

FISHING WITH A MOTOR-CAR

ARCHIE had bought a new car, and had asked Dug and the writer to cast dull care aside and come with him on a motor trip to distant fishing grounds where, it was said, the speckled beauties lay in wait for slimy garden worms threaded upon the cruel barbs of Kirby hooks. The invitation was accepted, indeed the proposition was "jumped at," and plans were laid for a day to be spent in getting closer to Nature.

It might be remarked that Archie didn't know very much about a car—no further proof of this would be needed than just one look at the old bus, which Archie insisted in designating "the cahrr," for which my enthusiastic friend had separated himself from several hundred perfectly good Canadian greenbacks. Dug, also, was in the kindergarten class in so far as motor-car mechanics were concerned, and it developed upon the third human in the party—I say human because, like the Three Men in a Boat, we were accompanied by a dog, in this case an English Bull pup, rejoicing in the name of Peps—to "twist the crank, tramp on her tail, adjust the spark, change the gears and act as valet-in-ordinary to the bally old power-plant." After the first two or three purely involuntary stops we made on the road the others of the party learned to "Crank 'er up," as it was manifestly impossible for the third human to crank the car, change the mixture or look for the elusive spark which had been lost somewhere between the coil and the cylinders, at one and the same time. The fact that it was impossible proved a blessing to the third party, who managed to get the old bus to "hit 'er up" again without a dissolution in tears of sweat. The sweating, though, was done profusely enough by the two shifts of crankers.

The trip was a foolishly absurd one from the start. The petrol waggon started to limp along on two cylinders almost at the time we left the barn—Archie hadn't had time to build a garage—and during the first mile or two hit just a few times on the third and fourth. This hitting on three and four was done in a vain sort of way, just to show us that she could do it if she wanted to. When she was chugging along she seemed to sing a refrain much like this, one word for each explosion: "I can—I can—I can do—I can—I can do it—but I'll—but I'll—but I'll be—be—be—be—blowed if—if I—if I will." And whether she could or whether she couldn't I'll be blowed if she would, anyway.

The first three miles of the trip were made without much trouble. Every time she hit on a third or fourth cylinder the spirits of the trio, and perhaps of the quartette, for who will say that Peps did not become enlivened or cast down at the performance of the engine, rose, and with each miss, and they were many, the spirits fell. A stretch of twenty-five yards done on the four cylinders was the signal for much rejoicing and we could see in our mental vision a perfect trip of twenty miles, a full creel, and a pleasant ride home in the evening. But Robbie Burns was right and whether our plans were best-laid or no they most certainly went terribly agley.

A DECIMAL five grade three miles from home started the fireworks. The old bus went jumping after a spluttering, fussing motor and, with a final screech of protest and a final buck, as though to unseat her riders, came to a full stop. The trouble was immediately diagnosed as that of a broken connection or a poor plug. Connections were examined and found to be right and tight. Plugs were looked over and found to be capable of firing any spark which might happen along. The connection from the coil was tested and found O.K., and the spitting spark on the third wire proved that the coils were in action and that the juice was entering the magneto. But if the juice entered the "mag" it apparently got no further, and a searching inquiry was instituted to try and discover just where the elusive spark eluded and why the mag was like a sponge—absorbing all the juice and delivering none. After a few minutes' search it was discovered that the breaker points were set too far apart and the trouble

THE kind of story that if you are not a motorist will make you thank your stars you didn't do it; and if you are a fisherman will enable you to understand how near the author came to being a writer of real fiction. The writer is a Canadian editor; of what paper we are not saying. But he had the experience, and as the story was too long for his own paper, here it is.—Editor.

By T. HUGH McCULLOUGH

was remedied. Everything appeared serene again and the procession started. The old bus just managed to make the decimal five grade on second speed and we were off for a beautiful coast of a mile and a half to lower ground. The engine didn't miss once for the whole mile and a half. We had shut it off when starting the coast.

When we neared the end of the grade we turned the switch on and threw the gear into low, letting the clutch in gradually. This had the desired effect. The engine caught and we found the car scooting along hitting on all four cylinders. The trip, for the next half-mile, was a near-heaven for Archie, who concluded that he hadn't "been had" so badly after all and that the benzine buggy was going to pay dividends on his investment in pleasure and utility. He was metaphorically patting himself on the back and telling us that a couple of weeks' experience with the car was going to work wonders both in improving the car's running ability and his mechanical capability, when a sound, very much like a pistol shot, from somewhere in the rear interrupted him and we pulled up to find that a thin spot in the left rear tire had given way. A closer examination disclosed a jagged tear a couple of inches long in the casing and, subsequently, we found a rip about four inches long in the inner tube. Archie wasn't a bit downhearted over this. He undertook to make repairs. This was a job he could do. Didn't he have a brand new tire fastened on behind, a couple of extra inner tubes in the tonneau, and a power-pump, the kind which fits in the spark plug hole, under the back seat? And hadn't he had experience in curing blow-outs and repairing punctures in the old bicycle days? Sure he had! Just leave it to him! Since he seemed so sure of himself, since he had all the necessary repair parts, since he wished to demonstrate his ability to look after one part of the car at least, and since the pilot had had experience in dealing with refractory automobile tires, he, Dug and the dog sat under a nearby tree and "left it to him."

The first hitch in the proceedings came when Archie found there was no jack in the car. Every seat was turned over, the tool-box and every possible place of concealment was thoroughly probed, and still no jack. Dug and the chauffeur had to get up and help. A block of wood, a large stone and a fence-rail made an effective jack and the wheel was soon in position for Archie to work with. And Archie certainly worked. The tire hadn't been off the rim for some time and it had rusted so badly that it was almost impossible to budge it. Archie pulled and hammered, pried and pushed, yanked and swore, but the only noticeable result was a beautiful row of beads of perspiration which graced his brow. After struggling with it and swearing and sweating manfully for a full ten minutes he came over to us and pleaded for help. The help was given, perhaps not freely and ungrudgingly, but it was given. After strenuous exertions the tire yielded and the rim was clear for the new pneumatic. This Archie insisted on putting in place himself and in another twenty minutes the tire was filled with air, the old casing strapped on behind, the pump placed under the rear seat and we had started again.

Some of the power-pumps wished on the present day motorists are plaguey nuisances. The one

Archie possessed was one of that class. A special kind of spark-plug was used in the car for this pump and to fill the tire it was only necessary to give a short lever a half-turn, extract the plug, insert the pump, and start the engine—so the advertisement read. After the tire was filled one had to give this lever a half-turn back, extract the pump and insert the plug. If this was done carefully everything was O.K., but if not, the force of the subsequent explosions would loosen the plug and it would fly out of the hole with a report like a pistol shot. We had managed to pump the tire and had started away happy in the thought that the old tub was going to get us to the river all right when the plug blew out. At the report Archie turned pale. He thought it was another tire gone. A few posi-

tively unprintable words rushed to his lips and he expressed himself as absolutely sick and tired of "the cahrr." A moment's inspection, however, showed the "reason why" and Archie's soul was entirely at rest because he knew he didn't know anything about the power-plant and so didn't need to worry. But luck, even though this didn't prove to be a blown-out tire, wasn't entirely with us. We couldn't find the plug. The force of the explosion had not only forced it from its moorings on the engine, but had torn it from the magneto connection and cast it—where? This particular car was fitted with a pan which ran from the front of the engine to near the centre of the car. We didn't know for what particular purpose it was placed there unless to catch any part of the engine which might shake off and prevent its loss—it proved useful for that—but whatever the reason, it was there and, as we could not find the plug, we concluded it must be in the pan. Archie and Dug crawled underneath and, loosening eight springs, let the pan fall. The plug was there right enough, and after replacing it carefully and re-fastening the pan we started again.

OUR freedom from troubles didn't last long, however. At the very next grade the car slowed down. The engine worked as fast as ever, but the car wouldn't climb the hill. Stripped gears, was the first thought. Wrong! Slipping clutch, the next. Right! Slipping clutch it was and slipping very badly. Apparently a former owner had put an overdose of grease in the clutch and it absolutely refused to grip. Dug's hat and a handy sand-bank solved this problem and we made the hill on low, with the chauffeur handling the wheel and throttle, Dug pouring sand on the clutch out of his hat and Archie softly swearing in the tonneau.

After another mile the engine petered out and, crank as we would, not a single explosion rewarded us. The carburetor had been leaking badly and a glance at the float disclosed the trouble which we afterwards verified by sticking the rule into the gasoline tank. No gasoline! Archie called at a neighbouring house, borrowed a horse and buggy and set off for a village a couple of miles distant for gasoline.

Time does not pass nearly so slowly when one is in action—even if the action does consist of bolstering up a rickety old automobile which should have been placed on the retired list many years before—as it does when one is just lying around waiting for someone else to do something, and the three-quarters of an hour Dug and I spent in waiting for the return of the gasoline-carrier seemed like triple the time. We were roused from our smoky snooze by the hoof-beats of a galloping horse and the rattle of a delapidated buggy and awakened in time to see the steed, which Archie had driven to the village, make the turn into the gate of its own home followed by the buggy which went around the gate-post on two wheels. Our inaction didn't last long. Running to the farmer's barn we found the horse standing in the cattle shed puffing prodigiously, but otherwise none the worse for the trip. A few minutes sufficed to mend some minor breaks in the harness, and we drove down the road to look for Archie, who, we thought, might be seriously hurt. A half mile down the road Archie hove in sight. The appearance of