## THE AUTOMOBILE AS A PRACTICAL VEHICLE FOR PHYSICIANS.

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Automobiles have undergone a rapid revolution in the past five or six years. The crude experiments placed on the market in 1900, with their noisy engines and awkward-looking bodies, put together in a hasty and unscientific manner, resulting in a jolting ride when the car could be made to go, have been supplanted in the present year by cars that are very near the perfect state. When we consider the large amount of capital invested in this new industry, and the great number of scientific and mechanical minds that have been concentrated upon this subject, there is little reason to wonder at the rapid improvement of the motor car.

The automobile was a toy for the rich, when they were first introduced, and they needed a rich man to run one, not that the first cost was so great, but the "up-keep" was so large that it needed a fat pocketbook to keep one going. This has all been changed, and at the present time an automobile is within the reach of any man of moderate means, and where it supplants the horse-driven vehicle, a saving can be shown in maintenance and time.

The physicians were the first to use motor cars in their business, and the rapid way in which they are changing from the horse to the car, is proof that the change must be a good one. Runabouts, or motor cars seating two, are the prevailing type, and many manufacturers make a special

physicians' runabout. The gasoline car is the one that predominates, electric cars are the next choice, very few using the steam-driven carriage.

A comparison of the cost of a horse-driven vehicle and a motor car for a physician's use is not a very difficult proposition. A busy physician, who undertakes to drive daily in his professional rounds, will require an equipment about as follows:

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| Standard doctor's buggy | $300 00 |
| Cut-under carriage | 400 00 |
| Single harness, hand made | 50 00 |
| Double harness, hand made | 100 00 |
| Two horses, at $200 apiece | 400 00 |
| | $1,250 00 |

A coachman's uniform should be added to this sum, also the cost of veterinarian's services, shoeing, repairing, depreciation, and interest on the investment, but these can be omitted, as there are similar expenses, amounting to as much, in maintenance of automobiles.

The expense of maintaining a two-horse equipage would be about as follows:

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| Oats, hay, straw for two horses | $240 00 |
| Hire of man, at $20 per month | 240 00 |
| Stable rent per year | 100 00 |
| Shoeing 2 horses | 50 00 |
| Harness repair, painting carriage, etc. | 50 00 |
| Sundries, brushes, blankets | 20 00 |
| | $700 00 |

Assuming that it is possible to drive 20 miles per day with this equipment, or approximately 7,000 miles per year, at a cost of $700 for maintenance, the cost per mile would be 10 cents.

A good serviceable automobile, that would do double the work of this horse outfit, in the same time, would cost in the neighborhood of $1,200, which is about the same price.

The approximate cost for 7,000 miles of use of such a motor car can be estimated as follows:

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| Stable rent, one year | $100 00 |
| Gasoline | 60 00 |
| Lubricating oil | 10 00 |
| Batteries | 10 00 |
| Chain | 15 00 |
| Spark plugs | 5 00 |
| Tires | 100 00 |
| Man's services, at $20 per month | 240 00 |
| | $540 00 |

There may be worn or broken parts to replace, such as valves, springs, spark coils, etc.—no one can say just what the expense will be. It depends upon the man who drives and takes care of the car. It is possible for a car to go through a year, and be driven 7,000 miles, with very little expense in the repair line, especially if the physician is his own mechanic, or at least superintends the work.

The figures given show that an automobile costing $1,200 will replace an equipment of two horses and two vehicles of the same value, and that the cost of maintenance, everything considered, is in favor of the automobile, for the same distance traveled. As a time saver in getting around to see patients, and as a means of enjoyment, the motor car far outstrips the horse and carriage.