

## The Farmer and The Auto To-day

By A. R. Pardington, Second Vice-President Long  
Island Motor Parkway, Inc.

*From "The Automobile"*

But what of the farmer in this new era, the age of automobiles, this period of rapid transportation? Did anyone ever hear of the farmer—our one class of nobility—being left by the roadside? Never. For years now we have heard of bankers, insurance magnets, railroad investors, lawyers, and numerous other classes as being addicted to the use of the automobile. Due to the narrow-mindedness of a few, the farmer has been presented in the light of an obstructionist, an opponent of good roads, and as one who gloried in blocking the wheels of progress as exemplified by the automobile. But his attitude had some reason.

### Why the Farmer was Prejudiced at the Outset.

The early antagonism of the farmer was influenced by a very small number of the extremely thoughtless, very rich, who burned up the highways, left a trail of dead domestic animals and fowls, and the "women folks" all aquiver with their last hairbreadth escape. These very few thoughtless automobilists had been accustomed to outgoin' abroad, where the rural population has been through years of just such experiences, and where draft and pleasure beats had long since become accustomed to the strange sounds and weird sights. Popular sentiment against the automobile and the automobilist was quickly aroused, and, judging from the press reports which were read daily, was soon at fever heat. Other automobilists came, driving other cars. They were of a different class, showing consideration for other users of the highway—even going so far as to stop their motors and assist the farmer to drive his beast, by leading, and by a kindly word spoken. Others, who had driven high-spirited horses—realizing the effect of the human voice—spoke to the animals as they slowly passed. There were still others, and to them belongs much credit for the quick eradication of the adverse sentiment. These, when they came up with a horse which displayed fear, stopped and urged the driver to

then and there educate the horse to the presence of the automobile.

### Good Work Done by the Thoughtful Autoist.

To the really fine work done by this class of autoist is due the real credit for the generally cordial relations which now exist between the non-autoing farmer and the autoist. To this class also belongs much credit for the increasing number of cars owned and operated by farmers. At these words, I hear an audible smile from some of my readers. If you do smile, and are inclined to doubt the truth of my statement, I say that I can tell you where you do not live. You do not live on Long Island, nor in certain parts of New Jersey, nor in a section of Massachusetts, nor even in good old Indiana, for the automobile-owning farmer is no rarity there, nor is he in thousands of sections of the country, where enlightenment prevails or where proper conditions obtain.

The schooling of the farmer has been rapid, but thorough. He is not likely to unlearn anything that he has learned. He has taken to the automobile with the same avidity as to the telephone. The telephone helped him to lift himself by his boot straps out of his seclusion and retirement. It broadened his view of life. It enriched his pocket. He made his sales at the high peak, and his purchases on the down sweep of the curve. He learned the weather reports before his city neighbor did. He set his watch each day on a signal from the naval observatory at Washington. He followed the progress of the world of events and was independent. Then came the automobile. His first acquaintance with it was disastrous. He watched it fly down the road, followed by a clod of dust, and from the wreckage he dug up his pet dog—dead. He sought further and found a blooded "Rock" or "Cochin"—also dead. The cloud of dust that followed the automobile was followed by a flow of "langwidge" and of such character that its repetition would

blast. Later there came another automobile, going much slower and blowing no horns. This time our farmer friend and his wife were about to drive on to the highway, on the way to "town." The horses were quickly reined in, and the ears of the good life were shocked at the expletive which escaped our friend's lips. Slower and slower came the automobile until it stopped short of the driveway. Its driver beckoned to the farmer to proceed, but was met by a shake of the head and "some few words." The motor is stopped, and its driver leaves the car and salutes our friend in an easy manner, with the result that an hour is lost, but a firm exponent of the automobile is found. The horse has been educated. He has even put his nose into the tonneau and forgets to scare when the car moves. There are two other horses in the barn, which are also educated. There is a converted farmer, but a doubting housewife. A ride to "village," only two miles away, and a speedy return, completes her conversion, and there you are. The result? That farmer owns a good second-hand car in which he does his "errands." His wife is taken to the sewing circle or the Ladies' Aid, and how the tongues do buzz. She hears discredit, sarcasm, unbelief, and gossip. She replies by inviting her neighbor to ride home with her when the husband comes. Another convert and another car. The first link in the chain was forged only three years ago. Already it extends half way across the Continent.

### **Autoing Agriculturist is an Accomplished Fact.**

An isolated case, you say? By no means; on Long Island, where I live, it is common, and is becoming more common day by day. A short time ago this conversation was overheard on a Long Island Railroad train. The writer had been in attendance upon the annual Farmers' "Institute," and was returning to the city. Seated across the aisle was a well-known Long Island farmer, one of the up-to-date kind, a representative citizen. One of those who had attended the institute entered and dropped into the seat alongside of the delegate. "Well, Charley, did your folks go into the city this winter?" "No, they stayed on the farm. We bought an automobile, and the winter has been so open that we have used it a lot." From this point the conversation lost interest, but it proved the fact that the farmer is taking to automobiling. One farmer, living in Nassau county, Long Island, who two years ago fought the proposition to hold the first race for the William K. Vanderbilt, Jr., cup

secured signatures to a petition to have the event held on those roads for the third time. In his arguments with his neighbors he tells them that within ten years they will be hauling their product to market in motor trucks.

Yes, the farmer is taking to the automobile, and justly so. It has enhanced the value of his acreage; it has annihilated distances, and made every resident of his county his neighbor; it has made his farm a suburban holding and has put him into the closest possible touch with the outside world.