

Hints on Swimming.

Written for THE CANADIAN HOME JOURNAL.

BY V. DE CASTRO.



to such places
land, Musko-
the-Lake, or
many summer
boating and bathing are the chief amuse-
ments, when they cannot swim. Ninety-nine
out of a hundred would find it such an easy
thing to accomplish. It only requires a little
patience, a little perseverance, and not more
nerve than most human beings are endowed
with. Moreover, it is simply challenging a
lesser form of suicide, a deliberate taking of
precious life into reckless hands for a boating
expedition to be organized of those who trust
themselves on the face of the treacherous
waters with no means whatever of saving them-
selves should an accident occur. Those who
make boats do not guarantee that they will last
forever, and too often some one finds himself in
the position of the pitcher that went to the well
ninety-nine times. Something gives way, a
not over-strong piece of timber grounds on a
rock, a sudden squall comes up, somebody
thoughtlessly insists on taking the oars in the
middle of the stream, and over goes the boat.
It is nothing new. Thousands who should
know better manage the foolish feat year after
year, and season after season the tragic list
swells. And yet the remedy is so simple. If
children were taught the means of guarding
against the chance of going to a watery grave,
most of the awful casualties that so often over-
shadow the various watering places would be
unknown. It is not a difficult thing to learn to
swim. It is not a matter of years, or even
months. A few lessons from someone qualified
to teach, or a clear, well-written article thor-
oughly mastered, and the simple directions
followed, should be sufficient for an ordinarily
intelligent young person. The main thing,
however, is to learn young—the younger the
better; and parents should realize that to have
their children taught this art is as much their
duty as to give them those other advantages
which they rightfully claim to fit them for the
ups and downs of life. A girl may have the
best possible education. She may be able to
chatter glibly away in half a dozen languages,
she may handle her violin like a Norah Clench,
or sing with the sweetness of a Patti. What
good will it all do her if, unable to swim, she
upsets from a boat, and has to rely solely on a
companion as little equal to the occasion as
herself, or on one who, in a panic of fear,
strikes off alone for the shore?

Take the little one of six or eight, see that
she is not intimidated in any way, and put her
in the water up to her neck. Extend her flat on
her chest, lightly supporting her under the chin.
Explain the motions required, and she will
swim in twenty minutes. The movement is a
natural one, and comes almost immediately.
With older people it is not such an easy matter.
They do not seem to have the same confidence
as the child, and invariably insist upon staying
in such shallow water that it utterly precludes
the idea of swimming at all. In the first place
see that the bathing suit is of the lightest kind,
and entirely without sleeves, or with the
merest apology for them. They fill with water
and become like balloons, rendering it most
difficult to take a forward stroke with the arms.

Have full confidence in the instructor, or if
alone, have confidence in yourself. Go into the
water until you are at least shoulder deep—the
deeper the water the easier to learn. The old-
time custom, and perhaps after all the best, is
a leather strap fastened under the chest,
attached to a long pole which the instructor
keeps in his hand while he walks along the
pier. The swimmer, being in deep water and
absolutely safe, can practice the motions to
good advantage. This method very seldom
fails.

If one is learning in the ordinary way, that
of walking out from the shore and then
attempting to swim in, he should never lose
confidence in himself. Remember that water
is extremely buoyant. To test this, throw an
egg into water, say five feet deep, and try to
swim down to it. You will soon find that it is
much easier to swim on top of the water than
under it.

In first attempting to swim, throw the head
fairly well back, the chest resting flat on the
water, the hands close to the chin, joined
thumb to thumb, palms down, fingers close
together, spring forward, throw out the arms
to the full extent, the legs also at the same
time making a corresponding motion. As the
hands reach their full forward extent, turn the
palms outward, taking care to keep the fingers
together, and bring the arms around in a circle
—the hands being about half a foot beneath the
surface—until they get as low as the hips.
Bring the arms close to the sides, take again
the first position, and repeat the movement.

Another important thing for a beginner to
remember is to go slowly and deliberately.
Two, or not more than three, long and not too
hurried strokes should be taken to every
breath.

Among the Shadows.

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Summer and winter sky—
So the long days go by;

Go by with sigh and song,
So short, and yet so long!

And as they hurry by
—Summer and winter sky—

God give my breaking heart
Strength to play out its part,

And to my loneliness
Something to hold and bless.

So may the days go by—
Summer and winter sky.

Wheeling.

HOW few women seem to think it at all
necessary to understand and thoroughly
master the small details of their machines.
Ask some of them what a sprocket wheel is,
and see how indulgently they will smile at you,
as though they thought you were joking in
assuming they would bother their pretty heads
about such trifles. Ask one of them what gear
her wheel is, and see if she can explain what
“gear” means. To most girls it is enough
that they are gliding along over smooth roads
with a congenial companion beside them, that
the air is sweet and fresh, and that they can
ride away for the time being from every care
and trouble in the world. They ask nothing
more, except a becoming costume, and a wheel
that runs easily, even if they cannot explain
why it does run so. For the benefit of those
who are interested in the subject of the proper
height of gear for bicycles to be ridden by
women and girls Adelia K. Brainerd says:—

Experience has enabled well-informed riders to
draw their own conclusions as to the respective
benefits of high and low gears, as far as their
own cases are concerned, but there are many
women cyclists who do not understand the sub-
ject at all, and who are ready to take any gear
recommended to them, quite unconscious of
how powerfully it may affect their comfort on
the wheel.

In the first place, although it has been
explained many times, it is better to state once
more, briefly, just what the gear of a bicycle
means. It is an arrangement by means of which
a comparatively small wheel is made to revolve
as if it were a very large one—that is, to cover
as much ground as the large one would in every
revolution. Practically all bicycles now are
made with twenty-eight inch wheels, and thus,
if a sixty gear is spoken of, it means that the
rear wheel of the machine (gear always refers
to the rear wheel) revolves as if it were sixty
inches in diameter. It is by means of the chain
turning over two sprocket wheels, the large
one in front and the small one behind, that this
result is accomplished. The variations in the
number of teeth on the sprockets determine the
gear. Fifteen teeth on the front and seven on
the rear give the gear sixty; nineteen on the
front and eight on the rear give sixty-six-and-a
half, etc. The formula for finding the gear is to
multiply the actual diameter of the rear wheel,
usually, as was said above, twenty-eight inches,
by the number of teeth on the front sprocket,
and then divide the result by the number of
teeth on the rear sprocket.

Now, so far as I have been able to observe
and judge, a gear of about sixty-three is high
enough for the average woman to ride. The
higher the gear, just so much the harder must
be the push on the pedals at each revolution,
and it is certainly less taxing to one's strength
to push a little more frequently and lightly than
to be at great effort in making each movement.
Especially in hill-climbing, or in riding on the
level over rough roads, does a high gear make
its disadvantages felt. On a smooth surface,
where there is no grade, the high gear is very
pleasant, because with each push one covers a
great deal of ground, and the machine moves
rapidly in proportion to the effort expended.
But there are few persons who can be sure of
always riding on roads like academy floors, and
in fact such a daily routine would be extremely
monotonous. The pleasantest cycling trips are
those which take one out into the country, and
there one must be prepared to encounter all
sorts of up-and-down grades and varying con-
ditions of the road-bed. Of course it is impos-
sible to lay down any fixed rule which would
apply to all women, but sixty-three seems a fair
average. Any one who is not strong would do
better to choose sixty, and riders of good mus-
cular power and endurance can ride sixty-six,
and even sixty-eight without injury. Nothing
above the last figure seems advisable for
women. For girls who have not the muscular
strength or physical constitution of the fully
developed woman, gears from fifty-six to sixty
would be better.

Here is a point which may be useful to those
who have had trouble with an excess of graph-
ite on the bicycle chain. When the graphite is
applied in the usual way, by rubbing or brush-
ing it into the links of the chain itself, it is
almost impossible to avoid putting it on too
thickly. Some of it is likely to spread out upon
the upper part of the chain, too, where it not
only does no good as a lubricant, but is pretty
sure to soil the rider's skirt. A far better plan
for putting it on is to apply it only to the lower
edges of the teeth on the front sprocket. Then,
as the wheels revolve, the graphite adheres only
to those parts of the chain where it is needed,
and the lubricating is accomplished cleanly and
satisfactorily.