

had been a long hiatus during which people's minds had been too much taken up with steam travelling to pay any attention to any other sort of locomotion.

I was one of the first to ride out on a "bone-shaker." It was a beautifully made machine and cost me £20. A square steel backbone on which played a long flat steel spring, hickory wheels with steel axles and brass journals for them to run in, and what would now appear immensely large and clumsy pedals, were some of the characteristics of this Rosinante of the cycling world. I have its old rusty skeleton now, and as I look at it I wonder that I could ever ride such a thing. I wonder more that the first ride of any consequence I undertook upon it was a trip of ten miles to see her who I hoped would be my lady love. Yes those were the blessed halcyon days of youth and love. How well I remember my well-cut tweed suit (special bicycling outfits were then unknown) my bright-coloured tie, my smart straw hat with a quite startling band round it! There was no necessity for a bell, the iron tires of my machine made as much noise as a two-wheeled gig, and my progress certainly used up as much muscular tissue as a small pony would bestow in drawing one. But there was something delightful in careering through the country lanes in this novel fashion, and there was the youthful pleasure of exciting wonder and admiration in the breasts of numerous "country joskins" as I passed along, and best of all it was when I came in sight of the honey-suckled embowered porch of the long, low, ivy-coloured house where dwelt the object of my affections, and saw a slender and comely figure standing there. How triumphantly I rode up and dismounted; how kindly I was received; how my supposed weariness after my ride was sympathised with! I shall never forget the tea table with its snowy cloth, the relays of eggs that *she* was sure I *must* want; the marmalade that was gently pressed as an incentive to appetite when the first gust of hunger was passed—resigning myself to her sweet proprietorship in the matter and eating when I was commanded to as obediently as a child. Oh, it was a mixture of love, bread and butter, and sweetness such as has never since been equalled in my cycling experiences!

But it was when rubber tires and "spider" wheels came in that we cyclists began really to enjoy the pleasures of the road. It is true there was a period during which cycling was tabooed. I remember forswearing the silent wheel for a long season, simply because it was considered not quite "the thing" to ride a bicycle. I should not be so foolish and conventional now, I think, and I was secretly glad when some distinguished cyclists—the Hon. Robert Lowe, afterwards Lord Sherbrooke—among the number, gave their countenance to the healthful and pleasant sport, so that at length cycling was permitted even to those whose narrow views limited their enjoyments to the limits allowed by some local Mrs Grundy.

Among various machines I have ridden I may mention a variety of the safety machine with side levers which looked very ugly but which was uncommonly safe. I did not know how ugly this particular sort of machine looked till I rode it down in South Wales in parts of Cardiganshire and Carmarthenshire little penetrated by the venturesome wheelman. One sunny autumn afternoon I was riding leisurely along a somewhat narrow road on the right hand side of which were precipitous rocks rising perpendicularly to a great height, and on the other a steep descent terminating in a river. Absolute loneliness reigned over the place, and I had not met any living thing for two miles, when all at once I saw before me about forty black pigs, industriously enjoying some acorns which had fallen from a giant oak which grew there. I gave a loud view halloo! and the way in which those pigs first of all ranged themselves with their ears and snouts all fronting me and then in sudden panic turned and fled as though "Old Harry" was after them I shall never forget. And I shall remember for a long time a pompous old gentleman whom I met in the same neighbourhood driving a mail phaeton with his man servant beside him. As soon as he caught sight of me coming round a bend of the road he pulled up, sent the man to the horses' heads, and came forward gesticulating to me to dismount in such a passionate manner that I thought he would burst, so red and apoplectic he looked.

The cyclist, of course, meets with all sorts of adventures, all of which have their charm, and I have often found it necessary, being somewhat of a mechanic, to turn into a rustic smithy for repairs, and to ask the smith, whether he was a "mighty man" or not, to allow me to make free with

his tools and appliances, a permission usually freely granted and often repaid by some little practical "wrinkle" I could give to the rural Vulcan. I remember on one occasion making a very tolerable makeshift crank out of a piece of an old waggon-wheel tire in a place ten miles away from everywhere and where iron was almost as scarce as gold.

Every cyclist in England has trouble with lamps and knows what it is to get off and light them ten or twelve times in a mile if they are "taken awkward;" to put pins in the wick to keep it up; to pinch the burnt part of the wick off with his fingers till one's hands and sometimes—from unguarded touches—one's face become of a sweeplike blackness. For one's lamp to go out and to run short of matches when you are miles from everywhere, is also far from pleasant, and all these things I have suffered. I have tried under compulsion to make various things burn in lamps. One night when I was going through an unknown and thinly populated district and was in constant fear of being taken up by a member of the county police force, I came to the end of my colza illuminant and in my extremity ventured upon neat coal oil. I was using a hub lamp at the time and for a mile or so I did very well, and my lamp threw most brilliant and cheering rays upon my solitary path. It was when the coal oil began to get hot that the trouble began. Long tongues of flame commenced to dart out of the lamp and trail behind me. Then the illumination got brighter, the lamp became unsoldered, the oil escaped, ran down the spokes and ignited, so that it was a perfect catherine wheel I bestrode, and at last after a wild gyration or two the lamp detached itself and flew off into the darkness like a meteor, alighting on some dried leaves and rubbish by the road-side and making a small conflagration which lit the long straight road for furlongs, nearly frightening a poor old woman to death who happened to be coming along the road from market.

This account of cycling experiences would be incomplete without some record of the sensations and impressions of a well-appointed ride in England. Riding in company is all very well in its way, but some of the keenest cycling pleasures are only tasted by the solitary cyclist. It is a sweet summer evening, for instance, and you have fifteen miles to "do" before you get home. The country is flat, so the road is for the most part level—a yellowish-white ribbon with two grass green borders. Beyond the wide borders of grass, on which here and there a donkey grazes, there are the footpaths, then the tall, brambly, irregular, beautiful, many-flowered hedges—every yard of which is worth transferring to canvas, with its wealth of wild flowers and lovely forms. Rising from the hedges here and there is the gnarled oak, not growing here to a large size; the lofty elm, whose highest leaves seemed to bathe in the sunset tints of the sky above; the delicate branchlets of the silver birch, which are so beautiful they almost constrain you to get off your machine and at once endeavour to sketch some faint memorandum of them in your note book. Before you are the glories of colour which some one has called the sun's bed curtains. They stretch upward to the arch of heaven above you, still an azure blue tinged with pink—a lovely rose pink such as you cannot match on earth. Now and again, there are openings in the hedges and you see the distant landscape, with the tall distant trees, dark and defined against the sky like a picture by Leader. Groups of children, returning with slow steps to the town you have left, pause and gaze at you as you glide by, the youngest toddler gripped firmly by the hand lest he run into danger. Labourers returning with their baskets and their flagons walk homeward with steps that tell of the long and weary furrow. By and by the colour of the sky will be cooler and greyer, there will be gentle, ghostlike mist wreathing up from the fields, and the figures in the landscape will be gamekeepers, leaning, gun on shoulder, over gates, and lovers who tell each other that the sun of their love shall never set and who pick such flowers from the hedgerow as they will never pick again. Onward, and still onward, till the tender crescent of the moon shows silvery white and there is around you the soft summer twilight with which moonlight has begun almost indefinitely to mingle. The silence is deeper, the miles of road more rural and deserted. You pass a cottage where the good folks are still standing round the door before retiring to the fireside, whose gleam begins to look inviting within, and their merry "good night" comes to you on the evening air. Onward, and still onward, in the cooler air; onward, and still onward, on the