

THE NATIONAL VEHICLE.

THE CYCLING GIRL

There is something captivating,  
And, upon my word, elating,  
That is quite exhilarating.  
In the merry cycling girl.  
She is chiquant,  
She is piquant,  
And she's kickuant  
When you see her in the whirl.  
And she rides with head erected—  
Not a single point neglected  
That will make her pose respected  
As a fascinating girl.  
She is dainty,  
Never painty,  
Nor is sainty  
When she rides right through the whirl.  
And she dresses for her walking,  
For her riding, for her talking,  
From her bonnet to her stocking,  
Does this entertaining girl.  
She is witty,  
And so pretty,  
Every bitty  
Like a ship with sails unfurled.  
—American Wheelman.

BIKE AND BLOOMERS

Mary had a little lamb,  
And both have long been dead;  
If Mary were alive today,  
She'd have a wheel instead.  
—Boston Globe.

Mary had a little lamb,  
It followed her each day,  
Till Mary put the bloomers on,  
And then it ran away.  
—Louisville Times.

"Mary had a little lamb"  
Will these fellows never quit?  
Their rhym'ng on the bloomer girl  
Is neither verse nor wit.

Did you ever moralize over the bicycle? If you never have just sit down sometime and think how many things the bicycle is like; absolutely irrelevant it is true, but how many other things there are that can be compared in one manner or another with this great though silent revolutionizer. It is revolutionizing man, woman, boy, girl, horse, wagon, buggy, carriage, railroads, stage routes, livery stables and many other phases of this work-a-day world. But as Dan Bryant used to remark "to return to my subject."

People seem to me to be buying bicycles very much for the same reason that they used to buy lottery tickets. It is not so far in the dim past that our imperfectly developed ethical sense saw nothing immoral in lotteries and even good people were not ashamed to gamble in these corrupting institutions. The fascination of the game lay, of course, in the fact that it turned one's life over to the keeping of chance, and chance might bring a miracle anytime. The excitement of it was most stimulating, and the lottery was an unfailing antidote for the commonplace.

Now we recognize the shameful element in this gambling—it may be because Uncle Sam has said we can't have our rag baby any more—but we still crave the excitement. Whenever restrictive legislation has suppressed the use of opium, quinine or some other drug has filled its place. I sometimes wonder if bicycling has not so taken the place of the forgotten lottery ticket. The bicycle can be called its successor in many ways, and brings in, far more harmless fashion, the element of chance to lend excitement to daily life.

The irresistible feature of the bicycle is that when you take to it you are in a delicious uncertainty as to what it may do for you. It will make a new woman—[without the capitals, if you please] of you, you are told, and straightway before every woman rises the ideal of the woman she wishes to be. Tall and straight, strong and fair, graceful and high-spirited is this ideal and nearly every woman who mounts a wheel expects it to carry her whirling away from headaches and sallowness; though just what type of beauty she is to find at the other end she is willing to leave to chance, and the best of it all is that where she is physically constituted to do so, she in some measure finds them all.

A man mounting the silent steed expects to win strength. He is to pay so

many hours a day for the ticket and as a reward he may expect to develop into a giant of strength and endurance; impervious to fatigue, with a clear head, a contented mind, some remindful bruises occasionally and some new experience. Of course the clothes lend color to these bright illusions—if they prove illusions—for both man and woman certainly do look more athletic in the stockings and knickerbockers of the cycling suit than in the conventional everyday dress and there is a satisfaction in that even though the transformation goes no further. But it does, and as a rule he realizes his expectations.

With the physical regeneration comes a making anew morally and mentally under the beneficent influence of this magical aid to reform. The lazy man finds himself freed from the bondage of the morning nap through the superior enticements of the dewy morning as it wakes the birds and the blossoms out in the quiet country by-ways. The bit of a holiday with which he begins the day makes business run more smoothly and the noise and heat of the town does not seem so unendurable with the memory of that morning spin comforting one's soul.

Irritable people are reformed into respectable members of the community through the healing influence of quiet rides on quiet highways after the day's work has exhausted their entire stock of civility and good nature.

Those evening and morning rides, by the way, develop all sorts of ambitions in the cyclist. He cherishes a hope that this close communion with nature may even develop him into a poet; and that sitting at the feet of Parnassus, he too may sing of those beauties of nature in which he is permitted to live. If he is morbid he expects to become christianized—and in many senses his expectations are realized through the good fellowship which is a salient feature of the wheel. Careless people who neglect their friends are ambitious to again become courteous in the matter of visits—and they do—since it now takes less than no time to go from one end of the town to the other.

The bicycle is a revolutionizer. It has brought a new stimulus into the every day life, into the highways and byways of this work-a-day world. Has injected new interest into thousands of hum-drum lives. Proved a safety valve for much superfluous energy, since it beguiles the energetic into reactive resting and offers a sane and quiet outlet for animal spirits, that attribute of youth so terrifying to respectable elderly people. Has proven the priceless boon of health to many an invalid woman, to whom came invalidism and a consequent thousand other ills from the mere ignorance of rational exercise.

And after all, it's quiet is the wheel's greatest charm. The fact that in this invention the problem of noise has been overcome seems to stamp it as a very high product of scientific knowledge. We realize today what a terrible enemy of humanity noise is and we know that as man grows wiser he will eliminate this disturbing factor from his daily life for it is a wholly unprofitable expenditure of force, this wear and tear which we undergo from the useless din that envelops nearly every industry.

Any instrument which makes a noise is yet in an imperfect state. The clatter of the type writer must be silenced before we can recognize that now almost indispensable and useful machine as perfect. Listening to the noise of the sewing machine has sent many a poor, struggling woman to the insane asylum and adds in no small degree to the work of running it. Everywhere noise implies imperfection while that which moves quietly is at least properly organized. The mob moves at random with hideous hoots and yells. The battalion of soldiery with quiet and precision.

The bicycle is doubtless only at the beginning of its evolution toward perfection, but already as it rolls quietly along the streets of the town, the roads of the country, it makes the noisy wagons seem but a survival from some more primitive mechanical age.

SOME BOOKS AND MUSIC

Luther H. Porter's "Cycling for Health and Pleasure" is on my table. Mr Porter has written in this, a very

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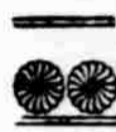
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interesting and instructive book and one that every rider of the wheel ought to read, and those who do not ride will find it a very entertaining work. It is not a racing man's book and he will probably find very little in it of interest to him. Every subject connected with cycling is comprehensively handled and a complete glossary of the bicycle is found at the end of the work. It is nicely illustrated, bound in cloth and has a chapter on costumes that is interesting to all. It is published by Dodd Mead & Co. of New York.

From the same house comes "Hygiene and Physical Culture for Women" by Anna M. Galbraith, M. D. When women recognize and are guided by the principles laid down in this work the world will no longer point to the women of Greece as the perfect specimens of form and grace. They will be seen all around us. I wish the book could be in every girl's and woman's hands in the land. It would make them stronger. Bound in cloth and illustrated fully, it is a valuable educator. The author has exhausted her subject. It is attractively written and every mother ought to place it in the hands of her girls.

From the Fleming H. Revel Co., of Chicago and New York I have Frances Willard's "A Wheel Within a Wheel" or how I learned to ride the bicycle, with some reflections by the way." Miss Willard always writes entertainingly and while she does not tell anything about the bicycle that others have not written, her moralizings and reflections are instructive and make good reading and it is a good book to while away an hour with. It is nicely bound in cloth and in these days of cycle publications should be among your books.

"My Fan with bonnie blue eyes  
She's the girl I love and adore,  
Come soon the once happy day  
When united to part never more:  
And through life I shall praise  
The Lanes and the Union Tan,  
For was it not on the wheel  
I wooed and won little Fan?"

In the above you have the chorus of "Love on a Union Tandem" which came to my table from E. B. Dye & Co., of Louisville, Ky., words by Edward O. Risley, music by Jno. H. Biller. It is not a masterpiece of vocal music but has a tuneful jingle and as a bit of cycle music will be appreciated by wheelmen and wheelwomen who like music. The "Keating Wheel March" from the same house is of a higher order and is really a tuneful march with a "swing" to it that catches the ear. Its composer is Ray Woodman.

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In *Wheel Talk*, a jolly bright, entertaining little weekly publication sent out by Messrs. Morgan & Wright, the bicycle tire manufacturers of Chicago, which came to my desk this week for the first time, I find the following:

"Base Ball, the national game, has to take second place now in the daily papers. Cycling easily takes first place in public interest."

"Thank you, good gentlemen! I have been scouring my brain for some time for an appropriate head for the bicycle department of THE COURIER and with that paragraph came the inspiration. "The National Vehicle" the wheel has certainly become, and under such head THE COURIER will hereafter publish all items relating to the wheel.