

THE WHEEL.

BY A MAN WHO WAS NEVER ON A BICYCLE.

See the wheeler with his wheel,
 Silent wheel,
 How many murderous thoughts pass through
 our minds as past he steal.
 As he glides along the pave,
 With the silence of the grave,
 And the crystalline glittering of his nickel
 plated steel
 Bursts upon th' enraptured sight,
 As it flashes dazzling bright,
 Till the gamins with delight,
 (Which the ordinary mortal and pedestrian
 cannot feel),
 Yell out "See the blooming hijit on his
 alti-tool'nous wheel,
 On his lofty, and exalted and velocipedic
 wheel.
 On his his wheel, wheel, wheel, wheel, wheel,
 wheel, wheel,
 On his lofty and velocipedic wheel."

Hear the tinkling of his bell,
 Little bell,
 As it warns the folks to give him room
 before he gives them—Tophet.
 And he dings it all the while,
 With a feeble, vacant smile,
 As he works his number twelves in a rhythmic
 kind of style,
 And the people, Ah! they think,
 When they hear that tinkle tink,
 "Here comes old Darwin's lost one! Here
 comes the missing link."
 And they positively feel
 Like smashing up his wheel,
 And implanting on his pantaloons some
 wounds that wouldn't heal,
 That would cause him to stand upright as
 he takes his mid-day meal,
 And would give him heaps of trouble as he
 sat upon his wheel,
 On his wheel, wheel, wheel, wheel, wheel,
 wheel, wheel,
 On his nickel-plated, highly-polished wheel.

A ROMANCE OF THE ROAD.

Mr. Muffins Midgett, just turned twenty-three, handsome, rich and accomplished, rode out of Hamilton one sunshiny morning in the early part of July in the present year, on a "Special Club" bicycle, intending to ride to Grimsby that day, and return to Hamilton on the following afternoon. A very pretty picture he made as he rode swiftly along, with his neat, well-fitting suit, his jaunty polo cap and his nickel-plated machine. His hair was almost a golden color and it clustered in closely cropped ringlets all over his head. His mouth was shaded by a heavy mustache; the rest of his face was shaved clean. His eyebrows were dark, and his his eyes of that dense, unfathomable blue that is almost indistinguishable from black. It was a pity, everybody said, that he allowed his mustache to grow, for he had such a lovely mouth. It was perfectly shaped, and on a woman would have been beautiful

indeed, but added to his weak chin it plainly said that Mr. Midgett had no more will than a babe unborn. Neither he had; the wind blew him to the right and to the left. Let him make up his mind to one thing and it was the easiest matter in the world to change his purpose as a general thing, but at times he would get stubborn and nothing could or would move him. His father had died when he was a boy of some six years of age, leaving him, an only child, in the care of his mother, who fairly idolized her handsome son. She lived only for him. She sent him to college and gave him every advantage that wealth could give. When he reached his twentieth year she died leaving him his own master with an income of some \$10,000 a year, any amount of debts, extravagant habits, and a determination never to get married. He almost hated the sight of a woman, invariably called them "fickle" and alluded to them as "designing creatures." Whatever moved him to do this, and why this young man whom it was generally so easy to talk down, should persist in his rabid denunciations of the softer sex, no one could tell. It was whispered that while at college he had made the acquaintance of some fair adventuress, who, as the phrase goes, "bled" him to an immoderate extent, and afterwards called him a fool and laughed in his face. But no one could say as to this; he left the cause of his hatred severely alone.

As I said before, Mr. Midgett rode gracefully along East Main Street. His face wore a gleeful expression, and he bent to his work with a grim determination to reach Grimsby in two hours and a half. He pictured to himself as he went along what a time he would have when he got there. In his mind's eye he saw the country hotel with the three-legged dog hopping around on the verandah. In his mind's eye he wandered down over the railway track and lay on the grass in the shadow of a brace of oak trees that grow at the top of the grove. In his mind he lit his pipe and watched the curls and rings of blue smoke roll gently out of his lips and fade away in the air above him, forming as they went all sorts of wierd, fantastic figures. In his mind the latest novel was in his hand, and all nature smiled on him in harmony. The insects' continuous song was music to his ear; in the oak trees overhead the birds twittered merrily. Then he stopped dreaming with a smile and turned his attention to the present. He had struck a sandy road now and it was a little harder traveling. He had just passed the Barton Church; a group of farmers' children had stood near the door playing "ring-around-a-rosy" or something of that sort, and had

greeted him with shouts of merry laughter. Out of his happy heart he smiled back on them. One boy, bolder than the rest, had run out to him, but he had increased his pace a little, and the boy was left standing open-mouthed in the middle of the road. He heard the children's shout of laughter as the youth turned back to join them, and he smiled again in reply. "How happy everybody is to-day," he said to himself, "as for me, why, bless me! I haven't a care in the world." Happy fellow. How many of us would give five, aye ten, years of our lives if we could say as much. Not a care in the world! Heigho!

But the time was coming when he was to have a care in the world. It was not so very far distant either. About a hundred yards ahead of him a small plank bridge spanned some trivial stream, and just next to it on the side he was approaching was a deep rut in the road caused by the heavy wheel of some wagon that had made it cave in. "How happy I am to be sure," he said again. Then he took his eyes from the road before him and raised them up to the great blue dome overhead. Here and there a cloud flecked the sky; a vagrant bird was fluttering in the east; in the woods over on the right an occasional shot told that some sportsman was after game. He saw and heard it all and smiled again, and then—and then the big wheel went down into the rut, the machine stopped short and he went head first flashing through the air, like a comet through space, and falling helpless and senseless on the planks at the other end.

When Mr. Midgett opened his eyes he was lying on a large old-fashioned couch in a large old-fashioned room. The window was open and the fresh country zephyrs came softly in through the vines that were trained up on the outside, he could catch a glimpse of the blue water of the lake lying as calm and peaceful as if it were a sheet of glass. A few fishermen's boats were scattered along the shore, and here and there great fishing nets could be seen hung up to dry on ugly, uncouth reels.

"Where the dev—," he began, and then stopped. The door had opened and a young lady was approaching him. She was a tall, well-built girl with dark, almost black, hair, great earnest brown eyes, a pretty, though rather sensuous, mouth, and a pure, fresh complexion. He regarded her with a puzzled look in his eyes. She spoke first.

"Good afternoon," she said, "do you feel better now?" She had a very pretty voice, low, sweet and thrilling.

He looked at her for a moment. "Better," he said in a puzzled tone, "better." Then