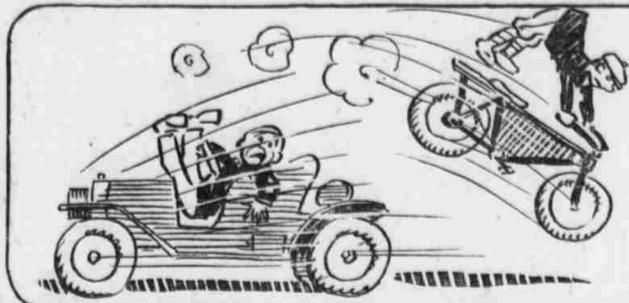


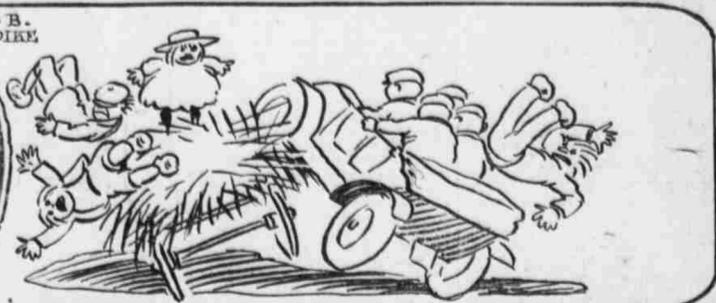
## Omaha Folks Have Their Thrilling Auto Experiences



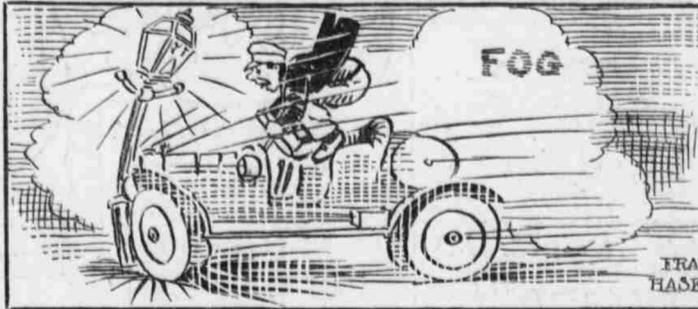
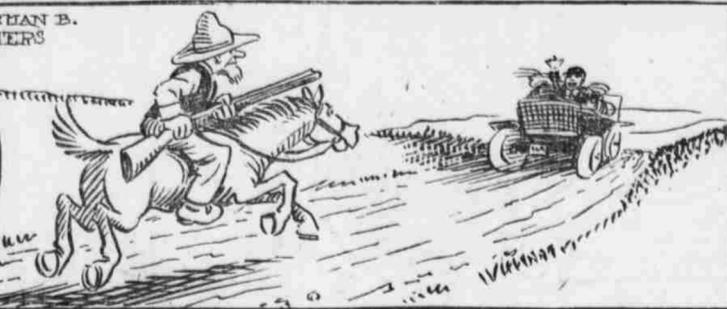
WILLIAM HYNES



NELS B. UPDIKE



HERMAN B. PETERS



FOG



FRANK HASKELL

**Y**OU cannot always get them to admit it, but the fact is every man who drives an automobile has had at least one or more experiences in the course of that same driving that if the experience has not sent cold chills up his spine and caused his hair to raise it has at least made him say things that he would not want his wife to hear.

Usually these experiences occur while the driver is new, say the first or second time he takes the machine out. Now and then, however, they occur after the fellow seems to have mastered his machine thoroughly. Sometimes these troubles are the fault of the driver and often the fault of someone else, but it all results in an expense account for the auto man, no matter whether a human being or the uncontrollable elements are to blame.

When you catch these auto drivers in a reminiscent mood they will talk machine by the hour, and it is then that they will drop a good story about some little or big mishap that occurred in the course of their driving. Sometimes it is an account of an accident in which their machine tried to jump over a hayrack party; at other times an account of how a motorcycle, going like a hornet shooting for his home tree, struck them amidship; again, it is an account of skidding on a muddy day right to the edge of a precipice leading overboard into the Platte river; then again it is an account of an automobile somersault, that scattered the tourists like winter's leaves. There is no telling what the story will be, but just draw out a few of the automobilists on a winter's evening and you will get the whole variety.

Nels B. Updike had an automobile with wonderful climbing propensities. He had often boasted of the hill-climbing powers of his machine, but he did not know that there were still some latent talents in the machine that he had never seen exercised.

### Climbs a Hayrack

When the car climbed a hayrack with a party of school children, plowed around on the rack for a while and then toppled off, he got a new idea of its ability and agility. Likewise he got a new respect for its prowess, and after that he hired a driver, for he did not care to trust himself with a machine that was subject to such rank caprices.

Mr. Updike was taking a bunch of visiting tennis men for a ride. He had "Cub" Potter, a local tennis player, with him as an entertainment committee. He had shown the visitors the town of Florence and was returning, when he overtook a hayrack party of school children. He was driving at a good clip and attempted to swing around the hayrack. He didn't swing quite far enough. The machine caught the side of the hayrack.

There was a ripping, cracking sound, a chorus of screams from the children, a redoubled snorting of the gasoline engine and the machine began to climb aboard the hayrack. With a simultaneous

scream the children tumbled off the opposite side and scampered in all directions.

The tennis men, Updike and all, were thrown violently into a flourishing bed of weeds at the side of the road. Updike and Potter wore straw hats. They landed on their heads with a shock that drove their heads through the crowns of the hats, so that the rim hung around their necks like the stylish collar of an Elizabethan dress suit.

No, there was no one seriously hurt except Updike, who was quite seriously injured.

### Hits Telephone Pole

The wildest automobile experience of Ralph Kitchen was wild enough to keep him awake for the greater part of three nights afterward and to break into what little naps he had with frightful nightmares. There was no ghost connected with the incident, either. There was, however, a leap over an embankment, a crashing into a telephone pole, that took off the two wheels on the right side of the machine and sent the car hobbling entirely around the pole like an insane duck with a wing and a leg gone, until it rammed its bill into the embankment over which it originally leaped.

"Now-a-days," says Mr. Kitchen, "when anyone wants to pass me in a machine I let him pass me. I take no more chances." Mr. Kitchen had this accident when he raced and passed a fellow in another machine. Incidentally, this same fellow came along, like the turtle of the fable, a minute later and helped Kitchen and his family pick up the remains of the machine. He was not only the turtle of the fable, but he proved the good Samaritan of scripture, for he heaped coals of fire upon the head of the man who had passed him in the race by hauling the crestfallen victor and family to Omaha.

Mr. and Mrs. Kitchen, with their son Richard and his wife, were returning from Calhoun. They were mounting the long grade somewhere north of Florence, when a low power automobile passed them. Mr. Kitchen threw on his own high speed, overtook and re-passed the fellow. He had just safely left the fellow behind, when there appeared a sharp turn in the road. Mr. Kitchen was unfamiliar with the drive; he jerked all the levers he could see and kicked a few besides, but as the big machine shot over the embankment he grabbed at his wife with one hand to hold her in the seat, while with the air of a man resigned to his fate he held limply to the steering wheel with one hand.

### Machine Looped the Loop

Straight for the telephone pole dove the machine like a hawk. All turned their faces away; they did not want to see death in all its hideous nakedness. Then Mr. Kitchen made one last despairing effort. With his one hand still on the seemingly useless steering wheel, he gave it a whirl to the left in the faint hope that the car might at least dodge the pole. Every little bit helped. Instead of suffering a head-on collision, only the right front wheel was struck. This was shaved clear of the machine. The car, now hobbling on

a broken axle on the right side, naturally swung to the right, and the right hind wheel was also swept off the car. Like a lucky bug performing gyrations on the surface of a pond, the crippled machine looped the loop around the pole and came to a halt, with its nose in the opposite embankment.

"Not one of us was even thrown out of the machine, although we all expected to be killed as we went over the bank," said Mr. Kitchen.

"And the next day a farmer came in and made me pay for a fence I smashed as I went over the embankment," concluded Mr. Kitchen.

John C. Wharton says if he had had any hair on his head every spike of them would have pierced the top of his derby one evening, when he thought for a few seconds his machine would surely run down and kill an 8-year-old boy who for pure devilment jumped in front of the automobile when Wharton was driving down from Florence. "I swerved to the left," says Mr. Wharton, and did my best to send the machine around him, as I could not stop it in time, but the kid was scared and he ran all the harder at an angle across the street, and for a distance of twenty-five feet that my machine skidded after him there was not six inches between the kid and the front of the car."

Mr. and Mrs. Wharton and Rev. and Mrs. Edwin H. Jenks had been at Florence. They had made the drive on a beautiful evening in Mr. Wharton's machine and were returning just at dusk, with Wharton and his year's experience at the wheel. They had just entered the north part of Omaha, when they espied three children playing marbles in the street near the curbing on the right. They were driving at a good speed, and Wharton tooted the horn. The children leaped to the curbing and out of the way.

### Jumped in Front of Car

But there was an 8-year-old boy among them and he wanted to show the little girls what he could do. When the car was within ten feet of them this reckless little rascal leaped out and attempted to scamper across in front of the on-coming car.

"I threw on the brakes and swerved to the left all at the same time," says Mr. Wharton. "I hoped to swing around him, for there was not time enough to bring the machine to a stop. Instead of ducking back, the lad became frightened when he heard the machine snorting so close behind him. His bare toes dug the gravel all the harder, but he stayed in line with the machine. Some of the time the fenders actually touched his clothes. When I brought the machine to a stop the mother rushed out and snatched the boy into the house. She told me it was not my fault, but I knew very well that if I had killed the lad there would have been a suit and I would likely have been held responsible.

"I am baldheaded, you see, but I thought I felt the roots of my hair endeavoring to start during that moment and I ran my hand over my pate afterward to see if there were not a little stubble there. "Well, the next day I hired a driver and I have not been without one since."

There are no precipices in eastern Nebraska

where a machine may topple over and go to smash on the rocks a thousand feet below. G. W. Wattle's is glad of that. He would be "gladder" if there were no steep embankments leading to the swirling Platte river on rainy days when the river is up. Mr. Wattle's found his machine skidding merrily toward the edge of such an embankment just below Valley one rainy day, when he, with Mrs. Wattle's and another woman, were making a muddy drive to Lincoln. "We had been skidding and skidding," says Mr. Wattle's when he gets reminiscent on the subject. "Then we were rounding a curve with a wire fence on one side and the Platte a good many feet below on the other. For the 'steenth time the wheels began to skid, and dangerously fast toward the edge of the embankment that led over into the river. I got desperate. A cold plunge seemed certain. I swung the steering wheel sharply and directed the machine straight into the barbed wire fence as the only possible means of getting away from the tumble into the river.

### Plows Through Wire Fence

Then the wheels, that had been skidding, suddenly took hold and smash we went into a fence post, broke it off and began to plow through the barbed wire. The wires sawed like buzz saws at the front of the machine, nearly cut the fenders in pieces, ripped the tires considerably and, say, there was old Harry to pay.

"We got straightened around and got as far as Waverly, and there we put up for the night. It was not so necessary that we reach Lincoln that night that we cared to take any more chances that evening. We waited for fairer weather, and since then we have been careful about attempting long drives in rainy weather."

Herman B. Peters, proprietor of the Merchants hotel, has the distinction of having the largest automobile in Omaha, and also of having an icebox on the rear which is most useful when making long trips in the country. Peters is not very strong for driving around the city, but each day does a century or more into the country, making trips to various counties, where he has numerous farms. Peters has had many thrilling experiences with his machine, although he always has a most careful chauffeur.

Last week Peters had a thrilling ride from Tekamah, where he shot a deer, and was told that the game wardens were after him for having the prized venison in his possession.

Peters still remembers a hunting trip he took to the western part of Douglas county after quail, where he had a narrow escape in getting away from a farmer who was after him with a shotgun. With some friends Herman had been drilling through some oat stubble, when Mr. Farmer ordered them off the field and then went to the farm house and with shotgun and on horseback started in pursuit.

While making his getaway on the slippery road, another farmer appeared with a team and would not give any of the road. Peters' machine was go-

ing at a rapid clip and in turning out for the wagon hit a bump and started through the air straight for a telephone pole. The pole, however, was missed by six inches and the machine was soon back in the road, making another fast getaway from the farmer with the gun.

### Turns Flip-Flop

It was due to the imperfections of the older style of steering gear that J. J. Deright suffered his greatest thriller a number of years ago, when his machine tried to climb a steep bank in a cut near Springfield, turned a sidewise flip-flop, and spilled Deright, Dr. Allison and a trained nurse in the cut about twenty feet ahead of the car. Deright was taking Dr. Allison and a nurse to Springfield on a professional call. He agreed to take them the thirty miles in an hour. The steering gear used to be connected at the axle of the wheel by means of a bolt and a nut. If the nut happened to come off the bolt might slip out and there would be all kinds of trouble. Nowadays the bolt screws in and is firmly fixed there. In those days, however, it was always possible for the bolt to "act up," and on this particular day it "acted up."

Within a few miles of Springfield the machine was rolling off thirty miles an hour nicely through a deep cut in the road. Suddenly one front wheel refused to respond to the movements of the steering wheel. The connecting bolt had dropped out.

The front wheel flopped limply to one side. The machine scrambled up the side of the steep cut. In an instant it flew nearly to the top of the cut. Then it turned the flip-flop and fell back into the cut up side down.

"Bang!" went a tire. When Deright and Dr. Allison sat up and looked around, the nurse was sitting on the ground laughing at the whole incident. Forty school children from the schoolhouse just beyond the cut came rushing to the scene. They had heard the heavy explosion of the tire, had seen the three persons performing miracles of contortion in the air, and felt sure the whole gang had been blown up by a gasoline explosion.

### Team Helps Out

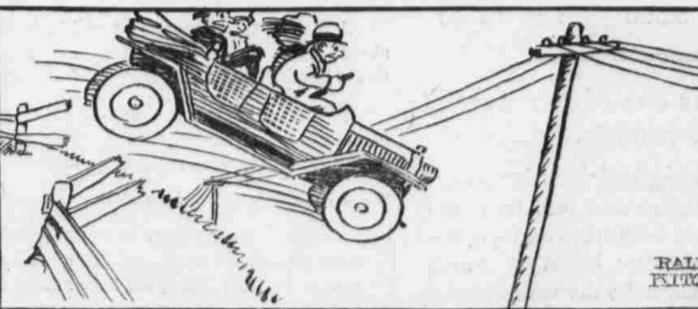
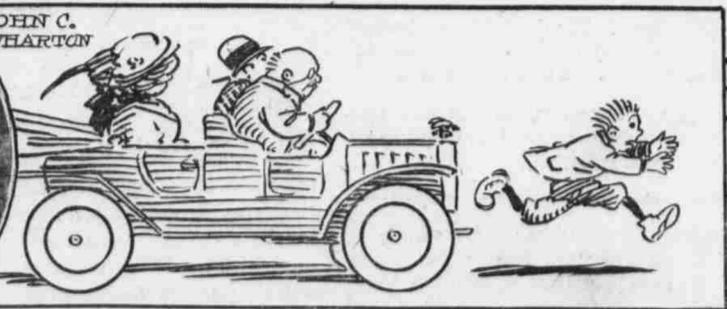
A team just coming into sight beyond the cut snorted and reared. Deright asked the farmer to take the doctor and the nurse to Springfield, and thus the two got there in time for their professional call. Nobody received an injury worth mentioning; all were, in the language of the "Hoosier Schoolmaster," "considerably shook up like," and their hair was on ends for a few moments.

Motorcycles are a hoodoo to William Hynes. Every time he drives his automobile and meets a motorcycle he knows there is trouble in the wind for him. His experiences with them are many. He hesitates to tell all of them, for he fears he will not be believed. Still, he tells of the time a motorcycle rider collecting for a motorcycle company crashed into his machine, turned a number of somersaults in the air, scattered his money all over Harney

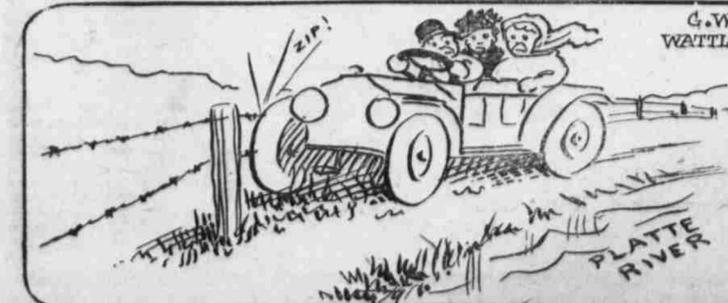
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JOHN C. WHARTON



RALPH KITCHEN



G. W. WATTLE'S



S. S. DERIGHT

