

"Oh, it is lovely," sighed her caller as she sank into the depths of the cosiest rocking chair. "Nothing half so delightful as a bicycle was ever invented. But I suppose there must be a dark side to everything, and I have just found the one belonging to my bicycie. Will has been telling me that the people do not like my riding it, and I came over to ask you if he is not mistaken."

"Ye'll sit and rest yersel' afore I tell ye a word, an' ye'll drink this glais o' buttermilk forby. But really noo, a' e ye no feared tae ride that awesome thing?"

"Yes, I was at first awfully, and I just yelled if Will let go for an instant, but one soon gets over that. But do tell me, Miss Macdonald, what they are saying in the church about my riding."

"Weel, we had a sma' discussion aboot it the ither day at Mistress Dr. Green's. Mistress Nathan Strange and a few mair, together wi' mysel'. It began by some ane sayin' that a meenister's wife sud be an example tae the congregation. An' I speered at them where in the Scriptures it was found that a meenister's wife sud be different frae ither folk. They cudna juist tell as tae that, but Mistress Strange referred me tae the passage aboot stumblin' blocks and said that dootless a bicycle was such. An' I said, 'Ah, yes, but I thocht it was maistly the folk on the bicycles wha felt the stumblin' blocks.' So they tried aince mair an' said that it was na a seemly or a godly thing for weemin folk tae wear a skirt that disna touch the ground. An' I said maybe so, but it maun be the next thing tae it, seein' that cleanliness is next tae godliness. Then they said that the neeborin' kirks wad like it fine tae be sayin' that the Presbyterian meenister's wife was running aboot the kintry at a' hours o' the day and nicht by her lain and Mistress Green went sae far as tae say that gin ye had even a female companion along wi' ye she wad say na mair."

Here Miss Janet paused and looked slightly embarrassed.

"And what did you say to that?" asked Mrs. MacDougall.

"Ah, I said—but ye'll never suspec' what I did say, an' I declare I'm fair ashamed tae let ye ken, but gin ye are weel rested I'll show ye my answer an' let ye laugh at me for a daft auld maid gin ye wull."

So saying she led the way to the door of a large empty closet and flung it open with a gesture quite dramatic.

"There!" said she. And there it stood radiant in shining black enamel and silver trimmings—a brand new bicycle.

"Oh, you beauty!" was all her companion said, and the next moment she was down on her knees examining it.

"It is perfect!" she cried; "I long to try it just this very instant. But, Miss MacDonald, what ever made you do it? Oh, I hope you have not sacrificed any principle out of regard for me."

"Aweel," said Miss Janet, with a little guilty laugh, "I cudna thole the idea that ye wad hae

tae gie up yer pleasure for want o' a companion, sae juist on the impulse o' the moment like, I up and said tae Mistress Green, 'Then ye may say na mair, for Mistress MacDougall wull h'ae a female companion and Janet MacDonald wull hae a bicycle.' Ye sud hae seen their faces. They were a sicht worth seein', but Mistress Green said quite nice and polite like, 'In that case I will withdraw my objections.' Noo, I may be wrang, but I thocht I saw a glint o' envy in her e'e. Juist ye mark my words, it'll no be lang afore the Doctor wull prescribe a bicycle for his wife's—dyspepsia."

But the minister's wife was not yet satisfied. "But are you sure," said she, "that you do not repent?"

"Ah, lassie," replied Miss Janet, laughing, "I believe that it's oor true that the heart is deceitful and desperately wicked, an' I dinna mind littin' ye ken that since the first day I saw ye ridin' my heart has juist been achin' for a bicycle."

Mrs. MacDougall jumped up and kissed her as well as she could for laughing. "Then you'll never regret your purchase," cried she, "for the reality is far ahead of the expectation. We'll go out right now and I will give you your first lesson."

So the first outwork of the citadel was won, and the audacity of the attack so discomfited the enemy that before they had recovered themselves the allies had taken the opportunity to plan further advances. Indeed, before Mrs. Nathan Strange had fully recovered her breath, the figures of the minister's wife and her staunch companion, Miss Janet MacDonald, had become a familiar feature of Middleborough and the surrounding country. This, in itself, was a great gain, for you remember the couplet about "vice" that we used to learn in our school books. How "seen too oft, familiar with her face, we first endure, then pity, then embrace." The majority of the population were fast reaching the embracing stage, and Mrs. Dr. Green's dyspepsia was becoming so alarming that the Doctor seriously thought of prescribing the forbidden bicycle as a medicine. Alas, to such a pass can even Scotch-Canadian Presbyterians come!

It was all right, at first, to turn away our heads, chirk up our self-righteousness and pass by on the other side, but, before long we began to turn, when nobody was looking, and gaze after the rider with a certain longing in our eyes. Then we stood on the roadside and gazed with open admiration; then we got so far as to say that "there wasn't any harm in it, anyway"; then, "Well, it must be a pleasant thing to be able take a ride into the country whenever you wish, and perhaps it is even a good thing for those who like it." Finally, we were on our knees praying our fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, uncles, or aunts for a bicycle that we might go and do likewise.

But although the allies rode into the citadel of public opinion with colors flying there still remained the central tower to be taken—the tower