

## EVERYBODY THERE.

### Automobile Races Hardly a Success as a Sporting Event.

W. K. Vanderbilt, Jr.'s, Gasoline Machine Takes the Championship.

It was dusty in Middletown and at Aquidneck Park yesterday. The dry spell had rendered the Middletown roads dusty to a degree that dwellers in city streets can have no adequate idea of. This dust was stirred up by the almost countless wheels and feet and bicycles and automobiles, traveling to or from the park, and the wind saw that the dust was well distributed. Then at the park the dust blown from the track directly on the judges' stand was something that cannot well be described, though it was appreciated by the many who stood there and stopped some of it.

The big automobile race meeting is a thing of the past. It was a big thing so far as the size of the crowd and the variety of the people present was concerned. As a race meeting, however, it was really a failure. It is putting it a trifle strong to say it, but most spectators will say there was but one consistent performer on the track, and that was W. K. Vanderbilt, Jr., with his celebrated racer. This took part, and the leading part, in three races, and the difference in time between the fastest and slowest one was just five seconds, or one second a mile. There were other good performers, but as a rule the machines were fickle; they could go all right one minute, and not at all the next. Like the railroad time table they were "subject to change without notice," and they changed—at least most of them did.

After all, an automobile race is a good deal like a procession of electric cars, or of several teams. Of course there is more or less of the personal element in it, but the machine idea seems to predominate. There was, however, something weird in the appearance of Mr. Vanderbilt and Mr. DeWolfe in the finals of the gasoline class. With eyes protected from the dust by great close-fitting goggles, with bodies bent so as to catch as little wind as possible, with chaffeurs leaning out at the turns like outriggers, and with an accompanying cloud of dust, they made a spectacle that would have delighted Victor Hugo or Jules Verne. They were ghostlike enough to stampede a whole army of Boxers.

Then in a sporting line the contest between A. L. Riker and S. C. Crane, in the second heat of the electric carriages, was a really interesting brush. The tricycles, because the drivers seemed to be more of a factor in their going, were also interesting. The steam machines did not appear to good advantage. In the endeavor to get them up to the highest pitch, they seemed to give way, and the delay at the starting line after they were ready to go seemed to be fatal to their chances.



The one thing that suited everybody was Mr. Vanderbilt's racer. Everybody wanted to see it and him. he was applauded all around the track and as before stated both the machine and the driver were fully equal to expectations and everybody felt satisfied with them. In the last race the big electric machine gave the Vanderbilt machine quite a run, but when he wanted to go by it he went—that was all.

It seemed as though about everybody was there. Some came early and left early. Others came late—but they came. The steam and electric cars and the buses carried out very many, coaches, automobiles, carriages, wagons, and all sorts of private traps took many more, and all except those who went on the steam cars received a dusting that they do not wish to have repeated soon. Some of the buses charged 50 cents for a ride from the Two Mile corner, where the electrics stopped, and many walked rather than pay what was considered an exorbitant sum.

That section of the grounds back of the judges' stand was reserved for coaches and private traps, and held a lunch tent. After a while, as in every part of the park, all sorts of people were in it. Over toward the back stretch was the station for the various styles of machines, all staked out and roped, and connected with the judges' stand by telephone. All the sloping ground to the west of the track was covered with wagons and traps, and so was about all the available space up to the grand stand. The rails all along the home stretch were crowded, as was about every point that gave a view of the track or any part of it, and a line of men and boys lay under the grand stand. It was a wonder, with a crowd so jammed together, that no accident happened. One fractious horse might have caused a great deal of damage, but if any horse felt that way he was quickly subdued.

The people were of all sorts. There was the usual race track gathering, the men and women who give the social flavor to the big racing days near New York, and whose names are constantly in the society columns. If they were not all there, then the absent ones escaped notice. They had the regular race day luncheons and seemed to enjoy the meet despite the dust—and those on the coaches certainly caught the dust. Then there were all other sorts of people, down to but not including tramps. Farmers and their families caught the fever and were there, as were many strangers from Boston, Providence, Fall River, and some even from Philadelphia.



The Newport band played whenever called upon, from an improvised stand. They had troubles of their own in getting out, but were ready enough to play. The trouble was to stop them when the races were ordered.

There was an abundance of programs at the gate, which were given away. Many passed in in the rush without seeing them, and later were glad to pay enterprising boys five cents each for a program.

The gate accommodations, especially the exit, were wholly inadequate to the demands of the vast crowd, which was estimated to number fully 8,000, though how many of these went in free is a question. Many got away early, some starting as soon as they saw Mr. Vanderbilt's first race. This exodus greatly helped things at the end, but it was bad enough. Many who went out by road waited for the 6:50 train and came home in comfort.

The prizes for the winners in each class were handsome silver cups, offered as follows: Steam class by W. K. Vanderbilt, Jr., gasoline class by the New England Electric Vehicle Transportation Company, electric class by the Locomobile Company of America, tricycle class by Mrs. O. H. P. Belmont, and final championship race by Mrs. Hermann Oelrichs. The second prizes, also silver cups, were given by the National Automobile Racing Association, which had charge of the racing.

The judges were C. L. F. Robinson, Arthur T. Kemp and Hermann Oelrichs, and they ran things as nearly as possible like a first-class horse race. The timers were F. W. Greene, A. L. Wilbur and Frank Tallman, and the starter was F. W. Peckham.

As already stated, the races were each of five miles, 10 times around the track, the course being in good conditions despite the dust. Each class—electrics, tricycles, steam and gasoline machines—had two trial and one final heat; then the winners of each class competed in the championship race at the finish.

The first race, for electrics, was a walkover for Mrs. Hermann Oelrichs.



who had Mr. Stuyvesant Leroy as driver. Mr. Dolan's machine was broken down and Mr. Neftel failed to come to time.

The second race, for tricycles, brought the three entries to the line. Mr. Harold Vanderbilt's tricycle must have had all its speed stolen during one of the times it was purloined, for the best Barney Foy could do with it was to bring it inside of three laps of the leader at the finish, which was an easy win for Skinner on a new De Dion-Bouton machine.

The third race, for electrics, was a sporty one. A. L. Riker and A. H. Whiting were up on a racing machine of the Riker build, with a rheostadt that looked big enough for a street car. S. C. Crane and Percy Maxim occupied the seat on one of the New England Electric Vehicle Transportation Company's regular machines, and Arthur Townsend and another colored boy were up on Mr. L. H. DeForest's machine. Mr. W. E. Vanderbilt's machine burned out a brush and did not start. Mr. De Forest's was in it only at the start, but the other two were in to the finish. Riker had the pole and held it, with Crane hanging on, sometimes one length, sometimes two lengths, while in the eighth lay he was ahead but outside. He could not get the pole and Riker won.

The next race, for steam vehicles, brought out S. T. Davis and Mr. John Jacob Astor. The former had a racing machine and the latter had not. His machine kept going steadily and steadily falling to the rear until he was two laps behind at the finish.

The next race, for tricycles, brought two machines to the mark—C. S. Henshaw's, a French machine, and Royal Phelps Carroll's regular roadster, with Mr. Carroll up. The latter got all sorts of encouragement from the coaches, the grand stand and the crowd generally. It took two boys pushing hard to get it going, and by the time it had gone around once the other machine lacked only an eighth of a lap of being twice around. Mr. Carroll made only two laps.



The sixth race brought up three steam machines. The Mobile Company of America had J. H. McDuffee and J. E.

Walker up, Mr. Scott drove his own machine, and T. Griffin managed one of the Locomobile company's engines that needed repairs. It lasted seven laps. Mr. Scott had a good machine but it was not a racer, so McDuffee was first.

The seventh was the race that everybody wanted to see. It was the first heat for gasoline machines, and so many had withdrawn that a match race was arranged between Mr. Vanderbilt and Mr. Lanier who had Mr. Victor Sorchan as a comrade. Another vehicle was put in by the Automobile Company, so that there were three starters. There was only one machine in the race, however—that locomotive of Mr. Vanderbilt's. It was cheered all along the line, as it came on making a racket that drowned the starter's pistol. When the three machines were lined up one would think he was in a machine shop, so much noise did they make. On the first lap Mr. Lanier's machine was only 51 seconds behind Mr. Vanderbilt's and it did not make a second.

The eighth race, the final for electric, proved a walkover for A. L. Riker. Mrs. Oelrichs said later, her machine made a pretty race while it was in it, but when it took 2 minutes and 29 seconds to make the fifth lap it went into second place and from then on seemed to go slower and slower.

The ninth was a walkover for Mr. Wolfe's white gasoline machine.

The tenth was the finals for steam vehicles. Both drivers jockeyed at the start and when they finally got away S. T. Davis's machine was in no condition to go and was pushed out of the way, giving McDuffee a walkover.

The eleventh was the final for gasoline machines and brought together the big machines of W. K. Vanderbilt and Mr. Wolfe, both run by their owners. After one false start they got away well together, and then there was fun. Mr. Vanderbilt gradually drew ahead, gaining a little on every lap, to the finish.

The twelfth, the final for tricycles, was marred by Henshaw's machine, run by a boy who was a warm favorite with the crowd, balking at the start. The boy kept pluckily going until the seventh lap, when the machine balked so badly that he withdrew.

Then came the championship match. Riker on his big electric machine took the lead, with McDuffee's steam engine second. Skinner third on his