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THE day of the horse is passing away. Already the practical demonstration of the faithful equine might be said to be taking place, and before another century shall have elapsed he may have become a zoological curiosity. His venerable bones will be soon mounted and on exhibition in museums. The small boy of the twentieth century will wonder what sort of animal Bucephalus really was and will marvel at the fact that he was once harnessed and made to haul heavy loads.

The beginning of the end was in sight when electricity first supplanted the horse as a means of propulsion for street cars. Then the bicycle craze sprang at once into popular favor and rendered still more limited the uses of our once essential quadruped.

But now still greater changes are taking place. The introduction of the automobile on streets of American cities is slowly but surely driving out the old fashioned hansom and the two horse brougham, and now even the horse team and the long overworked draft horse are to become "things that were."

The recent formation of a company in New York city with a capital of some $100,000,000 to exploit compressed air as a motive power for all trucking and carting business in Greater New York shows still again how surely the reign of the horse is passing away. He will of course continue, for a time at least, to remain the pet and the trained speaking animal of the wealthy in the city and the helpful friend of the more humble farmer in the country. But as time goes on and urban population becomes more and more dense it will be seen to be even more necessary in order to obviate congestion of traffic in city streets and to maintain a proper degree of sanitation and cleanliness to allow only self propelling vehicles on the public streets of our towns and cities.

The outcome of this will be a vast improvement in the condition and smoothness of all city streets, the abolition of the objectionable cobblestones as paving material and the elimination of the most piercing noises which now make a pandemonium of the average metropolitan thoroughfare.

It is true, motor vehicles for pleasure, public and business purposes have been somewhat slow of adoption in this country. The horse has held his own here with remarkable pertinacity, for it has been in European cities, and particularly in Paris, that the automobile industry has flourished to the greatest extent. The principal reason why Americans have been in no undue haste to adopt motor carriages is the fact that mechanically these have not hitherto been sufficiently developed to render them acceptable for general use. The motive power employed in most of them has been unsatisfactory because of lack of efficiency in some cases and extravagant expense of operation in others. But American brains and American energy have been at work on the problem for the last few years, with the result that the objections referred to have been practically removed.

The general public, as a rule, has not the opportunity of seeing the gradual and laborious approach to perfection of any important mechanical invention. This same general public is usually astounded at the miraculous appearance of some new wonder, while the men who have been laboring for years to bring about this apparent mechanical miracle foresaw the inevitable long before the busy world had thought of such a thing. For some time now jokes have been made about the passing of the horse, but until the last year or so it was never really thought that the period of equine usefulness had so nearly approached its close.

It was vaguely felt that changes might come about in time, for the idea of mechanical instead of animal traction power is as old as the history of human thought itself. Even Homer himself describes the god Vulcan as being engaged upon the construction of a great hall on wheels, which he describes as "self moving and wonderful," and Jane is made to compound Vulcan to create tripods which shall run by themselves, thus understanding better service to the gods in their meetings on Mount Olympus.

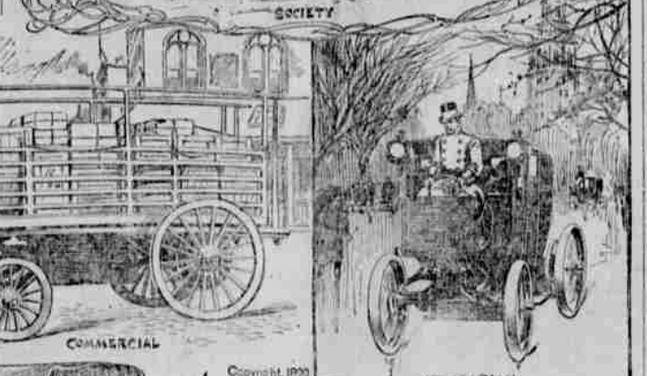
In the thirteenth century the Dominican philosopher Roger Bacon wrote one of his works, "Their will make carriages which will run with the greatest inestimable swiftness without any harnessed beasts whatever."

The earliest horseless carriage which is preserved today is one now on exhibition in Paris at the Conservatoire des Arts et Metiers. This machine was invented by Cugnot in 1769 and was made to operate by steam, the energy of which was applied through two perpendicular piston rods. The principal reason perhaps why the French steam automobile was not brought to a state of comparative perfection during the last century was the beginning of the revolution. The turbulence which accompanied that great authority turned men's minds from peaceful and civilizing pursuits to thoughts of warfare and the deposing of monarchs. But it was in all likelihood from the Cugnot steam carriage that Stephenson subsequently obtained his idea for a locomotive on rails.

At the Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1878 a steam automobile was exhibited very like that of Cugnot, the only difference being that the frame of the more modern vehicle was built after the plan of a common road carriage and not as a velocipede. This automobile, however, was not a very satisfactory machine, and it was not until 12 years later that MM. Serpollet and Archebaron invented a steam automobile, with which they journeyed from Paris to Lyons in ten days. In 1894 the automobile first gave promise of actual adaptability for general transportation and traction purposes. In that year the editor of the Petit Journal organized the first automobile race, which was run from Paris to Rouen. In this contest the steam horseless carriage, while proving most cumbersome, noisy and smooth in appearance, showed itself superior to its electrical and gasoline propelled rivals of that time. The following year another race was run, this time from Paris to Bordeaux and return, but in this test it was the electrical carriage that proved itself the superior machine.

Up to this time the construction of these carriages had been confined along the safe lines of a buggy or four wheeled cart instead of seeking an individuality for themselves through designs more fitting to their peculiar qualities. Today, however, it might be said that they have evolved an individuality of their own. Automobile mechanics is an art the study of which is only understood by those who are of the profession.

But one of the great difficulties that still face the constructors of horseless carriages is the provision of repairs. A Parisian made automobile victoria, for instance, costs some $900 and an automobile tricycle $700. The heavier carriages are proportionately expensive. This continuous of manufacture, however, is a drawback that time will put right, just as has been the case with the bicycle. But while the initial outlay for an automobile is still very large this is more than compensated for by the insignificant extent of operating expenses, the fact for the petroleum propelled vehicles cost only 1½ cents per mile.



NUGGETS FROM EVERYWHERE.

Senator Simon of Oregon has been taking hasty lessons. "Are you improving?" some one asked him recently. "Either that or the neighbors are getting more used to it," he replied.

Senator Turpie of Indiana says he never carried a watch because people used to bother him so by asking the time. "I thought I'd try my turn at bothering somebody else," says the senator.

"I suffer a great deal from cold," said Senator Chandler of New Hampshire recently, "but I don't know whether it is because I really feel it more or just because I make more fuss about it."

Joseph H. Choate says that once, as a Harvard student, he went into a Boston chop house and seated himself at a table where two gentlemen were seated. "Waiter, bring me some," said Mr. Choate. "Oh, no, sir," said Mr. Black, "the order of lunch" said the waiter.

Congressman Elect John L. Burnett of Alabama, who will probably be the smallest man in the next house, is an able lawyer. When he first appeared before the supreme court of Alabama to argue a case, he stood up behind a high bench on which lawyers were accustomed to lay their books and papers. "May it please the court," began the diminutive counsel, when the chief justice broke in: "Mr. Burnett, it is the custom of lawyers to rise while addressing this court."

Once, on a visit at a country house, a lady asked Richard Brinsley Sheridan to take a long walk with him. Sheridan made an excuse of the weather, saying it was scarcely pleasant enough for a walk. An hour later the lady interrupted a lengthy discussion between Sheridan and the author of "Rob Roy" by the remark, "May it please the author, this gentleman insists that it is raining hard outside." Sheridan, without pausing in his argument, replied, "Madam, I beg your pardon, I had forgotten that I promised you a walk."

Everyday Use of Homing Pigeons.

The carrier pigeon has become recognized as an important aid in the collection of news by evening newspapers in the British isles. For newspaper purposes there is not much advantage in flying birds from great distances, as they are seldom used for carrying messages farther than 20 or 25 miles.

Some of the evening papers in the British provinces possess birds that are noted, some of them having good records. The Edinburgh Evening Dispatch has a notable lot of birds, and they are found an immense aid in the particular duty allotted to them—the carrying to the office of reporters' copy from the many cricket, golf, football and sporting fields that encircle the city, and which, with one or two exceptions, are not in connection with either telegraph or telephone systems.

Every Saturday, which is the great day for sports in the Edinburgh district, as many as 30 or 40 of these birds are requisitioned to do messenger. On the morning of the days when they are to be worked they are spiritedly fed. Like schoolboys, liberated from school, pigeons, if they are hungry, will hurry home, and when they do arrive there is always a good feed of peas or corn awaiting them.

The reporter writes his copy on what is known as "flimsy"—a light oiled paper—and uses carbonized paper to obtain a duplicate. The copy is attached to the leg of the bird by means of elastic bands. At the football or cricket matches the timings of the birds from time to time are always watched by the crowds with great interest.

The arrangement at the newspaper offices for trapping the birds and taking the copy is rather ingenious. There is a clear fly in for the pigeons through a movable plate, which, when adjusted, leads into a small, well lighted compartment in the loft. The floor of this small chamber is a movable plate, nicely adjusted, so that the moment the pigeon alights on it two things occur. The weight of the bird liberates a catch and a wire partition noiselessly falls and shuts the unfortunate bird in. At the same time an electric circuit is formed and a bell rings in the subeditor's room to give notice of the arrival of the bird. The pigeon is then its own jailer and herald.

Should Lawyers Wear Gowns?

The legal fraternity of New York is in the throes of a great discussion—to wear or not to wear gowns. Judges in various courts do already don these robes of office, but it is now proposed that all lawyers, when appearing, shall put them on.

The majority of the lawyers are in favor of the innovation, and a great many have declared it to be their intention to wear gowns in future, whether ordered to do so or not.

They say that the appearance of lawyers in court dressed in solemn robes will add much to the dignity of the place and will have the effect of making the public respect the courts much more than at present.

One well known lawyer in New York expressed the opinion of a great number of his colleagues when he said:

"Too much dignity cannot be added to a judicial proceeding, particularly in courts having to do with human liberty and human life. I believe that lawyers should be robed inasmuch as they are officers of the court. It does not seem proper that a prosecuting officer should move the court, that death sentence be imposed when dressed in a light suit of clothes and wearing a red neckties. I once saw such an occurrence."

A Sacrificing Woman.

In a little village in the wilds of west Africa Miss Slessor, a Scotch missionary, has lived for 16 years without European companionship and has devoted herself entirely to civilizing the natives. When Miss Slessor first settled among them, she found that the most curious and cruel customs were practiced. For instance, if a woman gave birth to twins, the babies were at once destroyed, and their mother was driven out into the forest, there to perish of hunger. Thanks to Miss Slessor's influence, this practice has been abandoned. At first she used to undertake the care of mothers and babies threatened with this terrible fate, but now her work is less.

In order to benefit the natives, Miss Slessor felt that she must know them, and to do so thoroughly she must live among them. This she did, and she also took infinite pains to learn their language. Then she taught them the art of building, first building her own house to serve as a model.

The bravery and patience shown by Miss Slessor are most remarkable and have borne good fruit. At the present time she is considered the queen and prophetess of the district, is consulted in all important matters by the people and is universally respected.

Famous Landmarks May Collapse.

The bridge of Sighs in Venice is in danger of collapse.

This structure, famous in prose and poetry, may at any time fall and disappear in the dark waters of the canal it spans unless the Italian government officials take active steps to secure the noted state craft.

The Bridge of Sighs connects the palace of the doges with the cannot, or prisons, and the foundations on both sides are crumbling. The bridge dates from 1597. It is a graceful arch 27 feet above the water, with a roof of lead and arched overhead. It contains two separate passages, through which persons were led for trial or judgment.

The poetic sentiment attached to the bridge which gave it the famous name arose from a belief that many a political prisoner, innocent of wrongdoing, had had over the span. Those who went to the dungeons far below the nearby waters, whence there was no escape. So damp and foul are these cells that they are called "wells." Byron, who put them in his "Pictures From Italy," standing on the famous bridge, Byron wrote his splendid poem on the rise and fall of Venice.

Another notable structure in Italy that is said to be endangered by increasing plans of improvements is the Ponte Vecchio, in Florence. This is the most picturesque of Florentine bridges and was built by Taddeo Gaddi in the fourteenth century. Here the goldsmiths have their shops. In the middle of the bridge an open loggia gives views up and down the river.

Should either of the famous landmarks be destroyed the loss could never be repaired.

India Rubber.

A recent report from a British consul in one of the Central American states gives the information that the origin of the name rubber, as applied to caoutchouc. An English artist discovered in 1770 that the new gum was admirably adapted for rubbing out pencil marks. He wrote a paper on the subject and informed his contemporaries that a cubic inch of the substance, costing only 2 shillings, would last for years. It was used for no other purpose in England than effacing bad pencil marks for about half a dozen years, when it began to be called "rubber." After the introduction of the raw material and the scientific disentuition of the plant by Fresnelson it was first manufactured into waterproof clothing in France toward the end of the eighteenth century. Later on the firm of McIntosh of Manchester greatly improved on the French idea and manufactured waterproofs on a large scale, and "mackintosh" is the name by which waterproofs have been known since that time.

General Wheeler says that during the past war he used the same spurs he wore in the civil war.

"Why could get the young beggar started?"

The late Senator Morrill, though he probably took up less space in The Congressional Record than any of his colleagues, always made a speech early in the session and sent a copy bound in Russia leather to every senator and a paper bound copy to every voter in Vermont.

A good story is told by Rudyard Kipling at his own expense. During his stay in Wiltshire, England, one summer he met little Dorothy Drew, Mr. Gladstone's granddaughter, and, being very fond of children, took her in the grounds and told her stories. After a time Mrs. Drew, fearing that Mr. Kipling must be tired of the child, called her and said, "Now, Dorothy, I hope you have not been wearying Mr. Kipling?" "Oh, not a bit, mother," replied the small celebrity, "but he has been wearying me."