



First Boy: "I hear that there's a new disease in Pittsburgh."

Second Boy: "Is that so? What's it called?"

First Boy: "Automobiliousness."

AUTOMOBILIOUSNESS

TEXT BY MARY STUHLDTREHER

PICTURES BY KATHY WEBER

THE opening of Grant (Bigelow) Boulevard and a publicity campaign by William T. Mossman, the editor of a weekly social journal, the *Index of Pittsburg Life*, were responsible for the outbreak of the so-called disease, "Automobiliousness," in the spring of 1901.

His campaign began with a real shocker — the appointment of a woman, Miss Eloise Lorne, as the automobile columnist. But Miss Lorne knew what she was about, and her Saturday columns were written in the jargon of the day. Automobiles were referred to as

Mary (Mrs. Harry A.) Stuhldreher did her undergraduate study at Trinity College in Washington, D. C., and her graduate study at the Graduate School of Journalism at Columbia University in New York. She has had a book published and also articles in several national magazines. Miss Kathy Weber is a graduate with a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree from Manhattanville College in New York. The originals of the pictures are taken from the *Index* of 1901. — Editor

"machines"; private garages, as "auto palaces"; public garages, as "auto theaters"; and whoever drove the machine, as a "chauffeur" or a "chauffeuse."

In the March 9 issue of the *Index*, she wrote: "At present, there are two hundred machines of six different makes in Pittsburg: The



Locomobile

Stearns and the Locomobile, run by steam; the Winton and the De Dion Bouton, by gasoline; and the Riker and the Columbia, by electricity.

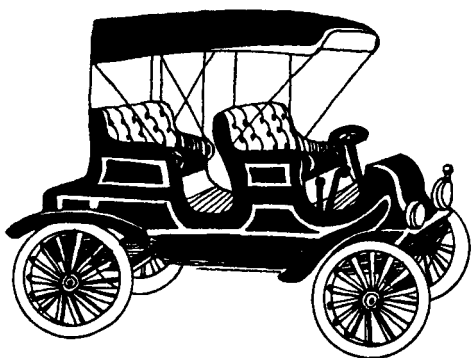
"The first Winton in Pittsburg created a sensation. It was a big noisy machine which frightened horses, wakened people out of a sound sleep and left noxious gas fumes in its wake. But that was four years ago. It

has improved since then. Even though it isn't as noisy as it once was, it is still noisy. Until it shows further improvement, please bear in mind that only a machine with its powerful motor and its superior construction can climb over hills and survive the wretched condition of our streets."

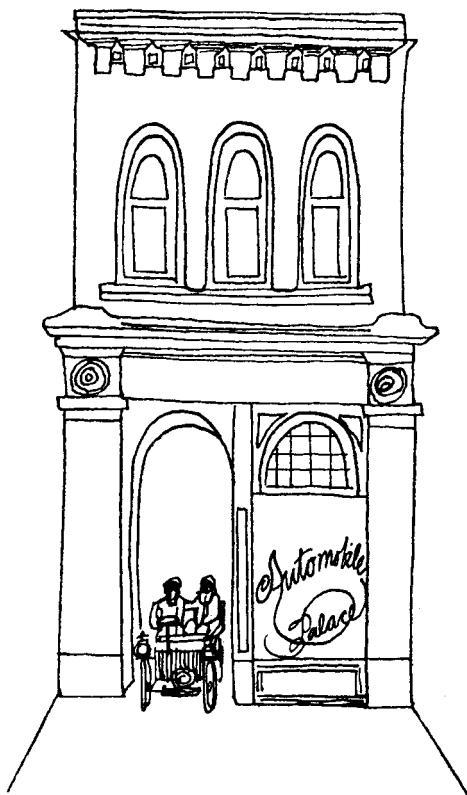
The first automobile palace was designed and built by Robert B. King and was adjacent to his residence on North Negley Avenue. It was built of brick with a slate roof, a cement floor, and pul-

ley doors of yellow pine. There was a switchboard for recharging the battery, and attached to the ceiling was a canopy of blue cotton which could be automatically lowered to cover the machine.

All the other machine owners had to depend on the auto theaters for gasoline and oil as well as for repairs and storage. The theaters were: the D. M. Seeley Company, the agency for the Locomobile and



Winton Double Seater Surrey



the Winton, at Beatty Street and Baum Boulevard; the Auto Repair Company, the agency for the Stearns, at 5988 Centre Avenue; the Banker Brothers (George and Arthur), the agency for the De Dion Bouton, at Centre and Highland avenues; and the L. B. Martin Company, the agency for the Riker and the Columbia, at Fourth Avenue and Duquesne Way. The charge for gasoline was ten cents a gallon, and the monthly charge for storage was fifteen dollars for the gas and steam machines and four dollars for the electrics.

The De Dion Motorette combined "Parisian daintiness with American ingenuity and strength." It was the most popular of the six

makes. It had a five-horsepower motor and a speed from three to thirty-nine miles an hour. It came in two models — the physician's coupe, with a two-passenger capacity, was completely enclosed in glass; the runabout, with a four-passenger capacity, had a collapsible top and a detachable luggage platform.

In the March 16 issue, Miss Lorne wrote: "Last Monday night, Mr. George Banker, with two passengers, took his De Dion runabout on

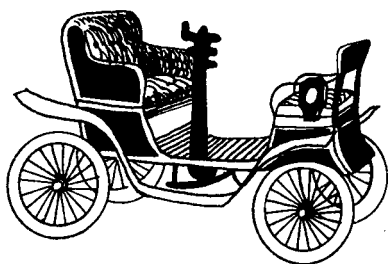


De Dion Bouton (Doctor's Brougham)

a trial run. He left Centre and Highland Avenues at eleven thirty when the streets were clear of traffic.

"Without once stopping the motor, he drove west on Grant Boulevard, crossed the bridge to Allegheny, climbed the Perrysville Avenue Hill, returned to Pittsburgh, drove to Wilmerding over rough roads and high hills, came back to the East End by McKeesport, and was back in his theater by seven thirty Tuesday morning.

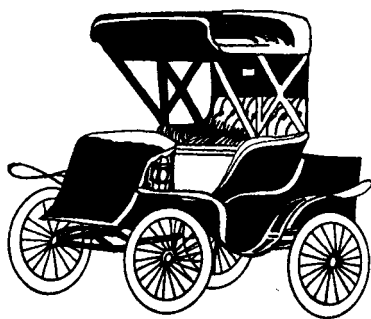
"During his eight hour run his average speed was thirty nine miles an hour. He used four and a half gallons of gasoline and a quart of water. The machine was oiled twice."



De Dion Bouton Motorette

His trial run must have impressed prospective buyers. A few days later, there was an announcement that "a car load of twenty Motorettes would arrive from New York on the Baltimore and Ohio freight train. Prompt delivery was assured." And for that matter, so was the future of the Motorettes.

In the March 30 issue, Miss Lorne wrote: "The new Grant Boulevard has proven an attraction for chauffeurs. It is a direct route to downtown and a round trip can be made from Highland Avenue to Grant Street in forty minutes. But there are two stiff grades on the new driveway which retard fast running. The eastern approach is also a hard climb. Several chauffeurs have had to turn back when this hill is encountered. It is poorly lighted for night driving. The chauffeurs have trouble with small boys who live in the vicinity. They seem to delight in standing in front of oncoming cars and throw sticks and stones at the chauffeur and his vehicle's wheels."



Stearns

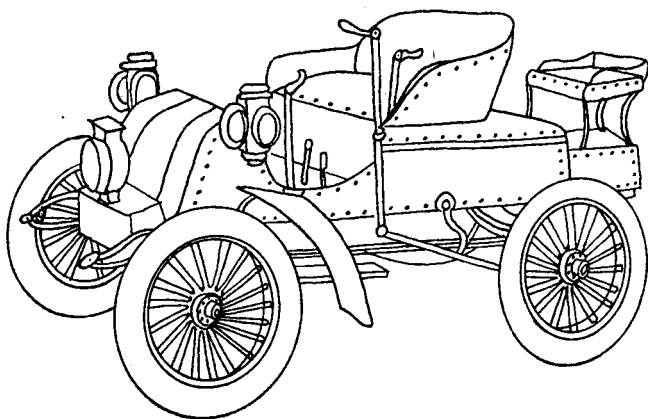
Her April 6 column was brief: "The first automobile accident in Pittsburgh from which a death resulted occurred last Tuesday after-

noon on the Grant Boulevard when a motor carriage ran over a young boy. It was in no way the fault of the driver. Mr. Mossman has petitioned the Department of Public Safety for a policeman on horse back or on a bicycle to patrol the driveway at all times."

The sale of automobiles was dependent on the weather. In the April 20 issue, Miss Lorne wrote: "It has been raining in Pittsburg for the past two weeks. The Triangle is flooded and the automobile business has been at a standstill. The only machines to be seen on the East End streets are the physicians coupes and the runabouts with canvas tops.

"But the agencies are not concerned. Orders for machines have come in faster than they can be filled and motorists have used the slack season for necessary repairs.

"Mr. Thomas Hartley's Winton is in the paint shop. He has a Winton semi racer on order but he will not have it geared for its best speed. Mr. F. T. F. Lovejoy is having his Locomobile fitted out with new burners and a generator replaced. Mr. Charles M. Schwab, the newly elected President of the United States Steel Corporation, is



Gasmobile

having some slight adjustments on his Gasmobile. Mr. Schwab, who is an expert motorist, told me that he considered the Gasmobile the finest machine made. Since there is no agency for the auto in Pittsburg and he refuses to drive any other make, he had the machine shipped here from its plant in Jersey City."

This oversight was soon corrected. In Miss Lorne's column for

April 27, Mr. Mossman announced that "the Pittsburgh Auto Company, backed by prominent Pittsburghers, would include an agency for the Gasmobile in its new auto theater now under construction at 610 Wood Street and to be ready for occupancy by the end of May.

"The Gasmobile, with its strength, durability and speed, will sell at a price range from \$1,700.00 to \$2,000.00. The building will also have storage space for one hundred machines, carpeted waiting rooms and a private entrance to the Duquesne Club."

At first, it seemed that Mr. Mossman intended the automobile to be for the exclusive use of rich men. But that was not the case. With the coming of May and sunny weather, women and the working classes were also included in his campaign.

The D. M. Seeley Company advertised "second hand vehicles at tempting low prices." The Banker Brothers opened an auto livery where cars with accredited drivers could be rented for thirty dollars a day.

In the May 11 issue, there was an article by Miss Lorne on "Women Who Drive," with photographs of Miss Mary Mellon at the controls of her Riker Electric; and of Miss Sara Seeley, the daughter of D. M. Seeley and a skilled chauffeuse, with a passenger, Miss Rebecca Jones, in a Columbia Electric.

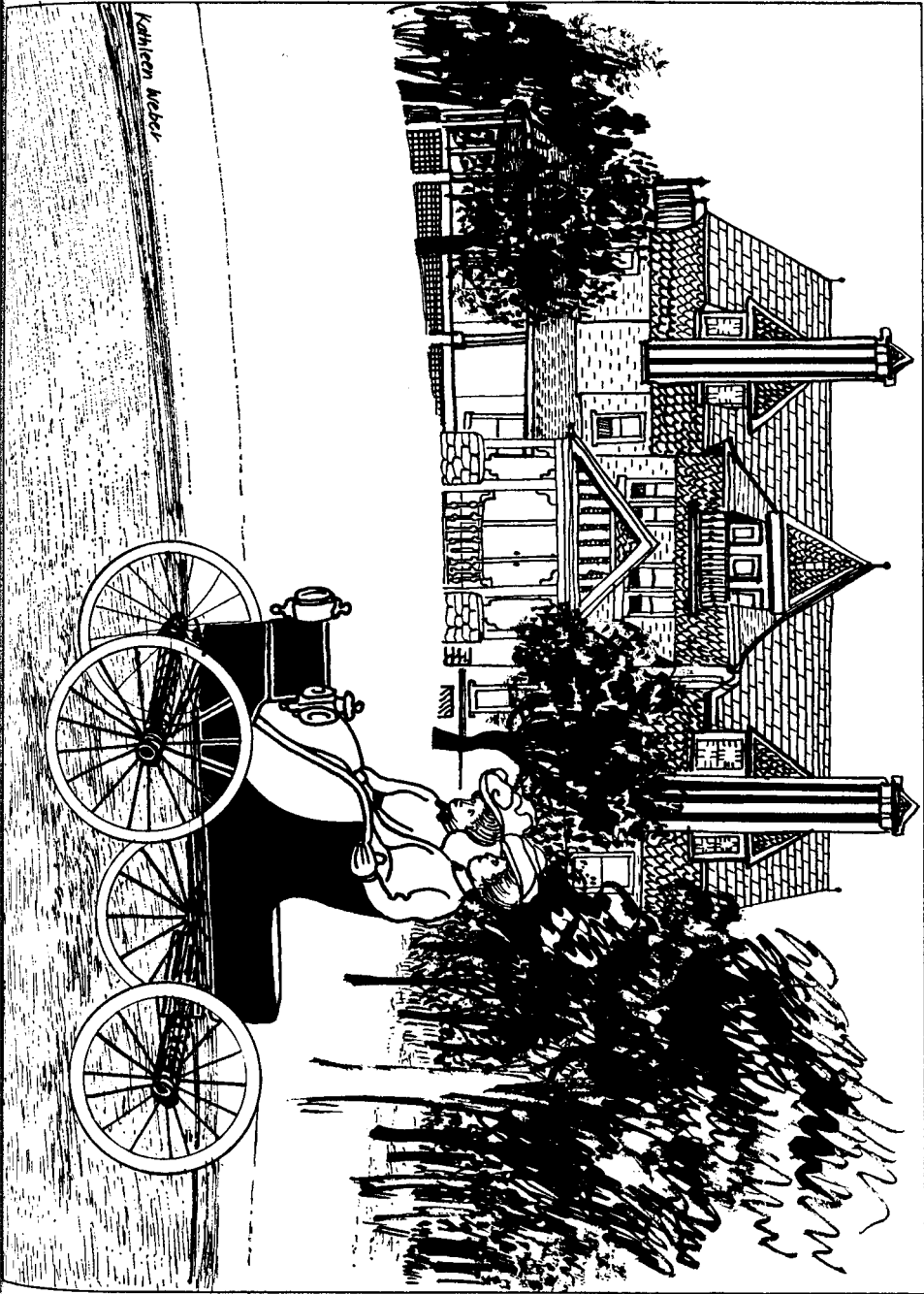
"The women who drive," Miss Lorne wrote, "find the gas machine too noisy and fear that the steam machine might blow up. Both are too hard to handle and take considerable strength in cranking. But they are quick to grasp the principles involved in the operation of the electric and consider it the perfect automobile for shopping, paying social calls, sight seeing in the park and on the Boulevard and for an occasional venturesome drive through the suburbs."

Miss Lorne's approval gave the sale of electrics the customary boost. The Pittsburgh Auto Company, the agency for the Fanning Electric, advertised: "No smoke. No smell. No trouble as well. They cost so little [\$750] and look so swell."

The post office announced that an order had been placed with the Bindley Hardware Company at Seventh and Liberty Avenue for five electric delivery trucks.

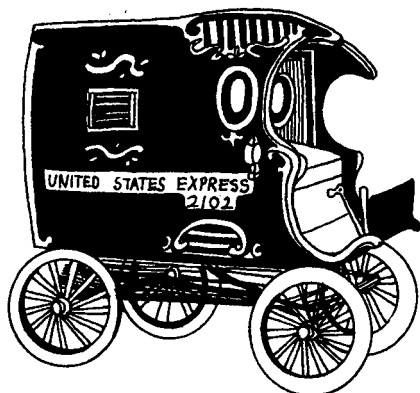
The Pittsburgh Auto Club was also founded that spring. It had a membership of fifty motorists, and its headquarters was in the East End, the center of automobile activity.

In the May 18 *Index*, Miss Lorne wrote: "The Club has become a mecca for members, who want to register complaints about the con-



dition of the city's streets or the danger from reckless and inexperienced drivers, or who just

want to stand around and talk about the relative merits of link motor belts, carburetors and differentials."



United States Express Co.
Delivery Truck

The complaints got immediate results. Mr. Seeley applied to the Department of Public Works to put the eastern approach to Grant Boulevard in better repair. A crusade was launched to fill the pot holes and to clear the scattered glass from the broken milk bottles on the East End streets. Mr. Mossman

asked the Department of Public Safety to make it mandatory for every new automobile owner to qualify for a driver's license by tests.

Meanwhile, the campaign moved ahead. The Banker Brothers, who had the largest sales in Pittsburgh, advertised six Peerless gas machines in stock, and the Seeley Theater, sixteen machines of steam, electric, and gasoline vehicles on order. "New Wintons have been bought by Mr. Frank Nimick and Mr. Hugh McAfee. Two doctors, O. E. Edwards and William McClelland, have ordered the physician's coupe."

Trial runs were popular. Mr. Joseph T. Speer, who had the only Packard in Pittsburgh, drove his handsome, neat, and noiseless gas machine over steep hills and unpaved streets to the top of Mount Washington at a speed of thirty miles an hour. Mr. W. N. Murray, in a Winton semiracer, outran a team of trotting horses from downtown Pittsburgh to Beaver in two hours and fifteen minutes.

Miss Lorne was not impressed. "Motorists should regard horses for prestige and show. The automobile is to be used for more practical purposes."

Her comment was emphasized by a rather wistful ad: "Do you still like a horse? Then you want one of our Pneumatic Tired Runabouts at \$150.00. Runs as easy as an auto and gives the horse fancier the added pleasure of handling the reins with his favorite steed ahead of him."

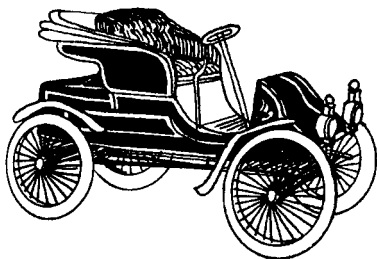


The Auto Club made plans for several long out-of-town trips for the summer. The owners of ten Wintons were to take part in a run by the Automobile Club of America from New York to the Pan American Exposition at Buffalo in June. George and Arthur Banker were to join the cavalcade in their De Dion Motorettes. Short drives were suggested to Harmony, Tarentum, Freeport, and New Castle.

Application was made for an auto race in Schenley Park for the annual Fourth of July celebration. It was turned down because the circle was too narrow for fast racing. Instead, there would be a parade of all makes of motor vehicles and some hill-climbing tests.

The June 29 issue of the *Index*, titled the "Automobile Number," marked the climax of Mr. Mossman's campaign.

In the lead editorial, he said: "The future belongs to the automobile. The vehicles can not be made fast enough to meet the demand. What a wonderful progressive city Pittsburg is. Here



Winton

we are scarcely two years old in the automobile business and we now have three hundred machines spinning over our streets and boulevards."

There were photographs of the three men and the two women who had done the most to advance the cause:

"Mr. D. M. Seeley, the first man to own and drive an automobile in Pittsburg, the air-cooled Franklin."

"Mr. F. T. F. Lovejoy, who has bought twelve automobiles to date and now owns six."

"Mr. Thomas Hartley, who has a Winton, a De Dion Motorette, and a Fanning Electric. He recently bought and shipped a Motorette to his brother in Kansas City."

"Mrs. Reuben Miller, Jr. the first woman in Pittsburg to own and drive an electric."

Mrs. Arthur Banker was the first woman to own and drive a De Dion Motorette. Her advice to motorists: "When you drive a gas machine in the country, and you see a farmer and his team coming in your direction, it is considered etiquette to pull to the side of the road, turn off your motor until they are out of sight before starting it again."

The feature article by Eloise Lorne was the account of a drive from Princeton, New Jersey, to Pittsburgh.

"The driver and owner of the machine, a Gasmobile, was Attorney H. L. Goehring. With three male companions, he left Princeton Monday morning, June 17th, and arrived in Pittsburgh, Saturday noon, June 23rd. He covered a distance of 446 miles in six days.

"He had a punctured tire and a loose motor belt; crossed seven mountains; was delayed one whole day by rain; encountered boulders, fallen trees and some grades that would daunt a goat.

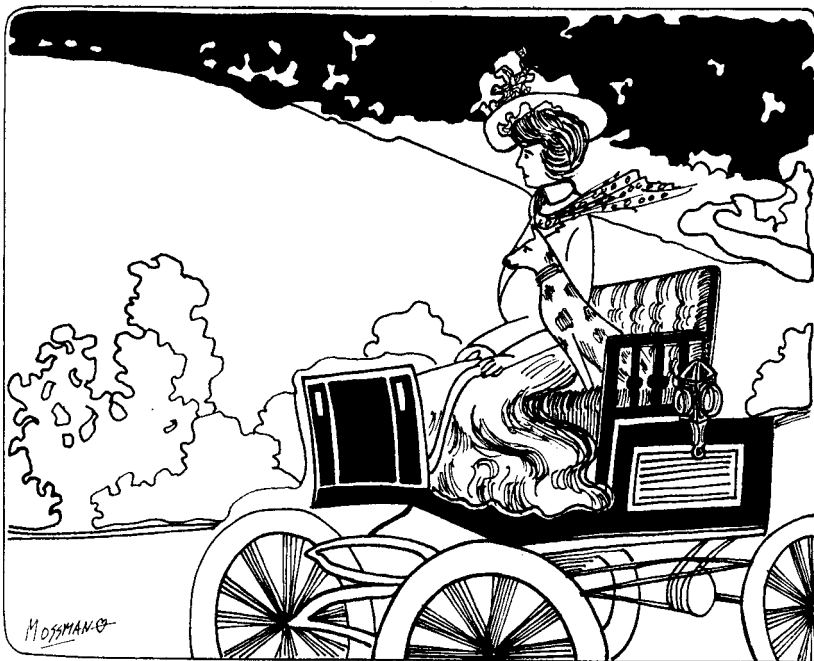
"The party was photographed in front of Nassau Hall; at an old stage tavern in the mountains; on top of Mount Loudon and being greeted by a group of villagers in Bedford.

" 'Although we did have some delay,' Mr. Goehring said, 'the love of adventure and the pleasure of being outdoors and on the move from morning to night through ever new and fascinating scenery made up for all the inconveniences we suffered.' "

"When asked if he would try it again, he said, 'Not until there's a big improvement in the roads.' "

There was mention made of some new auto palaces. "Mr. P. S. Suydam, on Murray Hill Avenue, has a trim auto shed and a gasoline storage tank nearby."

THE INDEX OF PITTSBURG LIFE



AUTOMOBILE NUMBER

"Mr. John Holdship, on Lincoln Avenue in Allegheny, has a two-story auto palace connected to his residence by an elevated walk."

"Mr. Edgar Brobst, the superintendent of the Edgar Thomson Works, has his auto palace papered in pink with pictures on the wall and ruffled curtains at the windows."

The smallest and daintiest auto palace, nine by five, was built by Mr. Reuben Miller, Jr., of Wallingford Street, to house his wife's electric.

There was a photograph of Mr. Mossman at the controls of a Peerless gas carriage on a country lane in Sewickley.

In a burst of rhetoric, he said: "To take control of this materialized energy, to draw the reins over this monster with its steel muscles and fiery heart appeals to an almost universal sense — the love of power. Add the element of danger and the fascination inherent in automobiling is not difficult to understand."

There was a brief article titled "How I Learned to Run an Auto," by Helen Dare.

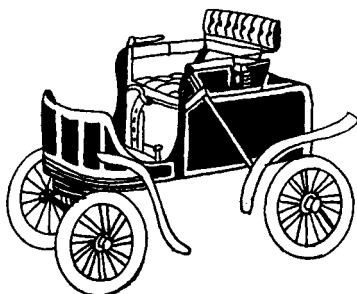
"Are you ennuied? Dull, grumpy, bilious, feeling as if you haven't a friend in the world. Then try an automobile. Not merely to ride in but to run.

"An electric is the simplest of vehicles — neat, clean and quiet. But you can not go far from a recharging battery and its initial cost and its upkeep make it more expensive than the gas or the steam machine.

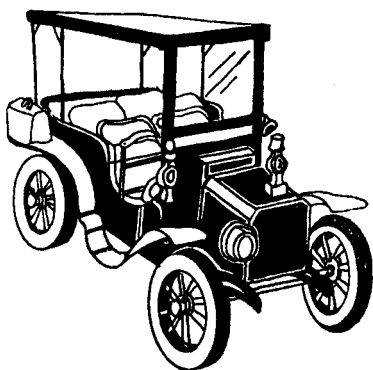
"The gas machine made so much noise that I couldn't hear the warning bells at the rail road crossings or what the farmers yelled at me.

"On the advice of my friend, Miss Alice Prible, who comes from Boston where women are more advanced in motoring, I now own and drive a Stearns steam machine and I am content."

Mr. Henry C. Frick's fifty-two-horsepower Mercedes Daimler with plate-glass windows, a canopy, and a double tonneau was the most costly car in the city — \$7,000. His French chauffeur, George Charley, said that he could drive from Mr. Frick's residence at Penn and Homewood avenues in the East End to downtown Pittsburgh in fourteen minutes.



Columbia Electric



Daimler
Owned by H. C. Frick

"It could be done in six minutes if it were not for the street cars and the small boys who run in front of the car."

There was an advertisement for the Automobile Show to be held in the Madison Square Gardens in New York in November. For winter driving there were styles for men, as well as for women, in fur coats and lap robes of wolf sable. Also some comments on the popularity of the automobile at home and abroad:

"A new Christian Science Church now being built in New York will have a room set aside in the basement for the storage of machines during services."



"The Harvard Corporation of Boston has undertaken a new enterprise. The members will establish a chain of auto service stations between Boston and New York in principal towns such as New Bedford and Fall River."

"A number of city employees in Philadelphia asked to exchange their horses and the vehicles they now use for inspection purposes for automobiles. An alderman approved their suggestion stating that it would cost less to keep an auto than it would to board a horse."

"The New York City Board of Aldermen have proposed that

automobiles be equipped with fenders and that speed be restricted to eight miles an hour."

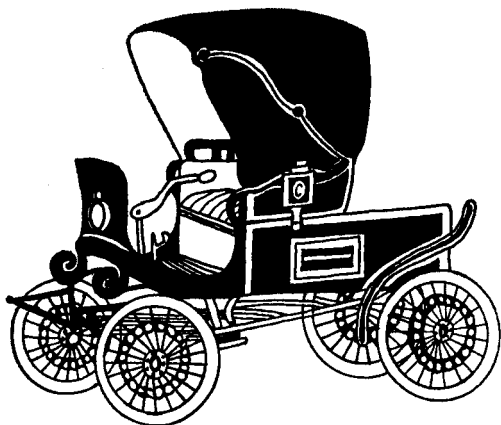
"John Jacob Astor will soon erect a road house on a splendid scale for motorists in Pelham, New York."

"The Buffalo Auto Club welcomes auto tourists to make use of its facilities while visiting the Exposition."

"The developments in aerial navigation show that the motors used in automobiles will also be used to travel through air."

"The crowned heads of Europe approve the automobile, and thieves in Paris have learned how to operate machines so they can steal them."

Such was the story of Pittsburgh's attack of Automobilioussness.



Number 8 Stanhope