

## By Unfrequented Roads.

### Rawal Pindi to Srinagar.

*When this interviewer was a newspaper colt in Calcutta, Mr. C. C. Larmour was a trusted officer of one of the big Indian banking corporations. Then, as the years slipped by, he became an enthusiastic motorist. He became familiar with the main roads and by-ways of the great country, the valleys and the hills. And fondness for the motor, backed by much experience in all sorts of climates in all sorts of roads, begat such familiarity with engines and cars that to-day Mr. Larmour is practicing as a motor engineer in Wellington. Of his many out-of-the-way tours in India, this is the brief story of one, told pretty much as he tells it.*

"Yes, I motored pretty well everywhere, at one time or another. India's an enthralling country to motor in, spite of drawbacks. Experiences? My dear chap, life in India is a long and continuous chain of experiences; you know that as well as I do. Touring experiences, you mean? Well, I've driven my car all over the Indian frontier, from Dera Ismail Khan to Peshawur, and right up to the Malakand. As far as motorists go, it is a region of unfrequented roads. You don't find repairing shops and garages at convenient intervals. A man has to take his risks on his own shoulders.

"I remember a trip I made a short time ago from Rawal Pindi to Srinagar. Car a 15 h.p. De Dion. I started at ten o'clock one morning towards the end of October, and reached Tret (3000 feet) at 12.30. Went right on, and reached Murree (7200 feet) at 3 p.m. Changed water three times going up. The first sixteen miles out from Pindi is a steady slow up-gradient. Then there are nine miles up and down through low hills. Then there is a fourteen miles straight climb to the 7000 feet level. I left Murree after an hour's stay, and free-wheeled to Kohala—twenty-six miles down hill to the 1500 feet level. On the run down I went into the back of a bullock-cart, with the result that the radiator began leaking. I got it repaired at a local tinsmith's. Bullock-carts are one of the standing nuisances of those rough roads. Despite their good intentions, they always seem to do the thing they shouldn't do, and the last thing you could reasonably expect of them. Still, I got into Kohala without serious casualties, and put in the night there.

"You have stayed in dak-bungalows. So have I. Why re-open these old wounds? The dak-bungalows on this trip were just about the same as one finds everywhere—populous with fleas and things, full of a haunting mustiness, devoid of the slightest suggestion of homely comfort. The usual things to eat—stringy fowls of most uncertain flavour, vegetables that are mysteries indeed, curries that are occasionally passable. But in a country where hotels are few and far between, one has every reason to be thankful for the dak-bungalows.

"I set out from Kohala, at six o'clock next morning. From this point there is a steady incline right up the valley of the Jhelum. I reached Domel at eight o'clock and breakfasted there. At nine o'clock I ran through Gurhi, and at 10.30 I ran into a wash of rain. At two in the afternoon, three miles short of Chikoti, I found that

a bridge I was to cross had disappeared. The car was carried across slung on poles by forty coolies, and at six o'clock I got into Uri. It was still raining—the sort of rain that seems to penetrate to one's bone, but not especially uncomfortable in that temperature. I had another night in a dak-bungalow, and was on the road again at eight o'clock next morning. At ten I passed the Mohurra Electric Works, and at 11.30 I ran into Baramulla. I left there again at 12.30, and reached Srinagar at two.

"That is a bald statement of route. The rest you must fill in for yourself—the stupendous loveliness of the typical Himalayan scenery, the odour of the pines and deodars, the unspeakable badness of the roads, and all that. And you can put in what you please concerning what you remember of the quaint, compelling picturesqueness of Srinagar. The capital of Kashmir is very beautiful, and it has been beautifully described, times out of number. The Maharaja of Kashmir and Jammu is Sir Pertab Singh, K.C.S.I. His brother is General Raja Sir Amar Singh, Commander-in-Chief of the Kashmir army. Very charming men, both of them. The Maharaja owns a Sunbeam car. The Maharaja is in many respects an enviable person. He has a delightful estate, and a delicious capital in the valley of the Jhelum river—a wonderful valley seventy miles long by forty broad, with an average elevation of 4,000 feet. The climate is superb. You have Tom Moore's solemn assurance that one Kashmiri woman was marvellously beautiful, although you would never have guessed it for yourself. There is any quantity of game—good shooting everywhere—barasingh (the Kashmir stag), markhaw, ovis ammon, ovis poli, all sorts of animals. During the season, too, the Mahsir fishing is as good as any in India. The Jhelum is a huge tumultuous torrent most of the time. It brings down sleepers for the railway from the enormous forests up above. The road through from Kohala (135 miles) follows the valley of the Jhelum. It is much frequented by tongas, bullock-carts, and ekkas—all very picturesque and quite in the picture, but all a dreadful nuisance to the motorist. You have ridden in an ekka? Then you, too, know the anguish of motion. A ride on camelback is absolute repose by comparison. The road is dangerous enough in many places, quite apart from the vehicular obstructions. There are many hairpin-bends in it; it is sometimes very narrow, and often villainously bad; the ruts at times are veritable chasms.

"My car went through bravely. I had no trouble of any sort. The only part that had to be adjusted right through was the contact-breaker, and the water had to be changed frequently and occasional stoppages made to allow it to cool down. The secret of enjoyable touring is to tour in a car that you can trust.

"Yes, it's a great country for motoring, and it will be better. As the number of tourists increases, the roads, where they are bad, will be improved. There is plenty of labour, and the Government of India is a Government of keen intelligence. The more people visit India, the better will India be understood, and the better India is understood the better it will be for all concerned. There are grave problems to be faced out there, and when ignorance and prejudice operate in other parts of the Empire, new hindrances are put in the way of the settlement of those problems."

Mr. C. C. Larmour has recently established himself in Wellington as a practical motor engineer and specialist, after many years of experience in India and Europe. Mr. Larmour will gladly give motorists the benefit of his unbiased opinion on all matters concerning motors, tyres, etc. He does not represent any particular maker of cars, and makes repairs a speciality, which he attends to personally at the residence of car owners. Intending purchasers of cars should call on, or correspond with, Mr. Larmour at 11 Norwich Chambers, opposite the Bank of New Zealand.

### Death of Mr. Singer, the Cycle King.

Mr. Singer, who died of apoplexy on January 4th last, had a remarkable career. He started as a mechanic in the works of Penn and Co., of Lewisham, spent the late sixties in the sewing machine department of the Manchester Company, and started in the early eighties as a cycle maker on his own account. Being one of a very few in the business at the time, and having very inventive brains and much enterprise, he soon made a fortune. About the middle eighties he got into the hands of the notorious Hooley, who floated the business into a company on a capital of £600,000 and debentures £200,000. The rush for shares was phenomenal, but the subsequent profits were not. At the outset of his career as a manufacturer Mr. Singer owed a great deal to his name, the world having got it into his head that he was the Singer of the sewing machine celebrity, and the mistake proved worth a good deal to him financially and from the advertisement point of view. The world only learnt the truth at Mr. Singer's Jubilee celebration in 1907, when he assembled a vast number of friends at the Hotel Metropole in London. There were toasts and reminiscences as usual on such occasions, and the truth about the name came out then. In later years Mr. Singer had a distinguished connection with the motor industry. His magnificent mansion in the suburbs of Coventry has long been the talk of the Midlands, where gorgeous stories are current of the hospitalities of the Cycle King, Alderman, and generous subscriber to the funds of the Liberal Party. Among the guests who have there been entertained royally was Lord Morley, for whom the late Mr. Singer had much veneration.

There is a movement afoot in England to help deserving girls into the motor-driving business. As to the ability of girls to drive there can be no doubt whatever, since many ladies are expert drivers. But the coming of the chauffeuse—if she is to come—opens a fertile field for conjecture.

### La Motosacoche.

We understand that this machine is growing in favour, as indeed it deserves, on account of its good qualities, which are lightness (it weighs only 70lbs., speed (thirty miles an hour at a cost of one and threepence), climbing power (up to 1 in 8 without assistance), and great simplicity. It is, besides, free from jerkiness, running smoothly always, and can be handled with ease by persons of medium physique. The cost of one we know of has been worked out for running upkeep and depreciation (10 per cent.) to 2s 5½d. for 100 miles. One Wellington firm estimates that its traveller gets through a week's work in two days with one machine, and another has six of them in use.