

THROUGH EASTERN EUROPE WITH AN (Continued from page 608)

improved with the weather, and early evening found us at Brasov.

Little of interest can be recorded before Bucharest was reached. Our road lay through Sinaia, snow still lying on the Predeal Pass, and the oilfields surrounding Campina and Ploesti. The road for many miles north of Bucharest has now been made, by a Swedish company, into an excellent race track for those who week-end at Sinaia. We were unfortunate enough to be going against this stream of traffic on a Saturday afternoon, and an untimely end looked probable on several occasions. It is hard to condemn the thirst for speed at this time and place, as I believe this is one of the very few stretches of really good road in Roumania.

Bucharest, our easternmost point, was reached in 24 days and a distance of 2800 miles. The very modern ramp garage had an efficient staff; so efficient were they that, on calling for the car, we found the engine had been most thoroughly cleaned with a hose, and the distributor and carburetters were full of water. This being remedied, we left for Craiova.

On coming out of our hotel here to park the car for the night, we found it hidden from the gaze of an inquisitive crowd by an enormous dust sheet, this apparently being the local way of preventing a disturbance of the peace.

In America, photography for the motorist is made easy by large road-side signs which say "Kodak ahead." In our case this function was performed by my wife, who would shout something similar. A few miles from Turnu Severin a loudly proclaimed "Photograph"

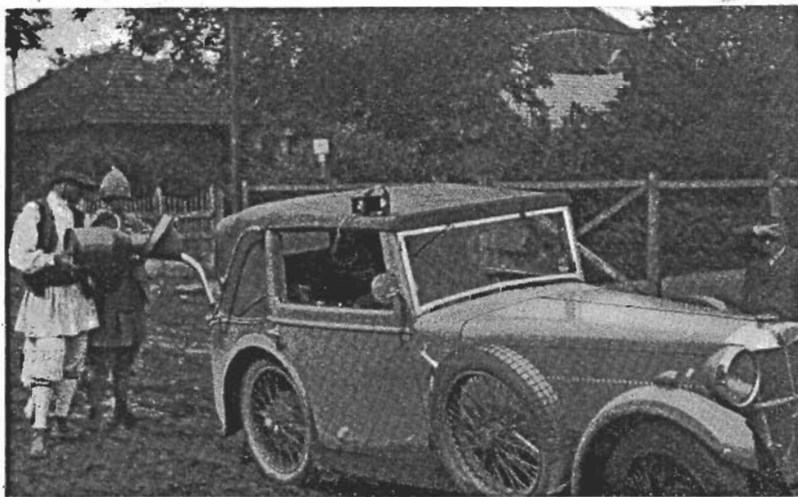
brought me to a stop. Coming towards us was a caravan of perhaps twenty cart-loads of gypsies with their worldly goods. As we stopped, so did they. The chief and his family immediately posed for a photograph (they were obviously used to this procedure) and, remuneration being forthcoming, we were at once surrounded by envious tribesmen and women with children clamouring for money; as my pockets, I felt sure, were safer in the car, to clear the way I threw a handful of coins on the grass. The resulting scum would do credit to any international team at Twickenham.

ating it at irregular intervals. Having quenched our thirst, and photographed the band, who came out into the road to play us away, we set out for the Yugo-Slav border after a stay of over an hour. A precious hour, as it turned out, for we found that the border closed at 6 p.m. At the station house of Bazias we were therefore forced to spend the night, having dinner on a steamer moored in the Danube.

The buying of petrol in a small village near here deserves some mention; it came from a seldom-used drum, and as they had no means of measurement, a litre bottle was laboriously filled and emptied the necessary number of times.

Many formalities at an early hour at the frontier delayed our arrival at Pancevo until lunch time. We had understood that at Pancevo ferrying the Danube to Belgrade was an easy matter. On arrival there we were disillusioned. Many enquiries elicited as many different instructions. At last, however, exasperated but triumphant, we found our way to a point opposite Belgrade, having crossed the small Tamis on a raft, and driven along narrow dyke tops, and made many detours where parts of these were missing. Belgrade was very welcome after a 65-mile journey completed in eleven hours.

South from Belgrade the road is good, well signed and picturesque, and evening found us in Sarajevo. The whole population apparently was having its evening promenade, and as no well-ordered motorist should dare to argue for the use of the streets, police appeared to shepherd us to the hotel. At the outskirts of



Filling up at Ilia, between Arad and Sibiu.

Beyond Turnu Severin we visited the interesting Turkish Island of Ada Kaleh in the Danube, and spent the night at Herkulesbad.

We had thought it possible to reach Belgrade the next day, but circumstances conspired against us. The heat was intense, and as our thermos was empty we stopped in the village of Moldava Veche to replenish it. The strains of Tzigane music reached us from an inn. On entering, we found the small front room occupied by a gypsy band and a few listeners, including a very drunken individual, whom we discovered to be the rich man of the village, and who paid the band to play for him. In the confined space the noise was deafening, the band was playing madly, loud shouts from the patron of music punctu-