

Medical Items.

THE MEDICAL MAN AND THE TROLLEY-CAR.—Very soon doctors will have to enter the army or navy in order to escape peril to life and limb. The thoughtless public is delighted with their new conveyance, but the doctor finds it only a deadly peril. It helps him but little if his business is extensive, leaves him to carry by hand his various impedimenta, gives him long walks where the trolley company, *mirable dictu*, has neglected to seize a street, and long waits where it fails to run frequently, and lets him out only at prominent street corners. He cannot make it wait in grandeur before the doors of his wealthy patients, nor will the motormen and conductors wear his livery. If he drives himself, it wears out his nerves and speedily makes him hysterical or melancholy, with its deadly wire or more deadly dread of collision hanging over the tracks he must cross and recross so often. His neck is sore and stiff from twisting his head to look out of the back window of his carriage, and his eyes take on a divergent squint, which no prism or graduated tenotomy can correct, from his efforts all day to see behind him with one eye while he looks ahead with the other.

At ordinary crossings he must look eight ways at once, and an ingenious scientist has calculated that at complicated crossings, like those in Philadelphia at Ridge Avenue, Spring Garden, and Twelfth streets, or at Twenty-second and Chestnut streets—and there are many such—he will need to make at least twenty-six single and separate observations before crossing, while if we add to this the additional acts of observation necessary in avoiding foot-passengers at the various crossings, and the carts and carriages occupying either side of each trolley track, with those preceding and following the car on each track, with special observations on the nature of the roadway as to holes, uncovered manholes, spots of ice and piles of snow in winter, as to whether the motormen, drivers, and foot-passengers are of imperfect sight or hearing, or imbecile, lame, or disabled from age, we have something like one hundred and two distinct acts of observation needed, and a rapid judgment and decision based upon them, as to whether to go on, back out, or stand still, and this, too, in a time so short that human limitations as to the rapidity of sensory impressions and consequent motor reaction forbid in many cases the required action in the limited time given.

Yet upon this decision and action the safety and life of the driver will depend, to say nothing of the safety of innocent foot-passengers and others less innocent.

And, still further, the scientist estimates that in the usual morning's work