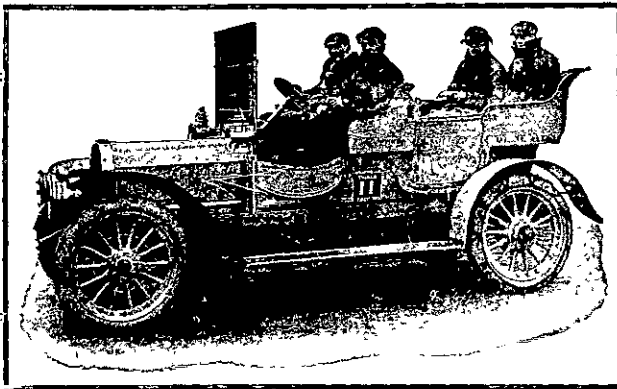


Motors



Motoring

Motors, Motorists, and Motor Matters.

Statistics continue to show that the accidents caused by the carelessness of drivers of motor vehicles are, in fact, very few indeed. During the three months ending February fifty persons were killed by motors in Great Britain, of whom thirty-three were killed by motor-cars, eight by motor-omnibuses, three by motor-lorries, and one each by traction engines and motor fire engines. Of the persons killed, six were motorists concerned. In thirty-five cases the verdict was accidental death, and in twenty-three of these cases the drivers were completely exonerated. Three drivers were committed for trial on charges of manslaughter, and two were cautioned by juries. In short, blame was only attached to drivers in five cases in three months.

* * *

These are very remarkable figures. It must be remembered that in Great Britain (especially since the introduction of taxicabs and motor omnibuses) the number of motor vehicles in use is enormous, and the pressure of traffic is very great. And it must further be borne in mind that there is a strong prejudice against motorists in the minds of magistrates, coroners, and the average juryman. There is no hope for escape for the driver to whom blame can properly attach. In the light of these considerations, it becomes plain that motors are about the safest vehicles on the road. Unfortunately, the returns of accidents and deaths caused by vehicles of the older type are not available. If they were, the contrast between those returns and the returns affecting motors would almost certainly be startling. One can scarcely spend a day in any English town of any size without hearing of a trap accident of some sort. The horse, indeed, is a very curious beast. You never know what he's going to do, and when he loses his nerve he most always hurts or smashes someone. The moral of it all is: If you want to be safe, ride in a motor-car.

* * *

This stupid prejudice against motoring is a thing that all intelligent motorists should set their faces against. In Ireland, County Waterford attempted to boycott motorists, and the Irish Automobile Club has very effectively boycotted County Waterford. So much the worse for the county. Motorists in Great Britain and Ireland have proved a remarkable source of revenue to the county towns and remoter villages. They have infused life and movement into hundreds of places that were apparently dead. In the case of many people, they have brought contentment and ease in place of poverty and care. It is because they

have tended to decrease the importance of Bumble that Bumble is so inveterate a hater of the car. It is a good thing that motorists are at last waking up to the possibilities of retaliation. Once the anti-motorists' pockets are touched they will get sense.

* * *

The supremacy of the American machine in the American market is shown by the fact that only 1416 cars of European manufacture were imported at New York last year. These included—Durracq, 418 (all but six motor-cabs); Renault, 266; Fiat, 181; Mercedes, 94; Panhard, 72; Delahaye, 65 (all but three motor-cabs); Isotta-Franschini, 40; Lancia, 27; Itala, 25; Hotchkiss, 22; Lorraine-Dietrich, 20. The only British cars imported were five Napier, three Humbers, two Daimlers, and one each Argyll and Rolls-Royce. As the users of powerful cars in the States are generally indifferent to cost, the figures say much for American confidence in American machines.

* * *

The Government of Tasmania has issued regulations concerning motor cars. In most countries the automobile stands as a symbol of modern progress and the spread of new ideas; but in Tasmania it still seems somewhat of an anachronism. Tasmania is in some ways the slowest country in the world. A considerable number of years ago, in Hobart, a man attempted to introduce hansom cabs. His speculation failed. No one would ride in the hansoms. They were not considered "respectable." In Hobart they still have cess-pits and cobblestone gutters here and there, and the general atmosphere is of 1850. In view of these things, the new regulations affecting motorists seem liberal. The identification-mark that drivers have to carry costs only 2s. 6d. annually. A silencer must be carried to reduce the noise of the engines at least 40 per cent. In certain main streets of Hobart the speed must not exceed six miles an hour (no man careful of his machine and reputation would want to exceed it), in other streets, ten miles an hour. In other towns and villages the speed must not exceed six miles an hour for cars and eight miles for motor cycles. On country roads the speed limit is twenty-five miles, to be reduced to fifteen when approaching or passing another vehicle. As twenty-five miles an hour is at any time a tremendous speed in Tasmania, motorists cannot complain. The mail train which leaves Hobart nightly arrives at Launceston (130 miles distant) in eleven hours. To go to the suburb of Glenarchy and back by train (about five miles each way) you must have the best part of a day to spare. The Tasmanian Government is plainly breathing revolution.

The King of Spain (the unhappiness of whose English queen is much talked of just now) continues to take a keen interest in motoring and aviation. He drives his own huge cars all over the country at breakneck speed. He has developed an intense enthusiasm for aeroplanes. Through all his youth he was a cheerful youngster officially depressed. Now it is only the Queen who is depressed (repressed) would be a better word. The King is making up for lost time.

* * *

M. L. Thery, the most famous and successful of French racing automobilists, died the other day, comparatively young. His wonderful performance in the Brasier car in 1904 will be remembered. Securing the first place in the eliminating trials for the French Gordon Bennett team, he repeated his performance over the difficult German course, bringing his car to victory at an average speed of fifty-five and a half miles per hour. From that time onward his record had been remarkable. He died at the age of thirty.

* * *

New Zealand motorists have all experienced the annoyance of worn gear-wheels. On rough roads and steep grades, especially when one is not an expert mechanic, it is a difficulty that will always arise. Such worn wheels are almost insatiable in the matter of lubrication, and need to be well looked after, as they are subject to considerable friction, and any wear quickly shows itself in lost motion or backlash. It is better to be a trifle over-generous than too sparing, although no good can come of swamping in oil where it cannot lubricate anything.

* * *

Madame Sarah Bernhardt has become what is called in the jargon of the day an autophile. It came about rather strangely. The famous tragedian was playing at St. Etienne. After the performance, M. Rene Dumond drove her to Lyons (say 125 miles) in his 40-h.p. Lorraine-Dietrich, and at Lyons she caught the 2.40 a.m. train to Paris. This is travelling, and Madame's enthusiasm is easily understood. We shall be hearing of the performances of her own automobiles soon.

* * *

At the present moment there are over three hundred automobiles in constant use in the Hawaiian Islands. This gives New Zealand a big lead. If we had as many cars in proportion to population, the motor industry would flourish exceedingly. There are no harrassing restrictions in Hawaii, and no accidents worth mentioning.

* * *

There is notable in England just now a significant revival of interest in motor-cycling. The military authorities are pay-