

CITY PEDESTRIANS NOW "MOTOR WISE"

Have Learned Duty Thoroughly in Effort to Preserve Health and Now Walking Has Been Taken Out of Category of Hazardous Professions

By JOHN S. WHEELER.

It was not so long ago that there was talk of making a traffic law in this city to govern the actions of pedestrians and define the points at which they could cross the streets, but this discussion has all faded into the echo now with the education of the New York public to the habits and tendencies of the automobile. New York has become "motor wise," that is the survivors have.

Several years ago when the automobile was a scarce species, which is to say before Mr. Ford discovered that a car could be produced and sold at a price attainable to the crowd, scampering pedestrians were constantly interfering with the pleasures of automobiling and giving joy to the proprietors of private sanitariums for the nerves, which filled up rapidly. It seemed as if the future generations would be born wearing a scared look and displaying an inclination to imitate the actions of a kangaroo. But New York caught on.

Recently I was fortunate or unfortunate enough to induce the manufacturers of a certain breed of car to trade me a new one for my rather worn one and a piece of the bank balance. This company equips its cars with whispering horns, the sort that you have to stop and listen for. A good full voiced carny bird could probably drown out this horn, and it would be an excellent means of demonstrating the sensitive qualities of the "whispering gallery" in Washington.

But that horn is on the job and does it. The reason is that the present day New York pedestrian is always on the lookout for automobiles when he puts his foot off the curb and has learned to obey the mandate of that well known and popular sign for which its author is said to have received \$300-\$100 per word—"Stop, Look, Listen." It is no longer necessary to carry a horn on the car which sounds like a flock of ferry-boats tuning up for fog. Of course some of them yet use horns of this character, but they are employed almost exclusively by those college boy drivers who rest on the backs of their necks when they are in the car and like to see how near they can come to undressing harmless folks as they pass them just to make it close.

About two or three years ago several motorists favored a law which placed the responsibility for accidents on the pedestrian if he were caught crossing the street at any point except at the corner. But all such talk has long since been dropped. The pedestrian has learned his duty thoroughly in his effort to preserve his health and general welfare, and walking in New York can now be taken out of the category of hazardous professions. It is no longer a profession, but a science, with many students enrolled. What is the explanation of this education of the New Yorker? Why does a wise man keep away when he sees a red flag?

Also the drivers of automobiles are becoming "motor wise" and no longer do you wake up in the morning wondering whether or not you will receive your milk because a careless chauffeur has crashed into the wagon and flooded some area of the street, which benefits nobody except stray cats. It is a tough thing on cats, this increasing efficiency perhaps, but a big boost for the cereal market. The fact that three or four drivers who believed they could go through a milk wagon and tried to demonstrate their theory found themselves disintegrating stone on a certain well advertised island has had its effect.

The drivers are attaining intelligence too, but of course the question as to whether the drivers or the walkers are more intelligent depends almost entirely on the point of view. When you are driving one day you will feel sure that you should receive several medals as a life saver because of your cleverness in handling a car and offsetting the stupidity of pedestrians. Perhaps you are walking on the following day and are positive that the only fact which prevents certain chauffeurs from being accused of your murder is your intelligence added to a little agility in avoiding them.

Then there is another contributory cause to the sudden burst of motor wisdom which is no small factor, and this is the sudden development of what might be termed the watch charm type of car. The drivers of these have to be very careful not to run into a baby carriage or something and smash them all up.

Among the dealers there appears to be considerable competition just at present to discover which manufacturer of these vest pocket brands can construct the smallest car. An owner of a well known breed race advertising columns of miniature machine was showing an even smaller one recently.

"But I thought you had a Ford," exclaimed the salesman. "Why do you want a Midget?"
"No," replied the prospective customer. "I am thinking of laying the big car on for the winter."
These owners are forced to follow the rule of "safety first" for their cars.
In Paris there is a law that the blame rests on the target of an automobile when he is hit crossing the street, the same as it does on a Vermont party-ride when he is shot by a hunter. The reputation of the few mortalities among the Paris pedestrians and the Vermont partakes is covered by the same reason—they make themselves out in dangerous neighborhoods.
The New Yorker who has to depend upon the hoof for transportation purchases his motor to loller in the street as much as possible, and you seldom find a motor running a time table or carrying a bank roll in the middle of the road with his back to the general crowd of traffic any more. That class has been completely eliminated

in the first two or three years of the automobile. Now when you run across or over one of this sort you will generally find in his pocket a return ticket to the small town. He is not a New Yorker.

The man who is about the streets constantly has learned to study the laws that govern traffic and the science of successfully crossing thoroughfares without laying himself open to the charge of blocking progress because he has been hit by a machine. Also there is less danger of the various parts of an automobile flying off and bringing down a pedestrian nowadays.

I recall one of those loose jointed cars of an early vintage that I owned once, which was sold to me with the guarantee that the rims were quick detachable. The only time that I found them to be Q. D. was on the occasion that I intend to put into type if you will follow me that far. A friend of mine in the advertising business was unfortunate enough to have an account with a road house which was weak on capital and slow with its checks, so the proprietor told the creditor that he could trade it out. The advertising man insisted that a party of four should be enrolled for this purpose and I was included in the cast of characters if I would supply the transportation.

We all stood by stanchly and helped him to spend the money which was owed him, it amounting to \$38.95. It is true that, after a certain point, at say about twenty dollars, it was necessary to select only the expensive entries on the menu, but we finally ran him \$2 over his mark, and he was satisfied. Then on the return trip one of the rear tires weakened with an explosion, but after a consultation, at which a quorum was present, we decided to run home on it flat.

This form of travel is accompanied by a noise similar to that made by a trolley car with a squared wheel. Our progress was good until we were coming down a long hill in upper New York when the quick detachable rims got ambitious and tried to beat the car home, which was unfortunate for a pedestrian who happened to be out late and in its course. The rim caught him where the legs bend easily and sprawled him in the road, thus proving it was quick detachable.

But rims are made differently now and automobiles are not so loose jointed. A machine is not liable to blow apart any minute like a charge of shrapnel, and New York is getting "motor wise"; in fact is "motor wise." There is even an active society to protest against loud horns as I can prove. For instance, to supplement the work of my "whispering horn" I purchased one recently that made the acoustics in any street good, and I could easily flush a deaf mute asylum on an airing with it.

Then one night I stood the car near the Winter Garden while attending the performance, and when I came out some thoughtful anti-noise agent had unscrewed the five dollars worth of canned noise off the car, presumably to protect the ears of the New York public. I suspect the ticket speculator who sold me the seats. I am sure he had a screw-driver and a piece of lead pipe in his pocket.

New York is rated as a sapient town. As I have said, the survivors have learned that the streets are not the safest places in the world, and the wise ones "stop, look and listen" before they venture from the curb. Motorists now are not bothered much by any of the except groups of Socialists holding meetings in the side streets, and the best thing to do is to keep off the side streets—the best thing for both Socialists and motorists.

Old Reappearances

PATRICK J. McMAHON of Passaic, N. J., walked recently into a saloon he had once conducted in that city and was served with a drink by his son, who failed to recognize him. The reason was that McMahon, Sr., had disappeared from home eight years before and had been given up as dead.

He asked his son a number of questions about his own disappearance and the family pedigree, all of which were answered without the son's realizing he was being quizzed by a man who knew the answers to the questions better than he did. When McMahon, Sr., revealed himself the son felt sheepish for a week.

James Osborn of Trenton, N. J., had an odd reappearance a few months ago. He went to Australia to look up the disposition of an uncle's estate in which he thought he should have had a share. While he was in Melbourne he noticed in one of the daily papers an account of the death of a James Osborn who had come on from the United States to look up relatives.

The similarity of the name struck him, of course, and he mailed a copy of the paper with the item marked. He was never much of a letter writer, so he let five months go by without sending a line, deferring what he had to say until he should know whether or not his quest had been successful. Finally after nearly eight months sojourn in Australia he arranged to start back, and wrote to his family.

When he arrived in Trenton he found that his little wall paper business had been sold out and that his wife and daughter had removed, nobody seemed to know whither. But a clew soon came to view.

Osborn filled out a check against his account and it was returned with the "no funds" comment. An investigation revealed that every cent he had in the bank had been withdrawn by his wife, she having had power of attorney during his absence. The bank officials, however, were able to give him the address of a Chicago bank where they thought from something dropped by his wife she would deposit her money. He telegraphed and received word to come on at once. He did so, and found his wife and daughter.

They had received the Melbourne paper, had cabled and had got no response, and finally believed the report true. A Chicago suitor for his daughter's hand urged their removal to Chicago and they had sorrowfully left their home in Trenton.

While they were hugging and staring at Osborn the letter carrier delivered his letter announcing his departure from Australia. It had been forwarded from Trenton. Now Osborn says that a man should write at least once a week when away from home if it's only to say O. K. and good-by.

SOME OF THIS SEASON'S DEBUTANTES



Miss MILDRED SAWYER
Photo by Davis & Sanford.



Miss PRISCILLA PEABODY
Photo by Helen McCaul & Elizabeth Dickson.



Miss MARIE DETOURS BOYNTON
Photo by Rochlitz.



Miss OLIVIA S. ERDMANN
Photo by Curtis Bell.



Miss ALEXANDRA EWING
Photo by Bauman.