

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING*(Continued from page 309)*

only petrol and steam cars were represented, so that the joys of the "combination of animate and mechanical motor" were not revealed to the public.

If the sporting instincts of the Frenchmen of 1894 were as they are to-day, they could have had just as much fun by betting on the date on which the Paris-Rouen run would actually be held as on the results of the event itself. The original date fixed was 1st June, but this was altered to the 7th to enable one of the prize-donors to attend. Then it was found that hardly any of the intending competitors were ready, and by an almost unanimous vote the run was postponed for six weeks. Another crisis of unreadiness nearly caused a further postponement, but finally the twenty-one who had successfully passed the preliminary tests (four failed) set off from the Porte Maillot on 22nd July, 1894.

Considering the experimental state of almost all the runners, the trial was extraordinarily un-

eventful, although admittedly the Serpollet steam omnibus driven by M. Maurice Le Blant sank into some soft ground and had to be dragged out with ropes by some forty or fifty startled on-lookers. The really remarkable feature of the event was that of the twenty-one starters, only four failed to reach Rouen. These four were steam cars, the petrol contingent, thirteen strong, all coming through successfully.

The first arrival at Rouen, and, since there was a massed start, the fastest vehicle in the run, was the De Dion steam tractor, driven by the Comte de Dion and Georges Bouton, which averaged 11.6 m.p.h. A close second was M. Lemaître's 3½ h.p. Peugeot, at 11.5 m.p.h., then came M. Doriot on a similar Peugeot, followed by H. Panhard and Emile Levassor, both on 3½ h.p. Panhard-Levassors. The other finishers comprised three Peugeots, two Panhards, a 3 h.p. Benz, a Le Brun petrol car, a 3½ h.p. Vacheron (a modified Panhard), notable for its wheel steering, two Serpollet steamers and a Gautier-Werlé steamer. How-

ever, after much deliberation, the judges ruled that the steam tractor was not strictly a self-propelled vehicle, since the steam tractor did not form part of the carriage, but only drew it along. Accordingly, the first prize was awarded jointly to the Panhard and Peugeot firms, both of whom used the Daimler-type petrol engine. Second prize went to the steam tractor, third place to M. Le Blant's steam omnibus, fourth award to M. Vacheron, and the fifth prize to M. Roger's Benz. A special consolation prize was given to M. Scotte, whose Scotte steam wagonette fell by the wayside. This vehicle, incidentally, was hung all over with little bronze bells, placed there by order of the Prefect to warn other road users of its approach! Finally an honourable mention, complete with medal, was granted to M. Roger de Montais, who drove a most fearsome steam tricycle, with a huge boiler just behind the single front wheel, a tubular frame and two vast cart-wheels behind.

And that's how all this trouble started!