

Mansfield Milburg Francisco

The Automobilst Abroad



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The Automobilst Abroad

Part I

General Information – The Grand Tour

Chapter I

An Appreciation of the Automobile

We have progressed appreciably beyond the days of the old horseless carriage, which, it will be remembered, retained even the dashboard.

To-day the modern automobile somewhat resembles, in its outlines, across between a decapod locomotive and a steam fire-engine, or at least something concerning the artistic appearance of which the layman has very grave doubts.

The control of a restive horse, a cranky boat, or even a trolley-car on rails is difficult enough for the inexperienced, and there are many who would quail before making the attempt; but to the novice in charge of an automobile, some serious damage is likely enough to occur within an incredibly short space of time, particularly if he does not take into account the tremendous force and power which he controls merely by the moving of a tiny lever, or by the depressing of a pedal.

Any one interested in automobiles should know something of the literature of the subject, which, during the last decade, has already become formidable.

In English the literature of the automobile begins with Mr. Worby Beaumont's Cantor Lectures (1895), and the pamphlet by Mr. R. Jenkins on "Power Locomotion on the Highways," published in 1896.

In the library of the Patent Office in London the literature of motor road vehicles already fills many shelves. The catalogue is interesting as showing the early hopes that inventors had in connection with steam as a motive power for light road vehicles, and will be of value to all who are interested in the history of the movement or the progress made in motor-car design.

In France the Bibliothèque of the Touring Club de France contains a hundred entries under the caption "Automobiles," besides complete files of eleven leading journals devoted to that industry. With these two sources of information at hand, and aided by the records of the Automobile Club de France and the Automobile Club of Great Britain and Ireland, the present-day historian of the automobile will find the subject well within his grasp.

There are those who doubt the utility of the automobile, as there have been scoffers at most new things under the sun; and there have been critics who have derided it for its "seven deadly sins," as there have been others who have praised its "Christian graces." The parodist who wrote the following newspaper quatrain was no enemy of the automobile in spite of his cynicism.

"A look of anguish underneath the car,
Another start; a squeak, a grunt, a jar!
The Aspiration pipe is working loose!
The vapour can't get out! And there you are!"

"Strange is it not, that of the myriads who
Have Empty Tanks and know not what to do,

Not one will tell of it when he Returns.
As for Ourselves, why, we deny it, too."

The one perfectly happy man in an automobile is he who drives, steers, or "runs the thing," even though he be merely the hired chauffeur. For proof of this one has only to note how readily others volunteer to "spell him a bit," as the saying goes. Change of scene and the exhilaration of a swift rush through space are all very well for friends in the *tonneau*, but for real "pleasure" one must be the driver. Not even the manifold responsibilities of the post will mar one's enjoyment, and there is always a supreme satisfaction in keeping one's engine running smoothly.

"Nothing to watch but the road," is the general motto for the automobile manufacturer, but the enthusiastic automobilist goes farther, and, for his motto, takes "stick to your post," and, in case of danger, as one has put it, "pull everything you see, and put your foot on everything else."

The vocabulary of the automobile has produced an entirely new "jargon," which is Greek to the multitude, but, oh, so expressive and full of meaning to the initiated.

An automobile is masculine, or feminine, as one likes to think of it, for it has many of the vagaries of both sexes. The French Academy has finally come to the fore and declared the word to be masculine, and so, taking our clue once more from the French (as we have in most things in the automobile world), we must call it *him*, and speak of it as *he*, instead of *her*, or *she*.

That other much overworked word in automobilism, *chauffeur*, should be placed once for all. The driver of an automobile is not really a *chauffeur*, neither is he who minds and cares for the engine; he is a *mécanicien* and nothing else – in France and elsewhere. We needed a word for the individual who busies himself with, or drives an automobile, and so we have adapted the word *chauffeur*. Purists may cavil, but nevertheless the word is better than *driver*, or *motor-man* (which is the quintessence of snobbery), or *conductor*.

The word, *chauffeur*, the Paris *Figaro* tells us, was known long before the advent of automobiles or locomotives. History tells that about the year 1795, men strangely accoutred, their faces covered with soot and their eyes carefully disguised, entered, by night, farms and lonely habitations and committed all sorts of depredations. They garroted their victims, or dragged them before a great fire where they burned the soles of their feet, and demanded information as to the whereabouts of their money and jewels. Hence they were called *chauffeurs*, a name which frightened our grandfathers as much as the scorching *chauffeur* to-day frightens our grandchildren.

A motor-car is a fearsome thing, – when it goes, it goes; and when it doesn't, something, or many things, are wrong. A few years ago this uncertainty was to be expected, for, though the makers will not whisper it in Gath, we are only just getting out of the bone-shaker age of automobiles.

Every one remembers what a weirdly ungraceful thing was the first safety bicycle, and so was the gaudy painted-up early locomotive – and they are so yet on certain English lines where their early Victorian engines are like Kipling's ocean tramp, merely "puttied up with paint." So with the early automobiles, they jarred and jerked and stopped – that is, under all but exceptional conditions. Occasionally they did wonderful things, – they always did, in fact, when one took the word of their owners; but now they really do acquit themselves with credit, and so the public, little by little, is beginning to believe in them, even though the millennium has not arrived when every home possesses its own runabout.

All this proves that we are "getting there" by degrees, and meantime everybody that has to do with motor-cars has learned a great deal, generally at somebody else's expense.

To-day every one "notes," or wants to, and likewise a knowledge of many things mechanical, which had heretofore been between closed covers, is in the daily litany of many who had previously never known a clutch from a cam-shaft, or a sparking plug from a fly-wheel.

Most motor enthusiasts read all the important journals devoted to the game. The old-stager reads them for their hints and suggestions, – though these are bewildering in their multiplicity and

their contradictions, – and the ladies of the household look at them for the sake of their pretty pictures of scenery and ladies and veils and furry garments pertaining to the sport.

Catalogues are another bane of the motorist's life. He may have just become possessed of the latest thing in a Mercédès (and paid an enhanced price for an early delivery), yet upon seeing some new make of car advertised, he will immediately send for a catalogue and prospectus, and make the most absurd inquiries as to what said car will or will not do.

Since the pleasures of motoring have found their champions in Kipling, Maeterlinck, and the late W. E. Henley, the delectable amusement has, besides entering the daily life of most of us, generously permeated literature – real literature as distinct from recent popular fiction; "The Lighting Conductor" and "The Princess Passes," by Mrs. Williamson, and more lately, "The Motor Pirate," by Mr. Paternoster. "A Motor Car Divorce" is the suggestive title of another work, – presumably fiction, – and one knows not where it may end, since "The Happy Motorist," a series of essays, is already announced.

A Drury Lane melodrama of a season or two ago gave us a "*thrillin' hair-bre'dth 'scape*," wherein an automobile plunged precipitately – with an all too-true realism, the first night – down a lath and canvas ravine, finally saving the heroine from the double-dyed villain who followed so closely in her wake.

The last entry into other spheres was during the autumn just past, when Paris's luxurious opera-house was given over to the fantastic revels of the ballet in an attempt to typify the *apotheosis of the automobile*. This was rather a rash venture in prognostication, for it may be easy enough to "apotheosize" the horse, but to what idyllic heights the automobile is destined to ultimately reach no one really knows.

The average scoffer at things automobilistic is not very sincerely a scoffer at heart. It is mostly a case of "sour grapes," and he only waits the propitious combination of circumstances which shall permit him to become a possessor of a motor-car himself. This is not a very difficult procedure. It simply means that he must give up some other fad or fancy and take up with this last, which, be it here reiterated, is no *fad*.

The great point in favour of the automobile is its sociability. Once one was content to potter about with a solitary companion in a buggy, with a comfortable old horse who knew his route well by reason of many journeys. To-day the automobile has driven thoughts of solitude to the winds. Two in the tonneau, and another on the seat beside you in front – a well-assorted couple of couples – and one may make the most ideal trips imaginable.

Every one looks straight ahead, there is no uncomfortable twisting and turning as there is on a boat or a railway train, and each can talk to the others, or all can talk at once, which is more often the case. It is most enjoyable, plenty to see, exhilarating motion, jolly company, absolute independence, and a wide radius of action. What mode of travel can combine all these joys unless it be ballooning – of which the writer confesses he knows nothing?

On the road one must ever have a regard for what may happen, and roadside repairs, however necessary, are seldom more than makeshifts which enable one to arrive at his destination.

If you break the bolt which fastens your cardan-shaft or a link of your side-chains, you and your friends will have a chance to harden your muscles a bit pushing the machine to the next village, unless you choose to wait, on perhaps a lonely road, for a passing cart whose driver willing, for a price, to detach his tired horse to haul your dead weight of a ton and a half over a few miles of hill and dale. This is readily enough accomplished in France, where the peasant looks upon the procedure as a sort of allied industry to farming, but in parts of England, in Holland, and frequently in Italy, where the little mountain donkey is the chief means of transportation, it is more difficult.

The question of road speed proves nothing with regard to the worth of an individual automobile, except that the times do move, and we are learning daily more and more of the facility of getting about with a motor-car. A locomotive, or a marine engine, moves regularly without a stop for far greater

periods of time than does an automobile, but each and every time they finish a run they receive such an overhauling as seldom comes to an automobile.

In England the automobilist has had to suffer a great deal at the hands of ignorant and intolerant road builders and guardians. Police traps, on straight level stretches miles from any collection of dwellings, will not keep down speed so long as dangerous cobblestoned alleys, winding through suburban London towns, have no guardian to regulate the traffic or give the stranger a hint that he had best go slowly.

The milk and butchers' carts go on with their deadly work, but the police in England are too busy worrying the motorist to pay any attention.

Some county boroughs have applied a ten-mile speed limit, even though the great bulk of their area is open country; but twenty miles an hour for an automobile is far safer for the public than is most other traffic, regardless of the rate at which it moves.

Speed, so far as the bystander is concerned, is a very difficult thing to judge, and the automobilist seldom, if ever, gets fair treatment if he meets with the slightest accident.

Most people judge the speed of an automobile by the noise that it makes. This, up to within a few years, put most automobiles going at a slow speed at a great disadvantage, for the slower they went the noisier they were; but matters of design and control have changed this somewhat, and the public now protests because "a great death-dealing monster crept up silently behind – coming at a terrific rate." You cannot please every one, and you cannot educate a non-participating public all at once.

As for speed on the road, it is a variable thing, and a thing difficult to estimate correctly. Electric cars run at a speed of from ten to twenty-two miles an hour in England, even in the towns, and no one says them nay. Hansoms, on the Thames Embankment in London, do their regular fifteen miles an hour, but automobiles are still held down to ten.

The official timekeeper of the Automobile Club of Great Britain and Ireland took the following times (in 1905) in Piccadilly, one of the busiest, if not the most congested thoroughfare in London.

Holloway horse-drawn 'bus	11.30	miles per hour
Cyclist	15.85	" " "
Private trap	13.08	" " "
Private buggy	13.55	" " "
Private brougham	14.80	" " "

When one considers how difficult to control, particularly amid crowded traffic, a horse-drawn vehicle is, and how very easy it is to control an up-to-date automobile, one cannot but feel that a little more consideration should be shown the automobilist by those in authority.

The road obstructions, slow-going traffic which will not get out of one's way, carts left unattended and the like, make most of the real and fancied dangers which are laid to the door of the very mobile motor-car.

In Holland and Belgium dogs seem to be the chief road obstructions, or at least dangers, not always willingly perhaps, but still ever-present. In England it is mostly children.

In France not all the difficulties one meets with *en route* are willful obstructors of one's progress. In La Beauce the geese and ducks are prudent, in the Nivernais the oxen are placid, and in Provence the donkeys are philosophical; but in Brittany the horses and mules and their drivers take fright immediately they suspect the coming of an automobile, and in the Vendée the market-wagons, and those laden with the product of the vine, career madly at the extremities of exceedingly lusty examples of horse flesh to the pending disaster of every one who does not get out of the road.

Sheep and hens are everywhere that they ought not to be, and there seems no way of escaping them. One can but use all his ingenuity and slip through somehow. Dogs are bad enough and ought to be exterminated. They are the silliest beasts which one finds uncontrolled on the roadways. Children, of course, one defers to, but they are outrageously careless and very foolish at times, and in short are the greatest responsibility for the driver in the small towns of England and France. In France some

effort is being made in the schools to teach them something about a proper regard for automobile traffic, and with good results; but no one has heard of anything of the sort being attempted in England.

Chapter II

Travel Talk

Touring abroad is nothing new, but, as an amusement for the masses, it has reached gigantic proportions. The introduction of the railroad gave it its greatest impetus, and then came the bicycle and the automobile.

With the railway as the sole means of getting about one was more or less confined to the beaten track of travel in Continental Europe, but the automobile has changed all this.

To-day, the Cote d'Azur, from St. Raphael to Menton, as well as the strip of Norman coast-line around Trouville, in summer, is scarcely more than a boulevard where the automobile tourist strolls for an hour as he does in the Bois. The country lying back and between these two widely separated points is becoming known, and even modern taste prefers the idyllic countryside to a round of the same dizzy conventions that one gets in season at Paris, London, or New York.

France is the land *par excellence* for automobile touring, not only from its splendid roads, but from the wide diversity of its sights and scenes, and manners and customs, and, last but not least, its most excellent hotels strung along its highways and byways like pearls in a collarette.

This is not saying that travel by automobile is not delightful elsewhere; certainly it is equally so in many places along the Rhine, in Northern Italy, and in England, where the chief drawback is the really incompetent catering of the English country hotel-keeper to the demands of the traveller who would dine off of something more attractive than a cut from a cold joint of ham, and eggs washed down with stodgy, bitter beer.

The bibliography of travel books is long, and includes many famous names in literature. Marco Polo, Froissart, Mme. de Sévigné, Taine, Bayard Taylor, Willis, Stevenson, and Sterne, all had opportunities for observation and made the most of them. If they had lived in the days of the automobile they might have sung a song of speed which would have been the most melodious chord in the whole gamut.

A modern writer must be more modest, however. He can hardly hope to attract attention to himself or his work by describing the usual sights and scenes. The most he can do is to set down his method of travel, his approach, and his departure, and, for example, to tell those who may come after that the great double spires of Notre Dame de Chartres are a beacon by land for nearly twenty kilometers in any direction, as he approaches them by road across the great plain of La Beauce, the granary of France, rather than give a repetition of the well-worn guidebook facts concerning them.

Chartres is taken as an example because it is one of those "stock" sights, before mentioned, which any itinerary coming within the scope of the *grand tour* is bound to include.

Almost the same phenomenon is true of Antwerp's lacelike spire, the great Gothic wonder of Cologne and, to a lesser extent, that of Canterbury in England; thus the automobilist *en route* has his beacons and landmarks as has the sailor on the seas.

Man is an animal essentially mobile. He moves readily from place to place and is not tied down by anything but ways and means and, perhaps, confinement at laborious affairs. Even in the latter case he occasionally breaks away for a more or less extended period, and either goes fishing in Canada, shooting in Scotland, or automobiling in France, with perhaps a rush over a Swiss pass or two, and a dash around the Italian lakes, and back down the Rhine for a little tour in Great Britain.

This is as delightful a holiday as one could imagine, and the foreign tour – which has often been made merely as a succession of nights of travel in stuffy sleeping-cars or a round of overfeeding orgies at Parisian hotels and restaurants – has added charms of which the generation before the advent of automobiles knew nought.

The question of comfortable travel is a never-ending one. The palanquin, the sedan-chair, the rickshaw, even the humble horse-drawn buggy have had their devotees, but the modern

touring automobile has left them all far behind, whether for long-distance travel or promenades at Fontainebleau, in the New Forest or the Ardennes.

There is no question but that, when touring in an automobile, one has an affection for his steel-and-iron horse that he never felt for any other conveyance. The horse had some endearing qualities, no doubt, and we were bound to regard his every want; but he was only a part of the show, whereas the automobile, although it is nought but an inanimate combination of wheels and things, has to be humoured and talked to, and even cursed at times, in order to keep it going. But it works faithfully nevertheless, and never balks, at least not with the same crankiness as the horse, and always runs better toward night (this is curious, but it is a fact), which a horse seldom does. All the same an automobile is like David Balfour's Scotch advocate: hard at times to ken rightly – most of the time, one may say without undue exaggeration. Often an automobile is as fickle as a stage fairy, or appears to be, but it may be that only your own blind stupidity accounts for the lack of efficiency. Once in awhile an automobile gets uproariously full of spirits and runs away with itself, and almost runs away with you, too, simply for the reason that the carburetion is good and everything is pulling well. Again it is as silent and immovable as a sphinx and gives no hint of its present or expected ailments. It is most curious, but an automobile invents some new real or fancied complaint with each fresh internal upheaval, and requires, in each and every instance, an entirely new and original diagnosis.

With all its caprices, however, the automobile is the most efficient and satisfactory contrivance for getting about from place to place, for business or pleasure, that was ever devised.

Comparatively speaking, the railway is not to be thought of for a moment. It has all the disadvantages of the automobile (for indeed there are a few, such as dust and more or less cramped quarters, and, if one chooses, a nerve-racking speed) and none of its advantages, and, whether you are a mere man or a millionaire, you are tied down to rails and a strict itinerary, whereas you may turn the bonnet of your automobile down any by-road that pleases your fancy, and arrive ultimately at your destination, having made an enjoyable detour which would not otherwise have been possible.

Too great a speed undoubtedly detracts from the joy of travel, but a hundred and fifty, two hundred and fifty, or three hundred kilometres a day on the fine roads of France, or a hundred or a hundred and fifty miles on the leafy lanes of England's southern counties will give the stranger more varied impressions and a clearer understanding of men and matters than the touring of a country from end to end in express-trains which serve your meals *en route*, and whisk you from London to Torquay between tea and dinner, or from Paris to the Cote d'Azur between breakfast and nightfall.

Just how much pleasure and edification one can absorb during an automobile tour depends largely upon the individual – and the mood. Once the craving for speed is felt, not all the historic monuments in the world would induce one to stop a sweetly running motor; but again the other mood comes on, and one lingers a full day among the charms of the lower Seine from Caudebec to Rouen, scarce thirty miles.

Les Andelys-sur-Seine, your guide-book tells you, is noted for its magnificent ruins of Richard Cœur de Lion's Château Gaillard, and for the culture of the sugar-beet, and so, often, merely on account of the banal mention of beet-roots, you ignore the attractions of Richard's castle and make the best time you can Parisward by the great Route Nationale on the other side of the Seine. This is wrong, of course, but the mood was on, and the song of speed was ringing in your ears and nothing would drive it out.

Our fathers and grandfathers made the grand tour, in a twelvemonth, as a sort of topping-off to their early education, before they settled down to a business or professional life.

They checked off in their guide-books Melrose Abbey, the Tower of London, the Cathedral of Canterbury, and those of Antwerp, Cologne, Rome, Venice, and Paris, as they did the Cheshire Cheese, Mont Blanc, and the ruins of Carnac. It was all a part of the general scheme of travel, to cover a lot of ground and see all they could, for it was likely that they would pass that way but once. Why, then, should one blame the automobilist – who really travels very leisurely in that he sees a

lot of the countryside manners and customs off the beaten track – if he rushes over an intermediate stretch of country in order to arrive at one more to his liking?

One sees the thing every day on any of the great highroads in France leading from the Channel ports. One's destination may be the Pyrenees, the Cote d'Azur, Italy, or even Austria, and he does the intermediate steps at full speed. The same is true if he goes to Switzerland by the Rhine valley, or to Homburg by passing through Belgium or Holland. He might be just as well pleased with a fortnight in the Ardennes, or even in Holland or in Touraine, but, if his destination is Monte Carlo or Biarritz, he is not likely to linger longer by the way than the exigencies of food, drink, and lodging, and the care of his automobile demand.

When he has no objective point he loiters by the way and no doubt enjoys it the more, but it is not fair to put the automobilist down as a scorcher simply because he is pushing on. The best guide-books are caprice and fantasy, if you are hot pressed for time.

Mile-stones, or rather *bornes kilométriques*, line the roadways of Continental military Europe mercilessly, and it's a bad sign when the chauffeur begins to count them off. All the same, he knows his destination a great deal better than does some plodding tourist by rail who scorns him for rushing off again immediately after lunch.

One of the charms of travel, to the tried traveller, is, just as in the time of the Abbé Prévost, the ability to exchange remarks on one's itinerary with one's fellow travellers. In France it does not matter much whether they are automobilists or not. The *commis-voyageur* is a more numerous class here, apparently, than in any other country on the globe, and the detailed information which he can give one about the towns and hotels and sights and scenes *en route*, albeit he is more familiar with travel by rail than by road, is marvellous in quantity and valuable as to quality.

The automobile tourist, who may be an Englishman or an American, has hitherto been catered to with automobile novels, or love stories, or whatever one chooses to call them, or with more or less scrappy, incomplete, and badly edited accounts of tours made by some millionaire possessor of a motor-car, or the means to hire one. Some of the articles in the press, and an occasional book, have the merit of having been "good stuff," but often they have gone wrong in the making.

The writer of this book does not aspire to be classed with either of the above classes of able writers; the most he would like to claim is that he should be able to write a really good handbook on the subject, wherein such topographical, historical, and economic information as was presented should have the stamp of correctness. Perhaps four years of pretty constant automobile touring in Europe ought to count for something in the way of accumulated pertinent information concerning hotels and highways and by-ways.

Not all automobilists are millionaires. The man of moderate means is the real giver of impetus to the wheels of automobile progress. The manufacturers of motor-cars have not wholly waked up to this fact as yet, but the increasing number of tourists in small cars, both in England and in France, points to the fact that something besides the forty, sixty, or hundred horse-power monsters are being manufactured.

Efficiency and reliability is the great requisite of the touring automobile, and, for that matter, should be of any other. Efficiency and reliability cover ninety-nine per cent. of the requirements of the automobilist. Chance will step in at the most inopportune moments and upset all calculations, but, with due regard given to these two great and fundamental principles, the rest does not much matter.

It is a curious fact that the great mass of town folk, in France and probably elsewhere, still have a fear and dread of the mechanism of the automobile. "*C'est beau la mécanique, mais c'est tout de même un peu compliqué,*" they say, as they regard your labours in posing a new valve or tightening up a joint here and there.

The development of the automobile has brought about a whole new development of kindred things, as did the development of the battle-ship. First there was the battle-ship, then the cruiser, and then the torpedo-boat, and then another class of boats, the destroyers (destined to catch torpedo-

boats), and finally the submarine. With the automobile the evolution was much the same; first it was a sort of horseless carriage, for town use, then something a little more powerful that would climb hills, so that one might journey afield, and then the "touring-car," and then the racing machine, and now we have automobile omnibuses, and even automobile ambulances to pick up any frightened persons possessed of less agility than a kangaroo or a jack-rabbit might inadvertently have been bowled over. These disasters are seldom the automobilist's fault, and, happily, they are becoming fewer and fewer; but the indecision that overcame the passer-by, in the early days of the bicycle, still exists with many whenever an automobile comes in sight, and they back, and fill, and worry the automobilist into such a bad case of nerves that, in spite of himself, something of the nature of an accident, for which he is in no way responsible, really does happen.

Once the writer made eleven hundred kilometres straight across France, from the Manche to the Mediterranean, and not so much as a puncture occurred. On another occasion a little journey of half the length resulted in the general smashing up, four times in succession, of a little bolt (no great disaster in itself), within the interior arrangements of the motor, which necessitated a half a day's work on each occasion in taking down the cylinder and setting it up again, and each time in a small town far away from any properly equipped machine-shop, and with the assistance only of the local locksmith. It's astonishing how good a job a locksmith in France can do, even on an automobile, the mechanism of which he perhaps has never seen before. Officially the locksmith in France is known as a *serrurier*, but in the slang of the land he is the *cambricoleur du pays*, a name which is expressive, but which means nothing wicked. He can put a thread on a bolt or make a new nut to replace one that has mysteriously unscrewed itself, which is more than many a mere bicycle repairer can do.

The automobilist touring France should make friends with the nearest *cambricoleur* if he is in trouble. In England this is risky, a "gas-pipe thread" being the average lay workman's idea of "fixing you up."

Away back in Chaucer's day folk were "longen to gon on pilgrimages," and it does not matter in the least what the ways and means may be, the motive is ever the same: a change of scene.

This book is no unbounded eulogy of the automobile, although its many good qualities are recognized. There are other methods of travel that, in their own ways, are certainly enjoyable, but none quite equal the automobile for independence of action, convenience, and efficiency. It is well for all motor-car users, however, to realize that they are not the only road users, and to have a due regard for others, – not only their rights, but their persons. This applies even more forcibly, if possible, to the automobilist *en tour*.

One must in duty bound regulate his pace and his actions by the vagaries of others, however little he may want to, or unfortunate consequences will many times follow. Always he must have a sharp look ahead and must not neglect a backward glance now and then. He must not dash through muddy roads and splash passers-by (a particularly heinous offence in England), and in France he must observe the rule of the road (always to the right in passing, – no great difficulty for an American, but very puzzling to an Englishman), or an accident may result which will bring him into court, and perhaps into jail, unless he can assuage the poor peasant's feelings for the damaged forelegs of his horse or donkey by a cash payment on the spot.

Maeterlinck's "wonderful, unknown beast" is still unknown (and feared) by the majority of outsiders, and the propaganda of education must go on for a long time yet. Maeterlinck's great tribute to the automobile is his regard for it as the conqueror of space. Never before has the individual man been able to accomplish what the soulless corporations have with railway trains. In steamboat or train we are but a part and parcel of the freight carried, but in the automobile we are stoker, driver, and passenger in one, and regard every road-turning and landmark with a new wonder and appreciation.

We are the aristocrats of tourists, and we are bound therefore to have a kindly regard for other road users or a revolution will spring up, as it did in feudal times.

Take Maeterlinck's wise sayings for your guide, and be tolerant of the rights of others. This will do automobilism more good than can be measured, for it has come to stay, and perhaps even advance. The days of the horse are numbered.

"In accord with the needs of our insatiable, exacting soul, which craves at once for the small and the mighty, the quick and the slow; here it is of us at last, it is ours, and offers at every turn glimpses of beauty that, in former days, we could only enjoy when the tedious journey was ended."

The "tour abroad" has ever been the lodestone which has drawn countless thousands of home-loving English and Americans to Continental Europe. Pleasure – mere pleasure – has accounted for many of these pilgrims, but by far the largest proportion have been those who seek education and edification combined.

One likes to be well cared for when he journeys, whether by road or rail, and demands accordingly, if not all the comforts of home, at least many things that the native knows or cares little of. A Frenchman does not desire a sitting-room, a reading-room, or a fire in his sleeping-room, and, according to his lights, he is quite right. He finds all this at a café, and prefers to go there for it. The steam-heated hotel, with running water everywhere, is a rarity in France, as indeed it is in England.

Outside Paris the writer has found this combination but seldom in France; at Lyons, Marseilles, Moulins in the Allier, and at Chatellerault in Poitou only. Modernity is making its way in France, but only in spots; its progress is steady, but as yet it has not penetrated into many outlying districts. Modern *art nouveau* ideas in France, which are banal enough, but which are an improvement over the Eastlake and horsehair horrors of the Victorian and Louis-Philippe periods, are tending to eliminate old-fashioned ideas for the benefit of the traveller who would rather eat his meals in a bright, airy apartment than in stuffy, dark hole known in England as a coffee-room.

In France, in particular, the contrast of the new and old that one occasionally meets with is staggering. It is all very well in its way, this blending of antiquity and modernity, and gives one something of the thrill of romance, which most of us have in our make-up to a greater or lesser extent; but, on the other hand, romance gets some hard knocks when one finds a Roman sarcophagus used as a watering-trough; or a chapel as an automobile garage, as he often will in the Midi.

One thing the American, and the Britisher to a lesser extent, be he automobilist or mere tourist, must fully realize, and that is that the tourist business is a more highly developed industry in Continental Europe than it is anywhere else. In Switzerland one may well say that it is a national industry, and in some parts of France (always omitting Paris, which is not France) it is practically the same thing; Holland and Belgium are not far behind, and neither is the Rhine country; so that the tourist in Europe finds that creature comforts are always near at hand. The automobilist does not much care whether they are near at hand or not. If he doesn't find the accommodations he is looking for on the borders of Dartmoor, he can keep on to Exmoor, and if Nevers won't suit his purpose for the night he can get to Moulins in an hour.

A hotel that is full and overflowing is no more a fear or a dread; the automobilist simply takes the road again and drops in on some market-town twenty, thirty, or fifty miles away and finds accommodations that are equally satisfactory, with the possibility – if he looks in at some little visited spot like Meung or Beaugency in Touraine, Ecloo in Holland, or Reichenberg on the Rhine – that he will be more pleased with his surroundings than he would be in the large towns which are marked in heavy-faced type in the railway guides, and whose hotels are starred by Baedeker.

In most countries the passport is no longer a necessary document in the traveller's pocketbook, though the Britisher still fondly arms himself with this "protection," and the American will, if it occurs to him, be only too glad to contribute his dollars to the fees of his consulate or embassy in order to possess himself of a gaudy thing in parchment and gold which he can wave in front of any one whom he thinks transgresses his rights as an American citizen: "from the land of liberty, and don't you forget it."

This is all very well and is no doubt the very essence of a proper patriotism, but the best *pièce d'identité* for the foreigner who takes up his residence in France for more than three months is a simple document which can be obtained from the commissaire de police. It will pass him anywhere in France that a passport will, is more readily understood and accepted by the banker or post-office clerk as a personal identification, and will save the automobile *chauffeur* many an annoyance, if he has erred through lack of familiarity with many little unwritten laws of the land.

The automobilist *en tour* always has the identification papers of his automobile; in England his "License," and in France his "Certificat de Capacité" and "Récépisse de Déclaration," which will accomplish pretty much all the passport of other days would do if one flourished it to-day before a stubborn octroi official or the caretaker of a historical monument.

The membership card of the Italian, Swiss, or French touring clubs will do much the same thing, and no one should be without them, since membership in either one or all is not difficult or costly. (See Appendix.)

France is the land *par excellence* for the tourist, whether by road or rail. The art of "*le tourisme*" has been perfected by the French to even a higher degree than in Switzerland. There are numerous societies, clubs, and associations, from the all-powerful Touring Club de France downward, which are attracting not only the French themselves to many hitherto little-known corners of "*la belle France*," but strangers from over the frontiers and beyond the seas. These are not the tourists of the conventional kind, but those who seek out the little-worn roads. It is possible to do this if one travels intelligently by rail, but it is a great deal more satisfactorily done if one goes by road.

Here and there, scattered all over France, in Dauphiné, in Savoie, and in the Pyrenees, one finds powerful "Syndicats d'Initiative," which not only care for the tourist, but bring pressure to bear on the hotel-keeper and local authorities to provide something in the way of improvements, where they are needed, to make a roadway safe, or to restore a historical site or monument.

In the Pyrenees, and in the Alps of Savoie and Dauphiné, one finds everywhere the insignia of the "Club-Alpin Français," which caters with information, etc., not only to the mountain-climber, but to the automobilist and the general tourist as well.

More powerful and effective than all – more so even than the famous Automobile Club de France – is the great Touring Club de France, which, with the patronage of the President of the Republic, and the influence of more than a hundred thousand members, is something more than a mere touring club.

In the fourteen years of its existence not only has the Touring Club de France helped the tourist find his way about, but also has taken a leading part in the clearing away of the debris in many a moss-grown ruin and making of it a historical monument as pleasing to view as Jumièges on the Seine, or world-famed Les Baux in Provence.

It has appointed itself the special guardian of roads and roadways, so far as the placing of signboards along the many important lines of communication is concerned; it has been the means of having dug up untold kilometres of Renaissance pavement; has made, almost at its own expense, a magnificent forty-kilometre road known as the Corniche de l'Esterel; and has given the backward innkeeper such a shock that he has at last waked up to the needs of the twentieth-century traveller. All this is something for a touring organization to have accomplished, and when one can become a part and parcel of this great organization, and a sharer in the special advantages which it has to offer to its members for the absurdly small sum of five francs per annum, the marvel is that it has not half a million members instead of a hundred thousand.

Chapter III

Roads & Routes

The chief concern of the automobilist to-day, after his individual automobile, is the road question, the "Good Roads Question," as it has become generally known. In a new country, like America, it is to be expected that great connecting highways should be mostly in the making. It is to be regretted that the development should be so slow, but things have been improving in the last decade, and perhaps America will "beat the world" in this respect, as she has in many others, before many future generations have been born.

In the excellence and maintenance of her roads France stands emphatically at the head of all nations, but even here noticeable improvement is going on. The terrific "Louis Quatorze pavé," which one finds around Paris, is yearly growing less and less in quantity. The worst road-bed in France is that awful stretch from Bordeaux, via Bazas, to Pau in Navarre, originally due to the energy of Henri IV., and still in existence for a space of nearly a hundred kilometres. One avoids it by a *détour* of some twenty odd kilometres, and the writer humbly suggests that here is an important unaccomplished work for the usually energetic road authorities of France.

After France the "good roads" of Britain come next, though in some parts of the country they are woefully inadequate to accommodate the fast-growing traffic by road, notably in London suburbs, while some of the leafy lanes over which poets rhapsodize are so narrow that the local laws prevent any automobile traffic whatever. As one unfortunate individual expressed it, "since the local authorities forbid automobiles on roadways under sixteen feet in width, I am unable to get my motor-car within nine miles of my home!"

In England something has been done by late generations toward roads improvement. The first awakening came in 1820, and in 1832 the London-Oxford road had been so improved that the former time of the stage-coaches had been reduced from eight to six hours. Macadam in 1830, and Stevenson in 1847, were the real fathers of the "Roads Improvement Movement" in England. The great faults of English roads are that they are narrow and winding, almost without exception. There are 38,600 kilometres of highways (the figures are given on the metric scale for better comparison with Continental facts and figures) and 160,900 of by-roads. There are sixty-six kilometres of roads to the square kilometre (*kilometre carré*).

In Germany the roads system is very complex. In Baden, the Palatinate, and the Grand Duchy of Hesse they cede nothing to the best roads anywhere, but in the central and northern provinces they are, generally speaking, much poorer. There are fifty-four kilometres of roads of all grades to the kilometre *carré*.

In Belgium the roads are greatly inferior to those of France, and there are immeasurable stretches of the vilest pavement the world has known, not only near the large towns, but great interior stretches as well. There are 17,500 kilometres of Chemins Vicinaux and 6,990 kilometres of Chemins de Grands Communications. They average, taken together, eighty-three kilometres to the kilometre *carré*.

In Switzerland the roads are thoroughly good everywhere, but many, particularly mountain-roads, are entirely closed to automobile traffic, and the regulations in many of the towns are so onerous that it is anything but agreeable to make one's way through them. There are thirty-two kilometres to the kilometre *carré*. The Simplon Pass has only recently (1906) been opened to automobile traffic. No departure can be made from Brigue, on the Swiss side, or from Gondo, in Italy, after three P.M. Speed (*vitesse*) must not exceed ten kilometres on the stretches, or two kilometres around the corners. Fines for infringement of the law run from twenty to five hundred francs.

Italy, with a surface area one-half that of France, has but a quarter of the extent of the good roads. They are of variable quality, but good on the main lines of travel. In the ancient kingdom of

Sardinia will be found the best, but they are poor and greatly neglected around Naples, and, as might be expected, in Sicily.

In Austria the roads are very variable as to surface and maintenance, and there are numerous culverts or *canivaux* across them. There are 21,112 kilometres of national roads, 66,747 kilometres of provincial roads, and 87,859 of local roads. They average fourteen kilometres to the kilometre *carré*.

The history of the development of the modern roadway is too big a subject to permit of its being treated here; suffice it to recall that in England and France, and along the Rhine, the lines of the twentieth-century main roads follow the Roman roads of classic times.

In France, Lyons, in the mid-Rhône valley, was a great centre for the radiating roadways of Gaul. Strategically it was important then as it is important now, and Roman soldiery of the past, as the automobilist of to-day, had here four great thoroughfares leading from the city. The first traversed the valleys of the Rhine and the Meuse; the second passed by Autun, Troyes, Chalons, Reims, Soissons, Noyon, and Amiens; the third branched in one direction toward Saintes, and in another to Bordeaux; while the fourth dropped down the Rhône valley direct to Marseilles.

More than thirty thousand kilometres of roadways were in use throughout Gaul during the Roman occupation, of which the four great routes (*viæ publicæ*) formed perhaps four thousand.

Of the great highways of France, the *Grandes Routes Nationales*, of which all travellers by road have the fondest and most vivid memories, it is well to recall that they were furthered, if not fathered, by none other than Napoleon, who, for all he laid waste, set up institutions anew which more than compensated for the destructions.

The great roadways of France, such as the Route de Bretagne, running due west from the capital, and those leading to Spain, Switzerland, Italy, and the Pays Bas, had their origin in the days of Philippe-Auguste. His predecessors had let the magnificently traced itineraries of the Romans languish and become covered with grass – if not actually timber-grown.

The arrangement and classification laid down by Philippe-Auguste have never been changed, simply modified and renamed; thus the *Routes Royales* – such as followed nearly a straight line from Paris by the right bank of the Loire to Amboise and to Nantes – became the *Routes Nationales* of to-day.

Soon wheeled traffic became a thing to be considered, and royal cortèges moved about the land with much the same freedom and stateliness of the state coaches which one sees to-day in pageants, as relics of a past monarchical splendour.

Louis XI. created the "*Service des Postes*" in France, which made new demands upon the now more numerous routes and roadways, and Louis XII., François I., Henri II., and Charles IX., all made numerous ordinances for the policing and maintenance of them.

Henri IV., and his minister Sully, built many more of these great lines of communication, and thus gave the first real and tangible aid to the commerce and agriculture of the kingdom. He was something of an aesthetic soul too, this Henri of Bearn, for he was the originator of the scheme to make the great roadways of France tree-shaded boulevards, which in truth is what many of them are to-day. This monarch of love, intrigues, religious reversion, and strange oaths passed the first (and only, for the present is simply a continuance thereof) *ordonnance* making the planting of trees along the national highroads compulsory on the local authorities.

Under Louis XIV., Colbert continued the good work and put up the first mile-stone, or whatever its equivalent was in that day, measuring from the Parvis de Notre Dame at Paris. Some of these Louis XIV. *bornes*, or stones, still exist, though they have, of course, been replaced throughout by kilometre stones.

The foregoing tells in brief of the natural development of the magnificent roads of France. Their history does not differ greatly from the development of the other great European lines of travel, across Northern Italy to Switzerland, down the Rhine valley and, branching into two forks, through Holland and through Belgium to the North Sea.

In England the main travel routes run north, east, south, and west from London as a radiating centre, and each took, in the later coaching days, such distinctive names as "The Portsmouth Road," "The Dover Road," "The Bath Road," and "The Great North Road." Their histories have been written in fascinating manner, so they are only referred to here.

It is in France, one may almost say, that automobile touring begins and ends, in that it is more practicable and enjoyable there; and so *la belle France* continually projects itself into one's horizon when viewing the subject of automobilism.

It may be that there are persons living to-day who regret the passing of the good old times when they travelled – most uncomfortably, be it remarked – by stage-coach and suffered all the inclemencies of bad weather *en route* without a word of protest but a genial grumble, which they sought to antidote by copious libations of anything liquid and strong. The automobile has changed all this. The traveller by automobile doesn't resort to alcoholic drinks to put, or keep, him in a good humour, and, when he sees a lumbering van or family cart making its way for many miles from one widely separated region to another, he accelerates his own motive power and leaves the good old ways of the good old days as far behind as he can, and recalls the words of Sidney Smith:

"The good of other times let others state,
I think it lucky I was born so late."

A certain picturesqueness of travel may be wanting when comparing the automobile with the whirling coach-and-four of other days, but there is vastly more comfort for all concerned, and no one will regret the march of progress when he considers that nothing but the means of transportation has been changed. The delightful prospects of hill and vale are still there, the long stretches of silent road and, in France and Germany, great forest routes which are as wild and unbroken, except for the magnificent surface of the roads, as they were when mediæval travelers startled the deer and wild boar. You may even do this to-day with an automobile in more than one forest tract of France, and that not far from the great centres of population either.

The invention of carriage-springs – the same which, with but little variation, we use on the automobile – by the wife of an apothecary in the Quartier de St. Antoine at Paris, in 1600, was the prime cause of the increased popularity of travel by road in France.

In 1776, the routes of France were divided into four categories:

1. Those leading from Paris to the principal interior cities and seaports.
2. Those communicating directly between the principal cities.
3. Those communicating directly between the cities and towns of one province and those of another.
4. Those serving the smaller towns and bourgs.

Those in the first class were to be 13.35 metres in width, the second 11.90, the third 10, the fourth 7.90. The road makers and menders of England and America could not get better models than these.

The advent of the automobile has brought a new factor into the matter of road making and mending, but certainly he would be an ignorant person indeed who would claim that the automobile does a tithe of the road damage that is done by horse-drawn traffic.

At a high rate of speed, however, the automobile does raise a fine sandy dust, and exposes the macadam. A French authority states that up to twenty to twenty-five kilometres an hour the automobile does little or no harm to the roads, but when they increase to over fifty kilometres an hour they do damage the surface somewhat. Just what the ultimate outcome of it will be remains to be seen, but France is unlikely to do anything which will work against the interests of the automobilist.

In consequence of this newer and faster mode of travelling, it is being found that on some parts of the roads the convexity of the surface is too great, and especially at curves, where fast motors

frequently skid on the rounded surface. To obviate this a piece of road near the Croix d'Augas in the Orleannais has had the outer side of the curve raised eight centimetres above the centre of the road, in somewhat the same manner as on the curve of a railway. Since this innovation has proved highly successful and pleasing to the devotees of the new form of travel, it is likely to be further adopted.

In the early period of the construction of French roads the earth formation was made horizontal, but Trésaguet, a French engineer, introduced the rounded form, or camber, and this is the method now almost generally adopted, both in France and England. Only some 14,000 kilometres of the national routes have a hand-set foundation, the others being what are termed broken-stone roads – the stone used is broken in pieces and laid on promiscuously, after the system introduced by Macadam. Some of the second and third class, roads are constructed of gravel, and others, of earth.

From the official report of 1893 it appears that the cost of maintenance of roads in France was as follows:

COST OF LABOUR AND MATERIALS	Annual Total Cost	Annual Cost per Kilometre (AV.)
Routes Nationales	22,570,300 fcs.	775 fcs.
Routes Départementales	14,555,850	600
Chemins Communication	82,474,450	423
Chemins Vicinaux	44,211,125	200

The above is for materials and labour on the roadways only, and something between 33 1/3 per cent, and 50 per cent. is added for the maintenance of watercourses and sidewalks, the planting of trees, and for general administrative expenses.

Excepting for twenty kilometres or so around Paris, the vehicular traffic on the country roads of France does not seem to be in any way excessive. The style of vehicles in France that carry into the cities farm and garden produce, wood, stone, etc., are large wagons with wheels six to seven feet in diameter. These wagons are more easily hauled and naturally do less damage to the roads than narrow-tired, low-wheeled trucks or drays. The horses in Paris, and in the country, are nearly all plain shod, with no heels or toes to act like a pick to break up the surface. Sometimes even one sees draught-horses with great flat, iron shoes extending out beyond the hoof in all directions.

The question of the speed of the automobile on the roads, in France and England, as indeed everywhere else, has been the moot point in all legislation that has been attempted.

The writer thinks the French custom the best. You may legally go at thirty kilometres an hour, and no more. If you exceed this you do it at your own risk. If an accident happens it *may* go hard with you, but if not, all is well, and you have the freedom of the road in all that the term implies. In the towns you are often held down to ten, eight, or even six kilometres an hour, but that is merely a local regulation, for your benefit as much as for the safety of the public, for many a French town has unthought-of possibilities of danger in its crooked streets and unsafe crossings.

Good roads have much to do with the pleasure of automobilism, and competent control and care of them will do much more. Where a picked bit of roadway has been chosen for automobile trials astonishing results have been obtained, as witness the Gordon-Bennett Cup records of the last six years, where the average speed per hour consistently increased from thirty-eight miles to nearly fifty-five, and this for long distances (three hundred and fifty miles or more).

To meet the new traffic conditions the authorities must widen the roads here and there, remove obstructions at corners, make encircling boulevards through narrowly laid out towns, and erect warning signs, like the following, a great deal more numerous than they have as yet.

They have very good automobile laws in France in spite of their anomalies. You agree to thirty-seven prescribed articles, and go through sundry formalities and take to the road with your automobile. In the name of the President of the Republic and the "*peuple français*," you are allowed thirty kilometres an hour in the open country, and twenty in the towns. You can do anything you like beyond this – at your own risk, and so long as no accident happens nothing will be said, but you must pull up when you come to a small town where M. le Maire, in the name of his forty-four electors,

has decreed that his village is dangerously laid out for fast traffic, – and truth to tell it often is, – and accordingly you are limited to a modest ten or even less. It is annoying, of course, but if you are on a strange itinerary you had best go slow until you know what trouble lies ahead.

In theory *la vitesse* is national in France, but in practice it is communal, and the barriers rise, in the way of staring warnings posted at each village-end, like the barriers across the roads in the times of Louis XI.

Except in Holland, where some "private roads" still exist, and in certain parts of England, the toll-gate keeper has become almost an historical curiosity. It is true, however, that in England one does meet with annoying toll-bridges and gates, and in France one has equally annoying *octroi* barriers.

One recognizes the vested proprietary rights, many of which, in England, are hereditary, of certain toll-gates and bridges, but it is hard in these days, when franchises for the conduct of public services are only granted for limited periods, that legislation, born of popular clamour, should not confiscate, or, better, purchase at a fair valuation, these "rights," and make all roads and bridges free to all.

In France there are no toll-gates or bridges, or at least not many (the writer recalls but one, a bridge at La Roche-Guyon on the Seine, just above Vernon), but there are various state ferries across the Seine, the Rhône, the Saône, and the Loire, where a small charge is made for crossing. These are particularly useful on the lower Seine, in delightful Normandy, as there are no bridges below Rouen.

In France one's chief delays on the road are caused by the *octroi* barriers at all large towns, though only at Paris and, for a time, at St. Germain do they tax the supplies of *essence* (gasoline) and oil, which the automobilist carries in his tanks.

The *octroi* taxes are onerous enough in all conscience, but it is a pity to annoy automobilists in the way the authorities do at the gates of Paris, and it's still worse for a touring automobile to be stopped at the barrier of a town like Evreux in Normandy, or Tarare in the Beaujolais. Whatever does the humble (and civil, too) guardian do it for, except to show his authority, and smile pleasantly, as he waves you off after having brought you to a full stop at the bottom of a twisting cobble-stoned, hilly street where you need all the energy and suppleness of your motor in order to reach the top.

There are not many of these abrupt stops, outside the large towns, and nowhere do they tax you on your oil or *essence* except at Paris – where you pay (alas!) nearly as much as the original cost.

At Rouen the guardian comes up, looks in your tonneau to see if you have a fish or a partridge hidden away, and sends you on your way with a bored look, as though he disliked the business as much as you do. At Tours, if you come to the barrier just as the official has finished a good lunch, he simply smiles, and doesn't even stop you. At Marseilles you get up from your seat and let the official poke a bamboo stick down among your *chambres d'air*, and say nothing – provided he does not puncture them; if he does, you say a good deal, but he replies by saying that he was merely doing his duty, and meant no harm.

At Nantes, at Rennes, at Orleans, and Bordeaux, all of them *grandes villes*, every one is civil and apologetic, but still the procedure goes on just the same.

At Lyons the *octroi* tax has been abolished. Real progress this!

In the old coaching days road speeds fell far behind what they are to-day in a well-constructed and capable automobile, but, as they put in long hours on the road, they certainly did get over the ground in a fairly satisfactory manner. Private conveyances, with private horses, could not hope to accomplish anything like it, simply because there is a limit to the working powers and hours of the individual horse. With the old mail-coaches, in England, and the *malle-poste* and the *poste-chaise*, in France, things were different, for at every *poste*, or section, was a new relay; and on the coach went at the same pace as before.

The London-Birmingham coaches in 1830 covered the 109 miles between the two points at an average speed of 15.13 miles per hour, the highest speed being eighteen, and the lowest eleven miles.

In France the speeds were a little better. From Lyons the old mail-coaches used to make the journey to Paris in four days by way of Auxerre, and in five by Moulins, though the distance is the same, one hundred and twenty leagues. To-day the automobile, which fears not hills, take invariably the Moulins road, and covers the distance between breakfast and dinner; that is, if the driver is a "scorcher;" and there are such in France.

In 1834 there were thirteen great lines of *malle-postes* in France as follows:

To Calais. By Clermont, Amiens, and Abbeville.

To Lille. By Senlis, Noyon, St. Quentin, Cambrai, and Douai.

To Mezières. By Soissons, Reims, and Rhetel.

To Strasbourg. By Chalons-sur-Marne, Metz, and Sarrebourg.

To Besançon. By Troyes and Dijon.

To Lyon. By Melun, Auxerre, Autun, and Macon.

To Clermont-Ferrand. By Fontainebleau, Briare, Nevers, and Moulins.

To Toulouse. By Orleans, Chateauroux, Limoges, and Cahors.

To Bordeaux. By Orleans, Blois, Tours, Poitiers, and Angoulême.

To Nantes. By Chartres, Le Mans, La Fleche, and Angers.

To Brest. By Alençon, Laval, Rennes, and St. Briec.

To Caen. By Bonnières, Evreux, and Lisieux.

To Rouen. By Neuilly-sur-Seine, Pontoise, Gisors, Ecouis, and Fleury-sur-Andelle.

Besides the *malle-poste* there was another organization in France even more rapid. The following is copied from an old advertisement:

AVIS AU PUBLIC

"Messageries Royales – Nouvelles Diligences

"Le Public est averti:

"Il partira de Paris toutes les semaines, pour Dunkerque, passant par Senlis, Compiègne, et Noyon, une diligence le lundi à 6 heures du matin. Elle repartira de Dunkerque à Paris, le mercredi à 6 heures du matin. Il partira aussi dans chaque sens une voiture pour les gros bagages et objets fragiles, le jeudi de chaque semaine.

"Les bureaux de ces diligences sont établis à Paris, rue St. Denis, vis-à-vis les Filles-Dieu."

From Paris to Bordeaux, 157 leagues, the Messageries Royales made the going at an easy pace in five days. To-day the express-trains do it in six and one-half hours, and the ever-ready automobile has knocked a half an hour off that, just for a record. "*Tempus fugit.*"

The subject of roads and roadmaking is one that to-day more than ever is a matter of deep concern to those responsible for a nation's welfare.

It might seem, in these progressive days, that it was in reality a matter which might take care of itself, at least so far as originally well-planned or well-built roads were concerned. This, however, is not the case; the railway has very nearly reached the limit of its efficiency (at any rate in thickly settled parts), and the electric roads have merely stepped in and completed its functions.

It is certain that an improved system of road administration or control is needed. The turnpike or the highroad served its purpose well enough in coaching days as the most direct and quickest way between important towns. To-day, in many respects, conditions are changed. Certain centres of population and commercial activity have progressed at the expense of less fortunate communities,

and the one-time direct highroads now deviate considerably, with the result that there is often an unnecessary prolongation of distance and expenditure of time.

Examples of this sort are to be found all over Britain, but a great deal less frequently in France, where the communication is by a more direct line between important centres, often leaving the small and unimportant towns out of the itinerary altogether.

In England, centralization or nationalization of the road-building authority should remedy all this. Cuts and deviations from existing lines, for the general good, would then be made without local jealousy or misapplied influence being brought to bear, and the general details of width and surface be carried on throughout the land, under one supreme power, and not, as often now is the case, by various local district and urban councils and county surveyors.

"The Great North Road" and "The Famous Bath Road" vary greatly throughout their length as to width and excellence; and yet popular opinion in the south of England would seem to indicate that these roads, to single them out from among others, are idyllic, both in character of surface and skill of engineering, throughout their length. This is manifestly not so. The "Bath Road," for example, in parts, is as flat and well-formed a surface as one could hope to find, even in France itself, but at times it degenerates into a mere narrow, guttery alley, especially in its passage through some of the Thames-side towns, where the surface is never of that excellence that it should be; throughout its entire length of some hundred odd miles to Bath there are ever-recurring evidence of bad road-making and worse engineering.

One is bound to take into consideration that it is the automobile, and the general increase in automobile traffic, that, in all countries, is causing the wide-spread demand for improved roads.

To illustrate the growth of the use of the automobile on the public highway, and taking France as an example, the following statistics are given from the *Journal des Débats*:

In 1900 there were taxed in France 1,399 *voitures-automobiles* of more than two places, and 955 of one or two places. In 1903 the figures had risen to 7,228 and 2,694 respectively. These figures may seem astonishingly small at first glance, but their percentage of growth is certainly abnormally large. These *voitures-automobiles*, be it recalled, are all pleasure carriages, and displaced in the same time (according to the same authority) 10,000 horse-drawn vehicles. At the same period Paris alone claimed 1,845 *voitures-automobiles* and 6,539 horse-drawn pleasure carriages.

Road reformers, wherever found, should agitate for two things: the efficient maintenance of existing roads and the laying out of new and improved thoroughfares where needed.

In England and America the roadways are under the care of so many controlling bodies that they have suffered greatly. In England, for example, there is one eighteen-mile strip of road which is under the control of twelve different highway authorities, while the "Great North Road" from London to Edinburgh, is, in England alone, subject to seventy-two separate authorities. Local jealousies, rivalry and factions, and the quarrels of various road authorities interfere everywhere with good roads. The greatest good of the greatest number is sacrificed to village squabbles and to the advice of the local squire, who "detests motor-cars," as he does most other signs of progress. The roads of the future must be under some general control. At present, affairs in England are pretty bad; let America take heed in her new provisions for road supervision and government.

There is at present an almost Chinese jumble in the distribution of authority over roads in England and Wales. There are in London alone twenty-nine highway authorities, and 1,855 throughout the rest of the country.

In view of the fact that through motor traffic of all kinds will increase every year, it has been suggested that new loop roads should be constructed round towns on the chief roads, private enterprise being enlisted by the expectation of improved land value. This certainly would be a move in the right direction.

Mile-stone reform is another thing which is occupying the serious attention of the road user. In Continental Europe this matter is pretty well arranged, though there is frequently a discrepancy of

two, three, or even five kilometres between the national mile-stones (*bornes kilométriques*) and the sign-boards of the various local authorities and touring clubs.

France has the best system extant of sign-boards and mile-stones. One finds the great national, departmental, and communal signs and stones everywhere, and at every hundred metres along the road are the intermediate little white-numbered stones, from which you may take your bearings almost momentarily, with never a fear that you are off your track.

In addition to this the sign-boards of the Touring Club de France, the Automobile Club de France, and the Association Générale Automobile satisfy any further demands that may be made by the traveller by automobile who wants to read as he runs. No such legible signs and warnings are known elsewhere.

There is uniformity in all the kilometre and department boundary stones in France; but in England "mile-stones" of all shapes, sizes, materials, and degrees of legibility are found.

There are some curious relics in the form of ancient mile-stones still in use, which may please the antiquarian, but are of no value to the automobilist. There is the "eightieth mile-stone on the Holyhead Road" in England, which carries one back through two centuries of road travel; and there is a heavy old veteran of perhaps a thousand years, which at one time marked the "*Voie Aurelian*," as it crossed Southern Gaul. It is found in Provence, in the Bouches-du-Rhône, near Salon, and is a sight not to be missed by those curiously inclined.

The question of dust is one of the chief problems yet to be solved for the benefit of automobilists and the general public alike. A good deal of the "dust nuisance" is due to badly made and badly kept roads, but we must frankly admit that the automobile itself is often the cause. "La Ligue Contre la Poussière," in France, has made some interesting experiments, with the below enumerated results, as related to automobile traffic. Road-builders and manufacturers of automobiles alike have something here to make a note of.

1. Sharp corners and excessive road cambers lead to slip, and, therefore, to dust.
2. More dust is raised on a rough road than on an equally dusty smooth road.
3. Watering the road moderately diminishes the dust.
4. The spreading on the road of crude oil, or of oil emulsions in water, is an important palliative.
5. Wood, asphalt, cobblestones, and square pavings are not dusty save after use by horse traffic.
6. Cars with smooth, boat-shaped under surfaces are less dusty than others.
7. Cars with large mud-guards and leather flaps near the road are more dusty.
8. Cars on high wheels well away from the ground are less dusty.
9. Cars with large tool-boxes at the back reaching low down between the back wheels are dusty.
10. Large car bodies are often dustier than small ones.
11. Blowing the exhaust near the ground increases the dust.
12. Cars fitted with engines having an insufficient fly-wheel or a non-uniform turning effort from any cause are more dusty.
13. A car mounted on very easy springs having a large up-and-down play will suck up the dust with each rise and fall of the body on rough roads.
14. Front wheels – or rolling wheels – raise less dust than back wheels or driving wheels.
15. Smooth pneumatic tires are dusty.
16. Solid or pneumatic rubber tires are more dusty at higher speeds, and with high-powered engines.
17. Non-skid devices, such as small steel studs, etc., do not increase the dust.

A writer on automobilism and roads cannot leave the latter subject without a reference to some of the obstructions and inconveniences to which the automobilist has to submit. If the automobilist proved himself a "road obstruction" like any of the following he would soon be banished and the industry would suffer.

A correspondent in the *Auto*, the chief Parisian daily devoted to automobilism, gave the following list of obstructions encountered in a journey of a thousand kilometres:

1. Drivers having left their horses entirely unattended – 75
2. Drivers who would not make way to allow one to pass – 86
3. Drivers asleep – 8
4. Drivers not holding the reins – 12
5. Drivers in carriages, or carts, without lights at night – 81
6. Drivers stopping their horses in the middle of the road or at dangerous turnings – 2
7. Drivers allowing their horses to descend hills unattended while they walked behind – 18
8. Dogs throwing themselves in front of one – 35
9. Flocks of sheep met without guardians near by – 8
10. Cattle straying unattended – 10
11. Geese, hens and children in the middle of the road – 30

Instead of seven sins, any of which might be deadly, there are eleven. Legislation must sooner or later protect the automobilist better than it does to-day.

Chapter IV Hotels & Things

In all the literature of travel, that which is devoted to hotels has been conspicuously neglected. Certainly a most interesting work could be compiled.

Among the primitive peoples travellers were dependent upon the hospitality of those among whom they came. After this arose a species of hostelry, which catered for man and beast in a more or less crude and uncomfortable manner; but which, nevertheless, was a great deal better than depending upon the generosity and hospitality of strangers, and vastly more comfortable than sleeping and eating in the open.

In the middle ages there appeared in France the *cabaret*, the *gargot*, the *taverne*, and then the *auberge*, many of which, endowed with no more majestic name, exist even to-day.

ICI ON LOGE À PIED ET À CHEVAL

is a sign frequently seen along the roadways of France, and even in the villages and small towns. It costs usually ten sous a night for man, and five sous for his beast, though frequently there is a fluctuating price.

The *aubergiste* of other days, on the routes most frequented, was an enterprising individual, if reports are to be believed. Frequently he would stand at his door and cry out his prices to passers-by. "*Au Cheval Blanc! On dine pour douze sous. Huit sous le cocher. Six liards l'écurie.*"

With the era of the diligences there came the Hôtels de la Poste, with vast paved courtyards, great stables, and meals at all hours, but the chambers still remained more or less primitive, and in truth have until a very recent date.

There is absolutely no question but that automobilism has brought about a great change in the hotel system of France. It may have had some slight effect elsewhere, but in France its influence has been enormous. The guide-books of a former generation did nothing but put an asterisk against the names of those hotels which struck the fancy of the compiler, and it was left to the great manufacturers of "*pneumatiques*" for automobiles to carry the scheme to a considerably more successful issue. Michelin, in preparing his excellent route-book, bombarded the hotel-keeper throughout the length and breadth of France with a series of questions, which he need not answer if he did not choose, but which, if he neglected, was most likely taken advantage of by his competitor.

Given a small *chef-lieu*, a market-town in France, with two competing establishments, the one which was marked by the compiler of this excellent road-book as having the latest sanitary arrangements, with perhaps a dark room for photographers, stood a much better chance of the patronage of the automobile traveller than he who had merely a blank against the name of his house. The following selection of this appalling array of questions, used in the preparation of the Guide-Michelin, will explain this to the full:

Is your hotel open all the year?

What is the price per day which the automobilist *en tour* may count on spending with you? (This is purposely noncommittal so far as an ironbound statement is concerned, being more particularly for classification, and is anyway a much better system of classification than by a detailed price-list of *déjeuner*, *dîner*, etc.)

What is the price of an average room, with service and lights? (Be it noted that only in avowed tourist resorts, or in the case of very new travellers, are the ridiculous items of "*service et bougie*" – service and lights – ever charged in France.)

Is wine included in your regular charges? (And it generally is except in the two above-mentioned instances.)

Have you a sign denoting adherence or alliance to the A. G. A.?

Have you a sign denoting adherence or alliance to the A. C. F.?

Have you a sign denoting adherence or alliance to the T. C. F.?

Have you an arrangement with the Touring Club de France allowing members a discount of ten per cent.? (Some four thousand country hotels of France have.)

Have you a bath-room?

Have you modernized hygienic bedrooms?

Have you water-closets with modern plumbing? (Most important this.)

Have you a dark room for photographers?

Have you a covered garage for automobiles? (This must be free of charge to travellers, for two days at least, or a mention of the hotel does not appear.)

How many automobiles can you care for?

Have you a telephone and what is its number?

What is your telegraphic address?

What are the chief curiosities and sights in your town?

What interesting excursions in the neighbourhood?

This information is afterwards compiled and most clearly set forth, with additional information as to population, railway facilities, etc.

The annual of the Automobile Club de France marks with a little silhouetted knife and fork those establishments which deserve mention for their *cuisine*, and even marks good beds in a similar fashion. Clearly the makers of old-time guide-books must wake up, or everybody will take to automobiling, if only to have the right to demand one of these excellent guides. To be sure the same information might to a very considerable extent be included in the recognized guide-books; indeed Joanne's excellent series has in one or two instances added something of the sort in recent editions of their "Normandie" and "Provence," but each volume deals only with some special locality, whereas the Guide-Michelin deals with the whole of France, and the house also issues another covering Belgium, Holland, and the Rhine country.

The chief concern of the touring automobilist, after the pleasures of the road, is the choice of a hotel. The days when the diligences of Europe drew up before an old-time inn, with the sign of a pewter plate, an *écu d'or*, a holly branch, or a prancing white horse, have long since disappeared. The classic good cheer of other days, a fowl and a bottle of Beaune, a baron of beef and porter, or a carp and good Rhine wine have gone, too. The automobile traveller requires, if not a stronger fare, at least a more varied menu, as he does a more ample supply of water for washing.

These quaint old inns of other days, with fine mullioned windows, galleried courtyards, and vine-trellised façades, still exist here and there, but they have been much modernized, else they would not exist at all. There is not much romance in the make-up of the modern traveller, at least so far as his own comfort is concerned, and the tired automobilist who has covered two hundred kilometres of road, between lunch and dinner, requires something more heroic in the way of a bath than can be had in a tiny porcelain basin, and a more comfortable place to sit in than the average bar-parlour, such as he finds in most country inns in England.

As Sterne said: "They do things better in France," and the accommodation supplied the automobilist is there far ahead of what one gets elsewhere.

The hotel demanded by the twentieth-century traveller need not necessarily be a palace, but it must be something which caters to the advancing needs of the time in a more efficient manner than the country inn of the eighteenth century, when the only one who travelled in comfort was he who thrust himself upon the hospitality of friends.

We are living in a hygienic age, and to-day we are particular about things that did not in the least concern our forefathers. In England there is no public-spirited body which takes upon itself the task of pointing out the virtuous path to the country Boniface. The Automobile Club of Great Britain and Ireland has not succeeded very well with its task as yet and has not anything like the influence of its two sister organizations in France, or the very efficient Touring Club Italiano.

Hygiene does not necessarily go so far as to demand a doctor's certificate as to the health of the birds and animals which the *chef* presents so artistically in his celebrated *plats du jour*, and one need not take the *journaux comiques* too seriously, as once did a gouty *milord*, who insisted that his duckling Rouennais should, while alive, first be certificated as to the health of its *bronches* and *poumons*. All the same one likes to know that due regard is given to the proprieties and necessities of his bedroom, and to know that the kitchen is more or less a public apartment where one can see what is going on, which one can almost invariably do in France, in the country, at any rate. Therein lies one of the great charms of the French hotel.

One of the latest moves of the Automobile Club de France is to call attention to the mountainous districts of France, the Pyrenees, and the Jura, and to exploit them as rivals to Switzerland. Further, a competition among hotel-keepers has been started throughout France, and a prize of ten thousand francs is offered yearly to that hotel-keeper who has added most to the attractions of his house. The club authorities furnish expert advice and recommendations as to hotel reforms to any hotel-keeper who applies. In England the newly established "Road Club" might promote the interests of British motor tourists, and the large numbers of Americans and foreigners, by undertaking a similar work.

To a great extent the tourist, by whatever means of travel, must find his hotels out for himself. He cannot always follow a guide-book, and if he does he may find that the endorsement of an old edition is no longer merited.

By far the best hotel-guides for France, Belgium, and Holland, the Rhine, Switzerland, and Italy are the excellent *annuaires* of the Automobile Clubs and Touring Clubs, and the before-mentioned Guide-Michelin and "Guide-Routiere Continental," issued by the great pneumatic tire companies.

Hotel-finding abroad, for the stranger, is a more or less difficult process, or he makes it such. The crowded resorts do not give one a tithe of the character or local colour to be had from a stay in some little market-town inn of France or Germany. In the former, hotels are simply bad imitations of Parisian establishments, while the best are often off the beaten track in the small towns.

The question of tipping is an ever present one for the European traveller. It exists in Britain and Continental Europe to an increasing and exasperating extent, and the advent of the automobile has done nothing to lessen it.

There is no earthly, sensible logic which should induce a *garçon* in a hotel or restaurant to think that because one arrives in an automobile he wishes to dine in a special room off of rare viands and drink expensive wines, but this is his common conception of the automobile tourist. One fights up or down through the scale of hotel servants, and does his best to allay any false ideas they may have, including those of the hostler, who has done nothing for you, and expects his tip, too. It's an up-hill process, and the idea that every automobilist is a millionaire is everywhere dying hard.

The traveller demands not so much elegance as comfort, and, above all, fit accommodation for his automobile. Some sort of a light, airy, and clean closed garage is his right to demand, and the hotel that supplies this, as contrasted with the one that does not, gets the business, even if other things be *not* equal.

The requirements of an automobile *en tour* are almost as numerous and varied as those of its owner. Hence the hotel proprietor must, if he values this clientele, provide something a great deal better than a mere outhouse, an old untidy stable-yard, or a lean-to.

Small concern is it to mine host of the local inn, who is somewhat off the beaten track of motorcars, as to what really constitutes a garage. He usually does not even know what the word means.

Any roofed-over shed or shack, with doors or not, is what one generally has to put up with to-day, for housing his resplendent brassy and varnishy automobile.

Once the writer remembers being turned into an old stable (in England), the floor of which was strewn with the broken bottles of a defunct local mineral water industry, and again into another, used as a carpenter's shop, the floor strewn with the paraphernalia and tools of the trade.

If the English hotel-keeper (again they do things better on the Continent) only would discriminate to the extent of believing that there is nothing harmful or indecent about an automobile, and let it live in the coach-house like a respectable dog-cart or the orthodox brougham, all would be well, and we should save our tempers and a vast lot of gray matter in attempting to show a conservative landlord how far he is behind the times.

One other very important demand the automobilist makes of the hotel, and that is the possibility of being supplied with his coffee at any time after five in the morning. The automobile tourist, not of the butterfly order, is almost invariably an early bird.

Without question the Continental hotel of all ranks is vastly superior to similar establishments in Britain. The inferiority of the British inns may be due to tardiness and slothfulness on the part of the landlords, or long suffering and non-complaining on the part of their guests. It is either one or the other, or both, of these reasons, but the fact is the hotel-keeper, and his establishment as well, are each far inferior to those of Continental Europe.

Perhaps the real reason of the conservatism of the British hotel-keeper is yet to be fathomed, but it probably starts from the fact that he does not travel to learn. The young Swiss serves his apprenticeship, and learns French, as a waiter at Nice, just as he learns Italian at San Remo. Ten years later you may find him as the manager of a big hotel at home. He has learned his business by hard, disagreeable work. How many English hotel-keepers have imitated him? Another cause of backwardness in England is the "license" system, with its artificial augmentation of the value of all premises where alcoholic refreshment is provided. This tends to make the landlord look upon it as his chief, if not his sole, source of profit. Even if he serves meals at a fair price, he looks to the accompanying, or casual, drinks to pay him best. This results in indifferent and slovenly food-catering. The public bar, with its foul-mouthed loafers, – there seems to be an idea that one can talk in an English tavern as one would not in an English street, – is often within ear-shot of the dining-room. This is one of the great defects of the English hotel system, in all but the largest towns, and even there it is not wholly absent.

This is how the facts strike a foreigner, the Frenchman, the Dutchman, the Belgian, and the German, whose hotels and restaurants are, first of all, for quiet, ordinary guests, and only secondarily as places where liquid refreshment – alcoholic or otherwise – is served with equal alacrity, but without invidious distinction.

The old-time inns of England, and their very names, have a peculiar fascination for the stranger. Some of us who know them intimately, and who how what discomfort and inefficient catering may lurk behind such a picturesque nomenclature as the "Rose and Crown" or the "Hawthorne Inn," have a certain disregard for the romance of it all. If one is an automobilist he has all the more reason to take cognizance of their deficiencies.

All the same the mere mention of the old-time posting-houses of the "Bath Road," the "Great North Road" (particularly that portion between London and Cambridge along which Dick Turpin took his famous ride) have a glamour for us that even the automobile will not wholly extinguish. According to story it was at one of the many inns along the "Great North Road" that Turpin procured a bottle of wine, which once having passed down the throat of his famous "Black Bess" enabled the rascal to escape his pursuers. The automobilist will be fortunate if he can find gasoline along here to-day as easily as he can that peculiarly vile brand of beer known as "bitter."

Buntingford on the "North Road" has an inn, which, in a way, is trying to cope with the new conditions. The landlord of the "George and the Dragon" has come to a full realization that the

motor-car has well-nigh suppressed all other forms of road traffic for pleasure, and, more or less incompletely, he is catering for the wants of motorists, as did his predecessors for the traveller by posting-carriage or stage-coach. This particular landlord, though he looks like one of the old school, should be congratulated on a perspicuity which few of his confreres in England possess.

There are two other inns which travellers on the "North Road" will recognize as they fly past in their automobiles, or stop for tea or a bite to eat, for, in spite of their devotion to the traffic in beer, these "North Road" inns, within a radius of seventy-five or a hundred miles of London, seem more willing to furnish solid or non-alcoholic refreshment than most of their brethren elsewhere. The "Bell Inn" and the "Red, White, and Blue" (and the George and the Dragon) of the North Road in England deserve to linger in the memory of the automobilist, almost to the exclusion of any other English inns of their class.

With regard to hotel charges for all classes of travellers, as well in England as on the Continent, there is an undoubted upward tendency which the automobile has done absolutely nothing to allay. One good is coming to pass, however, and that is uniformity of price for the class of accommodation offered, and (in France and most other Continental countries) the absolute abolition of the charge for "lights and service," an abominable and outrageous practice which still lingers in England – and for that matter Scotland and Ireland.

The discussion of the subject has been worn threadbare, and it is useless to enter further into it here, save to remark that since the automobile is bringing about so many reforms and improvements perhaps the abolition of this species of swindling on the part of the British hotel-keeper will disappear along with antiquated sanitary arrangements and uncomfortable closed-in beds.

In France – thanks again to the indefatigable Touring Club de France – they have eliminated this charge for service and lights entirely, and one generally finds hanging behind the door the little card advocated by the Touring Club, stating clearly the charge for that particular room and the price of the various things offered in the way of accommodation. This ought to be demanded, by law, of every hotel-keeper. Not every hotel in France has fallen in line, but those that have are reaping the benefit. The automobilist is a good advertiser of what he finds *en route* that pleases him, and scores pitilessly – to other automobilists – everything in the nature of a swindle that he meets with, and they are not few, for in many places the automobilist is still considered fair game for robbery.

As to the fare offered in English inns, as compared with that of the Continental hotel, the least said the better; the subject has been gone over again and again, so it shall not be reiterated here, save to quote Pierre Loti on what one eats for an English dinner.

"We were assembled round a horrible bill of fare, which would not be good enough for one of our humblest cook-shops. But the English are extraordinary folk. When I saw the reappearance, for the fourth time, of the fatal dish of three compartments, for badly boiled potatoes, for peas looking poisonously green, and for cauliflower drenched with a glue-like substance, I declined, and sighed for Poledor, who nourished my studious youth on a dainty repast at a shilling per day."

The modern tourist, and especially the tourist by automobile, has done more for the improved conduct of the wayside hotel, and even those of the large towns, than whole generations of travellers of a former day.

Once the hotel drew its income from the hiring-out of posting-horses, and the sale of a little food and much wine. As the old saying goes: "Four horses and four bottles of port went together in the account of every gentleman." Travellers of those days, if comparatively few, were presumably wealthy. To-day no one, save the vulgar few, ever cares that the innkeeper, or the servants, should suspect him of being wealthy.

It's a failing of the Anglo-Saxon race, however, to want to be taken for bigger personages than they really are, and often enough they pay for the privilege. This is only natural, seeing that even an innkeeper is human. Charges suitable for a *milord* or a millionaire have been inflicted on Browns, Joneses, and Robinsons simply because they demanded such treatment – for fear they would not

be taken for "gentlemen." Such people are not numerous among real traveling automobilists; they are mostly found among that class who spend the week-end at Brighton, or dine at Versailles or St. Germain or "make the fête" at Trouville. They are known instinctively by all, and are only tolerated by the hotel landlord for the money they spend.

The French cook's "*batterie de cuisine*" is a thing which is fearfully and wonderfully displayed in all the splendour of polished steel and copper; that is, it is frequently so displayed in the rather limited acquaintance which the general public has with the *cuisine* of a great hotel or restaurant, whether it be in Paris, London, or New York.

In provincial France it is quite another thing. The *chef-patron* of a small hotel in a small town may be possessed of an imposing battery of pots and pans, but often, since he buys his *pâtisserie* and sweetmeats of the local pastry-cook, and since his guests may frequently not number a dozen at a time, he has no immediate use for all of his *casseroles* and *marmites* and *plats ronds* and *sauteuses* at one time, and accordingly, instead of being picturesquely hung about the wall in all their polished brilliancy, they are frequently covered with a coating of dull wax or, more banal yet, enveloped in an ancient newspaper with only their handles protruding. It's a pity to spoil the romantically picturesque idea which many have of the French *batterie de cuisine*, but the before-mentioned fact is more often the case than not.

Occasionally, on the tourist-track, there is a "show hotel," like the Hôtel du Grand Cerf at Louviers (its catering in this case is none the worse for its being a "show-place," it may be mentioned) where all the theatrical picturesqueness of the imagination may be seen. There is the timbered sixteenth-century house-front, the heavily beamed, low ceiling of the *cuisine*, the great open-fire chimney with its *broche*, and all the brave showing of pots and pans, brilliant with many scrubblings of *eau de cuivre*, to present quite the ideal picture of its kind to be seen in France – without leaving the highroads and searching out the "real thing" in the byways.

On the other hand, in the same bustling town, is the Mouton d'Argent, equally as excellent in its catering (perhaps more so), where the kitchen is about the most up-to-date thing imaginable, with a modern range, mechanical egg-beaters, etc. This last is nothing very wonderful to an American, but is remarkable in France, where the average cook usually does the work quite as efficiently with a two-tined fork, or something which greatly resembles a chop-stick.

In the *cuisine* electric lights are everywhere, but the up-to-dateness here stops abruptly; the *salle à manger* is bare and uninviting, and the rooms above equally so, and the electric light has not penetrated beyond the ground floor. Instead one finds ranged on the mantel, above the cook-stove in the kitchen, a regiment of candlesticks, in strange contrast to the rest of the furnishings. Electric bells, too, are wanting, and there is still found the row of jangling *grelots*, their numbers half-obliterated, hanging above the great doorway leading to the courtyard.

The European waiter is never possessed of that familiarity of speech with those he serves, which the American negro waiter takes for granted is his birthright. It's all very well to have a cheerful-countenanced waiter bobbing about behind one's chair, indeed it's infinitely more inspiring than such of the old brigade of mutton-chopped English waiters as still linger in some of London's City eating-houses, but the disposition of the coffee-coloured or coal-black negro to talk to you when you do not want to be talked to should be suppressed.

The genuine French, German, or Swiss waiter of hotel, restaurant, or café is neither too cringingly servile, nor too familiar, though always keen and agile, and possessed of a foresight and initiative which anticipates your every want, or at any rate meets it promptly, even if you ask for it in boarding-school French or German.

There is a keen supervision of food products in France, by governmental inspection and control, and one is certain of what he is getting when he buys his *filet* at the butcher's, and if he patronizes hotels and restaurants of an approved class he is equally sure that he is eating beef in his *bouille* and mutton in his *ragoût*.

Horse-meat is sold largely, and perhaps certain substitutes for rabbit, but you only buy horsemeat at a horse butcher's, so there is no deception here. You buy horse-meat as horse-meat, and not as beef, in the same way that you buy oleomargarine as oleomargarine, and not as butter, and the French law deals hardly with the fraudulent seller of either.

The law does not interfere with one's private likes and dislikes, and if you choose to make your breakfast off of oysters and Crème Chantilly – as more than one American has been known to do on the Paris boulevards – there is no law to stop you, as there is in Germany, if you want beer and fruit together. Doubtless this is a good law; it sounds reasonable; but the individual should have sense enough to be able to select a menu from non-antagonistic ingredients.

Foreigners, by which English and Americans mean people of Continental Europe, know vastly more of the art of catering to the traveller than do Anglo-Saxons. This is the first, last, and intermediate verse of the litany of good cheer. We may catch up with our Latin and Teuton brothers, or we may not. Time will tell, if we don't expire from the over-eating of pie and muffins before that time arrives.

Chapter V

The Grand Tour

The advantages of touring by automobile are many: to see the country, to travel agreeably, to be independent of railways, and to be an opportunist – that is to say to be able to fly off at a tangent of fifty or a hundred kilometres at a moment's notice, in order to take in some fête or fair, or celebration or pilgrimage.

"*Le tourisme en automobile*" is growing all over the world, but after all it is generally only in or near the great cities and towns that one meets an automobile on the road. They hug the great towns and their neighbouring resorts with astonishing persistency. Of the one thousand automobiles at Nice in the season it is certain that nine-tenths of the number that leave their garages during the day will be found sooner or later on the famous "Corniche," going or coming from Monte Carlo, instead of discovering new tracks for themselves in the charming background of the foot-hills of the Maritime Alps.

In England, too, the case is not so very different. There are a thousand "week-enders" in automobiles on the way to Brighton, Southsea, Bournemouth, Scarborough, or Blackpool to ten genuine tourists, and this even though England and Wales and Scotland form a snug little touring-grounds with roads nearly, if not always, excellent, and with accommodations – of a sort – always close at hand.

In Germany there seems to be more genuine touring, in proportion to the number of automobiles in use, than elsewhere. This may not prove to be wholly the case, as the author judges only from his observations made on well-worn roads.

Switzerland is either all touring, or not at all; it is difficult to decide which. At any rate most of the strangers within its frontiers are tourists, and most of the tourists are strangers, and many of them take their automobiles with them in spite of the "feeling" lately exhibited there against stranger automobilists.

Belgium and Holland, as touring-grounds for automobilists, do not figure to any extent. This is principally from the fact that they are usually, so far as foreign automobilists are concerned, included in more comprehensive itineraries. They might be known more intimately, to the profit of all who pass through them. They are distinctly countries for leisurely travel, for their areas are so restricted that the automobilist who covers two or three hundred kilometres in the day will hardly remember that he has passed through them.

Northern Italy forms very nearly as good a touring-ground as France, and the Italian engineers have so refined the automobile of native make, and have so fostered automobilism, that accommodations are everywhere good, and the tourist to-day will not lack for supplies of *benzina* and *olio* as he did a few years ago.

The bulk of the automobile traffic between France and Italy enters through the gateway of the Riviera, and, taken all in all, this is by far the easiest, and perhaps the most picturesque, of routes. Alternatives are through Gap and Cuneo, Briançon and Susa, Moutiers and Aosta, or by the Swiss passes, the latter perhaps the most romantic of routes in spite of their difficulties and other objections.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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