

Poetry.

SONG OF THE WHEELMAN.

BY AN EARLY RISER.

I leave the busy house or store,
A rider skilled in wheeling,
And take the road for farm and shore,
A rapid speed revealing.

I see not many as I pass,
But few are up so early;
I roll my wheel along the grass
To catch the dewdrops pearly.

Around the commons then I go,
Or cut across so clever;
For men may run and men may row,
While I ride on forever.

I rattle over cobbly ways,
I bump above the ridges;
The tall and dusty weeds I graze,
I dash across the bridges.

And then I strike a sandy strip,
And puff like any bellows;
Whoever saw a wheelman slip?
The stout and lusty fellows!

Upon the pedals now I throw
My weight as on a lever;
For men may run and men may row,
While I ride on forever.

The busy day has now begun,
I lose no time in turning,
For from the East the morning sun
Sends down his sunbeams burning.

There could not all the winds that blow
From me my wheel dis sever;
For men may run and men may row,
While I ride on forever.

—Springfield Gazette.

A CANADIAN ADVENTURE.

Jackson's Creek, Red Deer River,
Saskatchewan, April, 1884.

DEAR OLD BOY,—I promised to write you when I had a chance, so here goes. We reached this place late last fall, and got our cabin built, and all snug before the winter set in; but no doubt you have seen my letters to Jack, so I shall not waste time telling our troubles over again. We are all right now, but at first, if the Indians had not helped us, we should have been hard up for grub, for shooting game in the woods doesn't come natural to a city clerk. I suppose you have been picking up your share of pots lately. I've only had one ride, and don't fancy I shall try another. You know I took my "bike" with me, but I found there was nowhere to use it, so it lay by and rusted till the frost set it, and our river soon got covered with a beautiful sheet of black ice. So one afternoon I thought I'd go for a ride on it, and explore the country towards Buffalo Lake before the snow fell and stopped me. I oiled up the bi. and started, first telling Jackson to leave some supper on the stove before he turned in.

You recollect our riding on the Welsh Harp reservoir some winters back, and you can guess how grand it was to spin along through the still frosty air, on an ice-path nearly a quarter of a mile broad, virgin forests on each side, with the blue mountains in the distance. The perfect silence, broken now and then by a sharp cracking sound, as of some tree split with the sudden frost, was strange and weird, and there was just enough excitement in steering clear of danger spots, where the swiftness of the current caused the ice to form less rapidly than elsewhere, to prevent things growing monotonous.

After riding about three hours I thought it time to turn back, so rode to the foot of a low cliff and dismounted, when, finding myself rather stiff, I lit a pipe, and rambled along the bank until I found a spot where I could climb to the summit of the hill, and enjoy the glorious sunset beyond a spur of the Rocky Mountains to the west. The moon was full, and though I had no lamp, yet, as there are no country by-laws here, I was in no hurry. On walking to the edge of the perpendicular rock, and, looking down on the river, I was surprised to see an animal prowling round my bi. I went quietly forward and found it was a wolf. It was standing directly below me, solemnly meditating over the prostrate machine, which it evidently took for a new kind of trap, and was quite unconscious that sixty feet above someone was watching it.

Wolves are a cowardly lot, and I puzzled myself how best to astonish him. At last, breaking off a clod of frozen earth as big as a Dutch cheese, I crept to the edge and carefully dobed it on to him. As luck would have it, it caught him fair on his back, and broke to pieces all over him. How you would have roared to have seen the result! It knocked him out flat on the ice, his legs slipping from under him, and sticking out each side, so that he must have felt split in half. Then, when he did get up, he was so frightened, he seemed to vanish three ways at once. He jumped about all over the place and before I had half done laughing I could hear him a mile away howling like mad. I strolled down and remounted, laughing till the woods echoed again as I rode merrily back, but when, after travelling a mile or so, I still heard him howling, and looking round found he had induced a lot of his big brothers to come and investigate the matter, I shut up and commenced riding a good deal faster. They came along at a rare pace, and their noise kept bringing out first one and then another of their mates till at last there was a regular pack not a quarter of a mile behind me. I leant over the handles and put it on, and as there was no wind, and I was on the most perfect racing path you ever dreamt of, I kept easily ahead; still I could not get away from them, and there were at least twenty miles more to go. I did not funk it, but I should have liked to have been at home; if a spoke broke, or I slipped my treadle, it would be all up with me. I was obliged to keep pegging away as hard as I could ride to prevent them gaining on me, and it seemed an age before I neared home. I was getting done up, and my followers were only about one hundred yards behind when I sighted our cabin, but at the pace I was going I could not dismount,

and if I slacked up they would catch me before I could gain the door. I had not thought of that, and just when I thought myself safe, I was obliged to dash past my refuge and leave it behind me, with only time to yell frantically for help; the lights were out, and no doubt Jackson was comfortably asleep. I felt sick with dismay, and rode on for some distance before I could collect my thoughts; then I decided to risk everything, and double back, in the hope that I should be able to get round before the wolves could pull themselves up; so, when I came to a broad bend in the river, I kept close in shore, slackened speed a little, and boldly swung right across the river. It was a terrible moment. Would the tyre grip the smooth ice? It did, and the whole pack rushed past me, tumbling over each other as they struggled to stop themselves. I found when I was fairly round that I had actually gained a little on them, and, spurting as hard as possible, tore along for home, shouting vigorously as I again neared the cabin. It was no use, for the pack was still so close that I dared not dismount, and again had to pass at full speed. Once more I turned successfully, and once more screamed in vain to my sleeping partner. I saw that unless I tried some fresh plan I should most surely be pulled down within sight of my own door. At last a ray of hope flashed on me. A little above our houses were some rapids, and on passing them I had had to keep close in shore, and even then had felt the thin ice bend. It was a last chance, and I determined to dash across the centre from the further shore. Perhaps the wolves would have to keep to the sounder ice at the side, and thus give me the start I wanted. They were now very close to me, and when I turned across the ice a short distance above the spot, the leaders almost touched me as they slid by. I got round somehow, and then bent down for the final effort. Every thing depended on the speed being great enough, and I knew it. I seemed to fly, the ice bending and cracking in every direction. Even in my extremity I dare not ride quite in the middle of the stream, and to my horror the wolves boldly followed. Suddenly there was a crash behind me, accompanied by a tremendous howling and splashing, and on glancing back I saw a huge black patch with the whole pack struggling in the midst of the water. The ice had given way under them, and I was saved. I staggered to the door, and just managed to wake Jackson and tell him what had happened before I fainted. When I came to he was nowhere to be seen, but through the open door I could hear the "crack, crack" of his Winchester repeating rifle as he took vengeance on the helpless brutes. He told me afterwards that none of them escaped, as all but a few were drawn under the ice by the current, and that he shot the rest. Don't show this letter to Florence, or she may get nervous about me. I've sent her a dose of general news. Write me as soon as you can spare time, and believe me, yours exceedingly,

HARRY.

—Wheeling Annual.

Goold and Knowles, of Brantford, are out with their catalogue for 1885, showing many improvements in both styles and prices of their lines of machines and sundries.