

HOME AND YOUTH

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THE POINT OF THE PEN

THE DECAY OF PEDESTRIANISM.

Those who have accustomed themselves by long continued habit to take regular daily exercise in walking, cannot fail to have noticed within recent years the very marked decline in the number of fellow-pedestrians to be met with on the highway and in the by-lanes of the country-side. Where at one time, within easy recollection, it was of no unusual occurrence to meet on the road numbers of people availing themselves of those benefits to be derived from a good walk, it is now indeed a remarkable circumstance to encounter during a few hours' ramble any one person—man, woman or child—ON FOOT, outside a three-mile, or at most, a five-mile radius from his or her own home.

Pedestrianism, in fine, is out of general favor—is out of the fashion. An inventive science having so placed at the disposal, and within the reach of all, such varied and pleasureable means of locomotion—the cycle, the street-car, the railroad—that walking, even the shortest distances, is rendered unnecessary; further, as a form of recreation, it is now almost universally voted to be "feeble" and "uninteresting."

Just as in the early years of the Victorian period, the introduction and development of steam as a motor power brought to a close the Old Country coaching days of our grandparents, so in like manner the swift and silent roadster has, in our own time, succeeded in eclipsing the modest pedestrian. Every highway has its cloud of cyclists. All the world goes on wheels—the leisured for their morning ride, the housekeeper to her shopping, the doctor to his patients, the business man to his office—even the clergyman on his parochial "rounds," and the policeman in pursuit of the law-breaker. There would seem to be no limit, as yet, to the many and useful purposes to which the cycle may be advantageously adapted.

In addressing this plea on the behalf of pedestrianism, the writer trusts that he may not be misunderstood. He would be very sorry to say, or to write, anything in disapproval of the MODERATE pursuit of wheeling, beside which there is no form of recreative exercise that affords the participant, whether male or female, such lively enjoyment, or that confers on the physique such real and lasting benefit. It is a matter of common knowledge, however, that