

Good Advice

Jules Méline

November 21, 1907

A strident siren's call, followed by an almost imperceptible rumbling that didn't take long to become clear made me turn my head, and in a plume of dust I made out a "sixty horsepower" hurrying by at a fantastic speed, a modern monster given birth to by man's imagination.

I instinctively stepped aside and put myself under the protection of a giant poplar. I thought of the ever-increasing danger of death to which we are exposed.

Wasn't "voluntary" interment in disgusting hovels and unhealthy workshops enough? Wasn't the slow death that is barely delayed by an insufficient salary of the exploited whose body and soul belongs to he who pays and commands that an insufficient salary barely manages to put off enough? Wasn't it enough for the raggedy vagabond to die of hunger and cold? Wasn't all this enough without progress itself, which should be a source of happiness for all, adding one more danger to our very lives?

Once joys were relatively evenly shared, and if the rich savored sumptuous repasts, the hobo, in compensation, was able to enjoy nature by peacefully strolling along the road. His empty purse served as his guarantee, while the overflowing moneybags of the well-dressed monsieur enflamed the envies of the poor. There was thus a danger for the haves in strolling along the highways, and this was after all quite logical.

At present the roles have been changed and the bearded brigand has metamorphosed into an elegant chauffeur, the automobile has substituted itself for the dagger and the fur-clad victim has been replaced by the beggar with his bowl.

Carters, bicyclists and pedestrians only go onto the highways with trepidation, the devastating automobile having proved itself, as is related every day in the newspapers.

What measures will the wretched take in the face of such a danger? They no longer want to be the victims of these brutes who have no concern for the lives of others and who, in order to satisfy their bestial passion, don't hesitate to spread horror and misfortune among those who are less fortunate.

It appears that an investigating judge advised a journalist to not hesitate in shooting down any *apache* who would attack him.

Automobilism, developing in an extraordinary fashion, has become a permanent death threat for those who are forced to use pedestrian and equestrian means of locomotion.

The automobilist is thus no more or less dangerous than the *apache*.

The judge's advice is good; can we follow it?

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