

the door with a glow at my heart, thinking of the joy it would be to Wardrop's honest heart to hear such good news in place of the evil he had feared.

It was getting dusk as I drove out by the lodge gate, and just then a gentleman passed me whistling. I put my head out of the window and took a good look at George Cairns, nor could I deny that he was a man of gentlemanly appearance, and handsomer than most. He had made the most of the gifts nature had bestowed on him, evidently having risen from the clerk's stool to be the son-in-law of his master, one of the merchant princes of the city. Nevertheless, as my four-wheeler went lumbering along the muddy road to Streatham Station, and I thought of what would meet him when he got within his own door, there was no man in London I envied less than Mr. George Cairns.—*David; Lyall in British Weekly.*

JAPAN.

Japan is a land without the domestic animals. It is this lack which strikes the stranger so forcibly, in looking upon Japanese landscapes. There are no cows—the Japanese neither drink milk nor eat meat. There are but few horses, and these are imported mainly for the use of foreigners. The waggons in the city streets are pulled and pushed by coolies, and the pleasure carriages are drawn by men. There are but few dogs, and these are neither used as watch-dogs, beasts of burden, nor in hunting, except by foreigners. There are no sheep in Japan; the wool is not used in clothing, silk and cotton being the staples. There are no pigs—pork is an unknown article of diet, and lard is not used in cooking. There are no goats, or mules, or donkeys. Wild animals there are, however—in particular, bears of enormous size. One of these Mr. Finck saw stuffed in a museum, and he describes it as being as "big as an ox." War, of course, is acquainting the Japanese with the use of animals. The army have cavalry horses, and others to drag the field guns. The Empress also, in obvious imitation of European royalties, is an expert horsewoman, and saddle horses are kept for her use.—*Science Siftings, London, Eng.*

THE TERM "MIDDLE AGES."

"Middle ages" is a term of no definite period, but varies a little with almost every nation. Roughly it may be regarded as including a period of about a thousand years, or from the fifth to the end of the fifteenth century; or if reckoned by events, as extending from the subversion of the Roman Empire, and the transfer of the Imperial dignity from Rome to Constantinople (A.D. 476) to the outbreak of the Reformation (A.D. 1520). Hallam, in his "History of the Middle Ages," says: "It is not possible to fix accurate limits to the Middle Ages; but though the ten centuries from the fifth to the fifteenth seem, in a general point of view, to constitute that period, a less arbitrary division was necessary to render the commencement and conclusion of an historical narrative satisfactory;" and he accordingly makes the period to extend "from the invasion of France by Clovis (A.D. 489) to that of Naples by Charles VIII. (1495)." For his purpose this might be advisable, but for common use there is little advantage in any such arbitrary restriction. The term must be accepted for convenience rather than precision, and to understand it as comprising a thousand years, from the end of the fifth to the beginning of the sixteenth century, is for all ordinary purposes sufficient.

Our Young Folks.

THE MOTHER POET.

My mother was a poet I
And, though she left no song
To ripple down the centuries
And cheer the world along.

Her soul was full of music;
Her thought was set to rhyme
Of little feet, that kept her heart
A singing all the time.

Her life was one long measure
Of kind, unselfish deeds;
So common is the doing
One scarcely knows or heeds.

She gave herself so freely,
Thought had she for us all,
And time to note each flower,
And the first blue bird's call.

A singer who sings truly
Must often sing of pain,
Yet hope rose through her sorrow
As rainbows through the rain.

Oh, what a wondrous poem
Is mother duty done!
My mother was a poet—
I'm sure that yours was one.

—Mary A. Mason.

A RACE WITH DACOITS ON MY BICYCLE.

(Concluded.)

As I left the *kyauing* behind and was making for the bridge, I heard a few notes whistled softly just behind me. The sound seemed to come from the bushes skirting the *kyauing*. I should not have thought anything of this, however, if the same notes had not been whistled again, this time apparently from the fields just ahead. This was evidently a call and an answer; and it made me a little nervous, especially if the danger (if danger there were) menaced me both in front and in the rear. I looked around, but saw nothing more than I had seen many a night on that same road. Not knowing anything else to do, I went steadily ahead, keeping myself and my wheel well in hand, so as to be ready for any emergency which might arise. Passing by some gaps in the shrubbery, I saw some figures in the fields near the road making stealthily for the narrow bridge which I should have to cross before I could get into the town. I thought I could see some *dahs* under their arms. Then I saw the danger which threatened me. The dacoits evidently planned to intercept me at the bridge, and cut me to pieces when I should be at a disadvantage. I couldn't go back; for even if I had not had reason to think that some of the gang were lurking behind me, the time I should have lost in turning around would have put me at the mercy of my pursuers. There was only one thing to do, and it didn't take me long to decide upon it. My wheel was under pretty good headway, and I crowded on all the power I could to try and reach that bridge before the dacoits got there. As I shot ahead an awful yell arose behind me. I had been sharply watched. Immediately my ears were greeted by a chorus of shouts from the fields on both sides of the road.

My recollections of the next few minutes are not very clear. All I remember is, pedalling with all my might, with those bloodthirsty cries ringing in my ears, and my mind making incessant calculations as to the chance of getting a bullet through my body next moment. But I heard no shots, and probably the dacoits had no guns. I rolled on the bridge just as they swarmed up from the fields into the road behind me.

But I was not out of the woods yet. Before I got into town I had a long hill

to climb. Now the Burman is a lightning sprinter when he chooses to sprint, and that's just what those fellows did. Racing them down hill I had the advantage, especially as they were running over the rough ground in the fields. But when it came to racing uphill they rather had the best of it, especially as they were now on the road. On a steep hill I would have had no chance at all; but the slope was gentle, and I had a start. I had a chance, therefore, for my life, and I made the best of it. The thought of those *dahs* put strength into every stroke I made. The worst of it was, I could not tell whether I was holding my own or not. My pursuers had stopped shouting, needing all their wind for running; and their bare feet didn't make much noise on the ground. I was bending low over my handle-bar, and didn't dare to risk diminishing my speed by straightening up to look behind me even for an instant.

But when I got to the head of the hill, and was passing the grounds of the Chief Commissioner, where there are always soldiers on guard, I felt that I could venture to take a backward glance. Then I saw that my pursuers had all disappeared.

Next day I wrote a letter to the Chief of Police, reporting my adventure in detail, and having "the honor to be, sir, his most obedient servant," according to the prescribed formula, which whosoever observeth not shall not gain the ear of the Government of Burmah. In due course I received a reply, in a big brown envelope, assuring me that the matter should be promptly investigated, and having "the honor to be, sir, my most obedient servant." This was polite. The Indian Government is great on politeness. But nothing ever came of it. I suppose the Superintendent did his best to ferret the matter out; but he had to work through native policemen, and they may have had reasons of their own for not being too anxious to catch the dacoits.—*David Gilmore, in Harper's Round Table.*

SEEING THE POINT.

A boy returned from school one day with the report that his scholarship had fallen below the usual average.

"Son," said his father, "you've fallen behind this month, haven't you?"

"Yes, sir."

"How did that happen?"

The father knew, if the son did not. He had observed a number of dime novels scattered about the house; but had not thought it worth while to say anything until a fitting opportunity should offer itself. A basket of apples stood upon the floor and he said:

"Empty out these apples, and take the basket and bring it to me half full of chips."

Suspecting nothing, the boy obeyed.

"And now," he continued, "put those apples back into the basket."

When half the apples were replaced, the boy said:

"Father, they roll off. I can't put any more in."

"Put them in, I tell you."

"But, father, I can't put them in."

"Put them in? No, of course, you can't put them in. You said you didn't know why you fell behind at school, and I will tell you why. Your mind is like that basket. It will not hold more than so much. And here you've been the past month filling it up with chip dirt—dime novels."

"They boy turned on his heel, whistled and said: 'Whew! I see the point.'"

Not a dime novel has been seen in the house from that day to this.—*Bible Reader.*



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