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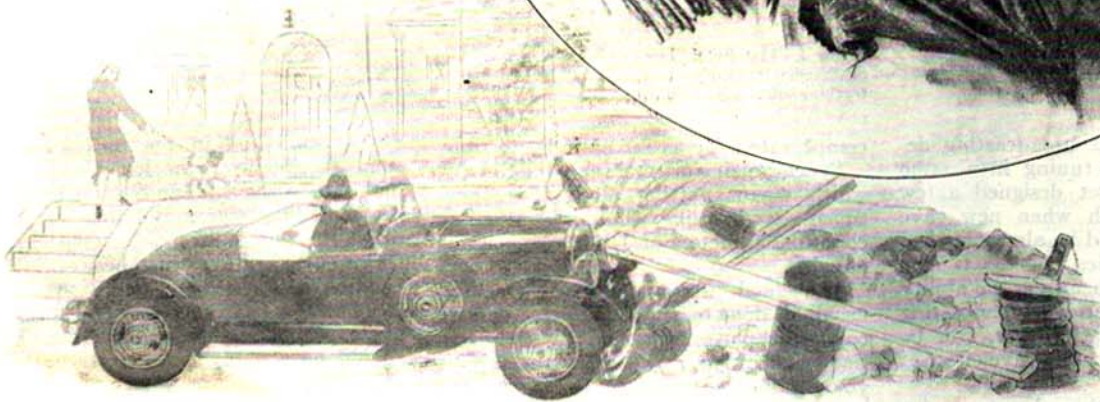
Dumb Drivers Cause Most Accidents

By

MARTIN BUNN



"When Reilly got smashed up," Gus said, "it wasn't the fault of his steering gear. He had his eyes on a girl and ran into a pile of dirt in the street."



"HEY, Gus," called Dan Appleyard as he drew up in front of the Model Garage, "do you think it's safe to have a radio receiver in an automobile?"

"Safe? Why not?" asked Gus Wilson, half owner of the garage and the automobile mechanic of the enterprise.

"I hear they bar 'em in some states because they distract the drivers," Appleyard explained.

"Humph!" Gus grunted. "What they ought to do first is pass a law against back-seat drivers! Why, talking to somebody while you drive would bother you worse than a radio. It doesn't take any brains at all, just listening. Seems to me, a radio might even save a fellow from an accident," he suggested after a moment's thought.

"How so?" demanded Appleyard.

"By keeping him from going to sleep," answered Gus. "Speaking of the things that cause accidents," the veteran auto mechanic continued, "you remember a while ago how young Reilly smashed his car and the paper said his steering gear jammed?"

Appleyard nodded.

"Well, it wasn't the steering gear," declared Gus positively. "I was right behind him when it happened and you can take it from me, there wasn't a thing the matter with his steering gear. The trouble was that he had his eyes glued on a girl on the other side of the street, and the first thing he knew he drove right smack into a pile of dirt from a street excavation."

"So that was it, eh!" Appleyard laughed. "But not many accidents happen that way."

"They certainly do," snapped Gus. "Just stop to figure out the real cause of all the accidents you've heard of, and you'll find, nine times out of ten, the driver of at least one of the cars mixed up in the smash was either dumb or careless. And if a dumb driver happens to mix it up with a careless driver—heaven help the other drivers on the same road!"

"Remember that horrible smash a few years ago on the state road near Shonk's Mountain? A man—a good careful driver—was coming into town late at night. He was doing about thirty—safe enough. Just as he was rounding a turn another car with four people in it came up behind him doing about fifty, and swung out to pass him. And a third car came around the curve the other way with three people in it, and that car

must have been doing sixty. The two cars crashed and seven people got killed.

"The combined speed at which those two cars hit must have been over a hundred miles an hour. Part of the frame of one of the cars swung over and knocked the rear wheel off the car of the fellow who was traveling alone and didn't have anything to do with it.

"I once saw another bonehead make a misplay," went on Gus. "He was traveling along a car track. A trolley car was just ahead of him, and he speeded up to pass the car. He didn't have sense enough to know that he couldn't get past a street excavation which blocked the road a little farther on. As he swung out to pass the obstruction the trolley hit the rear end of his car and swung it square around. It shot straight across the street and smashed into the back of a sedan."

Appleyard laughed. "You make it sound as though even a good driver isn't safe any more."

"Not in cases like those," said Gus, "but they're exceptions. Most times if you keep your eyes open and pay attention to where you're going you can keep out of trouble. Anyhow you're just as safe in the car as you would be walking. Even the sidewalk isn't safe when the dumbbells and careless drivers are around."

"All right," Appleyard decided, "I guess you can put in a radio for me. I'll leave the car sometime next week."

"I'll do it on one condition," said Gus with a smile. "You've got to promise you won't start doing a clog dance when some of that red-hot jazz comes in!"

Gus Says:

IT'S human nature to dodge the hard jobs. That's why so many fellows get along all right when they're on the road and then make a mess of parking or backing out of the garage. If there is anything in the handling of a car that gives you trouble, that's the very thing you ought to practice every day till you get it down pat.