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Shanghai, May 14, 1930.

The Chief Mechanic,
Bills Motors,
Shanghai.

ENCLOSURE

Re Chevrolet Roadster 7858

Dear Sir,

A few remarks concerning the above car may be helpful in understanding the peculiarities of the machine. Having used it about a week or so, my acquaintance with it has developed and so has my understanding of its merits and demerits. Ignoring its merits for the present, I shall enumerate its demerits, at least a few of them, for to recount them all is beyond my capacity.

The car has almost human attributes, for it often personates a man afflicted with consumption, that is to say it coughs with varying degrees of vigour. It also has the human characteristic of hiccupping, which it usually does when the wires connected with the spark plugs jump playfully away. This delightful habit is evidenced every 20 miles or so.

The "new battery" (vide Mr. Cohen) has somehow contrived to expire of old age, but with a little gentle coaxing by two or three coolies, it is possible to start the car. The plug sealing the gasoline tank is so ingeniously contrived as to admit raindrops, which steal stealthily into the carburettor which mischievous results. As the car has (very unfortunately!) not been constructed to run on water, it stops, loses at once all its human characteristics and becomes mulish: it refuses to budge, nor will the most vigorous adjectival force on each coax it forward.

And now we come to the leakage of gasoline, or should I say water, or a solution of the two? On no less than two occasions your mechanics have striven to convince the carburettor that it was not a fountain, but they failed. On three other occasions, when I was some miles away from your workshop, the gas insisted on leaving a trail on the roadside. I naturally resisted this display of ostentation (for what else could it be) by going to the first garage and having the defect remedied. On coalling at your workshop later, I was informed that I should not have gone to anyone but your good selves. Presumably, it was my duty to let the gas run, but in this duty I failed lamentably.

W. C. Miller,

Chief, Foreign Service Division.

When I first tried the car, I noticed that the steering wheel was moulded in concrete, or some such stubborn material. This defect, I was told, would be remedied. It was and, as a result, the rear wheels of the machine veritably lurch to the left when the steering wheel is turned to the right. I know the axiomatic laws of physics, gravitation, centrifugal force---or whatever it is called---may account to some extent for this phenomenon, but not fully: there is something in the mechanism that needs attention. The defect is serious and may easily lead to the premature propulsion of the driver into regions warmer than these.

The lights, too, involve much guesswork and amusement. For example, when one turns a switch and expects only the headlights and the tail-light to show their cheerful rays, the small side-lights also reveal themselves.

And now we come to the flooring of the car. You will notice that a portion of this has been removed, no doubt to admit the noxious fumes of the engine into the nostrils of the driver. This, of course, may help to make one insensible to the more noxious effluvia that pervades the vicinity of the Soochow Creek, but, for myself, I am seldom in that unsalubrious district and, therefore, do not fully appreciate the blessings conferred by the heat and odour conveyed via the aperture.

You will also find that the oil, obviously jealous of the gasoline, persists in besmearing the roadway.

Then the brakes: as ornaments they are unbeautiful; as tributes to the mechanical genius in man they are worthless; and for practical purposes they are useless.

Now, what else is there? Oh, yes: regarding the monogram S.S.M. on the doors, regarding this---well, I have absolutely no complaint. I was told that certain things would be attended to: the monogram was. Lest I should appear unappreciative, I thank you.

On reading this screed, you will feel like saying that a second hand Chevrolet is not a Rolls Royce. Granted. But surely one may reasonably expect it to run a month or two without coughing, hiccupping, stopping unexpectedly and exhibiting the other characteristics enumerated above.

Yours faithfully,

V. F. Sullivan,
Acting Chief, Automotive Division.

Forwarded:

W. L. Miller,
Chief, Foreign Service Division.

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