

THE SAGA OF THE ROARING ROAD

comfortable fortune and retired from business in 1900, at the comparatively early age of 43. His mind turned to travel and therefore the automobile caught his imagination.

Fired by his vision of the future of the automobile, Colonel Glidden, with Mrs. Glidden as a passenger, launched in 1903, on a tour of the principal European countries, and this at a time when a motor trip from New York to Boston was a highly precarious, if not hazardous, adventure. Having successfully completed this tour, which took him to a point beyond the Arctic Circle in Sweden, he and Mrs. Glidden decided, in 1904, to venture forth on a tour around the globe, using their automobile whenever possible.

The equipment of this first-around-the-globe car included a set of wheels with steel rims and flanges, to be used on railroad tracks at points where trails vanished and roads were non-existent. After an overland trip by railroad track from Boston to Vancouver, B. C., car and passengers proceeded by steamer to Yokohama, which was made the point of departure for a motor tour which included Japan, China, the Philippines, Sumatra, Java, Australia, Tasmania, and thence by way of Ceylon through India and Asia, entering Jerusalem by the famous Jaffa Gate, the first motor vehicle to enter these sacred precincts.

The tour, which consumed seven years, took the two dauntless motorists into thirty-nine countries, and their great motoring epic is preserved in Mr. Glidden's mammoth road log of the world, consisting of 2,500 photographs and a 250,000 word description of this great Odyssey of the Road.

Having satisfied himself by actual experience that the motor and the motor car had not only reached a

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stage of comparative stability, but had also brought about a new era of transportation, Colonel Glidden took counsel with himself and with some close friends as to how he could best promote motor touring and motor car development in the United States. He offered a cup, the famous Glidden Trophy, which became the "America Cup" of the motoring world and which, during eight years of strenuous competition, 1904-1912, stood as the emblem of the roadability and superiority of cars and around which fierce battles were waged by the giants of the automotive industry of those days.

Thus started the famous Glidden Tours, which had a twofold purpose, namely, to demonstrate the stability of the automobile in actual road service and the great necessity for construction of motor highways throughout the country.

But permit me to cut back a couple of years before telling about the Glidden Tours.

The first long distance run undertaken by the Automobile Club of America was from New York to Philadelphia in the spring of 1902. Some fifty cars participated. A storm came up, and I don't think more than ten of the vehicles got through.

I rode in a Locomobile steam surrey, which stranded near Burlington with a burned out boiler. They tell me though, that only four men sat down at the appointed hour to the banquet at the Bellevue, which had been spread for 120, and these four arrived by train. Survivors struggled in to the dinner party nearly all night.

Later that same year—1902—The A.A.A. staged another reliability contest, with the cars supposed to travel from New York to Boston and back again.