

MOTOR-CAR CONTESTS IN AMERICA.

In our last issue we gave brief particulars of the results of the horseless-carriage races held at the Rhode Island State Fair. Now that our American exchanges are to hand we are able to give fuller particulars, and the *Horseless Age* supplies us with the following particulars:—

Out of the twelve original entries only eight started. These were the Duryea Motor-Wagon Company, J. Frank Duryea, George Henry Hewitt, Fiske Warren, George H. Morrill, jun, William M. Ashley and Son, Riker Electric Motor Company, and the Electric Carriage and Wagon Company. The last two were electric vehicles, the first being an entirely new one and the second the "Electrobat," which received the gold medal at Chicago last autumn. All the remaining wagons were of the Duryea model, one being entered by the Duryea Company and the rest by private purchasers.

On Monday, September 7th, about 5.30 p.m., the carriages were called upon the track, and numbers were assigned to them, as is customary in horse racing.

Each carriage being required to carry a weight of at least 165 pounds in addition to the driver, all preferred to take this in the form of an extra passenger, who was either an *employé*, or friend of the owner, or some well-known student of the subject.

All the contestants were sent back some distance behind the post for the start, and came up in good order. At the word the electric-carriages shot ahead, followed by the entry of the Duryea Motor-Wagon Company. The other Duryea wagons were road-wagons not geared for high speed, and they fell back from the start. Throughout the five miles dash the electric-carriages gradually increased their lead, finishing close together, the Riker carriage first.

The first Duryea wagon was about three-quarters of a mile behind the winners.

A very strong wind was blowing, and the track, while fast for horses, was too rough and lumpy in parts for motor-carriages. The time of the four leading vehicles for the first heat was as follows:—

Riker Electric Motor Company	....	....	15 m. 1 s.
Electric Carriage and Wagon Company	....	....	15 m. 14 s.
Duryea Motor Wagon Company	....	....	18 m. 47 s.
William Ashley and Son	....	....	20 m. 59 s.

As this was the first heat ever run on a track between motor-vehicles, it is reasonable to suppose that the contestants felt new and strange, and could not do themselves full justice. On the second day, however, they gained courage, and determined to improve on the time of the previous day.

At the word the Riker vehicle took the lead, as on the first day, maintaining it to the finish, closely followed by the Duryea wagon and the wagon of the Electric Carriage and Wagon Company.

This heat was closely contested by the three leaders, and evoked great enthusiasm from the spectators. The time was a considerable improvement over that of the preceding day.

Riker Electric Motor Company	....	....	13 m. 6 s.
Duryea Motor Wagon Company	....	....	13 m. 13 s.
Electric Carriage and Wagon Company	....	....	14 m. 33 s.
William Ashley and Son	....	....	16 m. 31 s.

On Wednesday and Thursday a violent north-easterly storm prevailed throughout that section of New England. Rain fell in torrents, and the wind played havoc with the shows and with the plans of the management, and, therefore, all races were declared off on these two days.

On Friday the weather cleared, and by the afternoon the track was in good condition.

The electric carriages dashed off at a two-minute pace, closely followed by the Duryea wagon. A little beyond the half-mile the Duryea wagon was pulling up with the two electrics when a tyre punctured, and the wagon gradually lost headway. The Riker carriage maintained its lead until the home stretch was reached, when the other electric spurted ahead and crossed the line a second ahead of its rival. Much better time was made by all the entries in the third heat, scarcely one falling below the 15 miles an hour limit. The times of the four winners were as follows:—

Electric Carriage and Wagon Company	11 m. 27 s.
Riker Electric Motor Company	11 m. 28 s.
Duryea Motor Wagon Company	11 m. 59 s.
William Ashley and Son	15 m. 47 s.

The race was conducted by the Association under the general rules applied to trotting races, and the awards were made upon this basis. The conditions called for a 20-mile race of five heats of five miles each, one on each of the five successive days of the fair, but as unfavourable weather prevented the completion of more than three heats, three-fifths of the purse only was divided in the following proportions:—First money, to the Riker Electric Motor Company, of Brooklyn, N.Y., 900 dollars; second, to the Electric Carriage and Wagon Company, Philadelphia, Pa., 450 dollars; third, to the Duryea Motor-Wagon Company, 270 dollars; fourth, to William Ashley and Son, Springfield, Mass., 180 dollars.

Public interest in the motor races in Providence and vicinity was very keen, and quite a number of students of the new method of locomotion came from distant points to witness the trial of speed.

The electric carriages weighed from 2,200 to 2,500 lbs. in racing trim, including passengers, the heavier of the two being that of the Electric Carriage and Wagon Company. The leading Duryea wagon weighed about 1,200 lbs. all on.

The fastest mile was covered by the Riker electric carriage, the time being 2 minutes 13 seconds.

It was quite generally commented on by the audience that the electric vehicles made as much or more noise than the gasoline at high speed.

Professor W. H. Pickering, of Harvard University, acted as Chairman of the Board of Judges.

FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE JUDGES.

Cambridge, Mass.,
September 20th, 1896.

Now that the Providence races are over, and we have had an opportunity to examine and weigh the results, I think we must conclude that some very valuable information has been obtained. Unlike the Chicago and New York competitions, this was a speed contest pure and simple. Only eight vehicles were entered for competition, and, therefore, according to the published rules governing the races, no other points were considered by the judges. The comparison between the electric and gasoline carriages was particularly interesting, and the results were quite different from those obtained at Chicago. No electric carriages were entered in the New York contest. While at Chicago the electric carriages were badly beaten, at