

NIGHT RIDING IN A MOTOR CAR

TWO THINGS THAT SHOULD BE AVOIDED.

Don't Drive in the Twilight and Don't Hug the Roadside—Steering Straight in the Black Can Be Mastered—Precautions for Motoring in Fog.

Driving a car at night is something most motorists don't like if they are handling the machine on an unfamiliar road. And, most any driver makes two mistakes when he has to send his auto along in the dark, says an article in Motor Print.

"Watch the average driver when any delay makes it obvious that he cannot hope to reach his destination without an hour or so of lamplight. As the shadows lengthen he keeps pressing the car on urgently and nervously, inspired by the fallacy that it is easier and pleasanter to drive by twilight than in the dark with acetylene to help him.

"As matter of fact the half hour or hour between lights is easily the worst time in the twenty-four hours for seeing. If the lamps are not lit there is insufficient light; if they are lit the fading daylight is just strong enough to spoil the clear contrast between the glare of acetylene and the object it throws into shadow.

"As a consequence this half hour or hour between lights is always an anxious time and may include two or three narrow squeaks, dangers avoided and mistakes corrected at the last possible instant. These have their effect on the driver's mentality. They string up any nerves in his constitution, and by the time thick darkness has fallen and his powerful lamps can help him to see as far as is possible he is already utterly demoralized.

"If he has to keep on driving for several hours his nerves will recover, as he finds driving easier in the deeper darkness of absolute night; but this is just the experience which the timorous night driver seldom enjoys, for he is generally home by an hour or so after lighting up and has had a prolonged experience of driving in the black.

"Any man with an objection to night driving should arrange to stop and dine, prepare his lamps, smoke; anything to waste a little time during this awkward half hour of between lights. He will find nothing to terrify him when he takes the road again as soon as darkness has really fallen.

"A second error common among less experienced night drivers is to hug the side of the road and use its illuminated heading of turf as a steering guide. This error has two bad effects. Sooner or later the car will slide up to some conveyance or other the color of which blends readily with the roadway, its tail lights, if any, will be those tiny glass globes set in the back of the fender or headlights, rendered invisible alike by position and intrinsic poverty until the car is almost upon them, when only a mighty swerve can avert a collision.

"If the car is held to the centre of the road, or even a trifle toward the outside, the vehicle will be visible much earlier, and even if it is overlooked until rather late quite a minute swerve will avail to clear it.

"This error also produces a second unpleasantness. Many owners have complained to me that they cannot hold their cars straight at night. By day they can keep the car's nose on a bee line, but by night they quaver and corkscrew and are forever giving little tugs and wrenches at the wheel. This sensation is the product of short focus steering. The eyes are strained on some point too near to the car. It may either be the fault of weak headlights, allowing too brief a range of vision, or of steering by the roadside road edge as illuminated by the side lamps.

"If a driver takes notice when driving by daylight he will find he steers by and toward a point well ahead of the car and therefore steers straight. He can only steer straight at night by adopting the same plan, and consequently he should employ head lamps of ample power and steer by their light, not along the road edges lit only by the side lamps.

"When it comes to night driving with fog, then truly has the automobilist reached the limit of helplessness, since it seems almost impossible to make his lamps of any value at all either to himself as road illuminants or to others as warning beacons of his approach. To see what might be done to improve matters in this direction I have for some time been experimenting with various devices and different colored lights. Some of these experiments have proved hopeless failures and need not be given here; others, however, have been more successful and are outlined below.

"I will first tell you of my experience with colors; the word penetration is hardly the right definition, but rather what light is able to penetrate through a moist atmosphere. It is a scientific fact that on a wet day the air is much lighter than on a dry one. In rifle shooting less elevation is required on the former than on the latter. For on a bright sunny day the bullets will travel much slower and lower than when rain or fog is in evidence; much the same is experienced in the production of short focus steering. A good illustration is to observe the colored lights in railway signals, the white and green ones are practically useless at a distance when they are compared with the red light, only because the rays are impeded by the glare in fog from the two former, but the latter is seen and enables one to see at a much greater distance than either.

"Referring to my experiments, a red glass was put into an ordinary lamp; the light given off was somewhat confusing, the road surface was thrown into relief only with difficulty distinguished. Then an orange lens was substituted with marked improvement; steering was far easier, the sides of the roadway, which was 20 feet wide, being quite clear and a considerably increased range of vision directly in the line of travel.

"It seemed that with some lights a bank of ethereal mists is thrown up in the form of glare close to the light, thus effectively obstructing the line of sight. Acting upon the photographic dark room principle, double glasses were tried, red and orange, whereupon an absence of showing up the fog was appreciably noticeable, but the distance that the light shone through was restricted to all sorts of livery cars, travelled in all sorts of roads in all sorts of weather and towed many a car home.

"This 1907 car was the first four cylinder Cadillac acquired by the (Antoni) dealer, who has in his present the demonstration service each succeeding year's model that was purchased as a demonstrator.

Norman E. Doane of Sacramento, who owns a Pullman car, was the winner in a competition for license number 44 in California. There were 200 or so folks after the tag.

PEERLESS TRUCKS.

Something About Them and How One Ran to Philadelphia and Back. Peerless trucks which were shown in Part II of the Madison Square Garden automobile exhibition have motors different from the touring car type made by the Peerless company. The engines are of four cylinders, 4 1/2 inch bore and 6 1/2 inch stroke, thus being one of the few low stroke motors in commercial vehicles.

This motor produces 24 horse-power at 225 revolutions a minute. The speed of the motor is controlled by a governor and makes them, it is contended, for longer life of wearing parts and economy of fuel. There are four speeds forward in the transmission, operating the truck from three to fifteen miles an hour.

A feature of these trucks, which are made with either three or four tons carrying capacity, is in the size of the wheels.

"Commer" trucks have been tried out in many places in the past several years, but houses and agencies being in existence in all parts of the United Kingdom, St. Petersburg, Copenhagen, Odessa, South Africa, Singapore, Canada and Australia. For the "Commer" is claimed superior economy in gasoline and lubricating oil consumption.

It is announced that a five ton "Commer" truck has been running in New York for ten months in continuous daily service without being laid up an hour for repairs.

"Commer" trucks of various sizes will be imported as rapidly as is needed to meet demands. An agency system covering the leading cities will be perfected by Wyckoff, Church & Partridge.

Survivors are at work on the grounds of the Olds Motor Works at Lansing, says W. J. Mead, general manager, to make an auto plant. The building is a three-story and basement structure, 100 feet long and 40 feet wide, and is to be an assembling area.

Material such as machined parts, assemblies and sub-assemblies will be delivered to this building from the main machine shops and the assembly plant from one end of the other, where they will emerge as a completed product.

The theory of the Western motorist who believed that he got better mileage by grinding off the letters of the manufacturer's name from his tires is not so with Diamond tires, says J. A. Braden of the Diamond Rubber Company.

This motorist's idea was that projections of stones or frozen mud in rough roads are likely to strike the letters and tear out chunks of rubber. For one thing, he does not realize, probably, that with the name on the tire, it is less likely to be cut off by any tire company in case of a claim.

The Knox Automobile Company will have a test next Wednesday of its new combination engine. The engine is a four-cylinder, 40-horse-power unit, which is a modification of the engine used in the Knox touring car.

At the recent Mardi Gras Speed Carnival in New Orleans, Bob Burman in his Buick won the first prize in his class. He was driving a Buick 1907 model, which he had modified for the occasion.

It is reported by the Chalmers Motor Company that business is better this season than it was in the same months last season. The company is working full force and over time to meet the shipping order schedule.

Such a condition, while naturally gratifying to a manufacturer, has a meaning also to those particular buyers who are satisfied only with well tried standard cars. It means there will be a shortage of such cars this year as there was last.

The greatest care is exercised in manufacturing the Alco cars, according to H. D. Gray, chief engineer of the automobile department. After first having been continued experiment in the laboratory developed the treatment best suited to each particular case of the metal.

When a shipment of steel is received by the American Locomotive Company it is held pending chemical analysis and is not put into stock until after having satisfactorily met the specifications. The bars are then stamped with the specification number throughout their entire length and this stamping process follows the same principle through the various stages of production, so it is possible at any and all times to positively identify the material used in each and every part.

In the four years that this car has been at work it has been driven by many drivers and has been the medium of the education of many people in driving. It has answered all sorts of livery calls, travelled in all sorts of roads in all sorts of weather and towed many a car home.

In a little shop at 216 St. James street, Philadelphia, which is still standing, Oliver Phillips was the first to construct a motor vehicle and in 1844 he constructed a 3-horse-power machine which he ran from his other shop at the corner of Third and Pine roads to the Schuylkill, a full mile and a half, says Charles Spitzer.

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The talk of the "yearly model" is very little heard among manufacturers now. They are beginning to build a series of cars of a certain type of body and chassis, with changes so slight that it has become simply a matter of refining original construction rather than introducing something entirely new. In other words, I believe that the manufacturing of automobiles has got to a point where it is no longer necessary to try to attract the buyer with something entirely new. What the buyer of to-day wants is a machine that will run and can be depended upon. He wants a machine that will look well and which will give him some pleasure. He is not interested in a name pure and simple.

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Any one watching a huge mass of crude rubber that has been thrown into one of the great "cracking" machines will become impressed with a sense that it is not inanimate. It is a living thing, there comes a hazy idea that the mass is not devoid of life, which superinduces a somewhat creepy feeling as the dark looking thing squirms and twists in the grip of the machine and squeals and emits little shrieks as if it were being tortured.

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George E. Daniels, general manager of the Peerless Motor Car Company of Pontiac, Mich., says: "My visit to the recent automobile show in New York, Philadelphia and Chicago has brought very forcibly to my mind one idea which I believe will be adopted by the manufacturers during the coming year, and that it is no longer a question of yearly models. The yearly model is a thing of the past, and has been done to the automobile manufacturer ever since its announcement.

The talk of the "yearly model" is very little heard among manufacturers now. They are beginning to build a series of cars of a certain type of body and chassis, with changes so slight that it has become simply a matter of refining original construction rather than introducing something entirely new. In other words, I believe that the manufacturing of automobiles has got to a point where it is no longer necessary to try to attract the buyer with something entirely new. What the buyer of to-day wants is a machine that will run and can be depended upon. He wants a machine that will look well and which will give him some pleasure. He is not interested in a name pure and simple.

Visitors to the plant of the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company at Akron, Ohio, they came interested enough to watch the process through which the crude rubber is put will be surprised at the amount of time in it both before and after spreading a month in the drying chambers.

Any one watching a huge mass of crude rubber that has been thrown into one of the great "cracking" machines will become impressed with a sense that it is not inanimate. It is a living thing, there comes a hazy idea that the mass is not devoid of life, which superinduces a somewhat creepy feeling as the dark looking thing squirms and twists in the grip of the machine and squeals and emits little shrieks as if it were being tortured.

After the crude mass has been "cracked" and washed it is sent up to the drying and curing, where it is allowed to rest for a month.

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