

CYCLING AND MOTOR NOTES.

The remarkable growth in the use of the taxi-cab in London is shown by the following figures published. In 1903 there were registered in London 11,404 horse drawn cabs and 1 motor cab; in 1904 the figures were 11,057 cabs and 2 motor cabs; in 1905, 10,931 cabs and 19 motor cabs; in 1906, 10,492 cabs and 96 taxi-cabs; in 1907, 9,818 horse drawn cabs and 723 taxi-cabs; whilst in 1908, there were 8,475 cabs (3,000 less than in 1903) and 2,805 taxi-cabs.

Of the two interstate road routes, Melbourne to Sydney and Melbourne to Adelaide, there is little difference in the actual mileage, but a wide difference in the nature of the country to be covered. After the recent grand drive of Messrs. Bertie Barr-Smith and Murray Aunger across from Melbourne to Adelaide in 22 hrs. 24 mins. different expressions of opinion were voiced as to which was the better performance, Messrs. Smith and Aunger's, or Messrs. H. B. James and C. B. Kellow Melbourne to Sydney drive of 25 hours 40 min. After his recent drive across from Adelaide to Melbourne, Mr. James states that, considering the difficulties of the two routes, he is of the opinion that Mr. Barr-Smith's performance is the most meritorious of the two. On the Sydney route there are certainly less good roads, but the bad tracks are of a known quality, and a car can be driven to a time schedule. On the Adelaide route there are two bad sections, the Strathdownie sand stretch and the Coorong, that make this trip a matter of considerable uncertainty; you might get across without trouble, and, again, you might lose hours getting out of a sand-drift or loose patch. "Only those who have motored over the sections mentioned," says Mr. James, "can realise the wonderful performance recorded by Messrs. Smith and Aunger, and the man who beats it will want everything in his favour and a lot of luck."

Messrs. F. H. Forde and R. White, with their respective parties, have just returned from a ten days' motor-tour of the Waikato district, extending to Okoroire. Bad roads constituted the chief grievance.

The cycle record, Wellington to Palmerston North, was broken by Mr. F. Birtles on Tuesday. Mr. Birtles started from Wellington at 8.30 a.m., and reached Palmerston at 2.45 p.m., the journey thus occupying six and a-quarter hours, fifteen minutes less than the previous record for the distance.

The ninety-mile cycle road from Hamilton to Auckland will be decided on Saturday. The race is being run under the auspices of the Eden Cycle Club, and valuable prizes will be given to the successful riders. The following handicaps have been declared by Mr. G. Hely, handicapper:—H. Flewellyn and A. Flewellyn, scratch; W. W. Scott, 5m.; D. Scott, 12m.; M. Scott, 15m.; T. Benyon and N. Wadman, 22m.; B. Maberley, G. Howard, and V. R. Scott, 25m.; J. Lynch, W. Wickstead, and G. Herring, 35m.; S. Kitchen and A. Twidle, 40m.; T. Sullivan, M. Brennan, and A. Viall, 60m.; A. Stewart, withheld. The race will finish at the Tivoli Theatre, Newton.

The Australian cyclist, Clark, and the Americans, MacFarland and Nat Butler, got badly beaten at the Paris Velodrome d'Hiver recently, Butler being defeated by the French rider Parent in a 60 kilometre paced race, won in 44m 56 2-5s.; MacFarland going under to Marcel Berthet in an unpaced match; and MacFarland, partnered by Clark, sustaining defeat in the Prix des Etats-Unis from Dupre and Heller.

It was estimated that at the end of 1908 there were fully 150,000 motor vehicles in use in the United States, while another estimate places the production of the current year at 75,000 new cars. The expansion of the motor industry in America during the past two years is stated to have been enormous.

A published list of the injuries received by the police of the metropolis (London) in the execution of their duty shows that during the year 1907 the following, amongst others, have been sustained:—By horses falling, 32; thrown by horses, 17; by stopping runaway horses, 49; assisting with fallen or restive horses, 18; by ve-

hicles when regulating traffic, etc., 27; kicked by horses, 15; trodden upon by horses, 18; knocked down by horses, 3. In the whole analysis there is not a single case mentioned of injury caused to a police constable by a motor-car, which, in view of the large amount of motor traffic in London at the present time is, to say the least of it, good evidence of the safety of that kind of traffic.

The great American race meeting on the Ormond-Daytona (Florida) beach this year was to have opened on the 23rd inst., and will close on the 26th. The programme includes a race open to cars that took part in the Vanderbilt Cup, and a competition for Sir Thomas Dewar's £400 trophy, the winner of which must attain a speed of 120 miles an hour, or two miles a minute.

THE GREAT RELAY RIDE.

Messrs. G. R. Broadbent, S. H. Day and H. B. James, three well-known Melbourne motorists, drove across from Adelaide to Melbourne last week for the purpose of making arrangements in connection with the forthcoming Dunlop Military Despatch Relay Cycle Ride, which is to be held from Adelaide to Sydney at Easter time. All along the route the keenest of interest is taken in the forthcoming ride, in fact, no cycle event yet held in the Commonwealth has commanded such public attention. All told some 28 relay stages were allotted, changing boards erected, etc. The severest portions of route are the sections over the Coorong, between Meningie and Kingston, and the bad sand stretches from the Adelaide border up to within ten miles of Casterton on the Victorian side. The Coorong was crossed during last week's very hot spell of weather, the heat being intense crossing the white sands and salt-crusted, dried-up lagoons. What with loose sand drifts, some of them ranging from two to ten feet deep, across the tracks, the motorists named had a trying time crossing the dreaded Coorong, strips of coconut matting being requisitioned before the soft fine sand could be negotiated. At one point nine miles of smooth pipe-clay ran along the edge of a lagoon, affording probably the finest speed track in Australasia. This stretch was some three hundred yards wide, and would carry any speed. All told, this country, whilst difficult for motorists, affords a better track for cyclists, and Messrs. Pfundt and McKinnon, who carry the despatch over this section (some 38 miles) will, with decent weather conditions, probably cover this part of the route in 3½ hours. On the Victorian side, near Strathdownie, some very trying coun-

try to cyclists will have to be crossed, sand and bracken fern, which will miles of track being nothing but loose probably necessitate considerable walking. After inspecting this half of the route, the Dunlop Company's representative anticipates that, with fair weather conditions, the 583 miles from Adelaide to Melbourne will be covered in about 38 hours. The present intention is for the despatch to be handed over by Lieutenant Colonel J. H. Lee Commandant of the South Australian military forces, at 10 p.m. on Good Friday eve at the Adelaide G.P.O., so that the despatch will probably reach Melbourne between eleven and noon on Easter Saturday.

BOXING.

JACK JOHNSON.

"Tad," the "New York Evening Journal's" caricaturist, opened up a story of Jack Johnson's life, told by himself, as follows:—

(By LIL' ARTHA JOHNSON.)

CHAPTER I.

I was the original tar baby. All others are imitations. I was born in Galveston, Texas, a long time before Bryan began to run for President.

I was never a mussy boy. My sister used to fight all my battles. She would mingle with anyone at the drop of the hat, and never run second. She beat everyone in Texas, and one day started for me. I left home.

I joined "The Uncle Tom's Cabin" show, and played the part of a bloodhound for three years.

I was a good bloodhound, too. The El Paso "Gazette," in speaking of the show, said that the bloodhounds were all right, but they had poor support.

I was raised from the part of the bloodhound to that of the child which Eliza carries over the frozen water.

After playing the stage for a while I met all-comers in pie-eating contests, and always held my own.

I was very thin when a child, and often had to stand twice in the same place in order to make a shadow. For a while I was hard up and out of work, but finally succeeded in getting a job down at the gasworks going through the pipes.

JEFFRIES V. JOHNSON.

IS A MATCH LIKELY?

In a very interesting article on this subject, the well-known Sydney boxing authority, "The Amateur," says: Offers of fabulous purses have been

made, as much as £10,000 or £15,000 to one of the principals in the match, whether he won or lost. What about the other party to the show? Johnson, as champion, must be placed on at least the same footing, which means a total of £20,000 or £30,000 in prize-money alone. It would be an absolute impossibility to make the speculation profitable, in Australia especially, through a match that would arouse nothing like the interest the Burns-Johnson affair excited, for Burns had just beaten out two champion, and Johnson had visited us some time before and easily accounted for the best pitted against him. Further, Jeffries has been out of the game for five years, during which period he has lived an easy life and grown very gross. Now, who will dare to say that such a man can, at 34 years of age, shunt his great weight of "too, too solid flesh," and be benefited, particularly as a saloon, where, for the sake of business, he had to be "at home" as much as possible, occupied the bulk of his time. It was Jeffries that drew the custom, not the brands of liquor he kept, or the way they were served up.

Jeffries has said, and repeated over and over, that he has no intention of facing the music again—could not, in fact, be dragged into the ring with wild horses.

Think you, reader, that even if the bringing off of a Jeffries-Johnson battle in Australia were possible, and the announced purses enticed the pair, also that any Government the Continent over would allow the match to occur, we could outbid America, where Jeffries is absolutely idolised, and where he, even if no more than Australia was prepared to give could be obtained, would naturally prefer to fight. Already some big syndicate up about Klondyke, in the Yukon territory, has announced their willingness to hang up 100,000 dollars, and others are only awaiting some definite pronouncement from the big fellow before "raising" that sum considerably.

Why would Jeffries fight again, seeing that he dropped out of the game directly Johnson menaced the position, vowed he could never be lured into meeting a coloured man, because of America's hatred of the negro race, and yet Jeffries had met three coloured men before, in the persons of Hank Griffin, Bob Armstrong, and Peter Jackson.

Presuming Jeffries did decide to fight again, and got into shape, could he really beat Johnson? I know many, especially in America, think the task might be easy for the white man, while others are of opinion that he would have exceeding difficulty in landing on the black. One thing is



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