

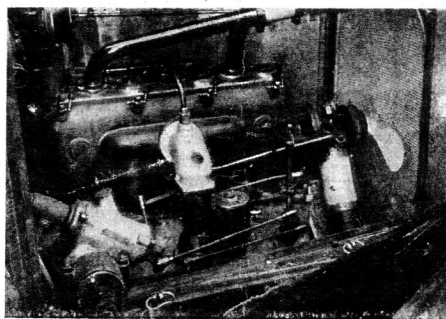
## THE 30-98 H.P. VAUXHALL

ONCE upon a time a man asked me if I thought that the 30-98 h.p. Vauxhall was a car that could be safely recommended. When I had recovered from shock and surprise and had decided that he was prompted by motives of perfectly honest enquiry, I told him that some questions, certainly not many, but some, required no thought, and this was one of them. I did not think about the 30-98 h.p. Vauxhall, I *knew* that it was one of the very best four-cylinder cars that the British motor industry had ever turned out. When he went on to ask, once again, if I thought the car could safely be purchased and maintained by a novice owner-driver, I was fain to admit that some thought was here necessary before an answer could be given, and finally I gave an answer in the negative. The 30-98 h.p. Vauxhall was an excellent car, but it was not the car to be recommended to the novice. How true was my knowledge and how false my opinion will become apparent from the following account of the behaviour of a Vauxhall over an extended week-end trip.

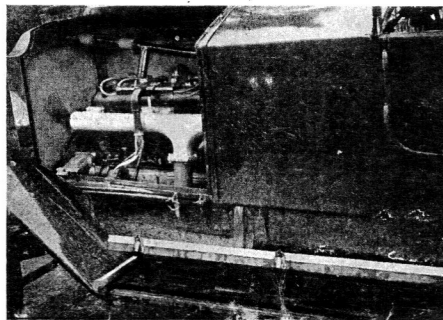
For the benefit of the very few British motorists who are not familiar with this model of the Luton company I will review very briefly the ideals that this car was born to satisfy. There has always been among a certain section of the public a strong desire for a car that, without being excessive in its horse-power, in its first cost and in its maintenance costs, can be justly described as a really fast car. Speaking generally, this desire has been met only by one or two of our most expensive cars and by a few sporting light cars. Considerations of cost have kept the former beyond the reach of the ordinary man, considerations of safety and the probability of frequent mechanical trouble have barred the latter. The 30-98 h.p. Vauxhall is a car of which the engine and chassis are just large enough to be made solidly and yet not so large as to involve undue weight or excessive cost.

### IDEALS AND EXPERIENCE.

From stem to stern, both chassis and complete car are designed in the very beginning as a speed car; and a car that is designed in the first instance as a fast



The carburettor side of the Vauxhall engine.



The near side of the Vauxhall engine, showing also the neat method of carrying the tools in a compartment formed in the running board.

car stands a much better chance of satisfying its function than an ordinary touring car of which the engine and other details have been merely "gingered up." A vital necessity in the production of a successful speed car is experience at the disposal of its makers. Vauxhall Motors, Limited,

produced a "hot stuff" engine in 1907 that made quite a stir in the motoring world, and in 1910 the reputation of the Company and the esteem in which its cars were held were considerably enhanced by one of their cars attaining the then remarkable speed of 100 m.p.h. for a car with an engine of only 20 h.p., R.A.C. rating. Since the war, the 30-98 h.p. Vauxhall has been introduced to meet the demand for a car that should approximate to the racing car in its performance, but yet should equal the touring car in its comfort, durability and general road worthiness.

### ACHIEVEMENT.

The lofty aims of the designer and of the makers have been realised in a manner that is difficult to believe until it has been demonstrated by experience. To me, the greatest of the many surprises afforded by my recent test of the 30-98 h.p. Vauxhall was its supreme ease of handling. I quite expected to find it a car that only an expert would venture to drive without qualms and trepidation. I expected to find an engine of terrific power with practically no flexibility, and I thought that negotiation of traffic would involve pains in the leg and stiffness in the arm by virtue of the perpetual manipulation of clutch and gear that would be necessary. I had heard that the Vauxhall, although possessed of what may be called conventional springing, *i.e.*, semi-elliptics all round, was remarkable for its road holding. But, nevertheless, I anticipated that steering the car on ordinary roads at speeds anywhere near the maximum of which it was supposed to be capable, would be rather more than a gentle nerve-testing job. It was considerations such as these, based on experience of other fairly fast cars, that led me to advise my enquirer as to the merits of this Vauxhall model to leave it alone if he was a novice. But the Vauxhall-Velox turned out to be one of the most easily driven cars that I have ever handled—its engine was

about the joys of the open road, some of us have experienced them, but none of us know what they really are until we have tasted them first hand from the driving seat of a car of this stamp. Some cars are a pleasure to ride in, others are a pleasure to drive. The two do not always go together, and of them the latter is by far the more desirable. But to them both belong the 30-98 h.p. Vauxhall, and until one has trodden its delightful clutch and its wonderful accelerator pedal, to say nothing of its foot brake, and has "twiddled" its steering-wheel ("twiddle" seems the proper word for the Vauxhall steering wheel, so light is it and so sure in its control), one does not know more than half the joys that motoring can offer.

#### FAST ROADS.

Where to take this car so that it may display at least a portion of its alleged prowess? Recent discussion in these pages has reminded us that some sections of the British nation do not like to think of others enjoying themselves within the ken of their fellow men, and so we turned our radiator northwards, intending to make for the deserted high-ways of the Derbyshire and Yorkshire moors. Here one gets straight stretches of moderately level road and winding hills of disreputable gradients or of unconscionable length.

The road from Lichfield to Ashbourne is twisty and erratic, also it was wet from the previous night's rain. We know that road and we love it when "doing" it on a 30-98 h.p. Vauxhall, because it soon reveals to the full the wonderful acceleration and ease of control of the car. At one minute we are doing 45 on what seems like something less than half throttle, at the next we are at practically a standstill waiting for a lumbering farm cart to come over a narrow bridge, or worming our way through a herd of cattle discovered on a blind corner, and then, a

minute later, the speedometer is showing 50 m.p.h. as we shoot up a long, straight, gentle ascent which I happen to know is free from crossroads or other potential danger—and all without a change of gear. But it is after Ashbourne and a detour to Dovedale that the really fast roads are available. Only the experienced motorist knows exactly just how much is connoted by that easy, well sounding phrase "sixty miles an hour." The 30-98 h.p. Vauxhall is supposed to be capable of over 80 m.p.h.; of this I cannot speak from experience, because, for reasons already given, Brooklands Track could not be used for a speed test. But I can say that for mile after mile we kept just on 60 m.p.h. over the Derbyshire moors, and the car rode and the engine worked much the same as they would with an ordinary car doing 35 m.p.h. to 40 m.p.h.

#### BRITISH ALPINE PASSES.

The road from Oldham to Holmfirth comprises a three-mile ascent with an average gradient of 1 in 14. At the top, which is 1,600ft above sea level, is a perfectly open stretch of moorland road. Starting at the bottom of this ascent at about 20 m.p.h., opening the throttle and changing down to third when the speedometer showed 35, we jumped up to 50 m.p.h. and kept just beyond this figure for the whole of that exacting climb—three miles without a break or a rest from the gradient and always at but little below a mile a minute speed! Over the top and back into top gear, the speedometer recorded 72 m.p.h. and was giving every indication of working still higher, when the comfort of the passengers in the back called a halt.

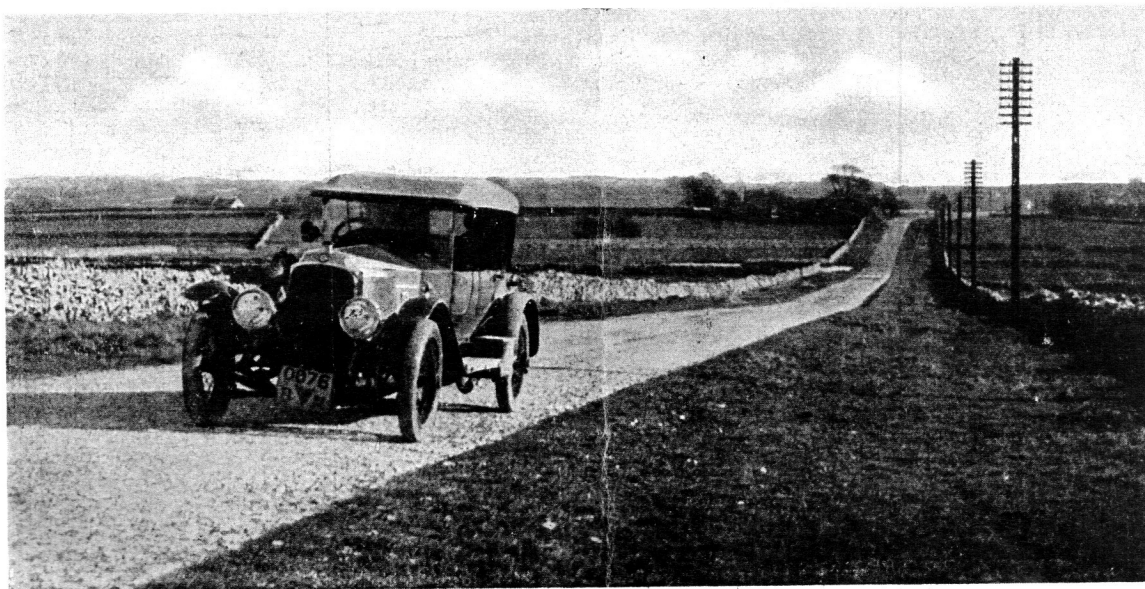
The road from Glossop to Sheffield consists for the first seven miles of a miniature Alpine pass, known to the natives as "The Snake." The gradient is rather steeper than the climb over Bill-o'-Jacks, which is the colloquial name for the

Oldham-Holmfirth hill, but of more importance than its increase in gradient is its winding nature. Here, with "slow ups" at corners, the average speed was 40 m.p.h.

Finally, and to check a false impression that may possibly arise from this account of what is essentially a fast car, let me emphasise that it is not *merely* a fast car. People often ask what is the use or attraction of such an exceptionally high speed vehicle as, say, the 30-98 h.p. Vauxhall. The answer lies but partially in the capability of the car for wonderful speeds, or in the fascination of those speeds. Indeed, a Vauxhall-Velox cannot be enjoyed to the full anywhere in Great Britain. It is in France or in the Alps where one may derive full benefit from its powers. In Great Britain its fascination and its appeal lie not in its speed capacity as such, but in the way in which its special construction and extraordinary engine power allow it to maintain what may be called "respectable" touring speeds. At 40 m.p.h. the car "potters along" much the same as the ordinary car does 25 m.p.h. This sense of effortless motion is a fascinating feeling that has to be experienced to be believed. The springing of the car, its wonderful steering and its no less wonderful braking combine to give an ease of control and a sense of security that not only cannot be excelled, but one feels is not wanted to be excelled. Safety and high all-round performance are the keynotes to automobile progress, and they are exemplified in the 30-98 h.p. Vauxhall to a degree that approaches perilously near to perfection. W. H. J.

#### ITEM.

*Daimler Cars for India.*—The Right Hon. Earl of Lytton, who is leaving England to take up his appointment as Governor of Bengal, has honoured Messrs. Stratton-Instone, Limited, with orders for two Daimler Cars.



A fast car and a "fast" road between Ashbourne and Buxton. It is on roads like this that one may enjoy to the full the speed capacity of the 30-98 h.p. Vauxhall.