

AUTO IS USED BY AUTHORS

Popularity of Motoring Is Reflected in Modern Novels, Short Stories and to Even Greater Degrees on Stage.

BY LEONE CASS BARN.
WITH the advent of the automobile, several years ago, a new school of fiction came into existence, and its establishment has been celebrated ever since in song, play, musical comedy, poetry and near-poetry.

Most of the "six best sellers" now utilize the motor car between every other page—and in many instances the entire plot hinges upon one of these delightful pleasure vehicles. Even the cheaper novels and stories revel largely in printed ownership of touring cars, taxicabs and runabouts. Lady Vera Vere de Plunk commands her almost French maid to command the butler to command the lengthy retinue of other lackeys (only found in novels and newspaper accounts of English nobility) to "fetch her other-mo-bile," just as nonchalantly as the golden-haired heroine in one of the "six best sellers" goes out to the garage and harnesses up her own red devil.

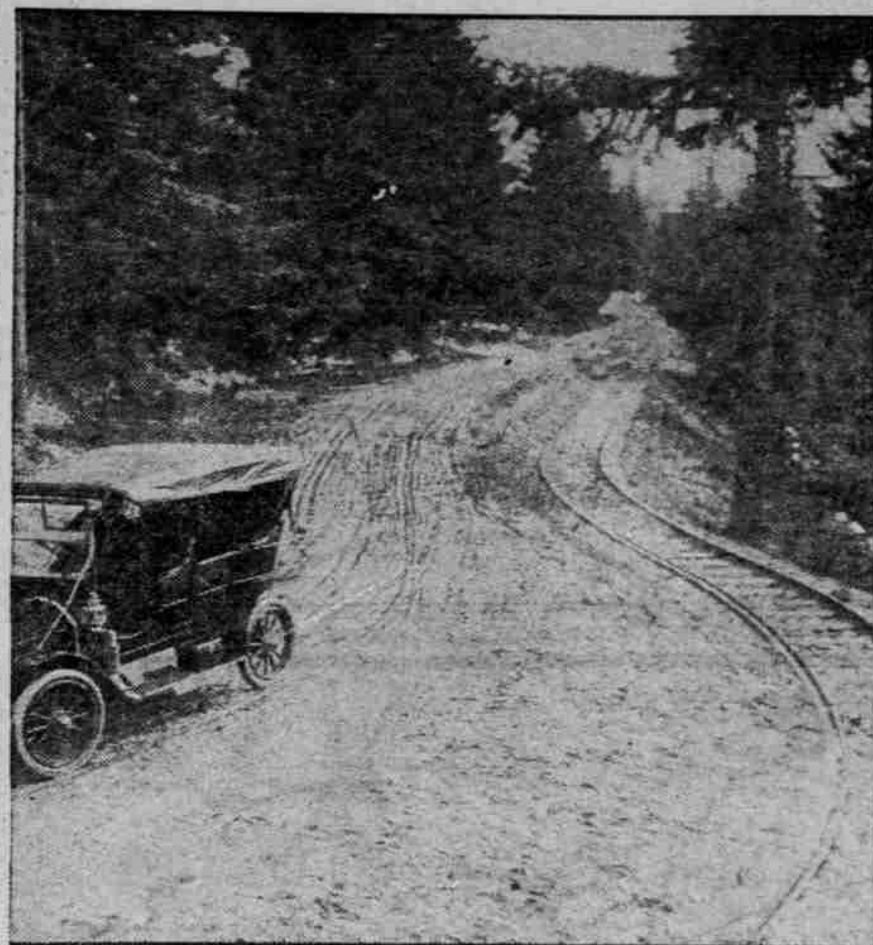
In the works of Robert W. Chambers, the auto figures prominently, as it does also in the "Lightning Conductor." Even in the shorter magazine articles, novelettes and serial stories of popular fiction the ones that find greatest favor with the reading masses are those with auto races, accidents, exciting rides, chases and motor jargon in them.

In days long since the poor little heroine, clad always in a long dark cloak and carrying a small satchel, kissed the family portraits and stole softly out the back area or the fire escape, to where the brave hero awaited her with a hired horse and rig from the nearby livery stable. Sometimes they eloped on horseback, oftentimes by means of the modern street-cars. Always in these long-ago run-arounds in novels the rain fell pitilessly and the wind sighed in the pine trees.

Now, thanks to the invention of the buzz-wagon, all is changed. Lizzie trips gaily out in midday, clad in a snakeskin motor coat, goggles and headgear so effectual it almost deceives even her up-to-date lover as to her identity. In a grand big car, which Harold has rented, purchased or pilfered, the twain merrily exceed the speed limit while fat papa and the "sho-fur" give the pair a hot chase, while the wind gaily sings a melody from "Lohengrin" and the horizon looks like a moving picture.

In the long ago novels, all the boarders at the farmhouse went in wagons or on horseback, to all sorts of gatherings, berry pickings, corn huskings, quilting, literary and debating societies in the schoolhouse on the hill, and on picnics during the summer season of the year. The gay old gasoline cart has supplanted all these dissipation, and now the farmer's daughter probably runs her own machine, and charges the festive erstwhile paying guest a slight wherewithal for taking a spin about the hills and dales.

But nowhere as in song and musical comedy has the automobile been so much in evidence. Every other ditty we hear these recent days has the joy gig for a motif. As the old ones die out, new ones come in and fit right into the niche. Since Arabella has ceased pounding "In my merry Olds-mo-bile" on her installment-plan piano, we still hear its sweet suggestiveness in the doubtful strains of the street musician (spare the word) and the drink-inducing hurdy-gurdy. Every time I go to a new musical comedy (or since there are no new ones, a



SCENIC HIGHWAY ON PORTLAND HEIGHTS, ONE OF CITY'S POPULAR AUTO COURSES.

salad of some old one) I fully expect to hear a song or chorus about an automobile, and if I don't hear it I have a temperamental grouch for a week. Sometimes the big car itself comes smothering onto the stage—as in the "Vanderbilt Cup" and many others. In "The Bishop's Carriage" a motor car plays a prominent part, besides other productions too numerous to mention. One might safely say, in every play—for if the auto itself is not actually in evidence, we hear all the characters, including the cook-lady and the chambermaid, talking about the "machine." The butler of ten years ago used to enter majestically and announce "The carriage waits, muh Lord"—(vision in distance of footman in grand livery.)

Nowadays the butler enters, even more majestically since motors are more distinguished than horses, and says instead, "The motor waits, muh Lord." (Vision in distance of mummylike chauffeur in goggles and oilskin head-gear.)

Even Sherlock Holmes, who always "jumped into a waiting carriage" or "summoned a hack and was driven hastily to the scene of the eight horrible murders"—nowadays, according to the historian of this wonderful gent of "wonderful" deeds—"summons a

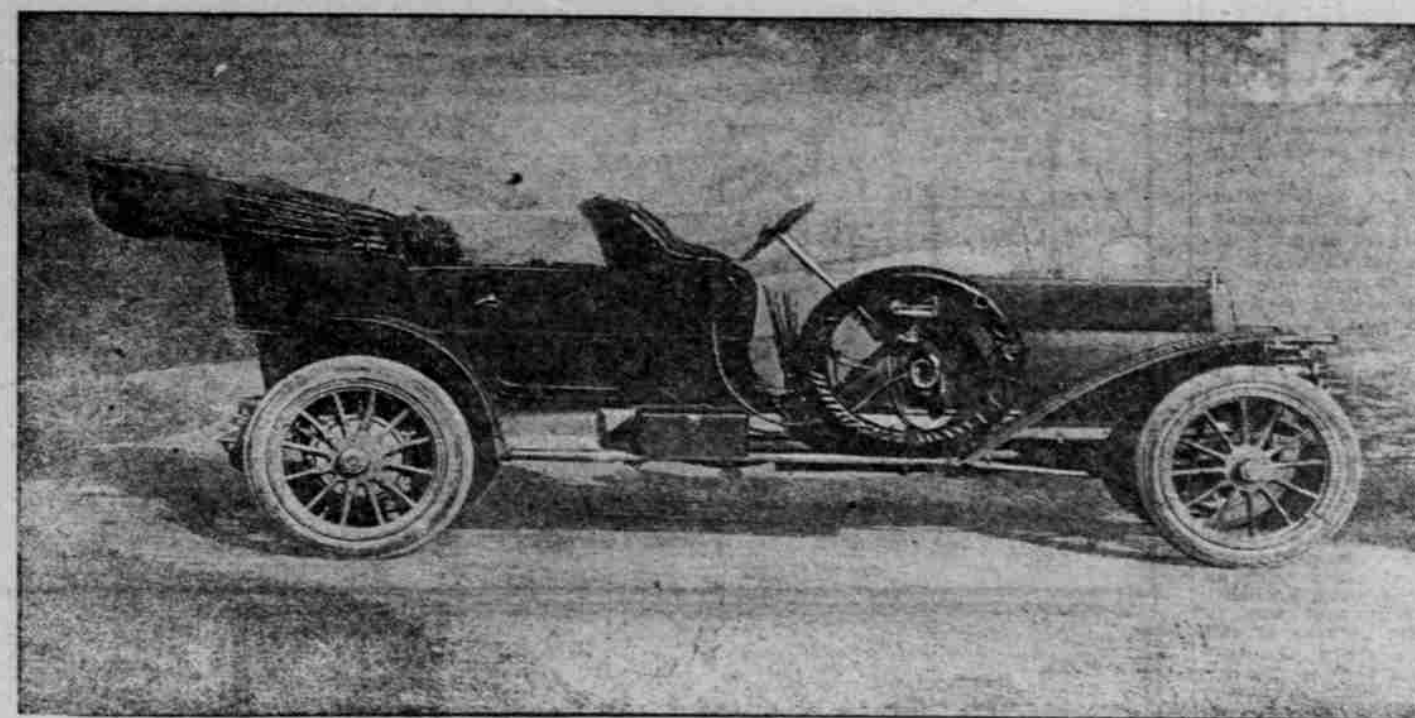
taxicab" or "jumps into his motor car" and is at the scene of the eight horrible murders before the murderers and murderesses get away from the place of their crime, or at least he arrives in time to measure the exact space they occupied in the atmosphere and land them all in jail before night-fall.

I, for one, am sorry the airship is being born. The automobile in song and poetry is so much more satisfying, and no matter how much moth-eaten the jingle may become, or how hackneyed the words or stilted the style—the motif is always the same nice, swift, thrill-producing, smelly benzine buggy.

Belgium's Automobile Trade.

During the year 1908 the little kingdom of Belgium imported 204 automobiles, valued at 1,409,187 francs, and parts valued at 2,063,444 francs, as compared with 255 cars valued at 1,555,106 francs, and parts valued at 2,821,652 francs in 1907. Of the cars imported in 1908, 152 were from France, 26 from Germany, 10 from Holland and six from England. Belgium exported in 1908, 492 automobiles valued at 5,917,525 francs, and parts valued at 5,316,798 francs, as compared with 454 cars valued at 5,721,447 francs, and parts valued at 5,269,973 francs in 1907.

Of the cars exported by Belgium in 1908, 155 went to England, 112 to Germany, 41 to France, 39 to Holland, six to Italy and one to United States. It will be seen from the above figures that the exports of Belgium were slightly greater in 1908 than the previous year, while the imports were slightly smaller.



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