

## CONCERNING CYCLING.

By ARNOLD GOISWORTHY.

Just about the present time cycling is almost as popular as saying spiteful things about your neighbours. The most widely circulating medium of this class is probably the bicycle. In spite of the many improvements of late years people tell us that the bicycle is still in its infancy. I presume they refer to the fact that at present it is unable to stand alone. You have to let it hold on to the wall or something, if you don't want to watch it all the time. It is a proud moment for you when you make your first start on your new bicycle. You hop along behind it for a few yards, and then, without a word of warning, you fling yourself recklessly at the concern, turn round gracefully to wave your hand to the sweet face at the window, and the next moment you find you are trying to wave a piece of the road.

The tricycle is a machine of the more staid kind. It doesn't lose its head so easily as the bicycle, and it is more in favor with people who have a solid objection to coming in at the fag-end of the journey on a police stretcher. Even a tricycle, though, has its drawbacks. As you meander softly along some pleasant country road, it is somewhat apt to disturb your equanimity when you find all the misguided bow-wows of the neighborhood plunging in delirious ecstasy at the revolving wheels, evidently mistaking the concern for a sausage machine.

I am something of a cyclist myself. It is true that I have never broken the record—indeed, I don't remember to have broken anything lately, except my last engagement, which was all the fault of her mother, as I told her in a few well chosen words. I began cycling under advice. I was looking solid and healthy, I had a really genuine Spring appetite, and I could take eight hours sleep regularly without stopping for breath once the whole time. Then my doctor began to feel uneasy about me. He evidently thought I wasn't doing the square thing by his profession; and he told me I ought to go in for sports a little. So I followed his advice. I began gradually; I put something on the Derby for three years in succession, but I didn't seem any the better for it. Then I was told that I ought to take more exercise. As a matter of fact, I have done this moderately all my life. The most violent exercise I ever remember taking was when in a regretfully heated moment I called the old man next door a liar. He afterwards explained that but for the fact that I was the sole support of an orphaned father, he would have made a mummy of me.

I finally decided to buy a tricycle, as being more to be depended on than other kinds of machines. When you want to stop for a moment on a tricycle you can pull up and can feel pretty sure that the concern won't want to play any cunning tricks with you. There are several ways of getting a tricycle now on exceptionally easy terms. You can either buy it right out, or you can get it on the instalment plan by paying threepence a week for a year, and being summoned for the balance at the County Court. Some people put an advertisement in the paper and say they would like a second-hand tricycle in good repair in exchange for a couple of white mice or a tame canary. But, of course, we can't all afford to be so liberal with our household pets.

One of the jolliest forms of cycling is to have a machine with a nice little seat in front for the youngest Miss Thompson. You always put the lady in front, and then if you should happen to run into anything it doesn't matter very much. Indeed, the chances are that you won't get hurt at all. Considered as sport, this sort of cycling is, of course, enjoyable enough; but when the same thing is supplied at a reduced price under Government auspices, it is called the treadmill for short. To a really sensitive girl there are times when tandem cycle riding is capable of producing the keenest and most heart-rendering disappointment. At a critical moment you lean forward and murmur "Miss Thompson—Mary." On the utmost verge of expectation she stammers an encouraging "Ye-es, Mr. Smith?" only to hear you calmly add: "Would you kindly put your best leg foremost and help scrambling up the next hill!"

A rather good story is told at the expense of a gallant general commanding one of the English out-districts. At the time when the Suakim Expedition was being got ready, he was summoned by telegram to London. No appointment as commander-in-chief of the Suakim force had as yet been made, and he went to the War Office full of high hopes. These hopes were still further raised by the first words the Duke of Cambridge said to him.

"I have sent for you, General—, to ask you if you are prepared to accept the command of —"

The general's face beamed in anticipation of the high honour about to be conferred upon him.

"The command," went on the Duke quietly, "of the volunteers at the Brighton Review."

We believe the now disappointed general declined the honour. What made the disappointment the more bitter was that this gallant officer had, as a matter of fact, been talked of for the Suakim command, and he knew it; but the selection was not approved in certain high quarters.

Peter the Great was one morning informed that during the previous night part of the foundations of a large hospital near St. Petersburg had sunk some inches, and that it had become necessary to at once shore up the building with beams, pending repairs.

On the monarch arriving at the scene, accompanied by his son Alexis, a workman showed the Czar the extent of the damage and informed him that the whole of the building was then resting on wooden beams.

"Indeed!" exclaimed the Czar, "I can remember the time not long since, when it was *entirely supported by voluntary contributions.*"

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