

**SKIRTS PROHIBITED.**

**RATIONAL DRESS PILGRIMAGE FROM LONDON.**

(From the "London Daily Mail.")

To-day those who want to see how the rational costume appears at its best on the huly bicyclist should look out for the departure from London of the delegates to the conference at Oxford of 'The Supporters of the Rational Costume.'

The ladies should create a dazzling effect, for according to a notice which has been issued by the convener of the gathering, Mr J. D. Ainsworth, three prizes will be given to the three ladies wearing the most approved costumes. Who will be the venturesome Paris who will undertake to award the apples to the rational beauties is not yet known.

Mr Ainsworth has convened the gathering in the names of a number of clubs, including the 'Ladies Cyclists,' the 'Ladies' Rational Dress,' the 'Ladies' South West,' the 'Mowbray House,' the 'Vegetarian,' the 'Western Rational Dress,' and the 'Yoroshi.' The Viscountess Haberton has consented to act as president for the occasion, and, among others, the following ladies and gentlemen have been invited to attend:—Lady Colin Campbell, Lady Randolph Churchill, Mrs Sarah Grand, Lady Richardson, Lady Henry Somerset, Miss Eva Maclaren, Miss J. Harrison, The Countess

of Warwick, Lord Coleridge, Colonel Saville, Mr W. T. Stead.

It is compulsory upon all ladies attending this congress to wear rational dress. This is the only condition which is made, and it will be enforced rigidly. 'Skirts will not be tolerated under any circumstances,' is the declaration in the marching orders; and in view of this emphatic pronouncement it is painful to imagine what might happen to any skirts which might dare to profane the occasion by appearing on the scene.

In order that there may be no sort of mistake about the matter, Mr Ainsworth has written to say that 'skirts will be entirely forbidden under any provocation, and the notion that the rider must carry a skirt to be put on the moment the bicycle is left will receive no toleration. Of course, it is understood that all the gentlemen riders who will attend are ardent supporters and advocates of the sensible costume. If we all do our best we shall have a gathering worthy of the occasion, and give the lie to those weak-minded and prejudiced people who are fond of saying that rationalists are dying out.'

The Englishwoman has hitherto steadily refused to bifurcate herself when she rides a bicycle, holding, it may be suspected, that a skirt divided against itself cannot stand scrutiny. Will this gathering, with its prizes for the three most approved costumes, give the rational cause a new impetus? Oxford has been chosen "mainly

because of its pleasant situation on the river between London and Cheltenham, the two centres of the Forward Movements in women's dress in regard to cycling,' and not because Oxford is the 'home of lost causes.'

**A CLEVER CABBY.**

The ways of the cabby are past comprehension, and the driver of the hansom in London is no different from his brother of the jinrikisha of Japan.

One of the latest and most amusing tales concerning the noble band of drivers comes from a little fishing village in the north of Scotland. The chapel of this queer and sparsely populated town depended entirely for its supply on the occasional help of the clergy in neighbouring towns. It so happened that upon a certain very rainy Sunday a new clergyman from the town of S—volunteered to conduct services in the little chapel, and in order to get there he engaged a vehicle which the Englishman knows as a 'fly,' in which through the pouring rain he was driven across the country to the chapel. Upon his arrival he found no one at hand, not even a sexton to toll the bell to summon the natives, so he took it upon himself to pull the rope, leaving the cabby meanwhile outside in the wet. For a long time nobody arrived, but finally one solitary in-

dividual did appear, and sat down in a pew nearest the door.

The clergyman then donned his surplice and began the service. When this was ended he observed that inasmuch as there was but one member of the congregation he thought it would be well to dispense with the sermon.

'Oh no, sir. Please go on with the sermon.'

When half-way through he expressed the fear that perhaps he was tiring his listener, and was much gratified to learn from his own lips that such was not the case.

'I should be glad to listen to you for hours, sir,' he said, and so the sermon ran on to an hour in length, and finally the service was concluded.

The preacher then expressed a desire to shake hands with so flattering an auditor. And then the trick came out—a trick which the clergyman's near-sightedness had prevented him from seeing at once.

His listener was none other than the driver of the fly, who was all the time charging him at so much an hour for the use of his vehicle!

The minister did not even have the consolation of getting even by ordering a collection.

'Where was Magna Charta signed?' asked a teacher in a South London Board School. 'Please, sir, at the bottom.'

**THE CLOSE OF THE AUCKLAND HUNTING SEASON.**



GETTING READY FOR THE DRAG.



DISCUSSING THE RACE.



Photos. by Slack, Auckland.

AFTERNOON TEA AT MR GORRIE'S, EPSOM.