

"Would you mind seeing if I am hard enough?" repeated the weary-looking man, more firmly, and, if possible, more in earnest.

"Hard enough!" gasped B.

"Yes," said the other, testily, "don't you see I've been blowing myself up for the past five minutes, and if you do not tell me whether I am hard enough now I shall probably bust in a minute or two!"

Blu. had already observed that the weary-looking man had the nozzle of some peculiar instrument inserted into one of the button holes of his vest, and was pumping away as if his life depended on it!

Now, if old Blu. had had the gumption of knowing something about cycling, he could have recognized that queer-looking instrument at once as a common pneumatic tire inflater. However, his education had been sadly neglected on these matters, and he therefore continued to gaze on the weary-looking one with intense astonishment, not unmingled with fright.

"Hang it, sir," exclaimed the w. l. one, "don't you see how I am distended. Put your fingers on me, quick, or by Jove, I shall explode this instant!"

No doubt Blu. looked as if such an occurrence would have given him extreme satisfaction, but instinctively he stretched forth his hand and touched the other as tenderly as if he was the startling-end of a powerful electric battery.

"Quick," yelled the queer chap, who continued pumping away like mad; "am I hard?"

"You are!" shouted the frightened Blumold; for his finger had certainly struck against something hard in the pumper's pocket.

At these words, a gratified and peaceful expression stole over the weary one's countenance, and ceasing his pumping operations, he sank back in his seat almost exhausted.

Poor old Blumold had naturally concluded that his companion was a lunatic, and began to consider how long it would take the train to reach the next station.

He tried his level best to appear unconcerned, however, and waited, in a state of disguised trepidation, for further developments.

Presently the owner of the inflater roused up a bit, and, after looking intently at old Blu., coolly bent across and gave him a most unmerciful pinch on the fleshy portion of the leg!

Blu. of course let out a yell of agony, which the other did not seem to notice, for he said solemnly,

"Sir, you are quite soft. You must be blown up at once or there will be every danger of a puncture. Allow me."

And before Blu. could move a muscle, the queer chap was leaning over him, having dexterously inserted the nozzle of the inflater in a button-hole of Blumold's vest, and began to pump vigorously.

When Blu. felt the forced air making peregrinations up and down his chest, he began to groan in agony, not, however, daring to stir, as the pumper was glaring down upon him—every now and then giving him a murderous pinch on the legs; but as Blu. is of that make known as "podgy," and naturally never felt "hard," the inflating gentlemen would be operating on his victim to this day as far as that was concerned. However, the strain proved too much for old Blu. With an unearthly groan, as the forced air began to tickle the back of his neck, he fainted dead away!

When he came to, a number of railway officials and others were around him, insisting on dosing him with brandy, etc. He soon got all right, and, having told his story, inquired about his mysterious companion.

They explained that the latter was a man who at one time owned a leaky-tired trike, and this had preyed upon his mind so much that he eventually went completely "off his chump," fancying himself, and, indeed, everybody else, a tire requiring to be pumped. To humor him his friends had allowed him to keep an inflater. On this occasion he had cunningly despatched his attendant to the refreshment room on some pretext, and during his absence had changed carriages, and the man on his return did not miss him till the train had left the station. At the next stop he had been found pumping away at poor old Blu. with great satisfaction.

"Is that a true story?" asked a doubting member of the party, regarding M'Gliblip with a cynical eye.

"Come, boys," said Mr. M'Gliblip, hurriedly, as he arose, "it's time for us to be off."—"Philander," in *Irish Cyclist*.

The Athenæum Club are talking of holding a meet this fall.

The prizes for the Wanderers meet are to be diamonds in every event.

The English are talking up a relay ride from Land's End to John O'Groat's.

Rumor, which in this instance probably states the truth, says that Zimmerman will represent the Raleigh Cycle Company in America in 1893.