

Poetry.

A TANDEM TALE.

I oft was told in childhood,
Quaint tales of long ago,
When babes slept in the wildwood,
Quite safe from pain and woe.

No harm could e'er befall them,
No grief could make them moan:
They were good little children,
And the gods protect their own.

Of-times I've sat and pondered
If true this tale could be,
And just as often wondered
If the gods protected me.

But when in cycle riding
I oft was harshly thrown,
I soon gave up confiding
In "the gods protect their own."

Nor 'gain did I accept it,
Though years rolled swiftly by;
Till Jove's dire anger taught it,
As I rode a tandem tri.

I learned that cyclers
(The loveliest ladies known)
Are safe from base caresses,
For the gods protect their own.

One evening in the spring-time,
With first tan-tri in town,
I took a lady wheeling
O'er smooth roads up and down.

We climbed the hills so lightly
No grade would leave us blown:
The coasts were just delightful—
"How the gods do bless their own!"

As swift we coasted downward,
My heart was full of bliss,
I threw my arms around her,
And tried to steal a kiss.

Oh, Jove! why this convulsion?
That thunderbolt why thrown?
No doubt to teach the lesson
That the gods protect their own.

Some say the steering faltered
When left to watch itself;
I say it was the immortals
Who laid me on the shelf.

So now when tandem riding,
I fear a modest throne,
And oft repeat the maxim,
"The gods protect their own."

—C. E. D., in *Bicycling World*.

The bicycle is not a toy—anybody who has ever wrestled with it will admit that. It is a practical road machine, unexcelled in removing stones from the public highway and indicating the presence of sand. Next to the wheelbarrow, it is the safest known carriage. It never bites ladies or children, and doesn't scare worth a cent. If you want fun, buy a bicycle; if you don't—buy one, anyhow. It is right there every time.—*Fort Wayne World*.

BICYCLE OR TRICYCLE.

The *Cyclist* sums up a discussion on the merits of the two machines as follows:

"The correspondence which has been going on in our columns for many weeks past has produced a great variety of opinions, but the majority of writers appear to have been content with extolling the particular style of machine which they at present ride. Thus, one who has never mounted a bicycle, or one, perhaps, who has abandoned that machine, thinks there is nothing better than a tricycle; whilst bicyclists, pure and simple, contend that they would not have a tricycle as a gift. Others, too, have placed the desideratum at one of the many safeties now on the market; but we think no writer has given any sound reasons why either of these particular types of velocipede should supersede all others for all purposes and all persons, neither, indeed, do we think any one could do so. In speaking on this question, we do so with a thorough knowledge of each class, having ridden each variety for long periods, and, after our experiences with them all, we can only arrive at the conclusion that there is no type that will suit the wants of every one, and that in deciding on a mount there are many things to be considered, such as quality of roads over which the machine would mostly travel, household accommodation, and purposes for which required, to say nothing of individual ideas and peculiarities. A considerable amount of abuse has been heaped upon the head of the ordinary bicycle, which to our mind is totally out of place, though there has certainly been a reason for the charges of danger, etc., that have been brought against it. As a matter of fact, a 'vaulting ambition hath o'erleaped itself' in the matter of the bicycle, and—doubtless to suit the wishes of large numbers of riders, who were continually clamoring for close build and high position, to enable them to ride as big a wheel as they could possibly stretch—machines have been built too generally on pretty but unsafe lines. Thus, we find nine bicycles out of ten sent out with forks nearly upright, scarcely any clearance between the wheel and fork top, small light back wheels and close-cut unsuitable springs. For our own riding, our machines have always been built with plenty of clearance between wheel and fork, a good two and a half inches rake, a free spring, a fairly large back wheel, and a powerful brake, and have selected the size of wheel some three or four inches below what we could ride at a stretch. Of late, we have been riding our ordinary bicycle a great deal, and we think that were these lines more generally carried out, there would be few machines that would surpass it, even in the matter of safety, with a careful rider. With the bicycle as now commonly built, and an incautious rider who climbs to the very highest size wheel he can reach, it is impossible to obtain either enjoyment or safety, and, as a consequence, the machine gets the blame. The bicycle proper has the advantage of a high position, by which the surrounding country, as well as dangers ahead, can be seen, and a good appearance, besides lightness, for even the small-wheeled safeties have not cut it out in that respect. Of course it has to be learnt, and with the vast majority of the community 'there's the rub.' For such the

tricycle comes in, or the safety bicycle, which has the advantage of being easier to learn. The safety is likewise easier to mount and dismount, especially when tired, and the low position and small wheel enables one to go very much slower when occasion requires, as amongst traffic, and to be off in an instant should a dead stop be requisite. It is even easier stowed away than the bicycle proper, but against it is the fact that, in the majority of geared-up machines the side slip on greasy roads introduces an element of danger that is totally absent with both the other classes. The tricycle is heavy and cumbersome compared with its *confreres*, but there is no learning required, that is to say, no series of tumbles to be gone through before the balance and full confidence can be obtained, but that it requires a considerable amount of learning is well known to every tricyclist. The speed that has been obtained on the road by noted riders has in some cases surpassed that of riders on a bicycle, but it must be remembered that the riders in all cases have been exceptional ones, and the machines highly geared and very different in weight from those supplied to the ordinary customer, so we can safely say it is a slower vehicle. Luggage can be carried on it to any extent, and its general adjustability makes it suitable for the whole family if it is so desired, though it necessitates more household accommodation. The use of the tricycle is not by any means so free from danger as some would make it, though with care it is as safe as a horse and trap, and perhaps safer. All things considered, we believe that the bicycle proper, when sensibly built, is no more dangerous than any other form of velocipede in the hands of a careful and experienced rider, and that for general, what might be termed, light riding, that is, without luggage, it will never be rested from popular favor. The safety (so called) is more suitable for traffic riding, such, for instance, as short, quick business calls. As an all-weather vehicle, the tricycle, perhaps, stands best, and for use where parcels have to be carried, as well as for traffic riding, it stands to the fore. In short, each particular type is the right thing when in the right place, but just as much the wrong thing when out of place.

Gradually but surely the bicycle is getting to the front as the greatest aid to human locomotion on land since the invention and development of the steam railway system. There are to-day very few among the speediest of road horses that can hold their own against a well-trained and well-mounted wheelman for any distance from five miles upward, while from fifty to one hundred miles or more the horse does not live that can live out a race with a cyclist. Already the bicycle has been ridden a mile in but a fraction over two minutes and thirty-one seconds, and nobody believes that this is the limit of possible speed. But it is in tests of endurance and the ability to cover long distances that the cycle is pre-eminent.

Our American racing men are only just beginning to find out what they are capable of doing on the bicycle when thoroughly trained and carefully fitted for contests of speed and endurance. So far the Englishmen have beaten them at the shorter distances, but Yankee muscle and pluck are not going to be kept in the background for any length of time.—*Mirror of American Sports*.