

THE CANADIAN ATHLETIC NEWS.

"Better to hunt in fields for health unbought
Than fee the doctor for a nauseous draught.
The wise for cure on exercise depend,
God never made His work for man to mend."

Registered.

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—Dryden.

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NOTICE TO SUBSCRIBERS.

As we announced in our first number, though subscriptions were payable in advance we did not intend to receive them until our enterprise should be well under weigh, and therefore made them payable after one month—namely, on the 7th June. Subscribers will oblige by remitting by that date.

Irregularities in the delivery of any subscriber's paper should be at once reported to the Manager.

THE WHEEL.

Bicycling has a position of its own among sports. Intrinsicly, it is no more a sport than walking,—of which it is a development. Some men with a fatiguing amount of brain tell us that men were painfully free from that possession a few ages ago. But every cloud has its silver lining; and if our remote ancestor was somewhat deficient in mental activity, he was far ahead of us in the use of his limbs. If his conception of Home Rule was primitive compared to that which flashes and coruscates with dazzling variability in the electric cranium of the nineteenth century,—it was at any rate enforced by a hairy biceps and a set of undecayed incisors. Not a solitary specimen could have been found capable of traversing the *pons asinorum*, but any ape not positively imbecile could have told you how to cross a river by the aid of firm hands and lithe bodies and the flexible tails that they were not then ashamed to wear. For a few million years—according to the latest chronology—man

was satisfied with his new mental acquisition, like a child with a new toy. Walking humbly under the trees that he was wont to climb like a squirrel, he was too far gone to regret even his departed tail. But a day came when he could no longer hide from himself the fact that—with all his many ounces of cerebrum and cerebellum—he was a very slow coach compared to his contemporaries and his former self. What was to be done? It would take too long to get back to the caudal and quadrumanous age. Could he, then, imitate the lost appendage and swing himself from tree to tree as of old? True, he had replaced his degenerate ivories with porcelain and gold; he had even patched his broken skull with platinum. But his experience of manufactured feet and hands would not justify him in trusting his now unwieldy frame to an artificial tail; besides which, he had been now for some time in the habit of wearing clothes,—with pockets opening upwards,—the whole style of which would be revolutionized by any such corporeal change.

In short, there was only one thing left for man to do, and that was to invent the bicycle. So he invented it.

The process was not sudden, nor was it simple. A hundred and seven years ago a Paris newspaper mentioned an arrangement of three wheels, in the midst of which a man could sit and shove himself along. This thing was called a "*velocipède*," and weighed about a hundred pounds. Presently, in 1816, a certain Baron, who was also landscape gardener to the Grand Duke of Baden, put two wheels tandem and sat on the yoke between them; and later on, some one forestalled the "Otto" of our own day by placing two great wheels side by side and sitting on the connecting axle,—still shoving! It was not until 1865

that a French mechanic named Lallement produced a three-wheeled machine propelled by cranks and pedals,—though a similar vehicle was entered in the British Patent Office in 1862. We all remember those bone-shakers, and what a craze there was to ride them! But the era of clumsy three-wheelers was short. In 1869 two Parisians made a "bicycle" with the large wheel in front, and with all its parts of metal. When the bicycle was furnished with rubber tyres and saddle springs it became to all intents and purposes what it is now. But what numberless improvements have been made, and are being made every day! It is only a few years since we were riding one of those massive affairs built by Stassen, a London engineer,—solid metal, every bit of it. And, thanks to the splendid workmanship of the maker, we have covered 105 miles of road between breakfast and supper. But what a test of endurance was a *hill* in those days! And now—why, everything about a bicycle, from felloe and spoke to the very step, is hollow, hollow, hollow. It is now reckoned that there are about 175,000 riders in Britain, 50,000 on this continent, and 75,000 elsewhere. There are about 200 makers, turning out some 500 styles of machines.

The usefulness of the bicycle—and of the tricycle, now that it has been rid of superfluous weight—goes without saying. We published last week an instance of its value in pastoral visitation; and if a clergyman has the courage to adopt such an unconventional method, no one need fear the loss of "dignity" involved. As a matter of fact, policemen on their beat and letter-carriers in country parts have already adopted the "prince of steeds." And of the healthiness of cycling we are not afraid to speak, although some overcareful per-