

all over the world was only 888. Our own total showing the motor manufactures of this country you already know—500,000. And as the imports have fallen so have the exports climbed. Though the total value of the export trade cannot keep pace with the remarkable increase in value of our manufactures it is growing wonderfully. Indeed it is growing at a rate that would satisfy anyone but a manufacturer of automobiles. Those gentlemen know no limits. Ten years ago a million dollars worth of cars was sold abroad. This year the trade amounted to thirty million, an increase of 2,900 per cent.

Of course that is very great. It would be still greater though, were not the demand at home so active, so urgent. An examination of our exporting statistics is interesting. Very properly, English speaking people are the chief purchasers. This year 21,750 cars were exported. Over six thousand went right across the border into Canada. Nearly six thousand went to Great Britain. South Africa took over 1,600. Continental Europe found it needed nearly 2,300. Automobile men have assured me that the development of the South American field will bring a fortune to the concern that does it. In the Rosario consular districts in Argentina, for instance, about 20,000 people are able to own motor cars. So far five per cent of them have been supplied. More, the thousand cars are principally of French and Italian make. Take Brazil though, and full two-thirds of the cars in that country are American make. So have we exported, begun to scratch the surface of foreign laws.

But just as the volume of business has grown, so, naturally has the number of automobile establishments. In 1899 (which date reports seem to make the dark age) there were fifty-seven plants in this country. Today there are nearly 800. In them are employed nearly 200,000 people representing \$300,000,000 paid out for services. Three years ago the latest date for which specific statistics are available the capital of the industry was \$174,000,000. Materials cost \$132,000,000. The total number of horse power under the hoods of cars fresh from the factory was nearly 76,000. Of proprietors and firm members there were over 400—men who were making a fortune out of motors, getting some of the billion a year for automobiles. And now let us see how the \$1,000,000,000 worth of cars is distributed over the country. Of course the proportions vary greatly. Take New York City with its population, about one eighteenth that of the entire country. Latest estimates placed the number of automobiles in New York at 400,000. Of course this means old as well as new cars.

In Texas they have about 60,000 in the whole state. Take the Middle West—Minneapolis, Detroit, Cleveland and all such cities and their adjacent small towns. There not one in thirty, but on the average, one in twenty people own their machines. These cars may be of the 1905 output but that doesn't matter. They all swell the total, help to pile up the three million motors whose wheels are turning. In the South the automobile is also common. From Nashville down to New Orleans you will find them, slowly but persistently ousting the horse

from the highways. To be sure they are not as common as in the Middle West. Still the statistics say that the Southern States spend about \$200,000,000 on automobiles every year. Even as far west as California the motor's song is heard. In the Golden state alone there are fifty thousand machines sold every year, totaling about \$65,000,000.

But for that matter we sell them as far west under our own flag as the Philippine Islands. Five years ago some enterprising shipper of Manilla imported two automobiles from the United States. He got them at the government rate, a wonderful reduction, for the bill was but \$1,205. Last year 309 automobiles were shipped to the Philippines and the bill that went with them was \$382,551. With the little islands in the Pacific spending that much money a year on machines the bill of a billion becomes a little clearer. Were I—or could I—trace down the money spent on the thousands and thousands of second hand cars, garaged in this country, the figures would overwhelm you.

Figures always seem "to overwhelm" but that's the only word when a stack of dollars millions high stares you in the face. Of course by second hand cars one means cars that are not the very latest model. Anything that is the year behind in the automobile business is second hand! Approximately there are two millions and a half such cars in this country. How they are distributed I do not know. Nor does anyone else. It is possible though to figure the upkeep on these cars. You can reason that each costs its owner at the very lowest \$400 a year. Multiply that by the horde of them and you will find you are up against another billion-dollar proposition—a billion for the upkeep of second hand cars.

To this billion add the billion for the new cars. Add to this and stir the mixture with a golden spoon letting it boil slowly until the upkeep of the year's output of the new cars has dissolved and you will have \$200,000,000 more. Then get out pencil and paper—which I refuse to do—and try to guess at the number of garages, the number of men they employ, the capital invested and the wages paid and you'll jump your total to a half million. So do you get dangerously near the three billion a year mark. Now I haven't made this the title of the story because it is more or less guess work. That automobiles cost us one billion a year I know. That they cost us three billion dollars is very probable. A fact article is not the place for probability. So we must be content with the lone billion and dream about the rest.

We do know that the automobile no longer is a luxury. We do know that it has become very much of a necessity. We do know that in many, many suburban towns more people own automobiles than homes. They mortgage their houses, you see, to buy machines. Now with some that is good; with others bad; Still it shows the absolute mastery of the motor. No longer something to be owned by only the rich it has come down within the means of the Great Average. Indeed to the man who has never had the use of a car, a car is a necessity. Take its vogue in the west, in the bare places in the farm country. No longer

(Concluded on page eleven)

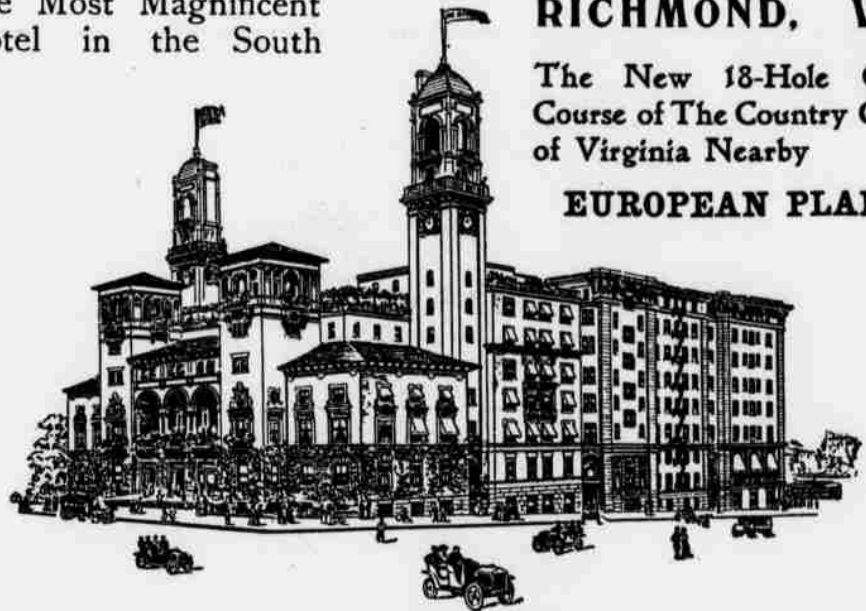
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