

# A Motor Conflict

By Hugh Pendexter

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"I tell you, Ezra Butterworth, these people are ruining me," said Pfad. "I want them restrained and stopped and made to wear every kind of a hamper and hodge-podge the legal market affords. And I want big damages!"

"You know, I have just launched the Peerless Car Manufacturing Company, Ltd., and believed I was about to reap my reward for improvements on the steering apparatus. For the success of the new car we are turning out depends entirely on my device. It revolutionizes the methods of steering motor wagons and is more delicate and sensitive than the daintiest bit of mechanism put on the market, outside of a watch. And yet it is so simple any one can repair and readjust it, if through any mischance it gets out of order. But those fellows are ruining me."

"Who?"

"The Auto Superba people."

"How?"

"Well, that's what I wanted you to find out, he groaned. "Ever since placing the machine on the market and after repeated, successful trials, every machine sold has met with an accident. We only put out a few at first, fortunately. But each sale has been a boomerang."

"Whom and for what am I to sue?" asked Mr. Butterworth, growing a bit interested. "Shall we prove that the purchasers are in sympathy with your rivals, and are guilty of a composite conspiracy, if I may use the term?"

"I doubt if that would hold," sighed the manufacturer. "You see, two of the complainants are old acquaintances, and, until they bought my automobiles, they were friends of mine. No; they wouldn't knowingly aid the Superba people in anything unbecomingly."

"But I can't sue, unless there's some thing to sue for," remonstrated Mr. Butterworth. "You must show me something tangible."

"Pfad, sir, looked at the old lawyer in dismay. Then he broke out: "I know they are at the bottom of all this trouble, and are inspiring experimental publicity. If I had last week's papers—"

"Jethuel," broke in Mr. Butterworth, "bring last week's file. Almost immediately the file was placed on the desk and the manufacturer with hurried fingers, turned to the first sheet and pushed his trembling, fat digit through several columns before he exclaimed:

"Here you have it. Read that! Machine not under control! They inspired it!"

Mr. Butterworth brushed his spectacles into place and mechanically repeated a portion of the item aloud. "Obviously the chauffeur did not understand the working principles of the new steering gear. He escaped death by a miracle. It was also by the interest chance some injury was not inflicted on a ground steering mechanism, who were standing near when the machine turned turtle. Ha! Well, where's the next? Nothing libelous in that, unless the chauffeur has a complaint. You're not to blame if he didn't understand the gear."

"Hang it, man! It's so simple a child can work it. My seven-year-old daughter can take one of the cars anywhere if the automatic safety clutch is on."

The other items were very similar. Each was short, and so far as it could be displayed no more bias than the average newspaper shows when recounting the dangers of a carelessly driven automobile.

"Mr. Pfad sent this in, sir," informed Jethuel, as he handed him an envelope the next morning.

"Dr. Bunin, eh?" mused the chief. "Thought a \$2,400 car yesterday afternoon. Lives on Riverside and is an expert chauffeur. Scan the evening papers very closely, Jethuel," he reminded.

And sure enough, that night's seven o'clock edition had quite a lengthy account of Dr. Bunin's injuries caused by an accident while out with his new machine.

"Anything that strikes you as unusual, my boy?" asked the chief, with what, for him, was almost a demonstration of gawdiness.

"I was forced to reply in the negative, and added that it would be conducive to the safety of his car if an automatic clutch were made a permanent fixture on every car sold."

"Public wouldn't stand for being protected," he declared. "Anything that savors of guardianship is repelled. We must be a free people, you know. By the way, I want you to come up to the house to-morrow afternoon at two o'clock. I had Pfad send up one of his cars for me to use for a few days. If we are to defend damage suits, we must post ourselves on this mechanism."

Promptly at two I was on hand, and was requested to sit in the rear seat while he did the driving.

On the way out to the boulevard we swung around by the Superba plant, where I had an opportunity of showing the mechanics how to handle a good car.

"Now, my boy," cried Butterworth, leaning forward, "hold her dead ahead for all you're worth. Don't budge out of your course for anything. And don't pay any attention to any music you may hear."

"Street land?" I yelled over my shoulder.

"All around you," assured Mr. Butterworth, with a loud chuckle. "Keep her straight."

"Shall I run into them?" I asked, for a group of men were now directly in our path, and as we neared I saw that they were carrying musical instruments.

"Straight ahead!" cried the chief. "Don't swerve a hair. Hold her hard and straight!" and above the chug-chug I caught the soft strains of harmony behind me just as the street band drew aside and began to play.

I was astonished and shot a glance over my shoulder just as Mr. Butterworth sprang to his feet and further named me by whipping up a violin and playing a weird and most depressing score. And as I caught it swelling, vibrating, concentrating in one eerie shriek, I was conscious that the leader of the curstone band, sawing away for dear life, was endeavoring to drown my chief's unwholesome melody. And as I changed to slow speed, my companion, leaning far from the car, hat off and his white locks blowing wildly in the breeze, scaped away most artistically, was brought face to face with a snarling rival. Then, helpless I brought the car almost to a standstill, while the musicians, except the two violinists, desisted from playing.

And as the Peerless drifted slowly along I felt that the two masters were playing a duet to the death.

"Stop her!" cried Mr. Butterworth. As I mechanically sought to obey I dropped his instrument and as the other gave a farewell screech I caught the tinkle of broken glass, and instantly the car hooked to the left, striking the leader of the musicians and tossing him aside.

I thought I must have unconsciously moved the lever to the third speed just as I should have come to a stop else there would not have been sufficient momentum to have caused the accident. Instantly that I felt the car jump I knew I shot off the power, and only the leader of the wandering players was injured.

"Call an ambulance," commanded Mr. Butterworth's quick voice, and although the wounded man's companion



Scraped Away Most Artistically.

lions protested we soon had him on his way to a hospital with the chief in close pursuit.

Left to myself I found a little glass cylinder in the steering mechanism had been shattered. Leaving the car in charge of a policeman I telephoned for one of Pfad's employes and went to the office.

It was several hours later when the chief returned, but by his sparkling eyes I knew he was successful in something.

"We've got them on the hip, my boy," he saluted exultantly. "Deposed the leader of the street orchestra, has made his affidavit, confessing all. He thinks he is about to die. He'll be all right in a few days, but his depositions stabs."

"And it is?" I cried.

"That he was hired by one of the Superba people to play a certain note whenever he saw a Peerless car approaching."

"A certain note?" I repeated numbly.

"The affinity, or whatever you wish to call it, of the little glass cylinder's voice. It is the old trick of breaking a drinking glass. The cylinder has its own note—sound it and the cylinder shatters, the steering gear is thrown out of gear, the car runs haphazard and has a smash-up. Simply splendid!"

He gave a light after reading the third newspaper item. A quiet investigation revealed that in every accident the glass cylinder was broken, seemingly because of the car's running into a pole or a building. But I was skeptical and had Jethuel do a little work. He has ascertained that one of Pfad's mechanics, who had been drinking glasses broken by a wandering fakir, had entered the employ of the Superba people just before the Peerless was placed on the market. He next found out that the mechanic had been seen talking with Depucci. Evidently Depucci was picked up and put to work with the results as recorded in the newspapers."

"But why did you take your instrument and play in the car?" I cried.

"I thought I might minimize, or delay, the effect of his vibration with a counter note," he explained. "I held my own for a half minute and they realized he was about to drown me out. That was when I called on you to halt."

"And the result will be?" I exclaimed joyously.

"That beside our fees we get a new machine apiece."



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Canada.

Since Washington planned a canal from the Atlantic to the Ohio, and Madison urged the need of one from the Mississippi to Lake Michigan, artificial connections have been proposed between almost every two important natural waterways of the country. For a time the development of railways obscured the interest in the canals. The Erie canal and others fell into comparative disuse. Meantime other countries have continued to open new waterways and make great use of them. The advantages of water transportation, chiefly its cheapness as compared with railway traffic, have revived interest in canals. To say nothing of the Panama canal, the new Erie canal, which will take thousand-ton barges from the lakes to the ocean, and the Chicago drainage canal, constructed as a sewage way and certain to be completed as a ship way, are examples of what may be done. Our water-courses lie in four systems—the rivers of the Pacific, the rivers of the Atlantic, the Mississippi and its tributaries, and the great lakes. That there will ever be a cut through the Rockies to join the Pacific and the central systems is beyond the dreams of engineers, remarks the Youth's Companion, but any one with a map may trace the conduits that will make the other three systems a great unit of water. Following streams where they show on the map, draw a line from the Mississippi to Green Bay, from Minneapolis to Duluth, from Cincinnati to Lake Erie, from Ashtabula to Pittsburgh, from Pittsburgh to Washington—and the great inland cities have become seaports. Draw another line from Boston to Providence by way of Framingham or across Cape Cod—the canal is already provided for—from New York to Philadelphia, from Philadelphia to Baltimore, cut the belt of Virginia at the mouth of the James, cut Florida along the thirtieth parallel, and a way is indicated by which a steamer can go from Boston to Galveston protected from a foreign navy on the high seas.

The Poor Rich Boy.

Instead of sympathy for the chanceless poor boy, we should rather pity the rich boy. What opportunity has he to become more than an ornament or a mere owner? As Riley makes the old Hoosier say: "What's more pathetic than just a-being rich?" Out of sheer humanity something ought to be done for the boy whose father has money, remarks the New York Globe. Genius is not confined to poor and humble birth. It should be possible for this chap whose mother wore a diamond euniburst really to rise in the world. The cottage and the cabin have become too arrogant for the boy who has more than his rights. Fit on a civilization that opens the door of opportunity only to the fortunate poor?

The girl students at Greenacres are in rebellion. The matron of the women's hall has fairly prohibited shrieking, screaming and whistling in the building, and restricted the students to "making a noise like a lady." This tyrannical rule would produce the condition described by the poet: "There was silence supreme! Not a shriek, not a scream, scarcely seen a howl or a groan— And the young ladies' very propriety resent it. Did not Freedom herself shriek when Kosciuszko fell?"

The youngest professor in the east era states is William T. Fuster, professor of English at Bowdoin college. He supported himself from a very small child, and at the age of 17 had saved enough money to take a college course.

The Baltimore Sun says "there are more fresh people in this country than fresh eggs." And more stale than stale eggs, but we can't help it.

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# The

## Review

## Office

## for

## Job

## Printing.

Archduke Leopold Salvator has sued for divorce because his wife has joined a close-to-nature community and confines her wardrobe to an old birdy sack. It's a safe bet that last year at this time he was kicking about her millinery and dressmaking bills. Some men are never satisfied.

Gustave Fischer of Boston, one of the best known engravers of the country, has completed, after four years' work, engraving a sketch of the battle of Bunker Hill on a meerschaum pipe, which has become one of the most valuable meerschaum pipes in America.

The United States senator from Nebraska who wants the post offices closed on Sunday will receive the thanks of all the mail clerks for his efforts, even if many business men think he is getting more than a shade too partisan.

Perhaps the surgical operation just performed on Mr. Harriman was merely a scratch for one of the railroads he swallowed.

More than 6,000 women are engaged in the Russian secret service. Who said a woman couldn't keep one?