

THIS ARTICLE IS GRUESOME AND FULL OF HUMAN GORE BUT YOU NEED IT

It is the Only Way to Bring Home the Stark
Picture to Automobile Drivers

(By F. C. Furnas)

Like the gruesome spectacle of a bad automobile accident itself, the realistic details of this article will nauseate some readers. Those who find themselves thus affected at the outset are cautioned against reading the article in its entirety, since there is no letdown in the author's outspoken treatment of sickening facts.

Publicizing the total of motoring injuries—almost a million last year, with 36,000 deaths—never gets to first base in jarring the motorist into a realization of the appalling risks of motoring. He does not translate dry statistics into a reality of blood and agony.

Figures exclude the pain and horror of savage mutilation—which means they leave out the point. They need to be brought closer home. A passing look at a bad smash or the news that a fellow you had lunch with last week is in a hospital with a broken back will make any driver but a born fool slow down at least temporarily. But what is needed is a vivid and sustained realization that every time you step on the throttle, death gets in beside you, hopefully waiting for his chance. That single horrible accident you may have witnessed is no isolated horror. That sort of thing happens every hour of the day, everywhere in the United States. If you really felt that, perhaps the cold lines of type in Monday's paper recording that a total of 29 local citizens were killed in week-end crashes would rate something more than a perfunctory

ing motorist with groans and screams and the educational spectacle of ten or a dozen corpses, all sizes, sexes and ages, lying horribly still on the bloody grass.

Last year a state trooper of my acquaintance stopped a big red Hispano for speeding. Papa was obviously a responsible person, obviously set for a pleasant weekend with his family—so the officer cut into papa's well-bred expostulations: "I'll let you off this time, but if you keep on this way, you won't last long. Get going—but take it easier". Later a passing motorist hailed the trooper and asked if the red Hispano had got a ticket. "No," said the trooper, "I hated to spoil their party". "Too bad you didn't," said the motorist, "I saw you stop them—and then I passed that car again 50 miles up the line. It still makes me feel sick at my stomach. The car was all folded up like an accordion—the color was about all there was left. They were all dead but one of the kids—and he wasn't going to live to the hospital".

Maybe it will make you sick at your stomach, too. But unless you're a heavy-footed incurable, a good look at the picture the artist would not dare paint, a first-hand acquaintance with the results of mixing gasoline with speed and bad judgment, ought to be well worth your while. I can't help it if the facts are revolting. If you have the nerve to drive fast and take chances, you ought to have the nerve to take the appropriate cure. You can't ride an ambulance or watch the doctor working on the victim in the hospital, but you can read.

The automobile is treacherous, just as a cat is. It is tragically difficult to realize that it can become the deadliest missile. As enthusiasts tell you, it makes 65 feel like nothing at all. But 65 an hour is 100 feet a second, a speed which puts a viciously unjustified responsibility on brakes and human reflexes, and can instantly turn this docile luxury into a mad bull elephant.

Collision, turnover or sideswipe,

each type of accident produces either a shattering dead stop or a crashing change of direction—and, since the occupant—meaning you—continues in the old direction at the original speed, every surface and angle of the car's interior immediately becomes a battering, tearing projectile, aimed squarely at you—inescapable. There is no bracing yourself against these imperative laws of momentum.

It's like going over Niagara Falls in a steel barrel full of railroad spikes. The best thing that can happen to you—and one of the rarer things—is to be thrown out as the door springs open, so you have only the ground to reckon with. True, you strike with as much force as if you had been thrown from the Twentieth Century at top speed. But at least you are spared the lethal array of gleaming metal knobs and edges and glass inside the car.

Anything can happen in that split second of crash, even those lucky escapes you hear about. People have dived through windshields and come out with only superficial scratches. They have run cars together head on, reducing both to twisted junk, and been found unhurt and arguing bitterly two minutes afterwards. But death was there just the same—he was only exercising his privilege of being erratic. This spring a wrecking crew prried the door off a car which had been overturned down an embankment and out stepped the driver with only a scratch on his cheek. But his mother was still inside, a splinter of wood from the top driven four inches into her brain as a result of son's taking a greasy curve a little too fast. No blood—no horribly twisted bones—just a gray-haired corpse still clutching her pocketbook in her lap as she had clutched it when she felt the car leave the road.

On that same curve a month later, a light touring car crashed a tree. In the middle of the front seat they found a nine-months-old baby surrounded by broken glass and yet ab-

solutely unhurt. A fine practical joke on death—but spoiled by the baby's parents, still sitting on each side of him, instantly killed by shattering their skulls on the dashboard.

If you customarily pass without clear vision a long way ahead, make sure that every member of the party carries identification papers—it's difficult to identify a body with its whole face bashed in or torn off. The driver is death's favorite target. If the steering wheel holds together it ruptures his liver or spleen so he bleeds to death internally. Or, if the steering wheel breaks off, the matter is settled instantly by the steering column's plunging through his abdomen.

By no means do all head-on collisions occur on curves. The modern death trap is likely to be a straight stretch with three lanes of traffic—like the notorious Astor Flats on the Albany Post Road where there have been as many as 27 fatalities in one summer month. This sudden vision of broad, straight road tempts many an ordinary sensible driver into passing the man ahead. Simultaneously a driver coming the other way swings out at high speed. At the last moment each tries to get into line again, but the gaps are closed. As the cars in line are forced into the ditch to capture size or crash fences, the passers meet almost head on, in a swirling, grinding smash that sends them careening obliquely into the others.

A trooper described such an accident—five cars in one mess, seven killed on the spot, two dead on the way to the hospital, two more dead in the long run. He remembered it far more vividly than he wanted to—the quick way the doctor turned away from a dead man to check up on a woman with a broken back; the three bodies out of one car so soaked with oil from the crank-case that they looked like wet brown cigars and not humans at all; a man, walking around and babbling to himself, oblivious of the dead and dying, even oblivious of the dagger-like sliver of steel that stuck out of his streaming wrist; a pretty girl with her forehead lapped open, trying hopelessly to crawl out of a ditch in spite of her smashed hip.

A first-class massacre of that sort is only a question of scale and numbers—seven corpses are no deader than one. Each shattered man, woman or child who went to make up the 36,000 corpses chalked up last year had to die a personal death.

A car careening and rolling down a bank, battering and smashing its occupants every inch of the way, can wrap itself so thoroughly around a tree that front and rear bumpers interlock, requiring an acetylene torch to cut them apart. In a recent case of that sort they found the old lady, who had been sitting in back, lying across the lap of her daughter, who was in front, each soaked in her own and the other's blood indistinguishably; each so shattered and broken that there was no point whatever in an autopsy to determine whether it was broken neck or ruptured heart that caused death.

Overturning cars specialize in certain injuries. Cracked pelvis, for instance, guaranteeing agonizing months in bed, motionless, perhaps crippled for life—broken spine resulting from sheer sidewise twist—the minor details of smashed knees and splintered shoulder blades caused by crashing into the side of the car as she goes over the swirl of an insane roller coaster—and the lethal consequences of broken ribs, which puncture hearts and lungs with their raw ends. The consequent internal hemorrhage is no less dangerous because it is the pleural instead of the abdominal cavity that is filling with blood.

Flying glass—safety glass is by no means universal yet—contributes much more than its share to the spectacular side of accidents. It doesn't merely cut—the fragments are driven in as if a cannin loaded with broken bottles had been fired in your face, and a sliver in the eye, travelling with such force, means certain blindness. A leg or arm stuck through the windshield will cut clean to the bone through vein, artery and muscle like a piece of beef under the butcher's knife, and it takes little time to lose a fatal amount of blood under such circumstances. Even safety glass may not be wholly safe when the car crashes something at high speed. You hear picturesque tales of how a flying

(Continued on Page Three)

A Few Words to You About the C. N. R.

During 1934 the average number of persons employed by Canadian National Railways was 74,774, and the wages paid them came to almost one hundred million dollars. This represented, both as to number employed and amount of payroll, an advance over 1933, and practically the whole increase in personnel was due to re-employment of those whose services had previously been dispensed with owing to lack of business.

The average mileage of road operated in 1934 was 23,676 miles, making Canadian National Railways the largest single railway system in the Western Hemisphere.

In 1934 the total freight transported by Canadian National Railways amounted to 44,719,477 tons, an increase of eighteen per cent over the previous year. The average haul of freight was 326 miles. The value of this freight is not ascertainable, but it must run into many hundred millions of dollars, and, comprising all kinds of necessities and luxuries, contributed to the welfare and happiness of every man, woman and child in the Dominion.

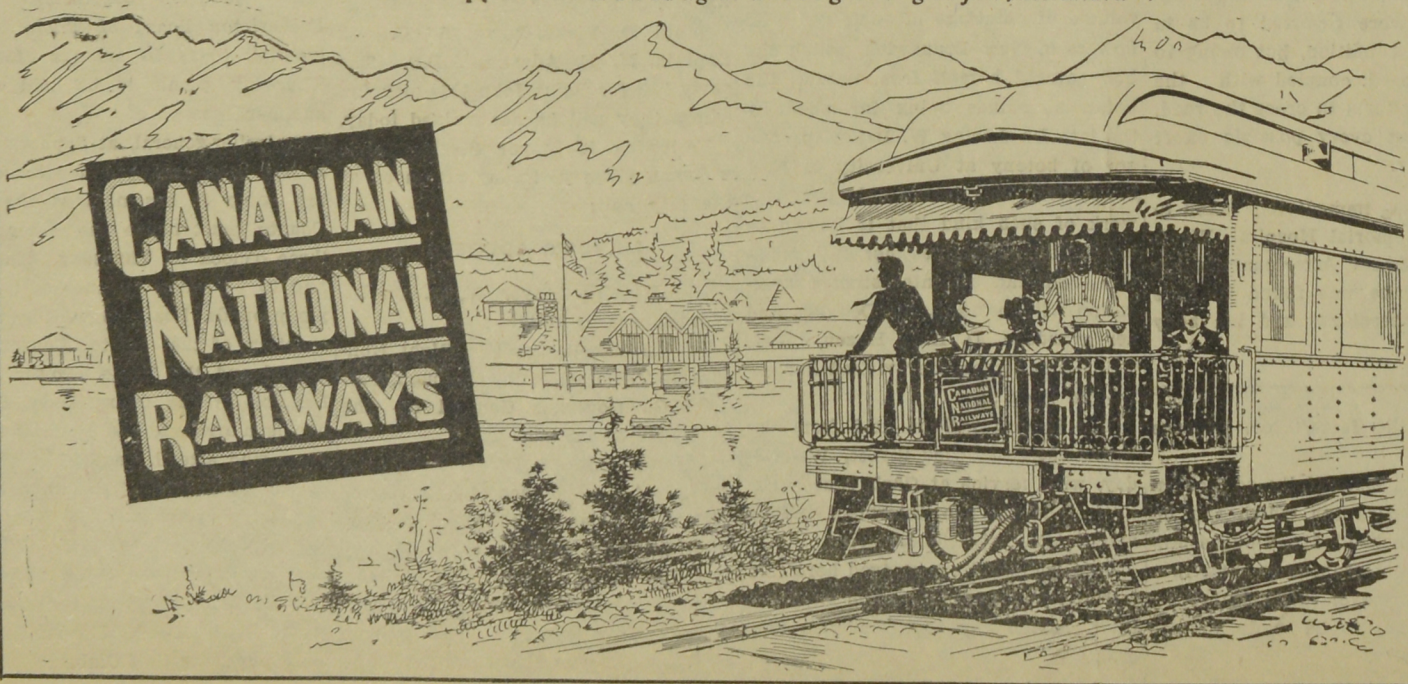
Canadian National Railways carried over 10,000,000 passengers during 1934. This was also an increase over 1933. These paid in fares \$16,331,229, or an average of \$1.62 per passenger with an average journey of seventy-one and three-quarter miles.

These figures, without embellishment or amplification, show the vastness of the public services rendered by Canadian National Railways. The system is conducted on as economical a scale as is consistent with the highest standards of railway operation. The improvement in business in 1934 over the previous year enabled more people to be employed : : more wages to be paid : : more service to be rendered. Also, more money was available to be spent among Canadian producers and Canadian merchants.

A continuation of this improvement in our business will carry on and enlarge these good results . . . the whole country will benefit. This year Canadian National Railways is co-operating in an extensive way in the national movement to diminish unemployment and to restore industrial activity : : to help banish the depression and bring better times for everyone.

Canadian National Railways feels justified in asking for your co-operation. A greater use by Canadian citizens of the facilities offered by this system—transportation, express, telegraphs, hotels—will materially help not only us, but all Canada . . . and you will receive full value for every dollar spent.

During the present Summer season the C. N. R. is providing special fares and excursions between points throughout Canada. These are exceptional travel bargains. The nearest C. N. R. agent will be glad to give full particulars.



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