatti	7	35	56.4
4.	Materassi, Itala	7	44	26
5.	Dubonnet, Bugatti	7	45	0
6.	Wagner, Peugeot	7	52	25
7.	Balestrero, O.M.	8	20	35
8.	Candrilli, Steyr	8	33	55
9.	Maserati, Maserati	8	37	11
10.	Croce, Bugatti	8	45	21
11.	Caliri, Bugatti	8	50	46
12.	Montanari, Bugatti	8	59	21

The following failed to cover five laps: Moravitz, Bugatti; Mucera, Ceirano; De Vitis, Bugatti; Lepori, Bugatti; Messeri, Bugatti; Divo, Delage; Masetti, Delage; Thomas, Delage; Benoist, Delage; De Sterlich, Diatto; Boillot, Peugeot; Vittoria, Diatto; Sillitti, Alfa-Romeo; Geri, Salmson; Zubiaga, Austin; Casano, Amilcar; Rallo, Salmson; Borzacchini, Salmson; Sandonnino, Citroen; Starrabba, Amilcar; Comella, Salmson.

EIGHTEENTH TARGA FLORIO RACE, APRIL 24, 1927
Medium Madonie Circuit, Five rounds, 335½ miles

		hr.	min.	sec.
1.	Materassi, Bugatti	7	35	55.4
	(Average, 44.15 m.p.h.)			
2.	Conelli, Bugatti	7	39	6
3.	Maserati, Maserati	8	1	36
4.	Boillot, Peugeot	8	27	35
5.	Palacio, Bugatti	8	33	52
6.	Dubonnet, Bugatti	8	37	59
7.	Eckert, Bugatti	9	15	0
8.	Marano, Fiat	9	37	41

The following failed to finish: Borzacchini, Salmson; Fagioli, B.N.C.; Zubiaga, B.N.C.; Cheravel, Bugatti; Caliri, Bugatti; Valdes, Diatto; Minoia, Bugatti; Madame Junek, Bugatti; Starrabba, Amilcar; Maserati (Ernesto), Maserati; Balestrero, Candrilli; Count Maggi.

NINETEENTH TARGA FLORIO RACE, MAY 6, 1928
Medium Madonie Circuit, Five rounds, 335½ miles

		hr.	min.	sec.
1.	Divo, Bugatti	7	20	56.6
	(Average, 45.6 m.p.h.)			
2.	Campari, Alfa-Romeo	7	22	33.6
3.	Conelli, Bugatti	7	22	50
4.	Chiron, Bugatti	7	27	22
5.	Madame Junek, Bugatti	7	29	40
6.	Minoia, Bugatti	7	40	21
7.	Fagioli, Maserati	7	43	25
8.	Dreyfus, Bugatti	7	53	53
9.	Lepori, Bugatti	7	54	5
10.	Foresti, Bugatti	9	9	39
11.	E. Maserati, Maserati	8	21	12
12.	Countess Margot d'Einsiedel	8	21	25

1,100-c.c. Class (Four laps)

1.	Riccoli, Fiat	5	15	25
2.	Rallo, Fiat	5	58	35

The following failed to finish: Inglese, Bugatti; Nenzioni, Bugatti; Verso, Bugatti; Cocuzza, Bugatti; Duke de Villarosa, Bugatti; Vittoria, Maserati; Marano, Maserati; Scianna, Bugatti; Marinoni, Alfa-Romeo; Borzacchini, Maserati; Materassi, Bugatti; Pastore, Bugatti; Nuvolari, Bugatti; De Sterlich, Maserati; Brilli Peri, Bugatti; Heusser, Bugatti; Candrilli, Steyr; Sillitti, Alfa-Romeo; Zanelli, Fiat; Vigo, Fiat; Prince di Sirignano, Camen; Esposito, Camen; Casano, Salmson; Biondetti, Salmson; Ciolino, San Giorgio.

TWENTIETH TARGA FLORIO RACE, MAY 5, 1929

Medium Madonie Circuit, Five laps, 335½ miles

		hr.	min.	sec.
1.	Divo, Bugatti	7	15	41
	(Average, 46.2 m.p.h.)			
2.	Minoia, Bugatti	7	17	43.8
3.	Brilli Peri, Alfa-Romeo	7	23	52.6
4.	Campari, Alfa-Romeo	7	34	45
5.	Foresti, Bugatti	9	13	27

The following failed to finish: Borzacchini, Maserati; E. Maserati, Maserati; Wagner, Bugatti; Lepori, Bugatti; Tranchina, Alfa-Romeo; Varzi, Alfa-Romeo; Candrilli, Bugatti; Ruggeri, Maserati; Bittmann, Bugatti; Conelli, Bugatti; Palmeri, Fiat; Jacono, Fiat; Fagioli, Salmson; Biondetti, Salmson.

TWENTY-FIRST TARGA FLORIO RACE, MAY 4, 1930

Medium Madonie Circuit, Five laps, 335½ miles

		hr.	min.	sec.
1.	Varzi, Alfa-Romeo	6	55	16.8
	(Average, 48.5 m.p.h.)			
2.	Chiron, Bugatti	6	57	5.6
3.	Conelli, Bugatti	7	3	13
4.	Campari, Alfa-Romeo	7	3	54
5.	Nuvolari, Alfa-Romeo	7	13	1
6.	Morandi, O.M.	7	18	31
7.	Williams and Divo, Bugatti	7	19	51
8.	E. Maserati, Maserati	7	29	12
9.	D'Ippolito, Alfa-Romeo	7	29	18
10.	Minoia, O.M.	7	32	13
11.	Borzacchini, Maserati	7	35	21
12.	Bittmann, Bugatti	8	17	16

The following failed to finish: Divo, Bugatti; Count Maggi, Alfa-Romeo; Archangeli, Maserati; Ruggeri, O.M.; Balestrero, O.M.

TWENTY-SECOND TARGA FLORIO RACE, MAY 10, 1931

Big Madonie Circuit, Four laps, 363.2 miles

		hr.	min.	sec.
1.	Nuvolari, Alfa-Romeo	9	0	27
	(Average, 40.28 m.p.h.)			
2.	Borzacchini, Alfa-Romeo	9	2	44
3.	Varzi, Bugatti	9	7	53.8
4.	Campari, Alfa-Romeo	9	8	11
5.	D'Ippolito, Alfa-Romeo	9	29	11
6.	Archangeli, Alfa-Romeo	9	45	14

The following failed to finish: Magistri, Alfa-Romeo; Pellegrino, Alfa-Romeo; Dreyfus, Maserati; Biondetti, Maserati; Fagioli, Maserati; Castagna, Salmson; Pirandello, Alfa-Romeo; Landolino, Maserati; Papillon, Maserati; Toja, Bugatti; Giusti, Bugatti; Romand, Bugatti.

TWENTY-THIRD TARGA FLORIO RACE, MAY 8, 1932

Short Madonie Circuit, Eight laps, 354.5 miles

		hr.	min.	sec.
1.	Nuvolari, Alfa-Romeo	7	15	50.6
	(Average, 49.3 m.p.h.)			
2.	Borzacchini, Alfa-Romeo	7	21	29.8
3.	Chiron, Bugatti	7	35	28.6
4.	Ghersi, Alfa-Romeo	7	38	5
5.	Ruggeri, Maserati	7	50	16
6.	Rondina, O.M.	8	39	38

The following failed to finish: Brivio, Alfa-Romeo; D'Ippolito, Alfa-Romeo; Fagioli, Maserati; Biondetti, Biondetti; Sciandra, Fiat; De Maria, Fiat.

TWENTY-FOURTH TARGA FLORIO RACE, MAY 28, 1933

Short Madonie Circuit, Seven laps, 313 miles

		hr.	min.	sec.
1.	Brivio, Alfa-Romeo	6	35	6.2
	(Average, 47.5 m.p.h.)			
2.	Balestrero, Alfa-Romeo	6	55	52.6
3.	Carraroli, Alfa-Romeo	7	7	45
4.	Gazzabini, Alfa-Romeo	7	21	2
5.	D'Alessio, Alfa-Romeo	7	34	11
6.	Cucinotta, Bugatti	7	34	11

The following failed to finish: Giardina, Bugatti; Lo Bue, Alfa-Romeo; Magistri, Alfa-Romeo; Virgilio, Alfa-Romeo; Borzacchini, Alfa-Romeo; Napoli, Alfa-Romeo; Ghersi, Alfa-Romeo; Casano, Bugatti.

TWENTY-FIFTH TARGA FLORIO RACE, MAY 20, 1934

Short Madonie Circuit, Six laps, 267.3 miles

		hr.	min.	sec.
1.	Varzi, Alfa-Romeo	6	14	26.8
	(Average, 43 m.p.h.)			
2.	Barbieri, Alfa-Romeo	6	27	14.2
3.	Magistri, Alfa-Romeo	6	40	2.6
4.	Balestrero, Alfa-Romeo	6	45	43
5.	Pages, Alfa-Romeo	6	49	28
6.	Ghersi, Alfa-Romeo	6	49	32
7.	Cortese, Alfa-Romeo	6	54	1

The following failed to finish: Battaglia, Alfa-Romeo; Battilana, Alfa-Romeo; Canaroli, Alfa-Romeo; Alloatti, Bugatti; L'Agata, Maserati.

TWENTY-SIXTH TARGA FLORIO RACE, APRIL 28, 1935

Short Madonie Circuit, Six laps, 267.3 miles

		hr.	min.	sec.
1.	Brivio, Alfa-Romeo	5	27	29
	(Average, 50 m.p.h.)			
2.	Chiron, Alfa-Romeo	5	34	21.6
3.	Barbieri, Maserati	5	45	57.6
4.	Magistri, Alfa-Romeo	—	—	—
5.	Balestrero, Alfa-Romeo	—	—	—

		hr.	min.	sec.
6.	Belmondo, Alfa-Romeo	—	—	—
7.	Ruesch, Alfa-Romeo	—	—	—
8.	Antinori, Alfa-Romeo	—	—	—
9.	Troja, Fiat	—	—	—
10.	Ferrari, Fiat	—	—	—

TWENTY-SEVENTH TARGA FLORIO RACE, DECEMBER 20, 1936

Short Madonie Circuit, Two laps, 88.2 miles

		hr.	min.	sec.
1.	Magistri, Lancia	2	8	47.2
2.	De Pietro, Lancia	2	14	25.8
3.	Gladio, Lancia	2	17	21
4.	Cammarata, Lancia	2	18	4
5.	Malaguti, Fiat	2	18	34
6.	Danese, Fiat	2	20	0
7.	Ansaldi, Lancia	2	20	31
8.	Matrascia, Bianchi	2	22	42
9.	Sartarelli, Fiat	2	40	6

TWENTY-EIGHTH TARGA FLORIO RACE, MAY 23, 1937

Favorita Park, 196 miles

		hr.	min.	sec.
1.	Severi, Maserati	2	55	49
	(Average, 66.8 m.p.h.)			
2.	Lurani, Maserati	2	57	28
3.	Bianco, Maserati	2	58	46

TWENTY-NINTH TARGA FLORIO RACE, MAY 22, 1938

Favorita Park, 106.7 miles

		hr.	min.	sec.
1.	Rocco, Maserati	1	30	4.6
	(Average, 71 m.p.h.)			
2.	Ralph, Maserati	1	32	15
3.	Villoresi, Maserati	1	34	9

THIRTIETH TARGA FLORIO RACE, MAY 14, 1939

Favorita Park, 141.5 miles

		hr.	min.	sec.
1.	Villoresi, Maserati	1	40	15.4
	(Average, 84.7 m.p.h.)			
2.	Taruffi, Maserati	1	42	5
3.	Barbieri, Maserati	1	45	56

THIRTY-FIRST TARGA FLORIO RACE, MAY 23, 1940

Favorita Park, 141.5 miles

		hr.	min.	sec.
1.	Villoresi, Maserati	1	36	8.6
	(Average, 88.4 m.p.h.)			
2.	Cortese, Maserati	1	37	23.6
3.	Rocco, Maserati	1	37	40

THIRTY-SECOND TARGA FLORIO RACE, APRIL 4, 1948
Round Sicily, 671 miles

		hr.	min.	sec.
1.	Biondetti and Igor, Ferrari	12	10	0
	(Average, 55.1 m.p.h.)			
2.	Taruffi and Rabbia, Cisitalia	12	26	14.4
3.	Macgieraldo and Savio, Cisitalia	12	30	51.4

THIRTY-THIRD TARGA FLORIO RACE, MARCH 20, 1949
Round Sicily, 671 miles

		hr.	min.	sec.
1.	Biondetti and Benedetti, Ferrari	13	15	9
	(Average, 50.6 m.p.h.)			
2.	Rolla and Riciero, Alfa-Romeo	13	17	58
3.	Rocco and Prete, A.M.P.	13	33	10

THIRTY-FOURTH TARGA FLORIO RACE, APRIL 2, 1950
Round Sicily, 671 miles

		hr.	min.	sec.
1.	Bornigia and Bornigia, Alfa-Romeo	12	26	33
	(Average, 54 m.p.h.)			
2.	Bernabei and Pacini, Ferrari	12	38	1
3.	La Motta and Alterio, Ferrari	12	53	5

THIRTY-FIFTH TARGA FLORIO RACE, SEPTEMBER 9, 1951
Short Madonie Circuit, Eight laps, 357.8 miles

		hr.	min.	sec.
1.	Cortese, Frazer-Nash	7	31	7.8
	(Average, 47.5 m.p.h.)			
2.	Bracco, Ferrari	7	34	10.2
3.	Bernabei, Maserati	8	12	23.6

THIRTY-SIXTH TARGA FLORIO RACE, JUNE 29, 1952
Short Madonie Circuit, Eight laps, 357.8 miles

		hr.	min.	sec.
1.	Bonetto, Lancia	7	11	53
	(Average, 49.7 m.p.h.)			
2.	Valenzano, Lancia	7	14	32.2
3.	Anselmi, Lancia	7	24	0.4

THIRTY-SEVENTH TARGA FLORIO RACE, MAY 14, 1953
Short Madonie Circuit, Eight laps, 357.8 miles

		hr.	min.	sec.
1.	Maglioli, Lancia	7	8	35.8
	(Average, 50.09 m.p.h.)			
2.	Giletti, Maserati	7	10	15
3.	Mantovania and Fangio, Maserati	7	13	43
4.	Valenzano, Lancia	7	18	47
5.	Bordoni, Gordini	7	19	26
6.	Cabianca, Ferrari	7	27	1
7.	Bornigia, Lancia	7	29	11
8.	Bonomi, Ferrari	7	35	18

		hr.	min.	sec.
9.	Stagnoli, Ferrari	7	37	24
10.	Pucci, Lancia	7	39	25
11.	Musso, Maserati	7	46	30
12.	Tramontana, Alfa-Romeo	7	53	22
13.	Musmeci, Alfa-Romeo	7	55	52
14.	Piccolo, Nardi	7	57	59
15.	Musso, Stanguellini	8	0	59
16.	Bordonaro, Ferrari	8	5	20
17.	Wisdom, Jaguar	8	5	37
18.	Toia, Lancia	8	17	23
19.	Ricci, Lancia	8	26	58
20.	Keck, Porsche	8	29	20
21.	Musitelli, Ferrari	8	31	36
22.	Gravina, Fiat	8	39	52

The following failed to finish: Taruffi, Lancia; Bracco, Lancia; Castellotti, Ferrari; Manzon, Lancia; Bormogia, Lancia; Valenzano, Lancia; Cortese, Frazer-Nash; Anselmo, Lancia; Peduzzi, Stanguellini; Rotolo, Fiat; Sighinolfi, Fiat; Casella, Gordini; Musitelli, Ferrari; Siracusa, Stanguellini; Panepanto, Ermini; Bruni, Cisitalia; Frazitta, Stanguellini; Scotti, Ferrari; Orlando, Fiat; Consiglio, Fiat-Siata.

THIRTY-EIGHTH TARGA FLORIO RACE, MAY 30, 1954

Short Madonie Circuit, Eight laps, 357.8 miles

		hr.	min.	sec.
1.	Taruffi, Lancia	6	24	18
	(Average, 55.8 m.p.h.)			
2.	Musso, Maserati	6	31	51
3.	Piodi, Lancia	6	55	11.2
4.	Bellucci, Maserati	7	11	20.8
5.	Biondetti, Ferrari	7	12	4.6
6.	Minzoni, Ferrari	7	29	27
7.	Arezzo, Lancia	7	32	23
8.	Starrabba, Lancia	7	36	33.6
9.	Scaminici, Lancia	7	37	2.4
10.	Di Salvo, Fiat-Raor	7	46	20.6
11.	Pottino, Lancia	7	48	53.6
12.	Sacconi, Osca	7	48	54.4
13.	Perrella, Lancia	7	51	50.6
14.	Biagiotti, Ermini	7	52	21
15.	Zappala, Giannini	7	58	39.2

The following failed to finish: Placido, Nardi; Fondi, Renault; Mme. Peduzzi, Stanguelli; Di Pasquale, Fiat; Piccolo, Nardi; Guarassi, Cisitalia; Rotolo, Nardi; Reginella, Fiat; Toia, Fiat; Cabianca, Osca; Crescimanno, Lancia; Grimaldi, Lancia; Sansovetti, Fiat; Scarletti, Maserati; Cacciari, Maserati; Vella, Jaguar; Castellotti, Lancia; Tramontana, Lancia; Manzon, Lancia.

INDEX