

# "The Marvelous Vogue of the Automobile," August 24, 1899

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*Fulfillment of Mother Shipton's Prophecy That "Carriages Without Horses Shall Go."*

NEW YORK CITY (Special).--The foretold time when "carriages without horses shall go" has come, and the end of the century finds the self-propelling vehicle an established factor of every-day life. This is demonstrated by the organization of the Automobile club of America for the development of the motor-carriage as a source of sport and pleasure, the formation of a gigantic trust for the commercial exploitation of electric street traction in this country, and the laying of plans for an international race between French and American automobiles--all events of the past few weeks.

So quickly do the new things become old, and so readily do people adapt themselves to the marvelous contrivances which modern inventive ingenuity has devised, that the automobile, but a brief time ago unknown, no longer arouses more than a passing curiosity. And yet it is one of the most interesting of latter-day inventions of the annihilation of space and time. In spite of its comparative youth, it may be found everywhere--in Paris, France, and in Paris, Ky. It adapts itself to a multitude of needs, for it may be my lady's victoria or the butcher's cart. It hauls packages and passengers. It runs over country-roads and city asphalt. It diversifies life by the sea and it makes the city streets more interesting than ever. It may be bought, hired or borrowed. It eats no oats or hay, but it may subsist on electricity or feed on petroleum or gasoline. It is good at sprinting or at long-distance travels. It climbs hills, speeds over flat surfaces and it may even turn flip-flaps, as the recent experience of a young experimenter at Newport has demonstrated.

Altogether the automobile, in its various manifestations and uses, is an exceedingly versatile and useful thing. In some respects it has threatened to supersede the horse, that faithful animal which has so many times been turned out to die, only to be resurrected to a career or prolonged usefulness. The horse is still with us, and the automobile promises to occupy a very large place in the activities of men, but there is no warfare between the two. It is not possible that the horse will disappear or revert to the five-toed thing he was in remote periods of the world's life. There will always be a field for the horse, at least to browse in, if not for many of the uses for which man has found him indispensable. So that in celebrating the vogue of the automobile there is no reason to chant an elegy of the horse. There are many who will take to the new form of propulsion; there are others who will never forsake the horse.

Some conception of the marvelous expansion of the automobile idea may be gathered from the casual announcement that a contract has recently been made for the manufacture of 4200 electric vehicles, or automobiles, involving an expenditure of over \$8,000,000. That is a large amount for investment, especially in a new enterprise, but if it proves anything, it proves that the automobile is no inconsiderable factor in modern life, and that the making and using of electric cabs and carts have assumed vast proportions.

A motor carriage is expensive to begin with; but, taking into consideration that there are no horses to be bought with it, the extra cost is more apparent than real. An electric cab costs some fifteen hundred dollars to build, and the more delicate and elegant private vehicles run up into the thousands. But the expense of operation is slight. A charge of electricity for one run may be had for sixty cents. The gasoline for an eleven hundred mile trip, made by a motor-carriage from Cleveland, Ohio, to New York recently, cost less than six dollars; and William G. Tiffany relates that the fuel for a two days' journey through Toraine cost him but three dollars.

M. Charron, of Paris, who was challenged [sic] to an international automobile race by Alexander Winton, recently proposed a stake of one hundred thousand francs, the object being to demonstrate the possibilities of American and foreign made machines.

For the future, the automobile holds out the promise of a city practically free from the maddening street noises that make modern urban existence more or less a torture. Cobble pavements are laid to resist metal tires and the pounding of steel-shod horses. With every vehicle motor-driven, and every wheel pneumatic-tired, all pavements can be of asphalt. Not only will the rumbling of heavy trucks and the clatter of hoof-beats disappear, but there will be no more tracks to cut up the streets, since electric omnibuses, carrying as many people of today, will and moving as swiftly as the electric cars take the place of street railways. Having already conquered the rail, electricity will then have made itself master of the highway as well. Rapid transit for long distances being supplied by electric trains in clean, cool brilliantly-lighted subways, the elevated roads will be no more. The removal of the horse from the streets will not only make them noiseless, but will practically solve the problem of street-cleaning, and greatly improve the sanitary conditions of urban life, reducing the amount of street refuse to a minimum. With clean, smooth thoroughfares, through which swift, air-shod, easy-riding vehicles dart noiselessly, it will no longer be necessary to seek the country for rest and quiet.

Once the horseless age is in full away, every man will have his own automobile, and the bicycle, which has already, to some extent, supplanted the horse, will in turn be shelved, save for purposes of sport. With the universal development of sources of supply of electricity, the electromobile will take the place of all other forms of traction, and plugs will be provided in the streets from which the automobilist may take his supply of power by a nickle-in-the-slot device, while along rural highways power stations will be established so that journeys of any distance may be undertaken. Even on the farm, autowains will do the heavy burden carrying. The horse may still be harnessed to the plow, may still furnish sport on the race-course and riding exercise of the few, but no longer will he be the chief bearer of man's burdens. Who will say he has not earned rest?

The General Postoffice automobile mail carts are being subjected to a severe test by the postal authorities of London, and it is believed that they will be put in general use. Those who have watched the new vehicle say they are faster than any that have yet been tried. Their appearance is up to date in every way.

Imagine a wagon, not unlike the mail wagons of New York with an immense [sic] hood over the driver's seat, and back of it another case of handsomely polished wood, which is used for the supplementary mails.

The front wheels of the wagon are small enough to swing under the body of the vehicle. They work on a pivot and the wagon can be turned almost in its own length. It is the facility with which these wagons can be sent around a corner or worked through a winding lane between lines of other wagons and drays that makes the new motor cart valuable.

Automobilists in this country are greatly interested in the attempt of Mr. and Mrs. John D. Davis to make the run to San Francisco in a motor carriage. Their automobile resembles a road phaeton. The motor is concealed under the seat. The driver sits on the left of the seat. With his right hand he controls the direction of the vehicle. Two levers on his left regulate the speed. The automobile must be supplied with gasoline and water every few miles.