

A FIN DE CYCLE INCIDENT.

BY EDNA C. JACKSON.

They had been engaged just eleven minutes by the clock, and were in the stage of trying to explain how it happened.

"Why do I love you, darling?" the Professor was saying.

"Because you are my ideal woman: so pure, so modest, so flower-like! You have none of the bold ways and language of the so-called fin de siecle girl; no mannish posing as an athlete!"

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Renie moaned mentally. "Must I spend my life on a pedestal! I can't—it's too condensed! I must get those antiquated ideas of his remodelled to the present century! I wish I were not so afraid of him!" She meant to confess, "some time," that she loved yachting, rowed a shell like a mermaid, jumped gates on her trusty steed, and went in for athletics, as she often remarked, "for all she was worth." Thus she drifted deeper and deeper into this good man's confidence and away from her own.

"Do you know," she said, with a swift, upward smile, "I thought you—you cared for Rill Richmond."

"Miss Richmond! I must confess that on a slight acquaintance I was inclined to admire her; but—heavens!—she poses as an athlete, swings Indian clubs! How could one admire such a woman! But I must go. I promised to meet Manager Stevens; the strikers are acting outrageously. Good night, Renie, my pearl, my angel."

"Pearl! Angel!" Renie drew a long breath as the door closed upon her ardent lover. She clasped her hands in mute protest as she continued: "This pedestal is growing narrower and narrower! I shall certainly tumble, and what a'smash there'll be! I'm not ready to be an angel; wings would be horribly in the way. Or a pearl! Shut up in a shell with an oyster. Ugh!" She dashed up the stairs and flung a door wide open. "Jim! Oh Jimmy, Jimmy, Jimmy, Jimmy, Jimmy, What's the row?"

"Here," quietly remarked a boy'sh voice at her elbow. "Save the roof; never mind the remnants of your lungs. What's the row?"

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"Here," quietly remarked a boy'sh voice at her counded arms, and the supple form swayed to and fro as she swung the clubs with lightning speed, round and round, above her rumpled, curly head, tossing and catching them deftly.

"All very well, missie," commented her young brother,

know that Mr. Waldon is the ruler of my actions."

"I'm glad of it; but if I did not know that you are a girl that never fibs, Renie," returned Jim, guilelessly, "I would doubt that statement. I really thought he meant 'biz' by the token of all these flowers and visits. I'm glad he don't; for though he is no end of a good fellow, he'd be a mighty uncomfortable sort of a brother-in-law. You've read of those toads that wrap a solid rock around themselves and indulge in little cat-naps of five thousand years or so? I imagine that, through the transmigration of souls, the Professor might have been one of those toads, and still clings to his antique toad ideas— Why, what's up?"

whats up:
The mischievous eyes, so like her own, watching her furtively, saw my lady's white brow contract in a wrathful frown.
"James Raine! How dare you talk so of the best, no-

blest, kindest, manliest"—
"Whew! Anything more? Then you did fib a while ago,
young woman!"

blest, kindest, manliest "—

"Whew! Anything more? Then you did fib a while ago, young woman!"

Two pairs of merry eyes met and two pairs of lips laughed.

"Renie, he is a good old chap, after all; so are you! Come along, now, and I'll teach you to ride the like. I have borrowed a lady's wheel on purpose."

"Oh, Jim, will you?" she cried, rapturously, springing to her feet; then, with a sudden thought, sinking back again. "But—but—I guess I'd better not. What would the Professor say if he saw his ideal floweret riding a wild, dizzy bike?"

"Renie Raine! You promised me to ride!" exclaimed the boyish, indignant voice.

Renie looked up delighted. "I believe I did, Jim! It wouldn't do to break a promise, would it?"

"I should think not! Come along; it's late. Hustle!"

A minute later two young forms were hovering in excited but solemn discussion over the wheel, on the quiet, asphalt-paved street at the back of the house.

"I'll hold you until you learn to steer," said Jim. "Now" (after a few minutes' drill) "try it alone."

"It's all the fault of these miserable skirts!" stormed Renie, giving the poor wheel a small kick. "Skirts are always in the way!" Once on the downward path, the wretched girl descended with lightning speed.

"Jim" (she lowered her voice as she whispered the awful resolution), "I'll get bloomers!"

Jim flung himself across his wheel in an agony of suppressed hilarity.

"Oh, if My Lord Professor should see you in that rig and riding the bike—you abandoned creature!"

"Jim!" (There were tears on the long lashes.) "Do you really think he would care—if—I wear a skirt over them?"

"Care! Certainly not! Of course we won't break on his enraptured sight all at once."

The next night found the two again struggling with the bibeycle. But alas for Renie! What saintly pedestal was ever graced by a rig like this? Full Turkish trousers of blue, blouse, and saucy cap crushed over boyish curls!

"You must keep your feet going," exclaimed the teacher. "Didn't I gow with it?" moaned Renie, prone on her left ear.

he's near-sighted and this street's dark! Good evening, Mr. Waldon."

"Good evening. I—I thought I heard Miss Revie," remarked the Professor, peering around near-sightedly.

"Good evening," said a soft, innocent voice near by, and a small figure hovered just in the shadow of a sheltering tree. Jim jumped on the wheel and basely deserted, much to the Professor's satisfaction.

"Little violet," he murmured fondly. "How like you is that dark, graceful, nun-like robe!"

Renie laughed a low, half-hysterical little peal.

"A boy's mackintosh, a mile too big, over bloomers!" she was saying inwardly. "Oh, my! A nun in this!"

Aloud she said, not very enthusiastically, with her hand on the gate: "Will you come in?"

"I cannot, darling! Until these labor troubles are over I will have but little time even for you, my pearl."

"Pearl," muttered Renie, surveying her dreadful combination of trousers and mackintosh with deep self-contempt.

"It is an outrage to deceive him so!" she said to herself as she walked away.

"Don't you laugh, James Raine!" she continued, coming upon that young person sitting on the edge of the porch, in the moonlight; "I am going to be a good, quiet, womanly woman henceforth."

"Um." "drawled Jim reflectively. "What a nice pair of antiques you will be. Oh, say, Renie," in a brisky tone, "in that case you won't want the new bike father and I selected for you to day?"

that case you won't want the new blue lattlet and I seeecher you to-day?"

Renie, who had passed into the hall, was back in a flash.
"Jim, you don't mean it!" she exclaimed, rapturously.
"What is it like? Tell me quick!"

"It is one of those earthly vanities winch you have forever renounced, young woman!" replied Jim, grimly.
"It's a pity, too," he sighed. "Such a beauty, all nickelplated. We meant it as a surprise, but, of course, since you don't want it"

don't want it"—
"James Jefferson Raine! Who said I didn't want it! Oh, you dear boy!" His neck was clasped in a smothering embrace. The result of the matter was that Renie became an expert wheelswoman in a wonderfully brief space of time. But she shed tears in sleepless nights of remorse over her reprehensible double life. Several times she bravely resolved, since she could not decide between her lover and her wheel, that she would boldly ride around by his office and reveal to him her offending in all its enormity; but the next day she would weaken, seek the streets less frequented by him, or fly miles into the country.

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It was a cool morning in July when Horace stopped at Renie's door. "I must go to Bulkley on horseback," he explained, "as the railroad is in danger of being blocked before I get back. I will come back late to-morrow, long after your blue eyes are closed, violet." He thought how fair and sweet she looked in her white, lace-trimmed wrapper.

"You should have a bicycle," suggested Renie. "See there." Rill Richmond flashed past on her wheel.

"If we both rode like—like that," she faltered, "I might go with you—part way."

"Even for that great pleasure, Renie," he said, freezingly, "I would think I had paid a great price for your company in the loss of my ideal. But there! Don't cry over such an absurdly impossible thing, my pet. It angered me even to think of your name being used in reference to such an unwomanly exhibition."

"That settles it!" declared Renie, after the door closed upon him. "I will give up my bike, James! This afternoon I will take a farewell ride; to-morrow you must take the wheel away—anywhere—only out of my sight!"

"Whew!" whistled Jim, bringing the front legs of his tipped-up chair to the floor with a thud, "I believe you mean it this time, Topsy."

"I do," she said firmly; "then I will tell him all—and—if he cannot forgive me"—

"You'll still have your bike, Topsy!" called Jim after her with cheerful consolation. But she had gone to her room, where she succeeded in making her eyes so red and swollen that she concluded to put off her farewell appearance until the next afternoon.

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After a long ride in the summer twilight she realized that her last appearance as a rider must positively be drawn to a

close.

"Almost night, and I am miles from home," she said, slightly dismayed. "I can make it shorter by taking the wagon track through the woods."

It was dark under the trees, and the moist leaves made a soft and noiseless track for the wheel. That is why the voices of two men reached Renie's ear while she herself was unpoticed.

noticed. What were they plotting? Murder, surely. And whose? Soon she was convinced that her own Professor was to be robbed and murdered on his way home with money to pay the

workmen.

A soft rustle of leaves, a rush as noiseless and swift as a swellow's flight, and straight past the two tramps flew a small form on a wheel. In an incredibly short time Renie had passed through the woods and reached the railroad. It was a very white, resolute face that she turned toward the path over which she had just come. Two men were watching the mill road over which he must come.

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"I don't know exactly what to do; but I'll spoil their plans somehow," she said firmly. "It is twelve miles to the forks of this and the mill road. I can only get there in time by leaving the road and taking the railway," she said. "He told me he would meet the eight o'clock train there, get some valuable papers—it must have been that dreadful money—and start for home at once."

With trembling fingers she took out her watch. There was just time.
"Oh, if that train will only be late!"

"Oh, if that train will only be late!"
She loosened her encumbering skirt and tossed it away, lifted her wheel across the rail and mounted instantly. It was not an ideal bicycle track. Stones and ties bumped her up and down; but she only bent lower, and with set lips passed over rough and smooth with indifference. Sometimes a long stretch of smooth path by the track gave her a gain of time, though the instant consumed in lifting her wheel over the rail, and remounting, made her frantic. Sometimes steep embankments towered over her, making the way dark and uncertain.

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"If I can only get there in time, only in time!" she whispered to herself with white lips.

Just then, with a crash and a bump, she fell, striking on her back across a sharp tie. She had run into a cattle-guard. Stunned and breathless, she staggered to her feet and mounted, with the painful consciousness that her back protested against every move

back across a sharp tie. She had run into a cattle-guard. Stunned and breathless, she staggered to her feet and mounted, with the painful consciousness that her back protested against every move.

"I won't faint," she muttered, half hysterically. "What is it the new school of thought teaches? All things are imaginary. I have no back, no pain, no— What's that!"

Suddenly before her yawned, densely black, the tunnel. She had forgotten that. And what is that far-away humming and rumbling of the rails behind her? Half a mile straight through the tunnel is the goal she seeks. She can take the road to her right; it leads around the hill a mile and a half. It is safe for her, but every minute may mean her lover's life. The alternative is the tunnel. She knows the meaning of that distant rumbling. A stone in the darkness—a broken tie—a break in the wheel—in that means no escape. Will she risk it? Not once does the brave wheel slacken; not once does its rider waver! Into the black cavern she speeds and is swallowed up in darkness. Perhaps the angels are clearing the way—perhaps she calls on them softly. The track is straight as a die, and in the smooth center there is a chance for her. She is hardly conscious; all life seems to be merged in feet and close-set lips. A dim opening is before her; how faint it is! Nearer, nearer! A scream that reverberates deafeningly against the rocky walls makes her heart leap and stand still. The train has entered the tunnel? It is now or never—a race for life. The earth trembles. Nearer the opening comes, nearer the rushing monster!

Professor H. P. Waldon, riding serenely along toward the crossing, thinking with hushed reverence of his fair lady-love asleep in her lily bower, hears the screech of a locomotive, reins in his horse, then beholds issue from the blackness a vision that makes him spring to the ground with the impression that he has gone suddenly stark, staring mad.

That same lily maid, with bare head and flying hair that looked as if it had never heard of hairpin or comb; f

THE CHILDREN'S CORNER

A "Proverb Hunt" will now begin this column. A prize is offered for correct solutions of the first three pictures. Only offered for subscribers may compete, and competitors must be children of subscribers may compete, and competitors must be under sixteen years of age. Answers should be sent in for each group, e. g., 1-3, 4-6, 7-9, etc. A prize is offered for each group of three pictures, and a better one at the end of the year for the largest number of correct answers. Letters marked "Proverb Hunt" will not be opened until ten days after the third picture of each group is issued. The first letter opened, containing correct answers, will be prize winner; all others will receive honorable mention. Address your letters to Cousin Dorothy, FARMER'S ADVOCATE, London, Ont., and mark them "Proverb Hunt"—outside the envelope.



HIDDEN PROVERB-NO. 17.

My Dear Cousins.—

I must remind you that all MSS. for the historical competition must be sent in at once. They should reach London not later than June 30th. I have just received two—one describing the death of a British martyr; the other, of one in Carthage. Both are very good. As usual, the "Proverb Hunt" prize is carried off by one of the champions, John Sheehan. G. B. Rothwell deserves honorable mention, as he also has sent in a correct list of answers, viz.: 13—"There's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip"; 14—"Never swap horses when crossing a stream"; 15—"Old men for counsel, young men for war." Violet Clarke answered the first two correctly. G. B. Rothwell says that his books are increasing since he tried the "Proverb Hunt." Such a nice letter has reached me from one of my old friends, Blanche Boyd, I must quote some of it. She says: "I think the Advocate is dry, except the 'Children's Corner' and 'Uncle Tom's Corner,' which are very nice, I Children's we do not happen to be one of them, we will have to wait till we are; then perhaps we will also like them." Rather hard on the practical part of the paper, isn't it? but then, you see, we don't care about raising chickens and sheep. We are willing to let the "grown-uppers" attend to that; it is easy enough to eat them without learning the latest scientific methods. Here is another quotation: "I like you already, and always will; you must feel quite important with so many cousins." Is it any wonder that the "Corner" is a real pleasure to attend to when my "relations" say such nice things as that? I am very sorry for your disappointment, Blanche; something must have got tangled up somewhere. Many thanks for the advertisement, which I have sent on to the "cousin" who wanted it.

The Candy Country.

How it happened she could not tell, but a sudden ust of wind caught the big umbrella, and away Lily went like a thistledown, over houses and trees, until her breath was all gone and she had to let go. Down she went crash into a tree which let go. Down she went crash into a tree which looked like glass, for she could see through the red cherries and the brown branches. She picked a cherry and ate it. Oh, how good it was!—all sugar and no stone. Then she found that the whole tree was made of candy, so she ate some of the twigs, then climbed down, making more surprising discoveries. What looked like snow was white sugar, and the rocks were chocolate. In the little white houses lived the dainty candy people, all made of the best sugar, and painted to look like real men and women. Carriages rolled along drawn by red and yellow candy horses, sugar cows fed in the fields, and sugar birds sang in the trees. Lily danced along toward a fine palace of white cream candy, with pillars of striped peppermint stick and a roof of frosting. She ran up the chocolate steps into the pretty rooms. A fountain of lemonade supplied drink; and floors of ice cream kept people and things from sticking together, as they would have done had it been warm. Lily soon learned to know the characters of her friends by a single taste. The young ladies were flavored with violet, rose, and orange; the gentlemen were apt to have cordials inside of them, as she found out when she ate one now and then, and got her tongue bitten by the hot, strong taste. The people all lived on sugar, and were always sweet-tempered. If any got broken they just stuck the parts together and were all right again. The way they grew old was to get thinner and thinner till there was danger of their warishing. danger of their vanishing. Then the friends of the old person put him in a neat coffin and carried him to a great golden urn which was full of syrup. Here he was dipped and dipped till he was as good as new. This was very interesting to Lily, and she went to many funerals. But at last she began to get cross, as children always do when they live on candy; and the little people wished she would go away. No wonder, when she would catch up a dear sugar baby and eat him, cradle and all; or break some old grandmother into bits because she reproved her for naughty ways. Lily calmly sat down on the biggest church one day, crushing it flat. The king ordered her to go home; but she said, "I won't!" and bit his head off, crown and all. Such a wail went up at this awful deed that she ran away out of the city, fearing that some

one would put poison into her candy.
"I suppose I shall get somewhere if I keep walking; and I can't starve, though I hate the sight of this horrid candy," she said to herself as she hurried ver the mountains of rock candy that divided the city of Saccharissa from the great desert of brown sugar that lay beyond.—(To be Continued.)

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