

THE PROMISE OF THE AUTOMOBILE IN RECREATIVE LIFE.

By Robert Bruce.

THE extension of the domain, and the multiplication of the means of pleasure-life, which so markedly characterizes the present age, is due, perhaps, not more to an unexampled awakening of the recreative instinct than to the increased opportunities afforded for wider personal participation in the many forms of accepted sport. A broad-gauged, far-reaching change is in process. The old idea of physical exercise merely for its own sake has long been losing its hold. Here, as elsewhere in contemporaneous living, consciousness of some underlying, actuating incentive, and the realization of pleasant and profitable auxiliary results, has been needed to lead the way to healthful, cheerful and invigorating performance of well-sustained interest, and to endow with vitality that which the conditions of the times might otherwise narrow, to feeble insignificance.

Incentive finds more or less expression in all recreations worthy of encouragement and support. To some there has been lent the enthusiasm and interest of friendly rivalries conducted in true and dignified spirit; while others are linked with the progress of some modern invention. The latter have already afforded the devotees of outdoor life some efficient means of pleasure travel, by the use of which the radius of individual movement has been sensibly lengthened, and freedom, ease and comfort in so doing, favorably redefined.

Two types, both exclusively modern—the bicycle and the automobile—stand at the head of the list of mechanical accessories to sport and recreation; the first-named credited the most in achieved results; the second—the special contemplation of the present paper—showing from this view point the brightest promise for the future.

Those who best know the motor carriages of to-day—more especially clear-sighted and hard-headed inventors and manufacturers—are, as a rule, the most conservative of their proven capabilities and the least ungenerous to their

remaining faults. The professional boomer, in whatever form appearing, is the worst possible enemy to a movement the success of which must ultimately be measured by, ability to satisfactorily meet a number of severe mechanical requirements. Already some of those responsible for wide-of-the-mark utterances are formulating humble apologies to the public whose interests they have been pretending to serve, and whose confidence they have rightfully forfeited. The publicity radiating from this industry is either well-founded or withering; that of *OUTING'S* publishing may be depended upon as solely of the safer type.

One refreshing fact confronts the friend of automobile development in whatever way his observation may be turned—the serious thought of designers and makers finds utterance in the construction of models first for pleasure and afterwards for commercial uses. That this has not been the result—as some profess to believe—of a desire to solve the easier problem first will be apparent when it is understood that the most bothersome of all structural requirements are those called for by carriages adaptable to such highways, loads, powers and speeds as are contemplated for private ownership.

Neither the ponderous omnibus nor the lumbering autotruck call for equal nicety in unity and detail of outworking as compared with the self-moving surrey,





or phaeton, or even the roundabout. To combine strength and durability with reasonable lightness and speed, high efficiency and endurance of propelling forces, with symmetry of outline and ease of management, grade ascending power, with ample carrying capacity, and so following—these are but a few of the special difficulties to be overcome in the construction of pleasure types of automobiles. No more arbitrary array of fixed requirements could easily be formulated to vex designers and builders.

And, yet in at least one important respect the motor vehicle industry is greatly favored over all other of the developments of modern mechanics. The purchasers of its earliest products are almost without exception men and women of means, of patience and personal enthusiasm for an ultimate, rather than immediate, satisfactory outcome of their investments and efforts. Many are themselves, indeed, amateur designers and constructors of no mean order. Not a few have suggested, and in extremity demonstrated, various devices and improvements already indispensable to the operation and control of accepted models.

Whatever may result from the combination of explosive gas and compressed air as a propelling resource for automobiles—and the possibilities of success in this direction grow with the progress of daily experiment—will ever stand credited, first of all, to the courage and perseverance of an American, who, has for years backed his belief in the worth of this system with his time, labor and fortune, and is now equipping a factory for the manufacture, on an extended scale, of vehicles brought to promising efficiency in his private service. Whether

or not these models secure that share of public favor expected for them, it is admitted that their possibilities are being searched to the uttermost. This instance, although the most notable of all, is but one among the many known to the current records of the trade.

There are perhaps two scores of improvised laboratories in the United States to-day designed solely for automobile experiment, and doubtless one-half that number of completed vehicles assembled on individual lines from working parts made to special single order. The sum-total of value of such outside cooperation is beyond easy calculation at this particular stage of the movement.

Were it possible to select a goodly number of the best models of each of the three practicable types of carriages, namely, those propelled by (1) electricity, (2) the hydrocarbons, and (3) steam, place them in the hands of persons of active and varied pleasure-searching inclinations, and afford them full and free opportunity for the all-round use of these machines, a comprehensive summary of their experiences would form a fair reflection of what we may confidently expect in due time from the addition of the automobile to the means of recreation. New possibilities in track and road racing, in general pleasure riding and touring would be demonstrated before our eyes. We would be fully justified in availing ourselves of this improvised index to future probabilities, for the reason that the certainty of far-reaching improvements in contemporaneous types would lend extreme conservatism to any calculation of such matter.

Another margin of safety would be afforded in the likelihood that selling prices will in some degree decline with the multiplication and further perfection of the facilities of production, thus materially increasing the number of machines, which coming years will place in commission. Whatever has already, through vexatious trials, been accomplished, even one by one, will be but primary practice for multitudes under conditions which will be brought about so swiftly as to become commonplace with us, before the end of the decade upon which we are soon to enter. We are therefore privileged to foreshadow the future position of the automobile in sport and pastime

by means of the account it has already rendered of itself.

Competition on the road and track alike divides itself into two broad classes: contests between (1) motor cycles and tricycles (both commonly known as "motocycles,"), and those between (2) motor vehicles as such. The lines separating these classes are drawn much more distinctly in Europe, and especially in France, than in the United States, owing largely to the more advanced state of both industry and sport in that country. Motocycles are of many types, constructed after the manner of heavier bicycles and tricycles, and ingeniously fitted with various motive powers. Racing with these machines has come to be very popular on the Continent, and more so in Great Britain than with us. At a tournament held at the Crystal Palace, London, on July 1st, 1899, five events were run, and each one was well contested, notwithstanding that Mr. S. F. Edge, formerly a champion middle-distance cyclist, swept every event on the programme. He won the mile handicap in 1:50, the two miles handicap in 3:38, and the five miles scratch in 8:55 2-5, while in the hour race he covered 34 miles 540 yards, and finally, with Jarrott for partner, beat Stocks and Ridgeway in the mile tandem in 1:43 4-5. There were six starters in the mile, six in the two miles, seven in the five miles, and five in the hour competition.

The road record between London and Edinburgh has always been much sought after by British long-distance men, with the result that the figures have been gradually reduced for the bicycle to 25 hours, 20 minutes. Recently Mr. J. W. Stocks, on a motocycle, undertook to eclipse the cycle record, which he did very effectually. Leaving the Scottish end at 6 A.M., he reached London at 2:35 the next morning, covering the route in 20 hours, 35 minutes, and averaging, including all stops, nearly 20 miles per hour for the entire journey. The superiority of the latter performance more clearly appears when it is remembered that the cycle record was, like the automobile record, practically a single dash from start to finish, which a trained cyclist is able to sustain for that number of miles like an animated machine. And yet the time of the motocycle, notwithstanding all the perils and

drawbacks of management at high speed by night, was 4 hours, 45 minutes less than the cycle time.

In the last annual race over the Paris-Bordeaux course, Bardin's average time for the 565 kilometers was $42\frac{3}{4}$ kilometers per hour. In the "Tour de France" (motocycle division) Teste sustained a uniform speed of $41\frac{1}{2}$ kilometers per hour over a distance of 2,291 kilometers. Paris-St. Malo was won by Renaux on the motor bearing his name, his time for the 372 kilometers giving the high average of 52 kilometers per hour. The winner of the Paris-Dieppe race averaged 42 kilometers per hour, and Teste was victorious in the shorter Paris-Trouville course of 175 kilometers, making 57 kilometers per hour. Baras scored three brilliant victories in the Paris-Lille (258 k.), Paris-Ostend (323 k.), and Paris-Boulogne (330 k.) races, his respective average times per hour being $48\frac{1}{2}$, $52\frac{1}{2}$ and $45\frac{3}{4}$ kilometers.

The last-named figure is perhaps the most meritorious of them all, inasmuch as it was made on a quadracycle, carrying a passenger instead of the usual stripped tricycle. The last of the big races for 1899, Bordeaux-Biarritz, was productive of high averages, and Bertin's time for the 281 kilometers reached the record mark of 60 kilometers per hour. Mention must also be made of the shorter distance performances of Beconnais, at Acheres, in September. On the famous "route du Parc d'Agricole," this motocyclist covered two kilometers in 1 minute 50 3-5 seconds, and made the kilometer with flying start in 48 seconds, equaling a speed of 75 kilometers (about 47 miles) per hour. This



feat, coupled with his hour record of 42 miles 337 yards, on the track, go far to compensate Beconnais for his comparative lack of success in the longer road races.

Motor vehicle speeds average somewhat less than the speeds of motorcycles, owing principally to the heavier weights necessary to be carried and the difficulty of handling a large machine with the same ease and quickness of controlling movement as a small one. Notwithstanding these facts, however, the average of the winner of the Paris-Ostend race (Levegh-Girardot) was 52 kilometers per hour, and in the Paris-Boulogne, 54. Tourist vehicles have averaged 24 or 25 miles per hour for upwards of 200 miles, carrying three or four passengers in a heavy touring body.



The personal mount of the Hon. John Scott Montagu, M. P., has per a recent communication to the *Motor-Car World* (England), as a matter of record averaged 29½ miles per hour between Paris and Amiens, a distance of about eighty miles of rather hilly country, and 30.3 miles on the comparatively level highway in Belgium between Dunkerque and Ostend. These are averages from end to end of distances named, and, of course, on the favorable level or slightly down-hill portions of a speeding effort, forty and fifty miles per hour are sometimes maintained for miles at a time.

In the "Tour de France," briefly noted in the automobile records department of the *OUTING* for January, 1900, René de Knyff, on a 16 horse-power

Panhard-Lavassor, averaged 51 kilometers per hour over a route 2,291 kilometers long. The Paris-St. Malo was won by Anthony, with a 16 horse-power Mors vehicle, at an average speed of 50 kilometers per hour for the course of 372 kilometers. The same equipment gained the Paris-Trouville race, making an average of 58 kilometers per hour for 175 kilometers. Levegh, on a Mors, and Girardot, on a Panhard-Lavassor, who finished the Paris-Ostend race in a dead heat, averaged 52 kilometers to the hour for 322 kilometers. The 330 kilometers between Paris and Boulogne have been covered by Girardot at an average speed of nearly 54 kilometers per hour.

An interesting comparison of moto cycles and motor vehicles, in the matter of recorded speeds over identical courses, may be made by placing certain items in this and the preceding paragraph against each other. Omitting those where the comparison would be from any cause incomplete, we have the following:

| | <i>Moto- cycle average.</i> | <i>Moto- vehicle average.</i> |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Tour de France, 2,291 kilometers..... | 41½ | 51 |
| Paris-St. Malo, 372 kilometers..... | 52 | 50 |
| Paris-Trouville, 175 kilometers..... | 57 | 58 |
| Paris-Ostend, 322 kilometers..... | 52½ | 52* |
| Paris-Boulogne, 330 kilometers..... | 45¼† | 54‡ |

* Levegh-Girardot competition.

† Quadricycle machine with passenger.

‡ Girardot's record time.

It will be noticed that in three instances here noted the motor-vehicle speed exceeded that of the motorcycle, and of these, one event was the longest of all, and the lower average of another is accounted for by the footnote marked with the dagger. The short distance records are uniformly to the credit of the lighter types of machines.

In the summaries of both motorcycle and motor-vehicle performances here briefly given, the promise of future competition plainly appears. A two-wheeled, three-wheeled or four-wheeled power-driven machine, capable of negotiating various distances at upwards of forty miles per hour to-day, carrying weights ranging from 100 to 1,000 pounds, possesses possibilities which the untamed inclinations of sport-loving people in the United States will hardly overlook beyond the time required by manufacturers to produce the machines. Road courses suitable for these contests will become many, and the use thus made of them ought to be surprisingly great and

widespread. Tournaments and track competitions will come, and grow into deserved popularity. And it may here properly be said that the personnel of contestants in automobile events must form a pleasing contrast to any oft-met type of cycle racing enthusiasts.

The supreme test in speeding consists in the management of the machine. The success of the operator depends upon his getting the utmost power and swiftness out of his motor; in knowing how to best supply it with fuel, and in the thousand-and-one precautions against being taken unawares or caught by accident. He must be perfectly cool at all times, have plenty of nerve force, and be an utter stranger to fear. When one has no misgivings either about himself or the mechanism under his hand, he is less likely than otherwise to meet with misfortune.

Many of the famous French motocyclists have been brought up in the workshops, and have therefore a thorough acquaintance with the practical side of their machines; but the best amateur management does not materially suffer from point-and-point comparison therewith. The latter displays infinitely more tact and resource; the former more mechanical dexterity. Since the skill of the operator counts for so much, and the liability to, accident must always be taken into account, there is considerable glorious uncertainty about racing with automobiles; and, in fact, it is extremely rare to find the same person winning in consecutive events. All this tends to lend especial interest to the sport, and is helping to create a popularity for it.

Touring by motor vehicle, the social interest in general and the motor club interest in particular, already centering about this new form of transportation, are developments of the greater movement intimately related to the topics constituting the present paper, but impossible to comprehensively treat in the same connection. They will be subsequently discussed in *OUTING*.

The spirit in which the automobile has been seized upon by those to whom we must chiefly look for support of its further development, is the best possible, as well as the nearest available index to its likely position in the recreative life of the approaching century. That spirit can at this moment be credited

with having accepted and improved to the utmost every advantage vouchsafed it by the industry, and with a surplus of wholly rational energy and enthusiasm for the opportunities denied to-day but promised to-morrow.

These things are very largely in the hands of those who have brought real strength to the sport of to-day. The older need not necessarily suffer by the addition to the list of a newer one of only far-distant kin; for, vital and vigorous in growth as it promises to be, it is in conflict with none other that can be named. It may, indeed, serve the ultimate best interests of those who innocently fear its power and tendency to somewhat eclipse their favorite recreations. The self-propelling carriage will take one not to the depths of the forests but to the suburban traps and ranges; it



will find the river road, seldom the river; it will carry home only what the automobilist-angler succeeds in catching; the leg-weary cannot pursue fugitive golf balls mounted upon it, but it will find the way home before the enthusiasm and hilarity of the game has suffered sensible decline.

Observe with what refinement of conscience this new form of transportation stops short of interfering with anything in the recreative world that flourished before its day, and how modestly content it is to contribute to the means and resources of the practice and enjoyment of many of them! This is the last as well as the very first of the premises of this paper. By thus furthering the purposes of rational pleasure-seeking, the automobile must likewise confer upon life a long line of especial benefits and blessings.