

# THE SUNDAY MOTORIST TELLS HIS TALE OF WOE

## Despairs of Beating the Jinx, but Still Believes in His Own Ability After a Day of Tribulations in Which His Indignant Wife, Restless Children and a Scornful Garage Mechanic Conspire With Fate Against Him

"The three children, crowded into the rear seat with Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, grew cramped and restless and finally indulged in a roughhouse."

By ARTHUR H. LABAREE.

SPREADING OF Sunday motoring, as who is not these pleasant week ends, I am constrained to insist that the Sunday motorist is a much maligned individual. He is scorned by garage mechanics, cursed by traffic officers and fined by Justices, and yet he is the chief support of them all, to say nothing of the automobile industry as a whole. Were it not for the man who takes the family out for a ride, or a short tour, on one or more days of the week end there would be fewer blacksmiths growing wealthy as motor car "experts," traffic officers would be restricted to the metropolitan districts, and more than half the revenue of our minor courts would vanish.

The acknowledgment is compelled that many motorists might know considerably more about driving than they do, and might even have, to their own advantage, a greater knowledge of the mechanism of their cars, but we must not all be condemned because of the ignorance of the few. Take myself, for example. I am one of the average type of Sunday motorists, too busy, or too weary, to drive during the week, except for a spin in the evening, perhaps. While my occupation is sedentary, and I must confess to no great fondness for musing about in grease up to my elbows, I can do so if I have to, and I presume I know as much about my car's internal organs as do most men who can afford a medium priced machine but not a chauffeur. At any rate, all my friends tell me I am a good driver, and, while I have noticed a disinclination on the part of some of them to go out with me a second time, I cannot acknowledge that this is through any fault of mine.

And yet, despite my conceded ability to guide my car aright and keep it upon the straight and narrow—sometimes mighty narrow—path, and my knowledge, acquired through an experience of several years, to cope with most mechanical emergencies that confront me on the road, I seem ever fated to have the most unpleasant, not to say ridiculous, experiences during my Sunday motor trips.

### Annoying Things Forever Happening When on the Road With Friends

This is invariably true if my wife has invited two or three friends to accompany us. Even when my wife and our son are alone with me annoying things are forever happening, so that before each summer is anywhere near its end I resolve to sell the car and never buy another. In fact, I have frequently wished that the car would burn or be stolen, but I have not expressed this to my wife, for she dearly loves motoring, and nothing can ever convince her, when there is a mishap, that the car is at fault. She always blames me. I am quite certain, therefore, that a suggestion to sell the car would lead only to more unpleasantness, for my wife is a determined woman, and often expresses herself with a directness and force incapable of misunderstanding.

I am reminded of a recent Sunday when we invited the Wilsons to accompany us for a ride out on Long Island. The Wilsons have two children, Freddie and Margaret, whom previously I had always considered exceptionally well behaved. The Wilsons have been with us before, but they have always left Freddie and Margaret at home with their grandmother. But last Sunday old Mrs. Wilson was away on a visit, so the children came along. We did not learn that this was to be the case until we stopped for our guests, and I cannot say that I was altogether pleased, for it rather overclouded the car, our own little Willie being with us, of course. But there was nothing to be done about it, and my wife agreed with Mrs. Wilson that Freddie and Margaret are such darlings they would be no trouble.

I have said before that I am a careful driver and my capability in this respect. I flatter myself, is matched by my attention to all the necessary details of preparing the car for a trip of the usual Sunday length. I am always particular to see that the radiator is filled with water, that the oil in the engine base is at the proper level, that the tires are neither over nor under inflated and that my gasoline tank is well filled. These essentials I attend to on Saturday evenings, so that there may be no unnecessary delay in starting on Sunday, as soon as an early dinner has been disposed of.

### Denting of His Mudguards Fails to Make Him Nervous

Sunday's start was no more noteworthy than usual. After Willie—he is eight—had been soundly spanked by his mother because he wanted to go and play ball with Johnny Peters next door, and announced at the top of his lungs that he "wouldn't go in the darned old car"—his vocabulary frequently amazes me—we picked up the Wilsons and set forth, with no particular destination in view—just for a ride.

We crawled along Queens Boulevard and Hillside avenue in the accustomed Sunday jam, were shouted at by the usual number of traffic policemen, and had our mudguards, both front and rear, dented quite as often as ever by other cars. I have been told by some Sunday drivers that this sort of thing makes them extremely nervous, but I am too thoroughly in command of myself and my car to be annoyed. I will acknowledge being somewhat put out when, just as a traffic officer was vigorously motioning for me to proceed and not hold up the line stretching for miles behind me, little Margaret Wilson set up a shrill scream because Brother Freddie had pulled her hair. As a result I stepped upon the brake instead of the accelerator, stalling my engine. But even that slight mishap was no cause for the withering look my wife turned upon me, or the "Come on, you boob, or I'll hand ye a ticket!" of the empurplated traffic regulator.

A few miles beyond Jamaica I turned out of the heavy traffic upon a pleasant road through the farming district of Creedmoor, which I had once discovered, quite by accident. There is a five mile stretch of this road without a garage upon it, so it was just here that our car elected to stop, after a few preliminary misdeeds of explosions. The missing was, of course, a clue to the trouble.

"Just a moment, Jane," I said to my wife, as I alighted. "I have already located the trouble. It's in the ignition."

I have read in my instruction book that to quickly locate ignition trouble it is best to short circuit the spark plugs with a screwdriver. If a spark is obtained but the car will not start, the plugs themselves must be cracked or fouled. So after Jane—she weighs 200 pounds—had climbed somewhat laboriously out of the car I fished out my screwdriver from the tool box under the front seat and then she climbed in again and at my direction put her foot on the starter while I held the screwdriver in the correct position.

I found that the current was plentiful as far as the spark plugs. Indeed, as my screwdriver happened to be one with a metal handle, I was the recipient of a "kick" that made my arm tingle for hours. It was evident, therefore, that the trouble was in the plugs.

"I'm sorry, Jane," I said, as I signalled to her to get out once more, which she did with less good grace than usual, the day being hot and the quarters for a woman of her girth crowded.

But it was necessary, in order that I get out from beneath the seat a spark plug wrench. With this I took out the plugs, one by one, and finding them to be slightly soiled, I rubbed each vigorously with my handkerchief, there being, as usual, no rags in the car. The handkerchief thereupon became a sorry spectacle and, as, somewhat thoughtlessly, I wiped the perspiration from my face, most of the grime was transferred to my visage; but the plugs worked no better than before. I took them out a second time and scraped at the points diligently with my screwdriver, but without greater success.

"Look in the tank," she insisted, after my second failure to induce an explosion.

"Nonsense," I remonstrated. "Didn't I go to the gas station last night and have it filled?"

"No, I don't believe you did," she retorted. "After you got through fooling with that mudguard I think you went straight to bed in a huff. I believe you have no gasoline."

She was right.

For once the tank contained not a drop of propulsive fluid.

"A pretty how-do-do!" she exclaimed. "How are you going to get some?"

"Tut, tut, my dear, some car'll be along soon and we can get enough to reach the nearest station," I soothed.

And presently a car did approach—a big limousine with a liveried chauffeur in charge. He merely smiled cheerfully as I held up my hand for him to stop and did not even hesitate.

The next machine halted, but the driver had nothing with which to transfer fuel from his tank to mine, and neither, it is needless to say, did I. Several other motorists were induced to tarry long enough for me to ascertain that none of them was equipped with a receptacle of any sort.

And he drove heartlessly away.

"There is nothing for it but to send back to the garage we passed just before we

turned into this road," observed my wife. "Very well," I replied, "let Willie run back and have them send out a car with a can of gas."

"Well, I guess not. Let that child walk two miles in this heat because of your neglect—never in this world!"

So I walked back myself. Traffic was all headed the other way. One car passed me, bound in the right direction, but at my frantic signal the driver merely waved and went on, apparently thinking I was greeting him, the fool.

In due time we were off again with five gallons of gasoline in the tank. Besides the price of the stuff there was a charge of \$2 for transporting it to my stalled automobile, but there was nothing for me to do but pay with a smile.

Aside from the fact that the three children crowded into the rear seat with Mr. and Mrs. Wilson grew cramped and restless and finally indulged in a "roughhouse" that drove me almost to distraction and ended only when I had to stop for the Wilson girl's hat, which my Willie had thrown into the street, the next hour passed pleasantly. Then, without warning, the motor suddenly died. I had just enough momentum and presence of mind to steer to the side of the road before we stopped.

### Complacent Garage Mechanic Looks on With Cynical Smile

"Thank goodness, we are in front of a garage," remarked my wife.

Sure enough, we were. Before it, with his chair tilted back against the wall, was a complacent youth in flannel shirt and brown overalls who regarded me with a cynical smile as I alighted and raised the hood. His grin and a desire to redeem myself for the episode of the empty gasoline tank steered my resolve to make that datted car run or die in the attempt. I would never call upon that patronizingly amused mechanic!

"It's the ignition this time without a doubt," I announced, after shorting a spark plug again, not with the treacherous screwdriver this time, but with the terminal wire itself.

I glanced hastily at such wires as were visible. All were unquestionably in place. What the deuce was I to do now? Heretofore there had always been some visible easily discovered reason for a sudden unintentional halt. This time there was none. All my mechanical knowledge had been acquired by experience, but here I had no precedent to guide me. My faithful instruction book had warned that distributor points frequently needed cleaning. I opened the distributor. Thank goodness, I knew where it was! I took out of it several little thingumajigs and polished them thoroughly. I put them back. The car wouldn't start. The garage mechanic was silently but highly amused. I hoped he might laugh himself to death!

After half an hour of this my wife could stand it no longer.

"Come here and make this thing go," she called to the languid mechanic.

He leisurely uncoiled his legs from those of his chair and sauntered toward us.



"Yes, see what it is," I adjured. "I know there is something radically wrong."

The mechanic reached under my dashboard and felt about with one hand. Then he poked the other under, holding a pair of small pliers from one of his pockets. At the end of just two minutes he straightened up.

"Shell now run; one of your wires was disconnected from the switch," he said.

"Ha, ha!" I chortled, trying to laugh it off. "Funny thing I didn't discover it."

"What," I continued in the same spirit of levity, "do I owe you?"

I said it in a tone that implied, I hoped, that it was a good sport, willing to pay any fair price for being helped out, but not supposing that two minutes work would cost anything.

All hint of amusement was gone from the mechanic's face as he looked at me sternly and replied:

"Five dollars," he said curtly.

I thought, of course, he was joking, and I was quite willing to reply in kind.

"Ha! ha! ha! Charge it up to me," I laughed, and climbed back to my seat.

"Say, where do you get that 'charge it' stuff?" he demanded. "I said 'five dollars' and I mean five dollars."

"What!" I exclaimed. "Do you intend to convey the impression that you want five dollars for doing two minutes work?"

"Oh, no, not for doing the work," he said. "For knowing how."

I gurgled incoherently.

"Isn't it worth something to you not to stand here all day?" he asked. "It cost me money and time to learn how to find troubles and fix 'em. It's men like you who don't know beans about their cars that's got to pay for my education. I took a night course in a school of automotive engineering. I could tear down your car from top to bottom and put it together again in a day."

He looked quite willing to perform the first part of his threat, if such it was, there and then, and I yielded. Making as much of a joke of the affair as I could, I paid him and we drove away.

### Caustic Remarks of His Wife Are Not to Be Repeated Here

The remarks my wife made upon the subject, including a comprehensive exposition of what she termed my spinelessness, need not be repeated here.

As we bowled along on the return trip amid a stream of cars fully as great as that in which we had left the city, I congratulated myself that the probabilities were all in my favor. Nothing more of an unpleasant nature was likely to happen.

Wasn't it? On the steep up grade of the Queensboro Bridge, in sight of Manhattan and within twenty blocks of home, there came suddenly an unmistakable sound from the rear. A back tire had blown out!

Now, you know, if you are a motorist, that cars won't stand on a grade without some-

thing to hold them, and that if you apply the emergency brake you can't turn your back wheel around when you replace the tire. You also know, if you are observant, that the Queensboro Bridge is as bare of anything with which to block your wheels as William Anderson's home is of Bronx cocktalls. So there we were. It was the right hand back wheel, of course, so I couldn't rest it against the curb of the roadway to hold the car. Wilson finally volunteered to put his shoulder against the back of the car and prevent it from moving if he could, but he wasn't equal to the task. The datted thing insisted upon sliding backward off the jack in spite of his best efforts. Finally a passing chauffeur solved my problem, although he did it in a manner that I could not consider kindly at the time.

"Put your clutch in reverse and it'll hold her, you poor fish!" he yelled, as he drove past, sensing the difficulty.

He had taught me one more lesson. His plan worked perfectly. I always have trouble changing tires, and this occasion proved no exception. A rear wheel I always find particularly difficult. So it was two hours later when, having dropped the Wilsons, we finally reached home. I told my wife I wanted no supper. I washed my hands and face and went straight to bed. It was while I lay there, too weary to sleep, that I gave serious thought to selling the car in the morning.

Can you blame me?

## Daniel M. Tredwell an Up to Date Business Man at Ninety-Six

### Near-Centenarian Attributes Longevity to Moderation, Common Sense and Gameness

Daniel M. Tredwell at 96 still active in business and as alert as most men of half his years.

By WILLIS STEELL.

I WILL keep an appointment with you four years from now. I will come to see you on July 26, 1925, your birthday, if we are both here."

"I will be here," said the other with emphasis and giving his hand on the promise.

This dialogue would not be worth printing except for the fact that the last speaker, Daniel M. Tredwell, celebrated his ninety-sixth birthday last Tuesday. On the day set for the next interview he will be an even 100.

What does this ancient man look like, how does he talk and what are his memories and his vision?

One might, if one were inclined to go the limit of guessing, figure out that Mr. Tredwell was twenty years younger than he is; he looks to be about 75. He is tall and rather slight in build; his face is long and narrow, with marked features, especially his nose and his bright blue eyes. He has plenty of hair—white, to be sure—on his head and a luxuriant white mustache. His teeth are sound, and only two of them show a glint of gold as evidence of the dentist's work.

His hands are long, with delicate, tapering fingers and well kept, even manicured nails. Indeed, in his person this ancient gentleman, who was 10 years old when Queen Victoria began her reign, is the perfection of neatness.

### An Up to Date Business Man, And He Is Modest About It

His dress is that of an up to date business man, which he is, for he occupies a desk of honor in the Home Title Insurance Company of Brooklyn. A touch or two only dates him back to an earlier generation, his immaculate white vest, contrasting with a neat sack coat of black serge, and a loose collar rather resembling a stock, around which is worn in voluminous folds a white silk scarf fastened with a ruby pin.

"I am really only an imitation business man," said the near centenarian, laughing. "It's almost a joke that they take me seriously here, but here I am to be found every business day. I have a few clients, bankers and financiers and such like, who come in here and talk securities and mortgages over with me. They treat me—the company I refer to—as if I were a spoiled child, but then, good many of us here are not precisely young when the question is of years. Alexander Calder, our vice-president, is 82. In business acumen I can stand no comparison with the father of our Senator Calder, but in health and endurance I can give him cards and spades, let him make the trump and then beat him.

"Now, you can see by this beginning that you don't want to listen to me. Why, my boy, I'm in my second childhood, and if I

begin to talk about myself I would talk you deaf and blind. There's no stopping the garrulity of an old person. I'm alive to my own defects and yet am reasonable enough or considerate enough not to wish to bore you; therefore, hadn't you better call the interview off?"

Not at all, after it had been so auspiciously begun, Mr. Tredwell was assured. He was assured also that the great public was tremendously interested in a man who had lived so long as he, and the readers of THE NEW YORK HERALD would be very much obliged if he would let them into the secret.

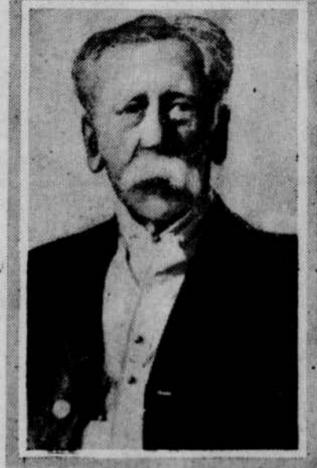
"Tut, tut," said the old man, "there is no secret. Any man under average conditions can live as long as I have and longer. More, he can live and enjoy life, read and take all other natural pleasures, including those of the table. I am impatient of those who die too young, as if they quickly tired of all the interesting and delightful things life, properly lived, holds out with open hands.

"I have no panacea and have used none, only in my own case I have exercised what seemed to me common sense. Thirty years ago I had an illness; it was not so serious, but it started me to thinking. I wondered what it was, exclusive of accidents, that made men die. Of course, I studied my own case, trying to find out by observation when an organ showed signs of decay. As soon as one did I sought to remedy defects and build it up again. Exercise has had very little to do with my long life, which has been in truth a sedentary one.

"But if you insist, I will give a few details. Take the matter of eating. Literally I eat everything that normal mortals do. I have always. It is true that I eat a small quantity of meat, but I was never very carnivorous. Of cereals I am extremely fond, but in highly of them. If I have a rule it is this: At each of my regular three meals a day I take just one-half of what I would really like to eat. That may be my secret; if it is one the readers of THE NEW YORK HERALD have my full permission to adopt it. It suits me and I studied it out only with reference to myself.

"As to drinks, politically I have always been a Prohibitionist and yet I myself haven't been a teetotaler. Now and then I took a drink. And as I look back on my life I remember many things I did as a boy and a young man which I ought not to have done, as is probably to be said of all men, and yet if I had my life to live over I would probably make the same or equally bad mistakes.

"On my ninety-fifth birthday the guests had a good deal of fun with me over the drink question. The occasion was celebrated at my birthday, Freeport, L. I., but owing to the number and to other reasons the dinner was served at the Elks. Throughout the guests had a good deal of fun trying to persuade the waiters to bring them



cocktails and wines, which, of course, they couldn't do. Then when I started down stairs I missed my footing and fell. I wasn't badly hurt, but the doctor who was called in (Dr. Carman, you've read of him?) prescribed a little whiskey for me. A shout went up that 'Uncle Dan wanted his drink so badly that he had fallen down stairs for it,' a good joke on me, wasn't it?"

"Two months ago I had a fall; I was going home, and as the houses in the block where I live look, many of them, much alike I tried to open somebody's front door with my latch key. While fumbling I could see a strange woman coming through the hall to open the door. In my nervousness I tripped and fell down to the first landing, and then as if not content I bounded down the rest of the fall to the sidewalk. I felt myself all over, and not finding any bones broken I refused a doctor, but had to lie up in bed three or four days nursing my bruises. I live with my daughter, who is a widow—she's 65—and, of course, all those of my family who are left came to inquire. One of these callers, a grandniece whom they'd call an old maid perhaps, a voter and proud to be one, looked at me and said:

"Uncle Dan, you're game!"

"And that's it, that's the secret; I am game. I hear, I see—for I never wear glasses except in my young days to correct near-sight; I eat nourishingly and agreeably, I love books, people, all rational amusements, and I'm game to keep on living so long as I can do these things.

### Talks of Books, His Hobby, and Recalls the Poetic Days of His Youth

"I was born on my father's farm near Freeport, L. I. Part of the ancestral acres now form the golf links there. My ancestors came here in 1633 and during the Revolution they were royalists—what history calls Tories. In religion they were Quakers.

"I was brought as a boy to Brooklyn and placed in the school of Prof. Joshua Healey. From there I went to the Hempstead Institute, from which I was graduated in my nineteenth year. Our farm, in the meantime, was sold to the Freeport corporation.

"I began the study of law with a Brooklyn law firm, but soon went to King's College, now Columbia University, where I was graduated from the law school. I began to practise in Brooklyn in 1848."

The old man opened a drawer of a handsome modern walnut desk and drew out one or two old books, the pages of which he fluttered, pensively. "My heart was never in my profession," said he. "I used to read books of literature, poetry and travel while supposed to be reading Coke or Littleton. You must not forget that while I was having my dreams of becoming an author Edgar A. Poe was still alive and so was Washington Irving. Yes; I can at least pride myself that I was a contemporary of these great writers. Their works fed my ambition.

"That is why I can tell you very little about Napoleon the First, about the Mexican war, about the great panic of 1837; they did not interest me; books did; I lived in books. This makes me a disappointing raconteur to persons who hope not unrealistically to live over the past through my eyes. In the meantime I married and had several children. My three sons all promised well—one as a doctor, which was the profession most favored in our family; one a politician, another a lawyer. They lived to come to fruition, and the politician made a name for himself which is still remembered, but they soon followed their mother in death. Only my daughter remains to me.

"Ambitions like mine have to be satisfied for happiness, and I soon published my first book. Can you think what it was?"

"Yes," said his auditor, "it was a book of poems."

You should have heard the old man laugh. He leaned back in his office chair and murmured between his chuckles:

"Of course it was poetry, and it was puerile, futile, mush. I expected the book to have a good sale. I went to the publisher to ask about it; he had sold six copies. That opened my eyes and I managed to get possession of the remainder as I thought, and destroyed them. The other day I picked up one of the volumes on a second hand shelf. I destroyed that, too.

"My next appearance as author was with the book or monograph 'On the Printing of Illustrated Books.' It was followed by a 'Life of Apollonius of Tyana,' a sort of his-

tory of the first years of our era. Apollonius was born in the year 1 and lived to be 100. I little thought when as a young man writing this history that I should emulate him in point of long life. A third book, entitled 'Nomads of the Sea' was undertaken after I had found my true subject was anthropology.

"In pursuit of that study I began to collect my library, which was in its day the leading anthropological library in numbers and value. It comprised 6,000 volumes and was housed in my own home in Flatbush. Later, when as founder and publisher and editor of *Chalcooprates*, a magazine, I lost my money, I had to sell my books and other collections of pottery and paintings. Some of them brought me good prices and others not so good. Some of the best things went to J. Pierpont Morgan.

"Lighter works of mine are the 'Legendary and Traditional History of Kings County,' 'An Account of the Algonquin Indians of Long Island' and 'Paint Laces as a Fine Art.' The last was really the work of my wife; I merely collected the material from all the noted cabinets and museum sources of Europe. It is a valuable and beautiful work, result of long study and research, and one of the regrets of my life was that my wife did not live to see the book.

### Tells His Real Great Secret, Which Is, 'I Have Kept Busy'

"You see, if work appeared before me I couldn't help but do it, and that is another inkling into my so-called 'secret' of longevity—I've kept busy."

Unnecessarily Mr. Tredwell began again to apologize because he talked so much about himself. In a long life like his he said he ought to have collected a myriad of anecdotes about famous people long since passed away. Said he: "Either I did not do it or I have forgotten these incidents. I vaguely remember having met Walt Whitman, but there are many living in Brooklyn and around Babylon, where he taught school, whose recollections of the poet are more vivid than mine."

"A hundred years do not seem long to me in literature, in history; they are but a day, and this may account for my failure to recognize at their literary value my great contemporaries. Did you ever read how George Meredith, a youth just returned from his schooling in Germany and already the author of a novel, met in a London drawing room an old, old lady? She was the protegee of Dr. Samuel Johnson, Mme. d'Arbly, or as she is better remembered, Fanny Burney, author of 'Evelina.' In the handshake of that pair a modern, then the most modern, of authors and a genuine antiquity touched. The touch thrilled Meredith, but later in life it might not, for he too would then be old enough to realize, as I do, that 100 years is nothing."