

## CHAPTER XII

### The Autocamper's Castle, the Trailer

**T**HE camping trailer is indeed the autocamper's castle. And it is more. It is his ever present domicile. It is his movable home on two or four wheels, preferably two. With a trailer tagging along unnoticed in the rear, the motor camper simply forgets that he is camping and just tours the country. His car is free from duffle and equipment. Then when meal time or night appears, he remembers that he is camping as well as touring, for right behind him has followed his home.

The autocamping trailer does more than kill the proverbial two birds with one stone. You can literally say it kills six birds with one stone. That is, it solves in one single unit of equipment the problem of tent, beds, stoves, food transportation, furnishings, and illumination.

With a trailer you are as independent as a feudal baron. You are lord of creation. You can camp and live anywhere that a road ribbons the topography of the civilized world. And like the baron you have everything about you needed for making your life comfortable and enjoyable. More than that, you have easily eliminated a bugaboo that haunts the car camper sometimes, the bugbear of packing. Finding just the place to carry everything in the ordinary

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automobile reduces itself to the ability of your ingenuity, to your being a Handy-Andy. Packing the equipment upon your trailer is a matter of scientific precision, for everything is builded for just the place it is located—both when trailing and when making your camp—and you carry everything in its appointed place and put it to its foreordained purpose.

Comparing camping with car equipment and with the trailer is a thing that every autocamper does. It is right that he should. If the trailer was far and above the car outfit in every way, then the former would crowd the latter out exactly as the railroads crushed canals. But neither the equipment you carry in your car is perfect, nor is the trailer; so the count is about even. For certain trips I have found one better than the other, but it all depends on where you are going, when you are going, why you are going, with whom you are going, and a dozen other things. Reduced down to the naked facts, it seems to me that the autocamper with a car outfit has sort of a "homemade" outfit, while the trailer autocamper has a "ready-made" outfit. The day will never pass when fifty out of a hundred will not prefer to think and plan out their own outfits, while the other fifty will believe that the men who devised the trailer knew a great deal more than they, and so this class prefer the autocamper's castle. It is exactly like two men who love dogs; one insists on training his own to the ways he wants the canine to follow, while the other believes that a professional trainer can do it better. And so

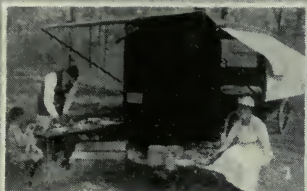
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one autocamper believes that he can best tell what he needs, while the other is mighty glad they make trailers all ready and waiting for him to hitch behind his car.

There is no quarrel between the trailer and the car outfit. At its hottest it is merely a little friction caused by a difference of opinion. The fact is that for some people and some trips one is right and best, but generally the other is likewise feasible. This matter of choice puts spice into autocamping. If it were without thrills, like putting a penny in the slot and drawing a stick of gum, then the avocation of autocamping would lose most of its fascination. Variety is the spice of autocamping.

Just as a mule can pull a much heavier load than it can possibly carry, so the auto will take along your outfit on the trailer *behind* the car with much less labor than *in* the car, pound for pound considered. A load of 750 pounds in your car in the line of outfit would be folly; but the same load will follow your car without a perceptible increase in gasoline or tire cost. The pull needed to haul such a load on a trailer over a level road will be but 20 pounds. Your car will never seem to know it has a burden behind, and the lug of the trailer up hills and down will be hardly noticeable.

Figured from the standpoint of burden to your car, the trailer and an outfit approaching the completeness of the camping trailer and carried in the car are about even. That is, you load upon your car beds for four to six people, tent to accommodate them, food and furnishings



1 The Kampkar in public camp ground  
2 Kamprite Trailer

3 The Adams Motorbungalo  
4 Livabout Camping Car

5 Kitchenette opened on Motorbungalo

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and you will do well if you keep the weight down to 400 pounds for everything. All the equipment with the trailer, and the unpowered car itself, will weigh 750 pounds. And it is a well-established fact that your car can pull the 750 pounds at least as easily, if not more so, than the same car under the same conditions can carry 400 pounds. In short, there is little difference from the standpoint of load on your motor whether you ask it to handle a complete car outfit or a complete trailer.

We have found the Adams Motorbungalow a *de luxe* camping trailer outfit, with: two double spring beds and mattresses; a complete kitchenette including ice box refrigerator, folding kitchen table, shelf, holders for utensils and dishes, water tank, gasoline stove, and plenty of room to carry all bulk food; roomy wardrobe with hanger rod; screened and curtained windows to the number of five; and an absolutely water-tight roof. Speaking of the roof, this is a frame of light wood over which is placed 10-ounce heavy oil duck, and topped with Fabrikoid, much like the automobile tops of the best cars. From each side of the top extend leatherette curtains, or flaps, this giving double protection of canvas and leatherette over your head.

The beds counterbalance with the roof of this outfit, so that when opening the double spring beds their weight lifts up the roof; and *vice versa*, when shutting up this camp the weight of the roof in settling down helps close the beds. Although there are small adjustable braces that may be let down at each corner of the extended

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camp, still this is not necessary under ordinary conditions, so substantial is this outfit. It is braced in place securely by a foot extending down from the draw-pull and by the rear step. This camp can be unhitched and completely set up in five minutes anywhere. It is automatic simplicity itself. Just step inside, push out on the upright beds, and as they easily swing to horizontal your camp is automatically made entire.

The 3-foot-square door that opens the kitchenette and wardrobe, slips off its hinges and becomes a camp table of regular height. The kitchenette may be opened from inside or out, whether you are trailing this outfit on the road and need to put in provisions, or have it erected in camp. Over the kitchenette and wardrobe there is a triangular-shaped shelf three feet on a side. The sides of this trailer are steel and the bottom is matched wood. The rear door has two panels, a screened window, and may be locked from inside or out.

The hitch of the Motorbungalow is instantaneous ball and socket of the best type. Wheels are 30x3½ inches, the bearings are roller type, and there are excellent steel springs. This outfit attaches to the frame of your car, being secured by a rear bumper bolted by two braces to your car frame. The body is 84 inches wide and the sides 13 inches. The complete camp erected makes a shelter 9x12 feet. The complete bungalow weighs about 850 pounds.

When on the road this outfit rides almost as high as the top of your automobile, but the

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front end is V-shaped and hence does not necessarily give more wind resistance than a trailer packing down lower. It is a camp that you may depend upon as dust-proof, bug-proof, and dry.

- Recently the author and his family, including the two small children, slept in this outfit during a period of rainy weather that lasted over a month and all but took the joy out of autocamping. However, day and night, we ate, lived, and slept in a bone-dry place inside this outfit.

The Motorbungalo Junior is a lighter model made by the Adams firm, folding down flat and compact, but having only a canvas roofing over your head, as do all other standard trailers. It has the kitchenette, wardrobe space, screened windows, and two comfortable double spring beds. There is a curtain arrangement so that you can divide camp into two bedchambers if you like. The basic trailer is the same as for the regular Motorbungalo, which was originally designed by Glenn H. Curtiss and is today manufactured in the original airplane factories of the inventor. Both styles of Motorbungalo trailers may be stripped of their camping outfits and used as a commercial trailer the year round when you don't want to camp. The body has a drop tail gate.

The Douglas De Luxe trailer is most surprising, being a sort of cabinet on a chassis, which cabinet tips off to open up into a most complete roadside home. When this cabinet affair is opened out you have a shed tent 8x12 feet, with beds hanging against the wall, in the

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daytime out of your way. The tenting is of 10-ounce duck and there are two screened and storm-proof windows. Now for the surprise! What was once the floor and sides of the trailer stands upright in camp as a wall of wood having in its center a complete camp table, dresser, and kitchen cabinet. The beds with this outfit are single, one above the other on a frame attached to the wall of the room. What will they build next? That's all you can gasp.

And the Carefree Folding Tourist Home looks like the answer to the above question. This is neither a camping trailer exactly, nor is it really a camping car body. You might call it a camping unit, which may be attached to the running board of your car, or to the rear of a coupé or runabout, or carried in a small truck. When folded you find a cabinet of wood that is about 9x40x54 inches. The front of the cabinet hinges up horizontally to form part of the camp roof, a shed tent comes forth to make the rest of your camp home, and there is a cot bed 4x6 feet, with plenty of dressing and living room besides.

The models of this outfit for runabout, coupé, and small truck are somewhat different in shape and more elaborate in construction than the running board model above described. For this model we find a cabinet 24x44x45 inches. The rear end of the cabinet hinges down flat with the bottom, and the top hinges to an angle of about 45 degrees, thus forming part of the roof. A canvas tent appears to make the rest of the camp right on the rear of your automobile or truck. There is a table with this outfit about 27x44



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inches in size. The bed is 40x78 inches. This outfit weighs 140 pounds.

The Chenango trailer weighs 850 pounds. The frame work for the tent is steel tubing; the tent does not come to the ground at the sides; and the Chenango boasts itself to be more of a bungalow home than a tent camp. When packed for the road this outfit is practically as high as your car. It has its food compartment at the front end and is accessible only when the tent is up.

The Curtis trailer differs in that its two beds do not fold down flat and do not when collapsed come in contact with each other. They stand vertical when the outfit is closed, forming two walls and leaving a great deal of packing space between them. This space in the Curtis is 48 inches high by 44 inches wide. The tent walls do come clear to the ground and the Curtis is a well-put-together unit.

The Auto-Tour trailer follows the accepted lines of the two-wheel outfit and adds a few articles to its standard equipment, like blankets, camp stools, and incidentals. The tent over this outfit reaches to the ground.

The Kamprite trailer differs a little in that the roof is not peaked, but flat where you expect the ridge, something the same as your auto top. It boasts of a floor mat and hammocks for clothing. The tent covering of the Kamprite does not extend below the body.

The standard Gypsy Trail trailing outfit is unique in that it offers only *single beds* and no ice box whatever. It has a fly 21 feet long that

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extends over the top of the trailer and your automobile in front. The wooden body of this outfit is 4x7 feet. The wheels take 30x3-inch tires, having roller bearings, and two steel springs. The canvas tenting is 8-ounce double fill army duck. Four adjustable legs extend to the ground at each corner of the trailer body. This company offers two extras—a curtain extended as a porch, and a lean-to tent. Trailer, lean-to tent, and fly over all—including car—make fine camp.

With the Auto-Kamp trailer it is an easy task to set up the complete trailer autocamp and be ready for housekeeping in ten minutes from the time the engine is switched off. The tent of this trailer is of heavy khaki-colored duck, treated with genuine Preservo, and absolutely water-proof. It forms over its frame a wall style tent 7x12 feet, having two storm-proof bobbinette windows. The frame is of wood, stained and varnished and well ironed and socketed.

The trailer selected for autocamping will depend to a great extent on your personal liking for incidental special features on one or another and your special requirements. With all of them you will add extra equipment to suit your notions. The outfits having the tent clear to the ground are somewhat warmer quarters in which to sleep, but in either case you will want plenty of bedding under you. Sleeping bags we have found most excellent for use with our trailing outfits.

In fair weather the trailer will not be made

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your dining room, for everybody will likely prefer to get out into the Big Dining room of the outdoors. Nor will it be made under fair skies your living room, smoking room, or parlor. It will be your kitchen and your bedroom under all conditions and in bad weather it will be a whole apartment of rooms all in one.

One need never hesitate about using the trailer because of the gasoline and tire expense. Under tests we have found that perhaps once in twenty gallons our trailer will take an extra gallon for itself. And on identical trips with a trailer behind and a car outfit loaded in the car there was absolutely no perceptible difference in the fuel cost. I cannot find any difference in tire punishment with the load on or behind the car.

There is one thing that will bother at first, and that is backing with your trailer. This has been the big and fatal problem to the builders of trailers, but it has been solved. Even when the draw bar was not such that it permitted backing the outfit where you wanted it to go, the times you backed up were far and few between and in the last extremity you could unhitch the trailer and turn it by hand. But this is not necessary today. The first thing in backing is to get the trailer going straight from the start or in making it turn the way you want it to go. Once you have it started as you want it, you will find it easily controlled with the steering wheel. In backing round a corner you first throw the front wheels *opposite* to what you would do if there was no trailer. This starts the trailer round the corner and then the wheels are thrown

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the other way and your car follows. It is not half as hard as it sounds and only needs common sense and patience at first.

As time goes on one finds many autocampers who are building or buying automobile camping bodies to place upon one kind of chassis or another. A great many of these have been home-made affairs that were not really satisfactory, or else small trucks, like the Reo Speed Wagon, have been slightly remodeled for the purpose of making a home on wheels for camping the highways.

There are now a very few camping bodies manufactured that the author can highly recommend, one of which is the Kampkar. This outfit resembles in appearance and weight the Ford sedan, and it is indeed mounted on a Ford T chassis. The body is made from seasoned poplar, all joints have pressed steel corner angles, panels and doors are  $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch material, and the body is light in weight while being sturdy.

The Kampkar has a 14-gallon gasoline tank, an 8-gallon water tank, ice box, folding table 22x49 inches, two-burner gasoline stove, Wear-ever cooking utensils in family size and numbers, table ware, electric lights, and an instrument board with map pockets. The two beds extended are 42x75 inches with 4-inch Marshall Springs and 2-inch padding. There are lockers almost everywhere about this outfit. The front seats are 22x42 inches with same springs and padding as listed for beds. The floor space (beds down) is 22x57 inches, and the body width closed is 63 inches while the length is 9 feet.

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The top is oiled duck and the sides allow backs of seats to swing out to form beds, each side protected by water-proof canvas. The weight is 600 pounds.

Another good camp car body is the Livabout, which appears as a neat sedan on the road, but when opened boasts ice box, gasoline stove, food compartment, cupboard, kitchen table, dining table, bathtub, drawers for toilet articles, emergency toilet, hot and cold running water, and two clothes closets. When not used for camping, the cabinets holding the outing equipment are readily removed, and you have either a passenger car or a light truck, as you please.