

"Ha! how much?" was the reply, jeeringly "as much again as half, I expect. Look here, you'd best get on to your own business, and not be fooling here."

"I only asked," I said, in a mollyfying tone. "You don't have live ones, do you? I want to buy some."

"Ha! I have quite enough to do with dead ones," the man answered. "You'll have to go to Barter's Cut for what you want."

And he turned away. So I had learned something. Barter's Cut was at the other end of the town, and did not bear a very good name. If any boy or man was an especially rough customer, it was said of him that he was one from Barter's Cut.

But there I must go for my pigeons. And how I longed for the next Saturday which should give me the opportunity!

(To be Continued.)

JAKE AND THE MINISTER'S BICYCLE.

IT'S perfectly outrageous for a minister of the Gospel to be makin' an exhibition of himself, a dartin' and flyin' round on one of them pesky things. He will break his neck one of these days. It would serve him right. It's runnin' right into the face of Providence, to ride on a concern that won't stand alone without being held up.

In the store the men were talking of the minister's new horse: one said it was the fastest in town. Jake is a great horse-jockey. He had just bought a fast trotter. He interrupted the conversation by saying, with a round oath, "If the parson ever comes my way with his new-fangled machine I'll run him down with my sorrel."

"You can't do it," shouted several.

"If I don't, I'll—I'll—I'll go to church every Sunday for a year," shouted Jake. "I'll try hard enough, for church-going aint in my line, you know," he said, with a wink, as he left the store.

One day the minister rode by Jake's house just as he drove his sorrel, in a light beach wagon, out of the stable. Some one must have told the minister what Jake said, for he smiled and bowed and said, "Good morning, Mr. Jones."

"Get out of the way, parson. I'm comin'."

He hit his horse a great lash and drove toward the minister at a furious rate. Such a race you don't often see.

They flew by our house-- we live two miles from Jake's house, you know--so fast it almost made me dizzy. The minister was a little ahead and gaining every minute. I ran out into the yard and waved my apron and shouted like a foolish girl. They came to a long, steep hill. The minister swung his feet over the handles and let his machine go itself. It flew like a bird skimming the water. Jake stopped at the top of the hill and watched the minister in amazement as he flew along. He muttered to himself:-

"I'm beat;—you might as well race with the wind."

He stopped at our well, to get a drink. The minister rode up and said as he dismounted, "Mr. Jones, there is not another horse in town that could have given me such a race as that. If it had not been for the hill, I guess you would have beaten me. I will ride back with you, if you have no objection."

Before Jake could say a word he had put his bicycle into Jake's wagon and sprang into the seat by his side. You will hardly believe it, but Jake asked the minister to take dinner with him, and he spent all the rest of the

day there. When I went to town, about four o'clock, Jake was sitting on the step, smoking his pipe, his wife by his side, laughing as if he were crazy, as the minister taught Jim, his oldest boy, how to ride the bicycle. Just as I got to the gate, the machine tumbled, and Jim, the minister, and all, went rolling over on the grass. I can hear Jake's shout yet, as he held his sides and rolled to and fro in delight. The minister had family prayers with him, and made him promise to send all his children to Sunday school.

BRIDGET.

HOW HE DRESSES THE BABY.

All family men fancy that they can dress the baby much more deftly and expeditiously than the mother can perform the same operation. That is, if they only set themselves about it.

"Of course there is no doubt of that," says the man to himself; "a man can do anything better than a woman, and not make half the fuss and talk about it. Women wear themselves all out talking things over. Why, a woman will talk more about making a flat-iron holder than a man would about building a meeting-house. When a man is going to do anything he goes to work and does it. He doesn't have to run all over the neighbourhood to ask every one he knows about it, and then do as he has a mind to, as a woman will do."

And so, having heard him boast of his capabilities for years, some fine morning, when his wife's head aches, and the feminine deity of the kitchen has given notice, the mother of the family invites him to dress the baby.

The baby is big enough to walk around and have a finger in every pie, but it will be "the baby" till a later addition appears.

The man who knows it all smiles triumphantly to himself. He is delighted with the opportunity of showing his wife how much quicker he can do it than she can. And he'll see if that baby is going to run all over creation after cats and things, and cry half the time while he is doing it. Discipline is what is needed with children.

He calls the baby to him.

"Stand there, Freddy, while papa finds your clothes, like a good boy."

Freddy places himself in position while his pa goes in quest of the raiment belonging to the juvenile. Freddy spies a bird on the top of a tree in the yard, and he climbs on the piano to get high up at the window, and he knocks down a couple of bundles of sheet-music, his sister Fanny's new hat that she left there last night when she came home from the party, so tired that she could hardly get upstairs to bed; and then poor Freddy slips and grabs the window-shade to save himself, and brings it down, fixtures and all, and draws a double-tracked railroad on the polished rosewood of the piano with his wildly clutching finger-nails, and lands safely on the floor, howling with rage at not having been able to get the bird.

By that time his pa has found most of his clothes and is ready to begin. But Freddy isn't ready. He wants to see the pictures in the album. Then he insists on hearing the watch tick. Then he wants to catch the dog by the tail and give it a good pull, to see if it is on fast. Then he wants to kiss mamma.

"Stand still!" says his pa, putting on the severe look that he uses on his insubordinate clerks in the dingy down-town office, "and see if you can keep your tongue still while I dress you! Don't wiggle so, Freddy! Stand still! Put down your foot! Let that cat alone! Here, you little mischief, stop chewing that lead pencil!