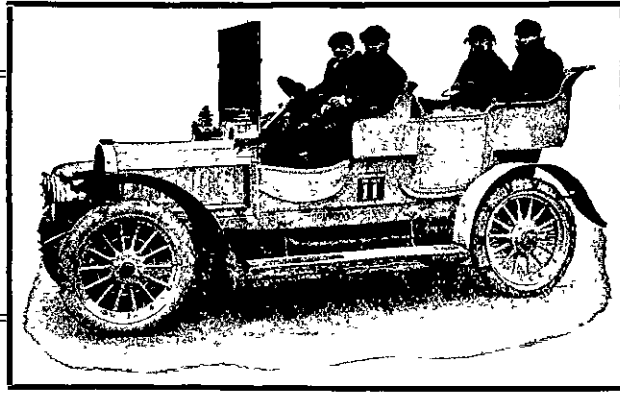


Motors



Motoring

Motors, Motorists and Motor Matters.

Now that taxicabs are coming into Australia, it is interesting to note what the effects on the pockets of the public are likely to be. There must be a saving because the automatically fixed fare in a taxicab removes every possibility of exorbitance; but how great will the saving be? In Melbourne one writer reckons that "putting all consideration of the added comfort and convenience out of the reckoning, taxicabs are at least twenty-five per cent. cheaper than ordinary hansoms." In Birmingham the tariff fixed for motorcabs to seat five persons is almost incredibly low, —6d. for the first half-mile, and 2d. for each succeeding sixth of a mile or part thereof, no hiring by time only: if kept waiting the charge to be 2d. for each 2½ minutes; no additional fare for hiring between midnight and 6 a.m., and no additional charge for reasonable luggage.

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We cannot look for any such cheapness as that in New Zealand; but if we paid on double that scale, there would be a vast reduction of the present excessive charges. It must be remembered that the drivers of taxicabs in England, despite the low fares, do very well. "We are disposed to think," says the *Commercial Motor*, "that the taxicab driver who uses a little judgment has got a far from unsatisfactory occupation."

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Here are some recent charges demanded by Wellington cabmen. Willis Street to Austin Street, afternoon, 4s., 5s.; 8 p.m., 6s. Post Office to Wellington Terrace, afternoon, 7s. 6d. Wharf to Hobson Street afternoon, 10s. Railway Station to Grand Hotel, from afternoon express, 4s., 5s., 6s. Grand Hotel to Opera House, night, 5s. Of course, the theory is that the public is protected against such extortion. If you think that the fixed tariff—the tariff as fixed by the City Council—really affords any protection, try the experiment of paying a Wellington cabman his legal fare.

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As to the improved convenience of the taxicab, it is easy to multiply instances. In all the cabs of the Lancashire Taxicab Company for instance, there is an electric lamp, a speaking-tube, mirrors, a foot-warmer, and the daily papers. The running is silky-smooth, and the vehicles are so snug as to be warm in any weather.

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The Paris Show of Commercial Vehicles has given great stimulus to the motor-industry. It includes the first international exhibition of airships and aeroplanes. It is remarked that there is a specially extensive showing of small delivery-vans and

motor-buses, although the antiquated buses of the Second Empire still rumble clumsily through Paris streets. Parisians are progressive, but by comparison with the attitude of the average French alderman, the Chinese are rampant revolutionaries. It is true that the City Council of Paris has put in a superb installation of motor fire-engines, but there is nothing but vague talk of motor-busses yet. There are hundreds of motor-waggons of all types in the show—perhaps the most remarkable of all, the single-cylinder Soller.

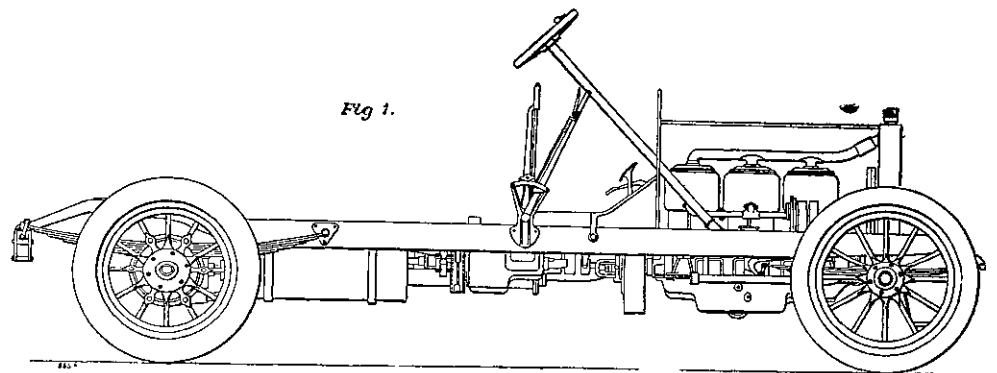
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Indeed there is every reason to agree that the horse is going. "No big business," says a London expert, "dreams of putting in horse-lorries now. They are slow, cumbersome, and extravagant." That is a serious indictment. There is more to be said. Horse-feed in the great centres rises constantly in price; while motor-power for vehicles becomes constantly cheaper. A

There is a reasonable suggestion in England that medical men motoring to urgent cases should display a red cross or other device on their auto and be permitted to go at high speed unmolested. The idea is a very good and humane one; but it is not likely to be adopted, because one of those red crosses would almost assuredly form a part of every motorist's outfit. They would be so useful in emergencies.

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At the Paris Salon great interest was shown in the new light petrol aeronautical engine, designed by the Pipe Company of Brussels. It comprises eight cylinders arranged in two sets of four in the form of a V. The bore and stroke are both 100mm., and at 1,500 revolutions per minute the engine is stated to give 70 h.p. The weight is 285 lbs., or about 4 lbs. per horse power. The engine is air-cooled. The aspirator is designed to draw in air at a greater rate



6-CYLINDER 20 H.P. SIDDELEY MOTOR CAR.

Constructed by the Wolsley Tool and Motor Company, Ltd., Addersley Park, Birmingham.

man with a motor can be out of the yard and miles away, while the man with the old-style vehicle is putting in his horses. Medical men are adopting the motor everywhere. Society women are everywhere preferring it to the old-style carriage. It combines comfort with an extraordinary possibility of speed—a possibility that is a constant astonishment to the perturbed police. Already in parts of the world, interest is as keen in motor-races as in horse-races. The noble horse has outlived his usefulness.

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During the days of the great snow in London recently, the horses were bested, but the motor-vehicles went cheerfully about their business. "The motor-bus," says the *Daily Telegraph*, "did not suffer to any great extent; indeed, yesterday saw the triumph of mechanical locomotion, though the progress of even these busses was naturally slow all through the city."

than is necessary at the normal engine speed, so that the cooling shall be efficient even when the engine is running slowly.

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As petrol comes into general use, it is exceedingly necessary that people should understand how very dangerous petroleum-spirit may be when it is handled. It is a safe rule not to use benzine for any domestic purpose at all. A light many feet away is a menace when benzine is used. It freely gives off an inflammable vapour, and in comparatively still atmospheres, such as that of a room, the heavy vapour will slowly travel distances of ten, twenty or thirty feet in a direction induced by a fall of the ground or gently moving air-currents. If it touches a light, it will immediately flash back and ignite the spirit from which it has evolved. Mr. Carlyle Smythe had his thumbs blown off when he was using a little benzine with a light many feet away. Many similar and many deadlier instances