

girls to your tender mercies, you scatter-brained man," said Miss Carr, smiling, as though well-pleased at the suggestion. "You might forget all about them, as you did on another memorable occasion, and the consequences would be disastrous. Yes!—if you take plenty of time, and don't rush about from place to place, I should be glad of a change myself. This wedding—"

"It is too good of you to include me. Wouldn't I like it!" cried Mr. Rayner, with a smile which made him look quite young and boyish. "September is lovely in Switzerland. The rush of tourists is over, and the autumn tints are wonderful. But we ought to get off as soon as possible. You will have to give up your week in bed, Miss Hilary!"

"I may as well give up bed alto-

gether, I think, for I shall not sleep a wink for thinking of it. Oh, father, dear, you are good! I drink to you!" and Hilary held up her teacup, bowing and smiling, and looking so bright and pretty that it was a pleasure to see her.

Well, it was a happy hour, and the memory of it remained all the more vividly, because of the contrast which it afforded to the dark days which followed. At twelve o'clock the same evening, Mr. Bertrand took up his candle and went the usual tour of inspection through the house. He peered into the drawing-room, fragrant with plants and cut blossoms, into the dining-room where the village carpenters were already putting up the horse-shoe table, into the pantry, where the more valuable presents

were locked away in the great iron safe. All was quiet and secure. He returned to his study and was just settling down for a quiet read, when the sound of footsteps smote on his ear. He opened the door and started back at the sight of a white figure which came floating towards him, with flowing locks and outstretched hands.

"What is the—who is it? What is the matter?—Lettice!"

The next moment two arms were clasped round his neck; he felt the heaving of breathless sobs, and an agonised voice called on him by name—

"Oh, father, father, save me! save me! I can't go on! I can't marry him! My heart will break—!"

(To be continued.)



A CHARITY GYMKHANA: HOW TO ARRANGE AND MANAGE IT.



ow that cycling has become so universally popular gymkhanas have been added to the list of summer *fêtes*, which, when well-managed, give a large amount of pleasure to both those getting them up and those taking

part. At most country houses impromptu events are arranged for the amusement of visitors, and the bazaar (now somewhat tiresomely uniform in idea) can, where a charity is to be benefited, be superseded by the more modern bicycling *fête* often with advantage.

The first thing to do is to arrange for a suitable ground. This should be as large and as level as possible; not certainly less than three or four acres of flat. The committee is also an important item in the programme. A large one is not necessary; but it should be both representative and efficient. The chief people of all classes in the district should be invited to promise their support, and in obtaining such promises young ladies of the committee will find plenty of outlet for their energies in the early stages of the arrangements.

Prizes are another important item; and here a word or two may be said against the practice of canvassing tradespeople (who are under obligations) for them.

The patrons of the proposed gymkhana will generally be found ready to subscribe to the prize fund, or to give prizes in the various competitions which have been decided upon. Do not permit the prizes to be overvalued. It is a practice which leads to nothing save grumbling on the part of the competitors.

The stewards of the course and ground stewards should be selected at least three days before the gymkhana is to take place,

and should be prepared to give themselves up entirely to their duties of showing the spectators to their seats, giving information to competitors and inquirers, and seeing that matters go smoothly.

The stewards of the course should see that each competitor has his or her distinguishing number or colour allotted and displayed in a prominent place, so that the spectators may not (as they unfortunately so often are) be left in doubt as to the identity of the various persons taking part.

Some satisfactory arrangement should also be made for the proper announcement of the winners in each event as soon after they are settled as possible. This matter is frequently overlooked, and disappointment and annoyance is caused thereby.

On the day itself all arrangements for marking the course should have been completed, and the various boundary lines, pegs, posts, etc., have been put in. It is a good thing to mark the sides of the course with a broad chalk line, such as is used in the tennis court, and this, for several reasons, is preferable to pegs, stakes, or tape lines.

The judges and timekeeper should be chosen, if possible, from amongst those who have no particular interest in any one of the competitors.

Ample time should be allowed for the competitors in each event to assemble; but when the time appointed has elapsed the event should be proceeded with without the delay which so frequently spoils the interest of onlookers.

Let it be understood that the judges' decision is final, and that their having given impartial consideration to the event makes it impossible for them to reconsider the matter.

A word or two as to the programme of competitions. This should be arranged with a due idea to the probable number and sex of competitors. On more than one occasion, for

want of a little thought, at gymkhanas where lady competitors have outnumbered the men by three to one, the events have been those suited to the latter in two cases out of three.

Nowadays, when gymkhanas are so popular, it should not be a difficult matter to arrange a satisfactory programme. The egg-and-spoon race is both a popular and amusing competition; but past experience has pointed to the desirability of substituting potatoes for the eggs. The Jack and Jill race is somewhat novel, and usually leads to a large amount of fun. In this competition couples enter together; their object being to ride to a given spot, where several buckets partly filled with water are placed, the gentleman dismounts and hands the bucket to his lady partner, who remains on her machine; half-way back to the winning post she has to pass the bucket to him, the winners being those who "get home" first, and spill least water. The fan and butterfly race is another comparatively novel competition; the object being to fan a paper butterfly to a given spot at the end of the course. The threading of bottles (without knocking any over) placed in concentric circles is another good event, bottles of the strongest kind, such as champagne ones, being of course chosen. The ribbon-tying race is another favourite, consisting of knotting three or more parti-coloured ribbons to the handles of one's machine whilst riding. The blindfold race should only be started with one competitor at a time; the object being to ride to a point whilst blindfolded, the winner being the competitor who goes farthest towards the goal without crossing over the chalk-line marking the boundaries of the course. These are some of the events which have proved suitable and popular for charity gymkhanas. Others, to make up a good programme, with plenty of variety, will easily suggest themselves or be doubtless brought forward by the various members of the committee.