

THE AUTOMOBILE PUSHING INTO FAVOR.

In Growing Demand for Business, Sport and Pleasure.

IT HAS been well said that the inventor, the mechanic and the engineer each has his role to play in the development of a new industry, and it is so in the case of the automobile, the gradual evolution of which has engaged universal and widespread attention. They blaze the way for future improvements and capital and brains lend their combined forces to the task of perfecting the ingenuity of some struggling and obscure fellow who, perhaps, hasn't the means to push his invention, and claim its rewards.

The credit for the invention of the automobile cannot be placed, though there have been many contentions for that honor. And we would have to go back almost a century to get at the principle of the thing, for the idea of steam locomotion over roads is almost 100 years old. For a long time the sultan of Turkey has taken his outings in a sort of steam roller such as is used for leveling the streets. It is provided with a canopy, and as the sultan prefers leisure to speed, his steam equipage is said to be plenty fast enough for him.

Ten years ago a dozen or more mechanics or inventors were all at work on the automobile plan at the same time, and there are many contending claims. Its introduction for pleasure purposes has only been made possible since the advent of electricity, coal-tar, the methods of light construction, steel wire spokes, rubber tires and other modern aids. Only within the past ten years has the industry assumed any progress, and within the last four years it has become an established trade, until now the demand is far in excess of the supply. The hydro-carbon system of operating the horseless vehicle has hastened its adoption for both commercial and pleasure purposes, and the indications point to a gradual desertion of the equine in favor of scientific methods of street propulsion. The system now in vogue of vaporizing gasoline and exploding it in a cylinder with an electric spark embodies the principles of the ordinary stationary vapor engine into compact and light form.

The commercial advantage of the automobile over the horse-drawn vehicle is already well recognized, and merchants of Detroit and elsewhere are said to be placing large orders. Two concerns in this city are engaged in the manufacture of automobile carriages, delivery wagons, surreys and all types of the horseless vehicle. These are the Olds Motor Works out Jefferson avenue and the Detroit Automobile Company, corner of Cass avenue and the railroad crossing. The former establishment will turn out its first vehicle about June 1. It is equipped with specially adapted machines.

Charles E. King, an employe of this firm, produced the first automobile ever seen in Detroit. This was three or four years ago, and it naturally attracted great curiosity and attention.

It was somewhat crude in construction, but it was wholly successful from a mechanical standpoint. It was operated by a four-horse-power engine, two cylinders,

4x6, and the motor power was gasoline. Mr. King now has a motor vehicle engine which is credited with being one of the simplest yet designed.

The speed of pleasure carriages may be regulated at from four to twenty-five miles per hour, while the racers make thirty-five or thirty-six miles per hour on continuous runs.

The automobile has come to be a recognized phase of sporting events. The first race in America occurred at Chicago on Thanksgiving Day, 1895. It was known as the Times-Herald race and \$5,000 in prizes was offered. The contest was from the site

with the fast ones in France. The Automobile Club of America meets in the parlors of the Waldorf-Astoria, and its membership list includes many names of fashion and wealth. An effort is being made to organize a similar club in Detroit.

The automobilists are strong agitators for good roadways, and they have joined hands with the bicyclists to make that matter a national issue. At present they are urging a transcontinental highway.

Jean de Marre, an enthusiast of Paris, has announced his intention of penetrating the gold region of Alaska with an auto-



AFTER A LIVELY RUN.
One of the Crack Machines of the American Automobile Club. Its Occupants are C. J. Field, of New York and a Friend.

of the world's fair grounds north to Evanston and return. The roads were heavy with snow and poor speed was attained. Mr. King, mentioned above, was an umpire in the contest, and he rode in the second carriage.

Since that time races have been held at various times under the auspices of the Automobile Club of America. The last one occurred in New York city only recently, and was arranged for the purpose of selecting the speediest to participate in the contests at the Paris world's fair, at which two or three American machines will probably be represented.

The Automobile Club of America is modeled on the plan of a similar club in Paris, and its members represent the greatest aggregate of wealth of any club in America. It is primarily social in its aims, and, secondarily, it exists to develop speed in American machines, so that they can com-

mobile. He intends to start from Dawson City and follow the Yukon river to the interior, but there is considerable skepticism as to his success.