

CYCLING.

LEARNING TO RIDE.

PROBABLY, if every woman in the beginning had realized the difficulties of learning to ride, she never would have essayed her first lesson. But the feat looks so easy, that probably there was not one woman in ten who did not believe that she could gracefully mount and forthwith ride away in triumph. The schools hold traditions of women who have actually done this thing, but they are the glorious exceptions that prove the rule of preliminary falls; and they prove something else as well. These favoured ones are generally women who have been noted for excellence in some other sport. They are good skaters, who have been in the habit of balancing themselves on the steel blades over the glaring ice; or fine shots, whose trained eyes and steady arms have shown the bullet the path to the bull's eye; or billiardists whose balls knew their way through the mysteries of 'draws,' 'drives,' and 'follows.'

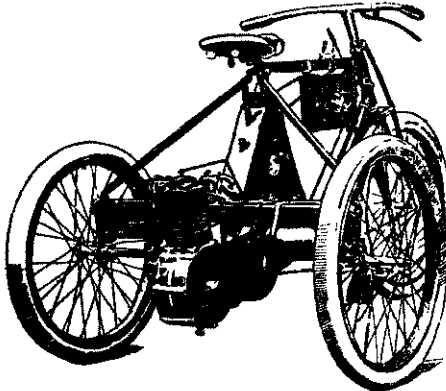
Steady nerves have everything to do with bicycling, and the chief value of the sport is its education of the nerves, and through them of the character. Most of the women who took up the wheel had already learned the theories of Delsarte. They knew that a dignified carriage was the result of a well organized and a well-controlled temperament; that an acquired dignity would react upon the mind, and cultivate the qualities that go to make the attitude real. They speedily discovered that no enemy had ever found out their weaknesses so readily as the bicycle. The woman who would ride must be patient, watchful, self-reliant. The least lapse in purpose, the thousandth part of a second's indulgence in indecision, was recorded, usually by a bruise on some portion of her anatomy which had come in contact with the floor.

Physicians say that science has discovered no new remedy for incipient brain disease equal to the bicycle. It gives sufficient enjoyment to make it fascinating to the patient, and it provides for a constant concentration of mind. The play it gives the muscles is extraordinary. The first long spin brings the rider home wiu. the realization that every fibre of the body has been brought into active use. There is no comparison between horseback riding and bicycling in this respect. While the horse is a companion to the true horsewoman which she is loath to give up, her wheel becomes something much better. It is soon identified with its owner as a horse never can be.

A handy little novelty was shown at the Paris Salon du Cycle. It is an ingenious folding parcel carrier attached to the upright above the front wheel, and when not required it folds up, thereby doing away with the ugly basket at present in use. It is not unsightly, and has the advantage that it cannot be forgotten when going out shopping, etc.

The expert rider forgets how she rides as she forgets how she breathes. She threads her way through crowded streets as readily as she walks them, and with as little effort and annoyance.

At the other end of the Dark Continent, British settlers have introduced the wheel along with the tennis racket and the cricket bat. The bicycle is the one Uitlander innovation that has found favour with President Krüger of the Transvaal, whose doctor recommends it as the most beneficial form of exercise. All over the world, the story is the same, from Rio de Janeiro, where there is a fine racing track, to Cabul, where the Amerer has recently ordered a consignment of wheels from England for the benefit of the ladies of his harem.



A PETROLEUM AUTO-TRICYCLE NOW IN USE IN PARIS.

Automatic machines figure largely in the manufacture of bicycles. These alone require the expenditure of a good many thousands of pounds for a factory able to turn out a few thousand wheels. Some of the makers whose output is perhaps fifty or sixty thousand wheels a year, have as many as a hundred and fifty of them. The working of the automatic machine is in itself a marvelous revelation. Imagine a bar of steel, an inch or two in thickness, and ten or twelve feet in length, being placed in the machine, which is then set in operation, and, without further aid from the man in charge—who watches a dozen machines at one time—turns out a perfect hub, or pin, or nut, or bolt, as the case may be, without the difference of a thousandth part of an inch between any two of them. When they are finished, these minute parts of the wheel are as carefully and delicately constructed as the works of a watch. At every operation to which they are subjected, they pass a rigid inspection; and the slightest deviation from the gauge causes them to be rejected.

The wooden rim first appeared on a wheel in 1893, and thorough tests proved its stanchness and springiness. Although it has usurped the place of the steel rim in America, the latter being practically obsolete, it is regarded with disfavour in England.

It was a splendid evening, with scarcely a breath of wind, when Mr James Caughley recently attempted to lower Reynold's unpaced mile record of 2min. 18sec. at the Recreation Ground, Napier. The first quarter was ridden in 35sec., the half-mile in 1min 7 2-5th sec., and the mile in 2min 18 4-5th sec. Although he has not lowered Reynold's record for New Zealand, he beat the local record of 2min. 20 3-5th sec., recently put up by Petersen, and thus leads in the competition for Mr Reynold's medal among members of the Wanderers' Bicycle Club.

The Christchurch Cycling Club held a sports meeting at the Lancaster Park ground on Good Friday afternoon, and despite the cold and threatening weather, it is estimated that over 3,000 spectators were present. The principal race, the Easter Handicap, five miles, was won by J. Chalmers (400yds), of Oamaru, G. Sutherland, Christchurch (500yds), being second, and A. Phipps, Christchurch (280yds), third. Time 14mins 10 2-5th secs. Another rider from Oamaru in R. J. Ritchie won the half-mile and Good Friday Handicap, three miles (second class). The racing, as a whole, was fairly good, some of the finishes were close, and some of the fields large. The officials, however, got the events off punctually, so that no serious waits occurred. A novelty was introduced in the shape of 'buckjumping' races. The wheels of the machines were elliptical in form, and, when propelled imparted a 'bucking' or 'bumping' movement to the bicycles. The difficulties of the riders caused much laughter. A. R. Barker, who paced by a triplet and a tandem, essayed to reduce his own mile record of 2 min 2secs, but the atmospheric conditions were against him, and he did not reach it by 21secs.

Efforts are being made by our cash cyclists to get Lessa, the crack French rider, to visit this colony.

A team of the Wanderers' Bicycle Club, consisting of Messrs W. R. Jourdain, T. Taylor, T. Oliver, A. C. Norris, A. J. Pocock, James Caughley, and Messrs W. J. Strickland, J. Lindsay, and A. F. Bowman, of the Athletic Club, left for Wanganui by the express train on Friday in order to be present at the cycling sports there. However, they could get no further than Paki Paki, and from there had to return to Hastings, where they spent the night at one of the hotels. Having obtained a room with a piano, they got up an impromptu smoke concert, and the songs and music contributed by the Club made the long evening pass pleasantly away.

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THE BICYCLE PATH, PROSPECT PARK, NEW YORK.