

HORSE VERSUS AUTOMOBILE: A FRENCH VIEW

THAT the passing of our friend the horse is only a question of time, few will, we think, be disposed to deny; and however much the breeders of the animal may strive to arrest the progress of public opinion in the adoption of this view, the relentless figures which each succeeding year piles up against them leave little room to doubt that they will ere long have to accept the inevitable, and, with what grace they may, admit defeat at the hands of the "horseless." Some noteworthy statistics of the competition between the horse and the automobile appear in an article by M. Daniel Bellet in the *Economiste Français*. By way of introduction M. Bellet cites the remarks of certain speakers at meetings of the Société Nationale d'Agriculture, who sought to prove that the horse-breeding industry had nothing to fear from the increase of automobiles, and that the country in which machinery was most used would have greater need of horses than ever. This optimistic view is scarcely sustained by the figures which M. Bellet proceeds to give. Speaking of the United States he says:

In the American confederation it is estimated that there are more than 130,000 automobiles, besides some 35,000 motor trucks, delivery wagons, etc., and 150,000 motor cycles and tricycles. Eight years ago the number of automobiles in the United States did not exceed 6000.

In Great Britain the development in automobiling has been enormous. In that country there are 85,000 automobiles, 15,000 industrial motor wagons, trucks, etc., 9000 motor vehicles employed in public transportation, such as the auto-buses and cabs, and an army of 75,000 motor cycles, tricycles, and quadricycles. In London, the competition between autobuses and taxicabs and the horse-drawn vehicles is so keen that it is evi-

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dent a very large number of horses must have been withdrawn from their former employment. Further, the number of two-wheel vehicles (horse-drawn, or "hippomobiles," as M. Bellet terms them) was reduced 1300 in a single year, and the number of four-wheel 400. Sir John Macdonald is quoted as stating before the Royal Automobile Club of London that the number of horses in London had been reduced within six years from 450,000 to 110,000.

In Germany the number of automobiles had increased from about 10,000 in 1903 to 50,000 in 1910, to which must be added many mechanical vehicles circulating on the roads of the Empire.

In France the 3000 automobiles of all sorts which represented the total in 1900, have increased to about 45,000. Since 1905, in the cities especially, the horse has given place to the motor. To quote M. Bellet further:

In Paris in the space of two years the number of horses decreased 14,000. In the Department of the Seine the decrease was also 14,000. The number of "hippomobiles" decreased more than 2000 in 1907, mainly due to the introduction of more than 5000 taxicabs. . . . In ten years the number of carriages *de luxe* was reduced by 50,000 units, while the number of horses, affected by this decrease, sank from 128,000 to 92,000 head.

One result of this displacement of the horse in Paris has been the possibility of acquiring at a cheap rate good horses discarded by the purchasers of automobiles. Another, according to M. Bellet, is that many who formerly went on foot, now, in view of the reduced cost of horses, ride. On the other hand, a serious problem is presented to the farmers and market gardeners by the scarcity of manure which must inevitably follow the supersession of the horse, unless some suitable substitute at a reasonable cost is forthcoming.