



ROUTE OF MEGARGEL'S WINTER TRIP ACROSS THE CONTINENT.



CROSSING A RIVER ON ROW BOATS LACED TOGETHER.

Lessons from the Experience of Percy Megargel Which Should Be of Benefit to Contestants in the New-York-to-Paris Auto Race.

IN view of the great interest manifested in the coming polar automobile race from New York to Paris under the auspices of Le Matin of Paris, with the co-operation of The New York Times, the adventures of Percy Megargel and his machine, David E. Foster, in crossing the American continent in midwinter in an automobile may not be amiss.

If Megargel starts in the race it is quite certain that he will not drive a high-power car, with the possibility of the outfit finding a resting place at the bottom of some river on which the ice has proved treacherous. Megargel is seriously considering entering the race, and is waiting the decision of the Reo Motor Car Company whose car, the Reo "Mountaineer," he drove in his last two transcontinental trips.

In an interview with Megargel on the subject of the polar race, he said that he did not contemplate using the thousand and one things which some contestants are said to be planning on. He thinks the race will be won by a lightweight car of medium power, with good clearance, driven by a man of resourcefulness. His car, well hampered with unnecessary articles, would still carry an equipment that when tabulated seems large.

It is only necessary to hear his modest description of the experiences he met with on his tour to know that no novice will have a "look in," nor would the average man who has achieved fame in the racing game on beaches. For instance, he is a likely contestant. In order to show how a contestant must depend more upon his brain and endurance than upon a high-power motor in his car, a brief description of the car and equipment which Megargel has in mind may be of interest.

The Car and Equipment.

In his trip from San Francisco in the winter of 1905-6 he took a regular stock car of 16 horse power and equipped the front axle with an extra strong trans rod. The tonneau was kept in place either by a special latch or by a bolt which carried his supplies. The front seat was fastened on with hinges so that it could be tilted up in order to afford sleeping quarters for himself and machine. Every nut on the car was tightened up as tight as possible without stripping the nuts. The projecting ends of the bolts were then drilled and cotter pins were inserted, eliminating the chance of a nut working loose.

A special windlass was constructed in the frame on which was wound 200 feet of three-eighths-inch wire cable, one crank operating the windlass and resembling the starting crank of the machine, but at heavier construction. The two bolts were removed from the forward ends of the springs and a steel rod inserted that ran completely across the front of the car and acted as a buffer or "cow catcher," as the veteran tourist put it.

Hartford traillux were fixed to each spring to prevent its breaking when the car was severely jolted, and a pair of springs were constructed and fixed to the rear axle with sharpened ends. These were allowed to drag in ascending all steep grades to prevent the car from backing down should the mechanism fail to work, and four inches from the end of the spring plates were fixed to the ends from sinking too deep into the soft earth.

A pair of Dietz oil lamps and a six-inch Dietz searchlight connected to a double generator were installed. Rubber lamp covers covered the lighting outfit. On the right-hand side of the car were iron brackets to hold in place two five-gallon cans of gasoline. A tarpaulin stretched across the tonneau and buttoned at the sides was to protect the contents from dust and rain.

A Warner automobile, to tell the distance traveled and the rate of speed, and a graduated meter to register the percentage of grades were placed on the dashboard. The foot throttle was equipped with a ratchet to enable the driver to lock it in place and run at any desired speed without keeping his foot on the accelerator.

Sand tires of his own invention were carried to be used in crossing desert stretches. Heavy woolen army blankets and two twenty-foot strips of heavy canvas were placed aboard, the canvas to be used in improvising a tent and to be stretched under the wheels when crossing an unusually boggy stretch of country.

There was a mess kit with a week's provisions, consisting mostly of canned meats, crackers, and vegetables. The rest of the outfit was made up in part as follows: Two heavy Colt revolvers, a Winchester rifle, a coil of strong wire, such as is employed in baling hay; an axe, spade, and shovel, an extra set of dry cells, and an extra set of copper wiring, a set of weed tire chains, a Gabriel horn, box spark plugs, rubber coats, hats, and hip boots.

Among the changes which he would make, some of which have been anticipated by the manufacturers, would be to

secure a higher clearance by fitting higher wheels to the car, larger gasoline tanks, using two cranks on the windlass and heavier cable, as the three-eighths inch material proved too weak on several occasions; a break on the flywheel, and a larger supply of provisions, as the party was practically without a morsel for four days.

He would use a thermometer that registers more than 20 degrees below zero, as in the mountains of Arizona it was guess work when the mercury disappeared in the bulb at 20 below. In the opinion of Megargel a good searchlight and two good Winchester should keep a pack of ruidous wolves at a respectful distance.

Megargel reached San Francisco in the latter part of November, expecting to cross the Sierra Nevada Mountains by the route followed by his friend Whitmore in the Summer of 1905. Finding the passes of the mountains blocked with thirty feet of snow he was obliged to make a detour of 300 miles to the south to Los Angeles and then tackle a country the nature of which was unknown to any motorist, including himself.

Prophets Confounded.

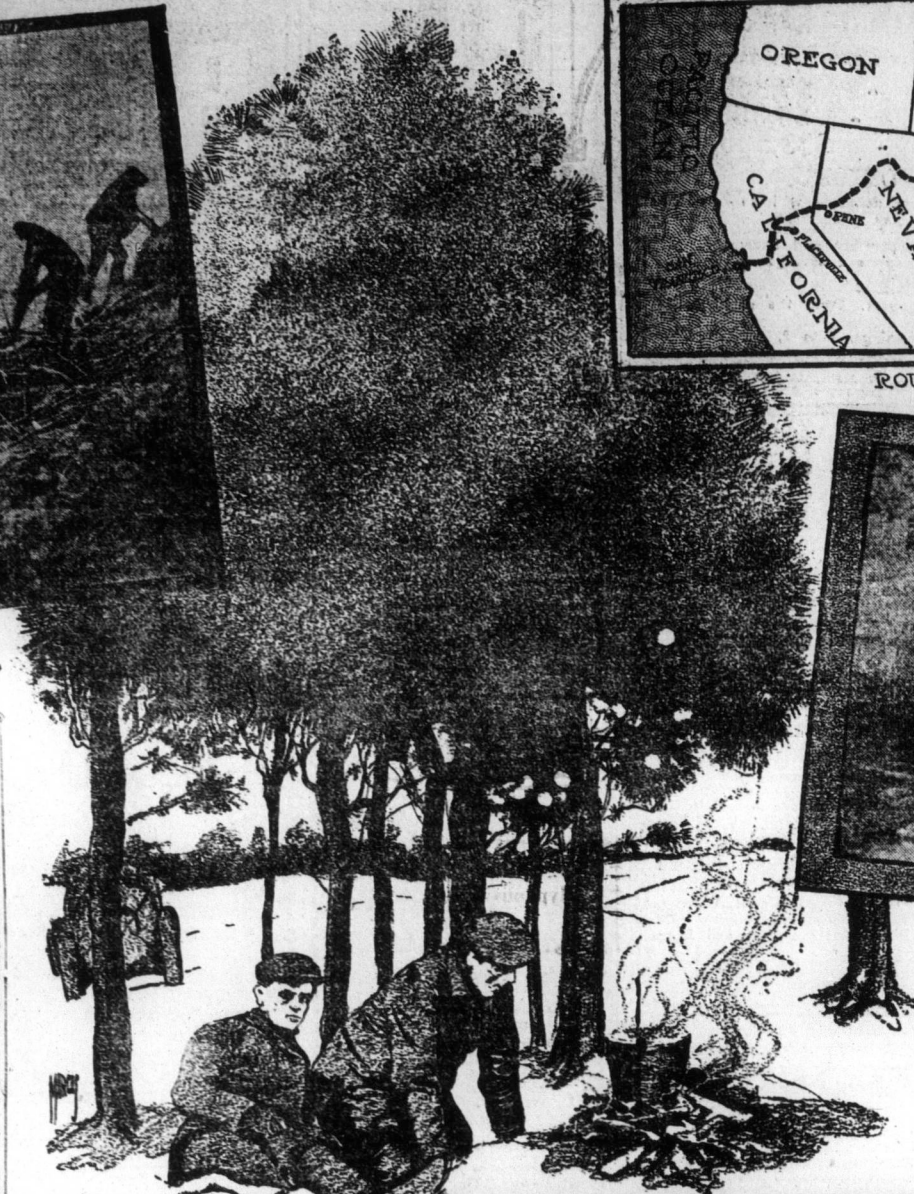
It was freely predicted that it would be impossible to cross with a motor car, and a number of motorists had penetrated east as far as the edge of the Mojave desert only to find themselves conquered by the sand.

Megargel with his sand tires was confident that he could overcome the difficulty and successfully negotiated it, running fifty-nine miles on one day that had paralyzed traffic on the Santa Fe and Southern Pacific lines. The machine and guide hid under the canvas of the tonneau and huddled in the blankets in the snow. There was a gale of forty miles an hour, and there was nothing to do but keep going or have the car swallowed up by the sand.

At Needles there was neither bridge nor ferry, and the wide and swift flowing Colorado had to be crossed. Two rowboats were lashed together, two side wheels resting in each boat. Mohave Indians acted as hostmen. Fasset nearly lost his life in this point through trying to stop the twin boats in the swift current. Less difficulty was met with on the Arizona desert, but when the San Francisco Mountains were reached the real trouble commenced. The mercury rapidly descended in the tube as the barometer showed high altitudes, and the carburetor had to be frequently adjusted to meet the changes in air.

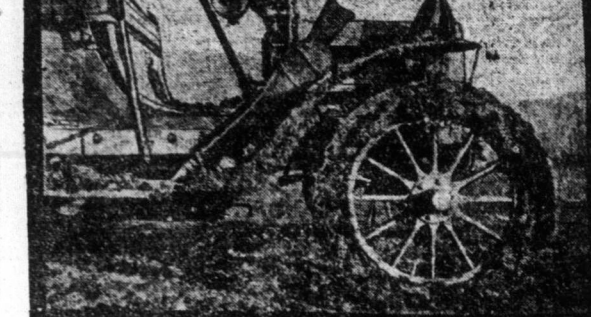
Towns became unknown and ranch houses disappeared entirely as the mountain tops came in sight. Snow was encountered, the drifts being in some places from eight to ten feet in depth. The trail, which had not been traveled in months, was obliterated. Occasionally a guide could be secured, but money was no consideration to the average cowboy snugly housed in his log shack to get out in and face a raging blizzard in so uncertain a conveyance as he considered the automobile, with its low clearance, and driven by "two dam fools," as they usually expressed it.

An effort was made to keep the railroad in sight, but this consisted of a glimpse of a line of smoke in the distance once or twice a day. The party bore forty or more miles to the north or south, as the



THINKING OF HOME—CHRISTMAS 1905

topography of the country changed. Under these conditions it is not to be wondered at that they became lost in the mountains between Williams and Flagstaff. A fierce blizzard was blowing at the time, and the railroad had not been sighted for days. The gasoline supply became practically exhausted, and the men realized that they were in for it. The mercury went down until it disappeared



MUD IN CALIFORNIA.

in the bull, showing that it was more than 20 degrees below zero. Previous to this they had struck a part of the country that had been visited by a heavy rain. They thought it advisable to wait until it had frozen, so as to make going better, and at midnight, several hours later, tried to make a start, but found that the wheels of their car had frozen fast. A half hour was spent in cutting it loose.

When they were reaching the timber line after leaving Williams, where there were only a few dwarfed pines, the snow blew so fiercely that they could not see more than a yard or two ahead. They decided to halt, and formed a camp beside a fir tree, the snow being banked on all sides to protect the travelers. An attempt was made to light a fire, but it had rained a few days before, and all firewood was covered with a thick coating of sleet.

After an hour of fruitless work, during which the tourists had to keep constantly in motion to prevent freezing, the attempt was given up in despair. When hope of reaching civilization was about abandoned it suddenly occurred to one of the men to use the gasoline blow torch to warm themselves. The sight of the yard of blue flame cheered the wayfarers, and they saw the problem of lighting a fire was solved, for the blue flame, which would melt steel, had no trouble in cutting through the coating of ice.

A Last Resource Sought.

A search was made through the tonneau for provisions, and such articles as had been overlooked were dumped into a pile of snow over the fire which had been kindled with the aid of the blow torch. They called the concoction soup. It was made of sardines, a potato, two onions, some greasy cracker crumbs, some butter, a little bacon, and pepper and salt. For four days they lived on the "soup," piecing it out with generous additions of snow and pepper always more pepper.

Then a rescuing party that had been searching for some lumbermen hove in sight in a sleigh, the corpses of two unfortunate occupants of the bottom of the box. Megargel and Fasset were taken to the nearest station of the Santa Fe, Belmont, about fourteen miles west of Flagstaff. Two weeks were consumed in getting the car to Flagstaff from where it had been abandoned. From Flagstaff they went east through Winslow, Amarillo, and Navajo Springs.

Deep snow was encountered most of the way, and the nights were extremely cold. The nights were passed huddled up in the blankets or in the little shanties of the Mexican section men, made of railroad ties, on the Santa Fe. They slept on these occasions with one eye on the greasers.

Regarding the travel on the Yukon of some of the rivers of Siberia, Megargel's experience on the Rio Puerco may prove enlightening. Soon after leaving Winslow there was no wagon road over the section, and the party decided to take the Rio Puerco. The car was lowered down the steep bank with the windlass, and soon they were bowling along on the snow-covered ice at the fastest clip they had been able to make since leaving California.

About forty miles had been traveled in this manner when, without warning, the rear wheels, which sustained several hundred pounds more than those in front, broke through. The occupants of the car were thrown headlong over the dashboard when the car stopped with a jolt. Investigation showed that the wheels were not in water, but quicksand of the most dangerous kind, and were being steadily drawn down.

Everything movable in the car was removed and an iron bar was driven in the ice fifty feet ahead, to which the cable of the windlass was attached. Despite the efforts of the two men they could not budge the car, and ties were carried from the railroad half a mile away to be used in blocking it up. Two days later, with the assistance of the crews of two sections of the Santa Fe, the car was released. A heavier car would probably have been lost if they had not gone through into deeper water further upstream. A locomotive and two Pullmans were swallowed up by the quicksand at the same point some years earlier.

No Trouble with the Gasoline.

No trouble was ever experienced with gasoline freezing. The lubricating oil, however, froze or became clogged, and it was necessary to put the flame of the blow torch on the lubricator and allow each morning before starting the engine.

It was necessary on innumerable occasions to crank for twenty minutes at a time, with frequent single explosions, before the cylinders warmed enough to allow low regular explosions. The canned goods in the tonneau were frozen at all times, and often when a can was thrown into a pile of boiling water and the contents warmed enough to explode the can there was a frozen core when the contents were served. Leather caps and shoes had to be thawed out each morning.

Sweaters with long turtle necks were worn at night and were drawn over the face to prevent freezing. Woolen stockings were worn under heavy articles, but the men frequently ran beside the car to keep their blood circulating freely. A hand was kept on the steering wheel to keep the car from spurring at a bare spot. On one occasion on another trip the car got away while some shoveling was being done, but brought up in a snow bank without injury. Snow crust was encountered sufficiently strong to carry the car.

Megargel is of the impression that it is impossible to cross the Sierra Nevada between November and June, but he figures that the run from New York to Ogden will be comparatively easy sailing in February, unless a few days of rain should put the Platte over its banks in Nebraska and wash away some bridges, as it does about each Spring.

There is no doubt in his mind that the run can be made from Ogden to Los Angeles. From Los Angeles to San Francisco is about 500 miles of well-traveled, excellent road, and this part of the journey, he estimates, should not take more than thirty-six hours.

Megargel has paid as high as \$1.75 a gallon for gasoline, and from his experience he has learned that it took four times as much gasoline to drive a car on cold weather through snow as when spilling along smooth roads in the Summer. On one occasion he had the gasoline carried four miles to the car on a wagon drawn by two cow ponies. The outfit came to grief in a small canyon.

On the subject of the Siberian end of the race Megargel is very reticent. He has pulled his car through boggy ground that could not well be more difficult to negotiate by reason of its being down-town, far from the hustle and bustle. "It may be the case of 'birds of a feather flocking together,' but every one here, employ and all, goes to church." A clerk in an exclusive hotel in upper Fifth Avenue said: "We supply more cars on Sunday mornings to people who want to go to church than for any other purpose."

Churchgoing Among the Guests of New York Hotels

Investigators Surprised to Find that Transients Are Very Diligent in Church Attendance—A Large Variety of Motives Discovered.

WHAT do the 100,000 or more transient hotel guests who add to New York's shifting population do with themselves on Sunday? Investigators from the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, which is operating a series of special evangelist Sunday night services for the hotel population and other strangers in the city, have found to their surprise that a large number of them go to church. And some of the hotel managers interviewed declare that the transient guests are better church-goers, as an average, than guests who stay all year around, or people who live in private homes or apartments. At a number of hotels it was declared that on Sunday mornings the transient guests are the most regular churchgoers to answer inquiries about where to go to church.

Why They Go to Church.

The reasons for churchgoing, however, are as varied as the types of guests. The largest part go because they are churchgoers at home and wish to keep up the practice. Some of these want simply the nearest church of their denomination. But others look upon city churches as features of the sights of the city and pick out the one they wish to attend for much the same reason that they would pick out the best hotel or the best restaurant in the city. Some want to see the church which cost the most money or the one with the highest salaried preacher. Still others want the best music or the best preacher or the best stained glass. Another class wants to see the minister, who is known as Dr. Scandise throughout the country because of his attack on this or that feature of New York. And a very large class wants to go to the church where Mr. Millenbach is to be seen in the congregation or the one where Mr. Megargel or Mr. Copper or Mr. Steel King makes his weekly peace with Heaven.

Their idea is to be able to say, when they return home, that they have seen this great religious spectacle and tell at great length just how the entire Moneybag family behaves at public worship and what the result of the service. As a result the hotel clerk, who supplies the information on the church directories in the reading room, has to be a regular bureau of information, not about the religious features of the churches, but about their financial and other show features. These people go to the churches just as they go to the museums, as part of seeing New York, and are as disappointed if the chief

personal exhibit is not on show as they would be to find some collection of pictures closed for cleaning.

In the more fashionable hostilities, the churchgoing indication takes the form of an order for a taximeter cab to take the Sunday guests to definite churches. These people generally have made up their minds as to whom they wish to see or hear—generally the church or preacher or choir made most famous by newspaper articles printed in out-of-town newspapers. The investigations made by the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church Committee covered all ranges of hotels, from the Mills to the latest of the great luxurious palaces of the rich, from the hotels which seldom open their registers and have no transient guests save in their restaurants, to those who haven't had anything like a permanent guest since they were opened years ago. But everywhere there was the report that hotel guests were consistent churchgoers, and there were as many explanations as hotels as to why this is so.

At the Mills Hotel, the clerk said that most of their guests were familiar with the city, and did not make inquiries at the desk. Some of the guests, however, said that not a few of their fellow-residents went to church, but principally on rainy Sundays. For the most part they were laboring men or clerks, and on fair

days wanted to walk around and see what was going on. On rainy Sundays, however, they wanted other recreation indoors, and after they were tired of the hotel reading rooms and had finished the Sunday papers, they generally went to church. Commonly, they did not care what church it was—they chose the nearest one which had a hotel reputation of being decent to strangers and of furnishing good music and a fair sermon. The Mills guests, he said, were generally a thinking set of people, and were rather hard critics of sermons unless they were full of ideas.

Generally Know What They Want.

At the Astor the management said that they were kept busy Sunday morning ordering cabs for churchgoers, of which there were always a considerable number among their guests. As a rule, they said, these guests knew what they wanted to see, and asked only to be told how to find it. A number of these people, for the first time in New York, perhaps, would ask to be directed to some church where years ago some very famous preacher had occupied the pulpit. They had heard of him from their fathers or mothers, who had attended his church, and they wanted to see it as a place of historic interest. Beecher's church figures particularly in this category, and one

confided, "Some lost them right off and have to come straight back for more." At that moment a striking-looking customer, who were kept busy Sunday morning ordering cabs for churchgoers, of which there were always a considerable number among their guests. As a rule, they said, these guests knew what they wanted to see, and asked only to be told how to find it. A number of these people, for the first time in New York, perhaps, would ask to be directed to some church where years ago some very famous preacher had occupied the pulpit. They had heard of him from their fathers or mothers, who had attended his church, and they wanted to see it as a place of historic interest. Beecher's church figures particularly in this category, and one

confided, "Some lost them right off and have to come straight back for more." At that moment a striking-looking customer, who were kept busy Sunday morning ordering cabs for churchgoers, of which there were always a considerable number among their guests. As a rule, they said, these guests knew what they wanted to see, and asked only to be told how to find it. A number of these people, for the first time in New York, perhaps, would ask to be directed to some church where years ago some very famous preacher had occupied the pulpit. They had heard of him from their fathers or mothers, who had attended his church, and they wanted to see it as a place of historic interest. Beecher's church figures particularly in this category, and one

Hair Business Booming.

HAIR seems to be one of the few businesses that is really prospering this winter. "What," announced the dealer in switches and wigs, "this has been the best season we've had since the Janice Meredith curl, seven years ago. That set things going some, but it wasn't a market to this." The dealer pointed triumphantly to a counter three deep with women passing judgment on various kinds of curls and puffs.

"It's the hats do it," he continued. "You just can't wear one of this season's fashions unless you have half-lots of it; but it doesn't much matter whether it's yours or not." The milliners have been booming our trade this year, I tell you."

"We sell lots of separate curls," a clerk

Smokeless Coal

A LONDON inventor claims to have discovered a process for producing smokeless coal, apparently by distillation of coal at a low temperature. This, after filtration, is said to deposit a very brilliant substance, the heating properties of which are far greater than those of the original coal, and which is absolutely free from smoke and dirt.

The inventor contends that efforts to overcome the smoke plague have hitherto been unsuccessful, because they have been made in the wrong direction, and that by the extraction of the smoke-producing material in coal before being burned, he has been successful in producing a smokeless coal. Sir W. B. Richmond, President of the Society for the Prevention of Smoke, has bought up this invention.

At that moment a striking-looking customer, who were kept busy Sunday morning ordering cabs for churchgoers, of which there were always a considerable number among their guests. As a rule, they said, these guests knew what they wanted to see, and asked only to be told how to find it. A number of these people, for the first time in New York, perhaps, would ask to be directed to some church where years ago some very famous preacher had occupied the pulpit. They had heard of him from their fathers or mothers, who had attended his church, and they wanted to see it as a place of historic interest. Beecher's church figures particularly in this category, and one