

BOYS AND GIRLS

Jim Bryan's Safety.

(By Elizabeth P. Allan, in 'Forward.')

The Campus of Wessex College was alive with boys and men, and, to judge by the glitter and whirl, there was a bicycle to every man. The occasion was the enrolment of candidates for the wheel race, to come off in three weeks, for which an adventurous firm had offered a fine 'Safety' as a prize.

'This is a pretty lively go,' said a young freshman, standing apart from the wheelers. 'I wouldn't mind being in the party myself.'

'You would be ahead, Jim, without a doubt,' said his companion. 'What any other fellow can do with arms and legs, not to say hands and feet, you always do twice as well.'

'He began to compliment and I began to grin,' mocked Jim Bryan, but he knew that

campus, and passed behind our group of spectators, as they separated and moved away.

'I wish Jim would not chum with that fellow Cowen,' said Reed to himself, 'Cowen is a bad lot. I wonder if there is anything a fellow could do to get hold of Jim Bryan. I might—well, that would be pretty tough, but when one thinks of the issues involved'—Reed suddenly sprang on his bicycle, and in another minute had caught up with Bryan who was walking off alone.

'I say, Jim, wait for me here a minute, won't you, until I lock up my wheel? There is something I want to talk over with you, if you have time for a little walk.'

Now Bryan was not in the best humor for companionship with one of the lucky racers, but Reed Nelson was not one to be lightly snubbed, and the two were soon facing the

roads, exulting in his speed, and every morning he tested his mettle, and measured his progress with the other members of the club.

And the pay? It was 'queer,' as Jim said; for Reed had frankly told the young collegian that he wanted to bribe him into a different set of habits from those he was fast forming under Conrad Cowen's lead.

'You know yourself, Bryan, that Conrad is going to be a failure in this life and the next if he keeps on drinking and playing cards; why should you throw yourself down that precipice after him?'

'Oh! a fellow must have some fun,' answered Jim, shortly. 'It is easy enough for you to choose, but I must take what I can get.'

Then Reed tempted him with his offer of the wheel, and the chance of winning the prize.

'What are your conditions?' asked Jim. 'What axe are you getting sharpened by this plan?'

'Well, since you offer me conditions,' said Reed, laughing, 'I might as well take you up; come and read with me half an hour every day.'

'Bible?' said Jim, doubtfully.

'Yes; we'll read the bible,' answered Reed, dropping his light tone. 'Is it a bargain?'

Jim did not disappoint his friend's expectations. He won the race, and the 'Safety' was his. But it came to him weighted with a sense of obligation to Reed, that was not altogether pleasant. Sometimes he felt like kicking against this invisible bond, and, careful as his benefactor was to show no sense of it himself, Jim wished more than once that he had never seen Reed's bicycle.

It was not always pleasant to Reed either—this position in which he stood to Jim—but as pleasantness had not been his aim, he quietly held the freshman to his bargain, and day after day took Jim into his bible reading, which he certainly would have enjoyed more alone.

Reading with Nelson, and riding his new wheel, about used up Jim Bryan's spare time and those other plans, into which Cowen was to lead him, were indefinitely postponed.

'I wish you'd tell me the true inwardness of this bible-reading scheme, Reed,' asked Jim one day. 'What put you on to it?'

'The fixed belief,' answered the other, 'that a fellow who reads the bible intelligently every day is building up, rail by rail, a fence to keep out the devil.'

'Well!' exclaimed Jim, 'I always knew you expected me to run away from mischief on my wheel, but this is a new sort of "Safety" that I hadn't bargained for.'—'Forward.'



'WAIT FOR ME A MINUTE.'

Conrad Cowen was not far from right, in giving him first place among the college athletes. This made his poverty, and his inability to get a bicycle, all the more bitter to him.

'I'd like the fun of the thing myself,' said Cowen, 'though I would not stand a chance. Well, fortunately for us paupers, there are some sorts of fun that are not confined to millionnaires; eh, Jim?'

The low laugh with which this was emphasized, brought a gleam of pleasure and defiance to Bryan's gloomy eyes.

'I can't say that yours is a very high style of fun, Cowen,' was the answer; 'but if it is the best one can do, why—Kismet, say I—so lead off.'

The laugh and the reply reached ears for which they were not meant. Reed Nelson, one of the older students, was at that moment slowly wheeling his bicycle off the

western range of mountains, aglow with evening sun rays.

When the club gathered for practice, the next afternoon, to everybody's surprise, Jim Bryan had taken Reed's place, and wheel; and, in light-weight costume, was poised for the run.

The surprised questioning was lightly turned aside by both boys.

'Oh, it's a bargain we've struck!' said Reed, and Jim made a wry face. 'Queerest hire, I pay, that you ever heard of,' he said; but nobody heard what the pay was.

Jim Bryan had never gotten as much pleasure out of any three weeks in his life as during these splendid autumn days that he was training for the race on Reed Nelson's wheel. Early each morning, while the white mist lay like a deep sea over the valley, and the mountain tops were amethyst and the sky gold, he tore about the country

Why He Did Not Go.

(Frank H. Sweet.)

Alfred Gaines left the store one night with unmistakable discontent on his face. Even the floor-walker noticed it, as the boy passed down the passage between the hosiery and shirt-waist departments, and he wondered a little, for only that morning Gaines had been promoted from the gingham to the silk counter, and had received the unusual honor of a nod and smile from the senior proprietor.

Reaching the street, the boy pulled his cap down over his eyes and hurried away, dodging to the right or left as the crowd of pedestrians swerved to one side or the other, and finally darting into a dark, narrow alley-way that was almost wholly given up to lodging houses. Two blocks more, and he slipped into a dimly-lighted hallway and ran up seven