

but, good or bad, the work will be one of the curiosities of the Champs Elysees Salon, where for many years past the celebrated actress had not been an exhibitor.

Duse, who is now playing in Italy, is said to have reaped a golden harvest in Russia, where the receipts were never less than 5,000 rubles a performance—equivalent to about £700.

'The one great secret of successful conjuring is very simple,' says a famous wizard. 'It consists merely of doing things when people are not looking at you. You'll probably call that absurd, but it is really the case. All one has to do is to make the audience look in one direction while the deception is being worked in another, and that is easy enough. I needn't even speak a word. I have merely to look fixedly at a certain thing. The eyes of the spectators invariably follow mine, and during the ten or fifteen seconds that they are thus occupied, I can do what I want to make the trick a success.'

At Berlin, the popular theatre, *Libre*, founded in 1892, with a uniform price of admission of about 6d, has prospered in a most extraordinary manner. Absolutely independent, supported entirely by the popular classes, this house has grown in public estimation in proportion as several others have declined.

The question of theatre hats agitated the public mind as long ago as the reign of Louis XV. An historian of that period, *Metra*, relates that on the 18th of January, 1777, at the opera a gentleman, finding himself placed behind a lady wearing a hat with excessively high plumes proposed to her that she should either take off her hat or change places with him. The lady rejected both propositions, and the gentleman, becoming impatient at seeing nothing, cut the leathers off with a pair of scissors.

Blondin, whose recent death has brought his name back to the Italian memory did not create the same impression here as in other places (writes the Rome correspondent of the *Dramatic Mirror*). Years before he traversed Italian rivers on the tight rope a woman had done still more than that. In Florence she descended into the public square from the highest steeple in the place, and in Rome she performed tricks on a rope stretched from one end of Piazza Mayona to the other, when the piazza was purposely flooded, and all the aristocracy of Rome drove round and round it, with the water reaching to the horses' shoulders. This woman, whose name was Sagni, danced on the tight rope at 70 years of age. Her feats are mentioned in many celebrated works. Janin mentions her and also Dickens. Blondin was unfortunate in Florence. He fell from his cord. He was inconsolable at this coming, as it did, after Niagara.

THE KINETOGRAPH IN WAR.

UNDER the above heading a writer in a photographic monthly asks the question why the kinetoscope should be 'confined to the reproduction of ordinary scenes for amusement merely,' and 'that kinetograms of genuine scientific interest and value will also be taken, specially of events which are of rare occurrence.' He is pleased to find that the 'recent artificial railway collision in Texas was kinetographed,' and hopes that 'in future cases of any extraordinary phenomenon which can by any means be anticipated, such as the explosion of a mine, the eruption of a volcano, and, above all, the encounter of two armies in battle, some competent kinetographer will be in attendance.' He instances the fact that 'not a single instantaneous photograph of an actual battle-scene in the late Chino-Japanese war was published in any of the illustrated papers.' Where is the photographer who would carry his paraphernalia to the proximity of a mine explosion, or lay his life at the mercy of a volcano as it belches forth its sulphurous fires, or, more deadly still, the myriads of death messengers that fly on the field of battle? 'Anybody,' the writer says, 'can imagine what a battle is like, as well as an artist.' The writer further suggests that 'kinetographers take more pains to have their kinetographs far enough away from the scene of the action to avoid the effect being marred by figures bobbing up half a dozen times while crossing the field of view close to the instrument. The operator should stand at least a few yards from the nearest moving object.' Good advice; but one would think that the operator should be better a mile away, so that his operations might not be marred by any strange bullets, or be encompassed by a shower of shot and shell, as he might then feel the moving objects marred his pictures, and spoiling his view, optically or otherwise. The suggestion of the writer might have been easily realised in the days of Bruce and Wallace, when the sword, battleaxe, and spear were the principal weapons of offence and defence, but when modern invention has made hand-to-hand conflict almost impossible, it is scarcely likely that the snap-shottists will be found on the field of war armed with a kinetoscope.

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CYCLING.

THE following definition of an ideal touring cycle will doubtless be useful. It should not weigh less than 32lb., nor more than 38lb., and should have mud-guards and an oil-containing gear case. The gear should not be more than 60in., and the throw of the crank 6 1/2 in. The handle bars should be flat, or slightly raised, and the handles brought well back. The brake should be rubber shod to prevent injury to the tyre. For a heavy rider a zin. roadster pneumatic tyre is recommended, but for a rider of average weight a 1 1/4 in. would be sufficiently large. The saddle should be of fair size and wide at the back. A very small saddle is most uncomfortable after riding any distance.

Cycling has certainly 'caught on' in New Zealand, and become a recognised, we had almost said the recognised, mode of propulsion amongst all classes of society, all ages, and both sexes. In the pursuit young New Zealand, as usual, is well to the fore. We present our readers in this issue with a portrait of, we believe, the youngest cyclist not only in this colony, but so far as we are aware of, in the world. Master Fred Howard was



CARNELL, PHOTO.  
 MASTER FRED HOWARD.

born on October 30th, 1893, and commenced to pedal at the age of two and a-half years, i.e., May, 1896, on a machine with pneumatic tyres and all other modern improvements, built specially for him by S. R. Stedman, of Dunedin. The machine weighs 15lb, 15in wheel geared to 30in. Master Howard rides well and cleverly, was recently elected a member of the Wanderers' Bicycle Club (Napier), of which his father is a vice-president.

England seems to be some way behind many Continental countries in the matter of finger posts and milestones. Probably France has the best system, and like most European countries, has adopted the metrical measurement. Not only are the distances, even on the bye road, accurately detailed, but every turn, every bifurcation, and every junction is carefully finger-posted. To lose one's self on a French road is almost a matter of impossibility. In Germany a similar system is adopted, and even in Russia the milestones and finger posts are much better and comparatively more numerous than in England. When the railway era began, English roads commenced to be less used, but with the advent of the cycle, and the possibility of motor vehicles, the high-

ways of the country will once more regain their usefulness, so that more attention should now be paid to the betterment of our roads, and the improvement of our milestone and finger post system. It would be a great step in advance if the metrical system of measurement could be adopted.

At a meeting at Christchurch, it was stated that there were between 4,000 and 6,000 bicycles in and around Christchurch, and as the estimated cost of each of these was at least £16 or £17, there was between £70,000 and £100,000 invested in them.

Mr Ernest Leitch, representative of the Australian Motor Car and Cycle Company, is travelling through New Zealand, and arrives in Napier shortly. He will be well remembered by those interested in cycling as an English racing man, who has beaten Zimmerman, the famous American champion, no less than twice. Mr Leitch holds some Scotch records, and was a member of the Polytechnic Club, London.

The recent success of W. J. Peall in his sensational billiard match with Roberts reminds one that this wonderful player has for many years been an ardent devotee of the cycle, his first ride having been a boneshaker late in the sixties. An interesting interview with him on the subject of his cycling career appears in the current issue of *The Cycle*. When asked whether cycling had any injurious effect upon his playing powers, he related the following incident—'Some five or six years since I was playing a big match at the Aquarium. I rode then a solid tyred machine, and you, of course, know what smooth riding that meant. Well, I went for a longer spin than usual one morning, did thirty miles in all, and had to ride quickly to get to the Aquarium in time to play. I arrived with not even a moment to spare to change my knickers, and played in them, making a break of over 1,300, so that cycling would seem rather to improve than to impair the nervous system. Of course, I am talking of cycling in moderation—not scorching or racing. The continual strain of fast riding may have some effect, but as I never ride at more than ten miles an hour I cannot say.'

A Home writer says: 'One can hardly imagine a more suitable recreation for hospital nurses than cycling. After the close atmosphere of the hospital ward, a spin through the country on a cycle must act as a wonderful tonic. The nurses of Guy's have quite a large club, and I hear now that at St. Thomas' Hospital there is just as much enthusiasm for the pastime as at Guy's. Of course, when out cycling, the nurses do not wear their hospital garb, but a special uniform which is not so conspicuous.'

SOME EFFECTS OF THE CYCLE BOOM.

'That staid and respectable journal, the *Spectator*, some little time ago said that "the moment bicycles cost £5, will last for ten years, and are independent of repairs, bicycles will become for all the healthy the universal means of locomotion." Well, we haven't quite arrived at that point, but we seem to be very near it.

'Everybody who can afford it—and, for that matter, a great many who can't—is going in for a "wheel," with the result that the immense expenditure of money on cycles has naturally curtailed the spending power of the public in other directions, and tradespeople of all sorts are beginning to cry out that their businesses are being ruined by the cycle boom.

'A writer in one of the American monthlies some time ago made an inquiry into the effects of the cycle boom on trade generally, and the result of his investigation certainly makes very curious reading.

'The jeweller and watchmaker seem to have been hit hardest of all. When grandpapa wishes to give his little grandson a Christmas or New Year present, he



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