

THE AUTOMOBILE IN AMERICA.

BY FRANK A. MUNSEY.

THE TREMENDOUS ADVANCE OF THE MOTOR-CAR WITH US, BOTH IN ITS MECHANICAL DEVELOPMENT AND IN THE VOLUME OF THE INDUSTRY—SOME SUGGESTIONS OF INTEREST ALIKE TO AUTOMOBILISTS AND THE PUBLIC—A BETTER FEELING FOR THE AUTOMOBILE EVERYWHERE.

LAST month I said something in this magazine about the automobile abroad, under the title "What The Automobile Has Done For France." Reliable statistics about the motor-car are not easily obtained, and it was especially difficult to get them in the French article, as I aimed to cover in a suggestive way both the direct and the indirect influence of the automobile in the French Republic. I had the idea, however, that statistics about the motor-car here in America would be easily procured, especially as I had no thought of embracing so wide a scope as in the other article.

My thought was to give facts and figures of the progress of the industry here at home, and not attempt to show, as I did with France, the vast indirect value of the automobile to the nation. The conditions that obtain in the two countries are wholly dissimilar. France is a pleasure-ground for all the world, while America is as yet a playground for her own people only. We do not draw great revenues from foreign travelers, therefore this phase of the automobile, so peculiarly important to France, means little or nothing with us.

THE GROWTH OF THE INDUSTRY.

Facts and figures about the beginning and progress of the automobile industry here at home are so conflicting, and there is such a dearth of accurate knowledge on the subject, that I cannot show, year by year, our growth in the manufacture of automobiles. The best obtainable statistics show that our output for 1905 has been about twenty-five thousand cars of one kind and another.

These figures, contrasted with those of half a dozen years ago, show the most tremendous strides of the automobile industry in America. Then but very little capital was invested in automobile factories; now over twenty millions of dollars are employed in the business. Then we had but two or three small manufacturing, merely experimental shops; to-day we have forty or fifty great big factories amply equipped with money and machinery and skilled workmen, and we have at the head of these factories both men of splendid executive force and those of scientific knowledge, who are bending every thought and every energy to the development of the best automobile in the world, and to its production at the least possible cost. It is in the latter respect that American ingenuity and American methods most forcefully assert themselves. This means that the American automobile will at no distant day dominate the markets of the world.

Until recently the automobile was looked upon as a plaything for the very rich and a fad of the hour. But that it is beginning to be taken seriously is made clear by the fact that in New York State alone we now have registered over twenty-four thousand motor-cars. Just how many there are in the whole United States I have been unable to learn, but with twenty-four thousand in one State of the Union, there must be as many as one hundred thousand now in use. The uncertain period of the automobile is past. It is no longer a theme for jokers, and rarely do we hear the derisive expression, "Get a horse!"

We are not only going to manufacture

the best automobiles in the world, but we are already making pretty nearly, if not actually, as high-grade machines as are produced anywhere in Europe. That the European machine has the prestige cannot be denied. It made a place for itself before we even started to manufacture automobiles, and it is difficult to overcome prestige. There is something else that works immeasurably to the advantage of the foreign car and correspondingly to our disadvantage. It is the great army of Americans who go abroad every summer and automobile there in foreign cars. They become accustomed to them, attached to them, and bring them home. The power of habit has its grasp, in automobiling as in everything else. The fact that So-and-so and So-and-so have foreign cars has an undoubted influence on other Americans in the purchase of automobiles.

AMERICAN AND FOREIGN CARS.

But all these influences will not be able to stand against the genuine excellence of the American car of to-day with its lower price. The duty on a car coming into America is forty-five per cent, and with the expense of casing for shipment, freight, and insurance, we have a total of fifty per cent, which must be added to the purchase price of a car in France. This means that one can buy an American car of the same horsepower, finish, and general excellence as a foreign car at just about half the price, or, in other words, get two American cars for what one foreign car would cost. With so wide a margin of difference in cost, it is not difficult to foresee a rapid diminution in the importation of automobiles as the quality of our own product becomes better known and is further improved.

Though we were the last country to take up seriously the manufacture of automobiles, we are to-day turning out even more cars than France. Her product, however, is of greater value than our own, as the average French machine is much more expensive. Our great expansion so far has been in inexpensive automobiles. And there is a very sound reason for this type of machine. In France, as in England and Germany and Italy and Spain, there is

not the vast well-to-do citizenship that we have in America. The automobile over there is largely owned by the very rich and the great leisure class—by these and by foreign visitors. Comparatively few men in business or in salaried positions indulge in the luxury of motoring. Their incomes do not warrant it. The motor-cycle and the bicycle are the pleasure machines of the people.

OUR LIGHTER AND SIMPLER MACHINES.

In America we have half a million men who can afford to own and run an automobile, and half a million automobiles we shall have in use here within the next ten years. Our manufacturers, realizing the difference in conditions between this country and the countries of Europe—the difference in the roads, and in the wealth and temperament of the peoples—are very wisely making automobiles that are particularly suited to America. Over eighty per cent of them, I should fancy, are so simplified that they are independent of the mechanic. They are chauffeurless machines, machines for the half million citizens, many of whom could not afford to maintain an automobile plus the additional expense of a mechanic.

The salary paid to a chauffeur in America has an important bearing on this point. Chauffeurs' wages here are anywhere from seventy-five to one hundred and fifty dollars a month, whereas abroad the average price is about forty dollars a month. Most men, however, prefer driving their own automobiles, whether they have a chauffeur or not. It is in the running of a car, the handling of it, the feeling of command over it, and its obedience to one's will, that the keenest enjoyment of automobiling is found. Delightful as it is to be driven with the speed of the toboggan in a good car over a fine, smooth road, it is far more delightful to be at the wheel.

In hilly or mountainous sections, where "thank-you-ma'ams" are thrown across the road every few rods, ours are the only cars in which automobiling is practicable. I use the word "thank-you-ma'ams" for the want of a better expression—I mean elevations like a log half sunk into the roadbed and covered

over with earth. This construction in our rude and imperfect road-building is, I believe, intended to keep the road from washing away in heavy rainstorms. It doubtless serves the purpose, but for the automobile, and particularly the low-hanging automobile of Europe, it means serious trouble, if not actual destruction.

In a run with a friend from Newburgh to New York last summer, I had a striking example of the adaptability of our light domestic cars to our rough highways. To my very great surprise we covered the distance, about sixty-five miles, in slightly less time than I had ever taken in going over it in high-priced, high-power cars. I was thoroughly familiar with the road, as I have automobilized over it many times and in a variety of cars, including a sixty-horse Mercedes, which I owned in 1903, and which I found to be wholly impractical and unsatisfactory for use on our roads.

The secret of my friend's good record was that he kept his car running all the while at pretty nearly full speed. He did not stop for rough places. It was not necessary. The car was made for just such roads, and was at home on them. On the other hand, with high-priced, high-power cars, one always favors them by going slowly and carefully over rocks and hubbles and hummocks, and through mud and sand. On clean, level stretches the big car can fly, but with the restrictions of the law and the scarcity of good stretches of road, it cannot make up what the little car gains on it on the great preponderance of bad stretches.

THE BEST MACHINE FOR TOURING.

Another important advantage with the small car, in addition to the fact that it actually needs no chauffeur, is that in wear and tear, and in the use of gasoline and oils, the expense is minimized. It is probably less than one-half that of a forty-horse automobile. And in speaking of small cars, I am not going back to the period of seven and ten and twelve horse-power cars. I mean cars of from eighteen to twenty-five horse-power. Nearly three years ago I made the statement in MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE that a

twenty-five horse-power automobile was the ideal machine for general touring. At that time I did not know so much about automobiling as I do now, but the experience I had had convinced me that this was a practical, economical, and yet sufficiently powerful car for any purpose.

What I said then, based on two or three years' of experience and a good deal of theory, I say now as a matter of absolute certainty. A twenty-five horse-power car is strong enough, if not overweighted by an excessively heavy body, to climb up the side of a house. It can travel as fast as any one could reasonably wish to go, and much faster than the law allows, and it is safer, more easily handled, and more satisfactory in every sense. I have had automobiles ranging all the way from five horse-power to sixty, including two forties, and the machine that has given me most satisfaction is a light car that makes up to about twenty-five or possibly twenty-eight horse-power. It is alike a good short distance and good long distance car—a car that tackles a hill with the will and the nerve of a bulldog, and when gentleness is required is as gentle as a lamb.

OUR URGENT NEED OF GOOD ROADS.

In one respect the automobile is doing more for us than it is for France. It is giving us good roads—not, of course, directly giving them to us, but it is the greatest force working for them that has ever taken shape. Every one who tastes the pleasures of automobiling at once becomes an uncompromising advocate of good roads.

France had her good roads before the advent of the automobile, and because of her good roads receives in the aggregate, through the automobile, a tremendous annual income for her people.

Much as this means to our sister republic, however, I am certain that America is being benefited even more, vastly more, through the influence of the automobile. While we are not yet drawing foreigners to our shores to spend their holidays, as France is, we are nevertheless marvelously increasing the worth of our enormous acreage throughout the length and breadth of the land, by the

good roads we are building and those scheduled to be built.

Give us fine, broad macadam roads everywhere, and our farm lands and the suburbs of cities and villages, stretching out even to a great distance, will bound in values. Good roads eliminate distance and make neighbors of us all. So do automobiles, like railways, the telegraph and telephone, eliminate distance. Combined, they enlarge the scope of the city by a hundred miles, giving us city comforts and conveniences with the pure air and sunlight and space and freedom of the country.

THE GRADUAL PASSING OF PREJUDICE.

The automobile has arrived. It has met the bitterest prejudices and the most deadly scoffing, and come up against stubborn and narrow laws, but in spite of these it has been developed and perfected and has triumphed. Already it has been absorbed into our civilization, even as the trolley, the electric light, and every other luxury that so rapidly crystallizes into a necessity.

With the recognition that the automobile has come to stay, prejudice generally is giving way to toleration and to reason. It is no longer war between the motor-car and the horse. Harmony between them is the keynote of the new order of things. It is getting to be felt, too, that after all there are some pretty decent and really thoughtful, humane men among automobilists. And this feeling helps, helps very much. Such a feeling, with a better understanding of the automobile, means better and more rational laws, more elastic laws, legislation that will suit *the motor-car*—not the kind that is based on the performance of the horse. It were well nigh as sensible to make railway laws to conform to the scope of the horse as to hold the automobile down to the hard and fast limits allowed that ancient and erratic quadruped.

As an automobilist myself, and one who is a strong advocate of motoring, both for health and pleasure, I am nevertheless unalterably opposed to the enactment of any laws that would work to the advantage of the automobilist and to the disadvantage of the public. The public should be considered first always, and

then be fair and rational with the automobilist.

For example, if an automobile going at the rate of twenty miles an hour can be stopped in half the distance it would require to stop a horse traveling eight miles an hour, isn't the automobile clearly less dangerous to the public, even though moving at the greater speed, than the horse is at the lesser? If this is so, why should the horse be accepted as the standard of measurement of the speed of the automobile in and about cities and villages?

It were foolish to assume that the automobile by nature and temperament and habits is a thing to endear itself to the non-automobiling public. It has such decided mannerisms, and is withal so strenuous in action, that it strikes a jarring note with the American citizen. Its impudent air of superiority as it dashes by one on the road, its insolent toot of the horn, commanding the right of way, and the blinding, stifling cloud of dust that it leaves behind it, are undeniably antagonistic to the ideas and viewpoints to which we have been accustomed. Whatever laws and regulations will tend to bring the motor-car and the interests and rights of the general public into the greatest harmony will, I am sure, meet with approval from the manufacturers of automobiles and all true lovers of automobiling.

TO REMEDY THE DUST NUISANCE.

It is certain that the dust nuisance is one of the very worst and most objectionable phases of motoring to all the people in the country. It is not only objectionable to non-automobilists, but to automobilists themselves. It has often been urged that the automobile should have special roads, and should be ruled off the public highways. Do this, and it ceases to be anything except a high-speed pleasure machine—a sort of horizontal toboggan, and as such it would soon dwindle into a very insignificant place among the inventions that have contributed so wonderfully to our present-day civilization, our present-day scope of living and doing and enjoying.

To make the automobile subservient to existing conditions, to develop it so that danger from its use will be mini-

mized, and that the dust nuisance will be largely done away with, is the result we must strive for and must attain. And whatever will help to bring this about should enlist the thought and the best efforts of automobile manufacturers and our lawmakers. I have done a good deal of thinking at odd times along this line, with the following result:

A PRACTICAL SUGGESTION.

Why not limit the power of automobiles that have the privilege of the public roads, and in addition elevate their bodies to say twelve, fifteen, or eighteen inches from the ground? With the machine of smaller power, danger is greatly decreased, and with the high car the dust nuisance would be very much less. It is the car of great power, with low-hanging body, that tears up the surface of the road and sends it flying in dense clouds of dust over everything and everybody.

The low-hanging car is necessary only to great speed. It does not capsize so easily at corners and on curves. But is the public interested in fast automobilizing on the general highways, and should it be subjected to such inconvenience and danger? That well-elevated cars could have ample safety with thoughtful and intelligent handling there can be no doubt.

I am inclined to predict that the time will come when the low-hanging car of to-day will be ruled off the public roads and relegated to the race-track. I am inclined to predict, too, that there must sooner or later be a limit placed on the power of automobiles for use on the highways. If not, where shall we stop—at sixty, ninety, a hundred and twenty horse-power, or even more? It seems to me that twenty-five horse-power for a light body, a light machine throughout, is pretty close to a good standard of measurement. Heavy bodies could still

be increased in horse-power proportionately to their weight.

THE NEED OF STATE INSPECTION.

One thing more in connection with lawmaking for the automobile. It is important—tremendously important—that the State should have inspectors of automobiles, whose duty it should be to see that all motor-cars are in safe mechanical condition—that they are amply equipped with brakes, and that these brakes are in perfect order. The most important thing about an automobile—more important even than the engine or anything else—is the brake. On this depend the lives and the safety both of those in the car and of the public.

An automobile should be equipped with sufficient brake-power to make certain, at all times and under all conditions, that the car could be stopped almost instantly. Two brakes are not enough. Four are not too many, and half a dozen of different kinds and methods of application would be better yet. A relay of brakes is always necessary, as it may happen at any time that a single brake, or even two, would refuse to work. Oil renders them useless for the time, and too frequently cars go out with brakes that are worn, or even broken. State inspectors, serious, honest, intelligent men, would save many human lives every year and show a tremendous reduction in the number of accidents.

The framing of laws that regulate and tend to prevent danger is quite as important to the public as are those hard and fast statutes that penalize the automobilist and drag him off to jail if he happens to run his car a bit faster than the law permits. IT WOULD BE WELL IF OUR LAWMAKERS WOULD FIRST LEARN WHAT AN AUTOMOBILE CAN DO AND OUGHT TO DO, BEFORE SAYING WHAT IT SHALL DO AND WHAT IT SHALL NOT DO.

THE MIDNIGHT LIMITED.

SHE thunders by with splendid speed—
An avalanche of fire and steel,
Whose tempest strokes of whirling wheel
Beat like the hoofs of Neptune's steed;
Cleaving the dark in mighty flight,
A raging monster, driving fast,
A harnessed earthquake reeling past,
Through the long reach of murky night!

C. F. Finley.

THE PRISONER OF THE VATICAN.

BY THE REV. JOHN TALBOT SMITH.

A PREDICTION THAT POPE PIUS X WILL END THE STRANGE DEAD-LOCK OF CHURCH AND STATE IN ITALY, WHICH FOR THIRTY-FIVE YEARS HAS IMPRISONED THE PONTIFF IN HIS ROMAN PALACE.

THE diplomatic position created in September, 1870, by the entrance of King Victor Emmanuel into Rome and the consequent ending of the Pope's temporal kingdom, is hardly appreciated by the American temperament. The fact itself is plain enough. A large proportion of Italians desired the unity of the little states in their peninsula under one ruler, and freedom from the domination of Austria and other outsiders. They achieved their designs, with the exception of the papal dominion, which remained under the protection of Napoleon III until the Franco-Prussian war. Most Italians would have preferred that Rome should remain in the hands of the Pope, out of respect for his position as head of the church, and with proper deference to their brethren in religion throughout the world; but the revolutionary element in the national movement refused to make Rome an exception, and Victor Emmanuel, much against his will, was forced to take possession of the ancient capital as soon as the French troops vacated it in 1870.

The king was excommunicated for his invasion; the Pope shut himself up in the Vatican, refusing to discuss terms of surrender; the Italian parliament voted him an annual income in return for his lost territories, and made the Vatican neutral soil, so that ambassadors could come and go freely. The annual income was declined. The two powers, one at the Vatican palace, the other at the palace of the Quirinal, sat down vis-à-vis in rather unpleasant contiguity, and there they have remained for thirty-five years.

It would take a volume to tell why the Pope became the prisoner of the Vatican. Chiefly it was his protest

against spoliation and dethronement. He had no army, and among monarchs and cabinets no friends. He did not wish to leave Rome, because his departure would have left the ecclesiastical monuments of the Eternal City at the mercy of the Reds, as the revolutionary element was called. The monarchist party did not wish him to leave Rome, because a Pope who leaves Rome must inevitably return, after exciting the faithful by his exit and his reentrance. Moreover, the Italians would have considered his departure a piece of persecution; their loyalty to the king would have weakened in consequence, and the monarchy would have been at the mercy of the revolution.

The cabinets of Europe found the situation, if difficult, quite bearable, and refused to consider any other. The problems that might arise if the Pope left Rome seemed many and insuperable. Even if a place could be found for him, some anarchist bomb or knife might destroy him, and thus rouse the Catholic millions to uncontrollable fury.

By the year 1890 the situation could be expressed in this way—Europe would not consent to the Pope's exile; the King of Italy, while unable to compromise, earnestly desired the pontiff's presence as a balance against the revolution; and the Pope could neither disregard the wishes of Europe nor find a *modus vivendi* with the king. In other words, the imprisonment of the Vatican had become a diplomatic *cul-de-sac*; no one could get out and no one could get in.

ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM.

The solution of the difficulty seemed to rest with the Pope, whose diplomatic ability had become well known. Whether