

FATE AND THE BICYCLE.

HARRY WICKHAM IN THE HOME MAGAZINE.

Along a tow path which the rakes and shovels of enthusiasts had converted into a bicycle track, two young men rode with the machine-like precision of experts. If the spirit of the legend be not dead, it will one day invent a nineteenth century centaur, half man and half wheel.

Lawrence Bieri and Howard Lynde moved side by side in the manner of bosom friends—or bitter enemies. When the passion of the legend is certain intensity, it habitually assumes the mask of its opposite. It is only the petty spite that dares to go abroad undisciplined.

Each wheelman had a strong motive that evening, for hurrying to Northampton and for reaching the residence of the other. Their destination was an L. A. W. fête at the home of the lady of their common hope.

The rivals were singularly alike in many respects. It could be said of both that they were tall, of which stood higher in Mable Stevens' estimation; moreover, both carried their cyclometers at the left of the hub. This apparently insignificant circumstance had a bearing upon events which warranted its insertion here.

Bieri, for the first few miles, was at the left of his companion. In such a position, a collision would have threatened his lantern. By dropping a dozen rods behind, the hazard was transferred to the cyclometers, but circumstances may render them doubly precious.

The movement was not only imprudential, but well-timed, for no sooner had it been made than an accident occurred. A very slight deviation in the straight line will cause two vehicles which are driven abreast, to collide. An imperceptible turn of a handle bar and there was a sound of breaking.

"Nobody hurt," laughed Lynde, as they recovered their balance without falling. "But your cyclometer is smashed."

"Good afternoon, Miss Stevens," came stiffly from the wheel.

"The effect of an unexpected slight has often been likened to a blow, perhaps because it brings the blood to the face. Her return was an icicle.

"I hope Mr. Lynde will pardon my familiarity."

"Unless Mr. Bieri objects, there is no harm done."

"The girl stared in blank amazement. 'I don't know what you mean,' she stammered.

"You seem to have forgotten last night, and sundry previous affairs which made it a surprise to me."

"I only remember that you stayed away from my bicycle party."

"Perhaps if you knew why I didn't come, you would not feel so happy."

"You are, evidently, inclined to add very little to my happiness at present. Tears of vexation stood on the brink of her eyes as she spoke and rode forward.

He watched her without deigning to increase his snail's pace. The growing interval of material separation became emblematic of the severance of the souls.

The strolling person cannot have failed to notice that events progress in spite of incidents. If a grindstone is to burst, there is no use in pronouncing it unsafe and ordering it stopped. So very sure that the catastrophe will occur before the stone can be turned off.

There was once a patriot who celebrated Independence day by exploding a hundred cartridges in a heavy iron box. When the last fuse had been lighted, he took the unusual precaution of stepping behind a tree, several yards distant. In vain! The box, after resisting ninety-nine concussion, burst into a score of pieces; one of which, striking the tree in a tangent and protruding in a curve, killed him as if by miracle.

Thus, if it is written that a man and a woman shall come together at a certain time and place, it is futile to contrive barriers.

Mable had not gone far when she thought of the letter. In looking to see if it was still safe in her belt, she necessarily took her eyes from the road.

Immediately there was a sharp report, not unlike that which accompanies the popping of air-brakes. The soft rubber tire had received a wound which let out the pneumatic cushion and a writ of habeas corpus let out the prisoner. This puncture was the work of certain bits of glass, which the malice of Bieri had broken from a bicycle lamp. The very thing that should have prevented a meeting between his sweetheart and his foe was about to bring them together. Malignity is a boomerang.

Those who journey without a meaning, are sometimes compelled to halt until the appearance of another and more provident wheelman.

The young lady sat for a long time at the wayside, ruminating upon the strange conduct of the delinquent individual and endeavoring to account for it. She remembered with chagrin, that Lynde had been continually in her thoughts during the party. Embittered by his absence, it had passed like an unheeded dream. As to the part in which Bieri had figured, that was nearly forgotten. It never entered her head that he considered himself her accepted lover. True, he had adopted a somewhat sentimental strain when chance led him to her, and but for the disturbed equilibrium of a flower pot, might have said something foolish. There was nothing in the memory, however, to mitigate the surprise of the following letter, which she now recalled.

"My Darling!—I could hardly believe in my good fortune, were not every particular of our last meeting photographed upon my heart. How clumsy of me

to upset that plant, but fortunately, you have already listened to words impossible to misunderstand. You have long known that I loved you. Dare I put the only obvious construction upon your complacency? I will be in Northampton, tomorrow, or rather, today. It is already morning, for I had to stop and get that fellow Lynde out of jail, where he landed himself by riding without a lantern.

Yours as ever,
"Lawrence."

This epistle had the effect of Gordon's curls, save that it enlightened as well as petrified.

A shadow flitted by, stopped and returned. Lynde was about to pass, when he saw the deflated tire. Without a word he produced a roll of adhesive tape, but before he could apply it, was interrupted by a question.

"Why did you ride without a lantern last night?"

"I didn't. You see, I carry one yet."

The other glanced at the broken illuminator and then at the mischievous gleam of class in the path. After a pause he asked:

"How came you to break it, then?"

"I cannot tell."

"But you can and must. I have heard a story which is evidently false, and will know the truth."

"Well, you may have noticed it, also. 'I had no lantern last night.'"

"But Mr. Bieri told me—"

"Mr. Bieri was mistaken."

An hour later, Mabel's correspondent bowed along the path toward Northampton. The distance he saw two lovers in an attitude of action.

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BOOKS AND MAGAZINES.

Hall Caine's latest and, according to some, his greatest novel, "The Christian," has been issued by the Appleton and Co. in the strenuous style for which this writer is noted and it has a large sale. It is a story of a man whose nature aspires on its spiritual side to higher levels than those of the flesh. In Hall Caine's hand such a theme is worked out with a vividness and power not paralleled by any other modern writer, and the result is a book that as soon as its large merits filter through to the public consciousness will be much read and much more so.

We reserve the right to recur to this work again, under more favorable opportunities. It is a book that every reader should have in his library. It is a book of the year, which all must read who would keep abreast of the times.

When reverses in a business career sent Chauncey C. Hotchkiss into letters for a livelihood, fate did a good turn for those who read what he has written. He has written "In Defense of the King" which is the "practice hand" of a Colonial Free-Lancee, now published by the Appleton, avoids its predecessor's prolixity and the gamut of heroism, adventure and hair-breadth escapes in a manner that even Cooper would have envied. It is a tale of the Revolution, with a historic figure in Sir Henry Clinton, whom it depicts rather conspicuously; and, as in the case of the "Practice Hand," the plot of the action takes place aboard ship, giving opportunity for some graphic marine descriptions. The great charm of "A Colonial Free-Lancee" is its slang, slang and dash; you never wink an eye and the end is reached—an end, too, happy enough to suit the most fastidious.

Another of F. Schuyler Mathews' interesting books on natural history is issued by the Appleton, under the title, "Familiar Features of the Roadside," a title which affords a good idea of the book's contents. Professor Mathews in this work undertakes to point out some of the beauties and wonders of Mother Nature which most of us wholly overlook in the hurrying of our daily lives. He points out the beauties and wonders of Mother Nature which most of us wholly overlook in the hurrying of our daily lives. He points out the beauties and wonders of Mother Nature which most of us wholly overlook in the hurrying of our daily lives.

Allusion has been made editorially to one of the chief papers in the August Forum—Senator Hoar's comparison of the currency question with the question of the future of the Republic. Among other features worthy of note may be mentioned a paper by Dr. Lyman Abbott on "The Growth of Religious Tolerance in the United States," and a recent White giving reasons against Hawaiian annexation; one by Professor Elihu Starbuck on "The Future of the Republic," and one by Professor Hopkins on the situation in the Philippines. Both Tucker concerning his plan to found farm colonies for the urban poor. Few recent numbers of this review have been so interesting.

Guntion's magazine for August takes up the "money question," that is to say the currency question, and presents reasons why it must be the next thing to be settled in this country. Guntion's is always a readable and interesting magazine, but it is never dull.

Wheelmen who want to read several capital short stories, connected with a view to exploiting the bicycle should read the August Home magazine.

The Home Doctor is the name of a new monthly published at 128 White street, New York, at 10 cents per copy or \$1.00 a year. It contains a large amount of well-edited and well-classified information concerning home hygiene and other subjects relating to healthful living.

Money, the non-partisan monthly devoted to a discussion of the currency question, prints in its August number an interesting article on the subject of money substitute, between Ben S. Dean for the free silver side and Maurice J. Muhleman, representing the gold standard. Money is a valuable instructor on the subjects falling within its scope.

Something of the character of a journal of current events has been lent to Chap-Book since it began to discuss political topics in its Notes. It does this with a style which is truly even when it is opinion (which incline to be Mugwumpish) provoke dissent. Chap-Book may be described as a fortnightly miscellany of news, and book reviews with more or less interesting miscellany stuffed between.

COMPETITIVE RAILWAY RATES.

From Leslie's Weekly.

It is poor recognition and a bad thing for the public when any great business is conducted at a loss. On general principles it is a demerit on the part of a man who has any property or service can be obtained for less than its real value. The laborer is not only worthy of his hire, but his wages should be such as to pay him fairly for the work done. And so also it is a bad thing for any form of property to sell for less than a fair cost. When services are rendered and property less than their value, then there is a depressed business condition and everybody suffers.

It is particularly true that large corporations to which the public has granted privileges because of the general advantage to be returned to the public through the business of these corporations exert a most harmful influence when they serve the public at less than cost. The influence is most demoralizing, and is felt alike by the shareholders of the corporations and the patrons of them. When railroads do business of this nature it is because of a way of rates, because of an indirect competition, and sometimes because the officers are themselves in an ill-directed zeal. Competition, when it leads to such results is, therefore, harmful; but competition is, nevertheless, the only safeguard against unfair competition. Therefore, the suppression of competition is directly opposed to the public interest.

THE CASH VALUE OF A MAN'S LIFE

According to Railroad, Insurance and Supreme Court Ideas.

COST TO RAILWAYS OF ACCIDENTS

Fully \$3,000,000 a Year Paid in Settlement of Damage Suits—The Dead Passenger Cheaper as a Rule Than the One Who is Badly Mutilated.

The statement that every man has his price is badly behind the times, in the opinion of the Washington Star. It is in great need of remodeling, to suit the ideas and customs of the present. It should read: "Every man has several prices," for he possesses, as a noted humorist has said, "several, if not more."

There is his own price, the price at which he values himself; the price at which others value him; the price insurance companies put him on, and the price of the Supreme Court holds is sufficient for any human being in general, and the man in question in particular. The man's valuation of himself is a variable quantity, which jumps up and down in such erratic style that it must needs be left out. The valuation of railroads is the poorest. Next to a general who has an important battle to win in the railroads of the country is a railroad, the company's value. Ancest, yet this cost has driven several roads into bankruptcy. Coal mining is considered by many to be exceedingly dangerous to human life, yet the aggregate of human beings killed on the railroads far exceeds those lost under ground.

Several of the eastern and western states have on their statute books a law which once prevailed in Pennsylvania, rating human life as worth at the outside \$5,000. Railroad companies coming under their jurisdiction cannot be compelled to pay more than that sum for any life through the carelessness and negligence of their management. The law, however, may be the father of a large family, and the industry and ability may earn for the support of that family twice or three \$5,000 yearly, yet if that man is killed through the culpable mismanagement of a railroad, the company is liable for a single \$5,000 payment, and the orphaned little ones must look elsewhere for the support and subsistence thus withdrawn.

DEATH IS CHEAPER.

If the passenger is mutilated, but not quite killed, the railroad company on whose road he was injured may be compelled to pay any sum not obviously unreasonable that a jury may assess. It often happens that in case of accident it is for the interest of the railroad company that the injured passenger die, thereby limiting the company's liability to \$5,000 in each case, rather than that they should recover sufficient to sue for damages and be awarded perhaps a much larger sum.

The bigger roads have sinking funds for just such emergencies, but the smaller roads generally have such a struggle to meet the charges that a reserve fund is not to be thought of.

The amount of money paid in settlement of damage suits by American railroads cannot be computed with any accuracy, because it varies considerably from year to year. When roads are in good condition, accidents involving loss of life or serious bodily injury are rare; when roads are in poor condition, such accidents are frequent. The loss systems of the country spend on an average in the settlement of damage suits about \$150,000 each, and the smaller railway companies bring up, probably, the total amount paid to about \$3,000,000 in all.

Each of the American railroad carriers collectively in a year 800,000,000 passengers, the number of fatal accidents average about 300, and of injuries to passengers about 3,000, or one killed for every 2,666,667 carried, and one injured for every 266,667.

A NOBLE WELSHMAN.

Rev. James Hughes, of Kimberley, South Africa, writes us, saying: "It was my pleasure last week to visit Toronto, Buffalo and the Niagara Falls in company with Mr. James A. Evans and others from Scranton. That visit has left living pictures in my mind of scenes of natural beauty and of Christian courtesy which will never fade away. In Buffalo we found a Welshman of the name of Richard Humphrey, whose acquaintance is well worth cultivating, and one of whom all the sons of Gwalia in his home have reason to be proud. His position today in the elegant and enterprising town of Buffalo does credit both to his heart and head. He landed in this country many years ago, a comparatively poor man, but today he is in a very flourishing commercial position, has made

much money, owns extensive property, has done much for the development of Buffalo and stands high in the estimation of his fellow-citizens. His generous instincts are commensurate with his mental capacity and energy. Very many have had reason to bless God for the generous conduct of this noble Welshman and his amiable lady. Myself and party are deeply indebted to Mr. and Mrs. Humphrey and family for the pleasure which we enjoyed and the information we gleaned during our visit to the indescribable Niagara Falls, and the superb city of Buffalo. Such men are a host in themselves and happy is the town that has a liberal sprinkling of such as Richard Humphrey."

CLEANING WALL PAPER.

Several Easy Methods of Renewing the Rooms Interior.

There are several ways by which wall paper can be cleaned so that it looks almost as good as new. Take a loaf of bread, but not too hard, and cut off one crust; then, taking it in one hand, rub the paper gently with the exposed surface. When the bread looks soiled, cut off a very thin slice and proceed with the work. It is best to rub up and down on the paper, and clean each place thoroughly before leaving it. Another way is to take a loaf of bread, and after removing the crust, soak it in cloudy household ammonia. It must be so wet that one can work it in the hands into a ball. Rub the paper lightly with it, and as the ball becomes soiled on the outside, knead it until a clean surface is exposed. This will remove the dirt and smoke and freshen up the paper wonderfully. Another plan is to make a soft dough of coarse brown flour mixed with water; it should be stiff enough to handle easily. The paper can be rubbed with it as in the former method. When there are green spots on the paper, say coarse brown paper over them, and pass a hot iron over it. Fresh paper may be needed several times if the spot is large. When there are spots from which the color has been removed, they can be made to look as good as new by the use of water-color paints. The design should be traced first, and the filling then put in with the paints.

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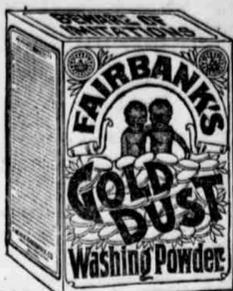
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