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Practical Automobile Experience.

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Physicians are usually poor business men, and in the selection of an automobile may be expected, in the majority of instances, to make the common mistake of buying a vehicle because it is attractive to the eye and is cheap, rather than because, after a thorough investigation, competent experts have declared it to be a practical business wagon that has passed the experimental stage.

There could be no greater mistake than for the physician of average means to buy a cheap automobile. They are the most expensive in the long run. I have owned two, and my first venture was the purchase of a \$600 machine that two expert machinists were unable to keep in running order. My second purchase was a 1901 model gasoline carriage, which cost me \$1,200. After using it for six months and covering 3,000 miles I have gained an experience which has cost me \$300, approximately, and will enable me to make some statements for prospective purchasers that may add something to the knowledge of this subject.

In cities where there are no central automobile stations where machines can be properly cared for at a reasonable expense, it will be necessary for an owner of an automobile to have a stable of his own, close to his house, where he can give the machine his personal supervision. In the case of a doctor whose time is never his own, it will be necessary to employ a man and train him to care for the machine. There could be no greater fallacy than the suggestion that an automobile is a simple machine to care for. There are many parts in a gasoline machine that require daily examination and adjustment; besides, the machine needs daily washing and oiling and refilling with gasoline, as well as the cleaning of exposed working parts, which become covered with dust or mud, and unless carefully attended to are subject to rapid deterioration.

A doctor whose practice the entire year demands the use of but one horse might find time enough to care properly for his own machine. The doctor, with a practice that is worth not less than \$3,000 a year, will need two horses, and when two horses are necessary the automobile becomes an economical factor.

The first few months of ownership of an automobile, when one is

PAYING FOR EXPERIENCE,

is the most expensive period. After that the cost of operation is not only lessened, but depreciation also becomes less, because of proper handling. Most of my troubles were due to lack of knowledge rather than

to apparent recklessness of operating, and I find that there is much less breakage and strain and the machine requires much less repairing and adjusting of parts now than it did during the first few months I owned it.

I have not been able to dispense with horses, as I have never been able to fully trust the machine. It has broken down and been laid up for minor troubles at different times, which have put it out of use for a number of days. It is like a horse, in that it is ready for business most of the time; yet, while it can easily do the work of three or four horses, a single machine will not take the place of two or three horses. If one of your horses is sick, the others can do the work. With the automobile the same rule must hold. The physician who decides to use the automobile exclusively

MUST OWN TWO MACHINES,

so that one will always be in perfect condition. It will not do to have a good and a poor machine. They must both be first class and equally reliable. I see in this proposition not only the greatest economy but the greatest degree of comfort, for, with a competent man in the stable, only one machine is used at a time and the cost of maintenance is no greater than if one machine only were used. Add to this the fact that your two machines will do the work of many horses, yet when they are not in use they are not deteriorating, are not "eating their heads off," do not require to be exercised and do not add to a man's work. I formerly kept four horses. I now keep two horses and the machine for winter's work, and I used but one horse and the machine during five months this summer. I mean in another year to own a second machine of the same type, which will probably be a second-hand machine in good condition, and then I shall dispense with horses entirely.

CITY MUD AND COUNTRY DUST.

I tried country touring with fast running the first six weeks I owned my machine, and I have given it up, for I found that long runs in the country made the machinery very dirty, and the overheating of the tires in 35-mile runs to a summer resort without stops, made them vulnerable to puncture, so that each run was followed by the removal and repair of a tire. I use single tube tires, and for the past four months, during which time I have used the machine only in the city of Milwaukee and its suburbs, I have had no trouble with them whatever. If an automobile is to do daily service in a business, it should not be used for frequent long country rides unless one is willing to give the machine a thorough overhauling and cleaning after these trips. The mud of our city streets is less detrimental than the dust of our country roads.

As surgeon for a consolidated street railway company owning all the lines in Milwaukee and suburbs, my duties take me to all portions of the city and its suburbs. With horses I was always on the road, as

I have never found a horse that could stand more than 15 miles of travel per day on the average, and keep in good condition. With the automobile I have not been obliged to count the miles and have been enabled to cover the entire route, which formerly took me the greater part of the day, in the forenoon. The frequent stops permit the machinery to cool off, and as I always have my man with me to care for the machine, the trip is made without the discomfort of feeling that at any moment I might be obliged to adjust a wire or some working part filled with grease. The fatigue of buggy riding is unknown in an automobile, and I have learned that I can do twice the work in the same amount of time without fatigue from riding. Every physician who has done much riding will appreciate what this latter means to him.

Experience has demonstrated the wisdom of automobile owners carrying liability insurance. I had an accident due to no negligence on my part that resulted in a woman breaking her thigh. Her husband was a sensible man and did not blame me for the accident, and I gave the woman professional attendance, but the sense of security from the annoyance of a possible suit at law that my liability policy gave me was worth far more than the premium it cost.

For the busy practitioner the possession of one or two automobiles under the conditions above indicated will serve the purposes of a conserver of his energy, a saver of his valuable time, an indicator that he is abreast of the times, and will give him the necessary leisure for reading, so difficult to obtain where "hay motors" only are used.