

ENGLAND ON WHEELS.

UP AND DOWN THE ISLAND ON BICYCLES AND TRICYCLES.—HOW TRADESMEN AND HOLIDAY-MAKERS UTILIZE "THE MACHINE."

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CYCLING IN THE COUNTRY.

But it is in the country that this sport reaches its greatest perfection. And no wonder, for the English roads are, as a rule, good, and always full of beauty and interest. You can wheel for miles on smooth, white highways, where the shadows fall more softly defined than on any others I know of, and between pretty hedges, with wild flowers growing in quantities by the wayside. You pass well-kept parks and pleasure-grounds, and broad fields red with poppies before the harvest and golden when the gleaners are at work. You are sure to come to quaint, out-of-the-way villages, with tumble-down houses, and perhaps a sleepy little river running through them, or else to old-fashioned towns, over which the headle with cocked hat, knee-breeches and gold lace still presides, striking terror into the hearts of the small boys. And then there is the inn by the roadside, which is the paradise of those English travellers who would rather walk, ride, drive or wheel through country roads and lanes than be carried at full speed over railways. Bread and cheese and beer never taste so good anywhere else. While you eat your lunch in the clean little room into which you are shown, and which looks out on a little flower-garden or on the meadows opposite, you feel at peace with the world and all men in it.

Nowadays you will meet in the country more cycles than wagons and carriages. In the first place, there are the postmen, who are now very generally mounted on wheels by order of Government, and the constables of certain districts, who also use them when there is constabulary duty to be done. Then there is the legion of pleasure-seekers, especially large at this season of the year, when everybody who can takes a holiday. Among the latter you see at least ten tricycles to one bicycle. The reason of this undoubtedly is, that English cyclists have learned to value their heads, and have also arrived at the conclusion, to which any rational man must agree, that it is better to take one's pleasure comfortably. The tourist can carry on a tricycle a reasonable amount of baggage, which he cannot do on a bicycle, and therefore he can appear among his fellow-men, in his resting evening hours, clean and respectable, and not the disreputable object which a bicyclist usually is at the end of a hard day's run, when he cannot make any change in his costume.

THE CYCLISTS' TOURING CLUB.

Almost all the cyclists one sees in England, women as well as men, belong to the C.T.C., or Cyclists' Touring Club. This is one of the exceptional cases when it is a practical advantage to be a member of a club. The C.T.C. has for its object the convenience of cyclists, and it is not contented with merely theoretical efforts in their behalf. It publishes a handbook containing maps, a list of hotels, roads, consuls—for each town has one—and repair shops. Armed with this the tourist knows exactly where

to go, and, moreover, what he has to pay, for all the hotels it recommends have made an agreement with the club, by which they are bound to charge certain fixed prices. Lodging-hunting, the *bête-noir* of all Englishmen, is thus an unknown evil to cyclists, who, however, forego the chance of grievances in the shape of extortionate bills which would require a letter to the *Times*, in the printing of which natives of this land do so greatly delight. There are C.T.C. hotel headquarters not only in the United Kingdom, but on the Continent, and even in America and Australia. The office of this institution occupies a whole story in a large building on Fleet Street. Mr. Shipton is the chief secretary, and he has many clerks under him. At any hour you may happen to go into this office you find the clerks hard at work over their ledgers. Apparently the business of the club leaves them little time for idling. Besides the officers in the main department, there is in each district a chief consul, who, if you write to ask him about the roads in his part of the country, will send you a route form, together with remarks upon their condition, warnings of dangerous hills, and incidental comments upon the neighborhood, its attractions and drawbacks. If these statements do not prove accurate, you are asked to return the form with whatever corrections you may think necessary. Members of the club pay one shilling entrance fee and half a crown annual subscription, which is reasonable enough.

The legal rights of cyclists are upheld by the Tricycle Union. While the club seeks to promote the comfort of the tourist, this institution sees that justice is done to them. Since coaching days are over, the roads in England are not kept quite as well as they were formerly, and this the Union has undertaken to remedy. In several cases it has brought suits against local boards of works, compelling them to put the roads in their district in good repair. Its work is well done, for, like the C.T.C., it is fully and ably officered. The President is Dr. Benj. Ward Richardson, a famous London surgeon, and among the vice-presidents are Mr. Herbert Gladstone, Lord Randolph Churchill, Viscount Bury, and Mr. Oscar Browning. It is, as a body, 20,000 strong.

A PASSPORT TO GOOD FELLOWSHIP.

As Mr. Stevenson asks in his "Inland Voyage," "What religion knits people so closely as common sport?" There is no necessity to have recourse to law to stimulate sociability among cyclists. The little silver badges worn by the members of the C.T.C. are sufficient to make the wearers fraternize with one another. The fact of belonging to the club is a passport to good-fellowship. When riding out on a machine I have had riders passing by stop and give me good day, and tell me, perhaps, about an ugly hill beyond. Indeed, my experience of this cycling freemasonry has been varied. For example, during a ride from London to Canterbury I made the speaking acquaintanceship of several cyclists, the club serving as introduction. The first was a London watchmaker, who was riding a tandem with his wife, and who rested at the same inn at which my fellow-traveller and I lunched. He was a specimen of the British Philistine, and as such was an interesting study for half an hour. But to avoid a

second meeting with him or another of the species, I would ride up the steepest hills and through the sands of Kent, which, in a season of drought like the present, is no easy matter.

But that very same evening I put up at a picturesque sixteenth-century inn, without the Westgate at Canterbury, and there I had a social adventure of another and better quality. This inn is called the "Falstaff," and a painting of honest Jack, in buff doublet and red hose, hangs by a fine piece of wrought-iron work over the door. In such a place one is prepared for pleasant episodes. And so we were not surprised when in the late twilight, after the teatray had been removed, we received a visit from a cyclist who was also staying in the "Falstaff" over night, and who proved to be a good fellow. He was a clergyman from Shropshire, and he rode a machine like ours, and had come exactly over the same route, and so we soon became very friendly. And our friendliness extended to the next morning, for we went together to the cathedral and through the city, and when this clerical cyclist left at noon he invited us cordially to his home in Shropshire, and we were sorry to have him go. There was still another wheelman who breakfasted with us in the inn at Rochester. But he was neither odious nor agreeable to us, and we were as indifferent to his presence as to his absence.

STYLES IN THE MACHINES.

Manufacturers are as much given to changing the styles of their machines as tailors and milliners are to varying fashions in dress. Not satisfied with making a good thing, they must bring out something new, which but too often proves a serious mistake. Buyers are, as is the case in every branch of trade, like a flock of sheep, and buy whatever a chosen leader may select. The two most popular tricycles this year are the "Rudge" and the "Humber," which are utterly different in make. The former is a single driver, with one large and two small wheels, and is the machine which Mr. Pennell rode on the trip he made last summer through the Midlands, and the account of which was published in the September *Century*. It is a singular-looking machine, with a somewhat lop-sided effect, and a good idea of it is to be had from Mr. Pennell's drawings in the above-mentioned article. Its good qualities are its almost perfect steering, great luggage-carrying capacity, and its light weight, being the lightest tricycle made. Besides this, it is very narrow, and can pass through doorways with ease, and can be ridden on American sidepaths. But its greatest advantage consists in its being a two-tracked machine, like a carriage. Therefore, when its two small wheels are put in a rut on the road or in a horse-car track, it can be propelled very easily, which is not the case with any other tricycle. This fact should recommend it especially for use on American roads.

The "Humber" is emphatically a racing machine, all races of any importance this year having been run on it. It is often called the bicyclist's tricycle, as it consists of two large wheels between which the rider sits, while he steers with an ordinary bicycle handle. Indeed, it is nothing more than a child's velocipede reversed, having two large wheels instead of two small ones. There is a small wheel behind. Machines like