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## THE PHYSICIAN AND THE AUTOMOBILE

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Editor Northwestern Lancet:

So many inquiries have come from physicians asking about my automobile, that for their benefit I will relate some of my experiences and observations. In the first place, the question comes, "Which is the best machine for the physician, gasoline, steam or electricity?" The question was one that I had in great part to decide for myself after boring my friends for a month or two by asking questions about their machines, and accumulating catalogues from different parts of the country. I decided to buy a second-hand steam machine, and it is here that I took my first lesson. The owner of the automobile I expected to buy took me for a ride down town and, to show me how easy it was to manipulate, exchanged places with me in the carriage, and gave me control of the vehicle. Our ride came to a sudden

termination; in trying to avoid the teams, and manipulate the different levers which were new to me, I turned the wrong way and dished one of the front wheels by running into the stone curb. This short ride of less than two blocks cost about ten dollars. This brought the question of repairs strongly to my mind.

It was some time after this that I took my second lesson. This time it was in a gasoline carriage, the kind that I am now using, the "Oldsmobile." My experience this time was in taking the part of passenger, and keeping my eyes open. I was with a reckless driver, and expected every few minutes to be a subject for an ambulance call. However, barring a few mishaps, we returned from several trips, whole and sound, and I placed my order for an Oldsmobile.

Some of the reasons that led me to purchase a gasoline machine are the following:

In looking over the electric vehicles on the market, I came to the conclusion that they would not answer my purpose. While they were neat and ran very nicely on good roads, they could not be relied on for any certain distance, and the batteries deteriorate very rapidly, necessitating new cells at a no small cost. The other day one of my doctor friends telephoned me asking how I liked my machine, stating that he had an electric, which was represented to him as having the capacity of traveling fifty miles on one charge of electricity, but he had not been able to get more than twenty miles at any one charge, and frequently could not go that far. He had used his machine about three months, and had been furnished with a new set of batteries.

In looking over the steam carriages I found a good many points in their favor, but much must be done each time one starts the machine, outside of the regular work of filling the boiler with water, etc. Gasoline is used for fuel, and the boiler is constructed on the same plan as a gasoline stove. You first let a small quantity of gasoline into the cup under the generator, and light that, then wait a few minutes for the generator to get hot so that it will vaporize the gasoline. When the generator is hot you are then ready to light the main burner. After this is lighted you wait to get up steam, which takes about ten minutes or longer, depending upon the machine and how it is manipulated. You always have to watch the water in the boiler. Should it get dry

considerable damage will be done in a few minutes. Should you by accident or otherwise let raw gasoline into the burner, and then try to light it, you will have a fire, and if you are not lively there will not be much left of your machine. A number of times during the past summer the Minneapolis street sprinklers have been called upon to quench fires caused in this way. Some drivers of steam rigs have a hose connected with their engines so that in an emergency their machine may be converted into a fire-fighting engine to extinguish the fire under its own boiler. The amount of gasoline used for fuel by a steam machine is about three and one-half times the amount used by the gasoline engine to develop the same power.

In the gasoline automobile you have a vehicle that is ready at any and all times, provided you have given it proper attention. A man may spend two hours a day taking care of a team and buggy, but let him take an hour to an auto, and the people think he is crazy, or that the machine is no good. To give a machine life you must take care of it. With my Oldsmobile, a turn or two of the crank and I am ready to go, whether it is to make a night call, or after the machine has been standing on the street for hours. There is no danger of fire or explosion. You can buy gasoline at almost any store and at farm houses.

My mobile was late in coming, owing to the great demand at the factory, but I made up for lost time when it finally did come. The evening it came the agent here, Mr. A. F. Chase, delivered it in my back yard, and after cautioning me several times not to take it out of the yard for several days, until I had thoroughly mastered it, left me to work out my own salvation. In less than three quarters of an hour I invited my wife to take a ride with me, and we went through the center of the city. Fortunately we did not get towed back.

The driver of the auto must be ever ready to avoid accidents, and especially in the country, where the horses have not made the acquaintance of the "beast." City horses that see them every day in the city and never move a muscle when they go by, prick up their ears, and are ready to run should they see one in the country.

There is a fascination in gliding along over the country without biting the dust of your horses' heels or of those ahead of you, for you

are in the lead. There is a feeling to move faster, faster, faster; and the chauffeur wishes he might be with Fournier on his sixty horse-power monster. Think of it; Paris to Berlin, seven hundred and forty-five miles, in seventeen hours, at times going at the rate of eighty miles per hour,—an ordinary block or two hundred and fifty feet, while you count one. Physicians may wish to travel that fast at times, for with them it is always hurry, hurry; but if we made such time in Minneapolis the city police would run us in, so at present I am content with my little Oldsmobile, of four horse-power.

C. D. HARRINGTON.