

his delicate hand, its tiny black eyes looking fearlessly into his own.

I held the cage while he slipped it in, and he carried it in triumph into the house. "Oh," he said, "how that carries me back to my boyhood!" and he began a series of reminiscences that promised to be full of charm. Yet I was a little surprised that such a lover of freedom should be willing to take a bird captive.

"But what am I thinking of! I don't know what young robins eat," he cried; "what shall I give it?"

"If you will let me carry the cage out and set it under the tree, I think the mother bird will feed it," I ventured to suggest, hoping that he would let it go free.

"Very well, we will try it," he said. So I carried the gilded prison out and set it in the cool grass beneath the shade of an apple-tree. In a moment down swooped, not the mother, but a gay oriole, its shining gold flashing between me and the gray rock. He lit on the cage and began to chatter to the little prisoner, who responded with a plaintive chirp. Faint as it was, the mother heard, and in a moment shot down from the tree and fiercely attacked the inquisitive visitor. A battle of about a minute ensued, but the birds separated before we had time to interfere, and the oriole flew meekly away. Then the mother robin, with sweet notes of compassion, comforted the frightened baby. Shortly she darted off and soon returned with a fat earthworm in her beak, which, with great skill, she dropped into the yawning bill between the wires of the cage. And so all the long June day she came and went and nursed and fed her darling. There the cage stood when the dew fell and the setting sun sent me home.

The next time I saw Dr. Holmes I asked about the fate of the little bird. "Ah," said he, "my heart smote me at making an innocent captive, and the next day I opened the prison door, and the faithful mother easily enticed her little one into the great free world."



Bicycle Enthusiasm

By Jno. Gilmer Speed

When enthusiasm waxes great about any new sport in this changeful America, those of us who have had experience as observers are apt to doubt as to its permanency. Too great popularity is very wearing in its effects. Some twenty years ago the velocipede was taken up by all the young people in the land, but, as it was a bone-breaking, muscle-wrenching machine, its vogue was very short. Then we had the roller-skates, the use of which enabled young people to gratify their gregarious instincts, and it was an old-fogy town indeed in which there was not a skating-rink. The popularity of this sport also passed away, without any better reason than that people grew tired of it. And so with half a dozen other games and sports which have enjoyed a brief fashion. But the bicycle enthusiasm during several years past has grown steadily and shows no sign of abatement. It has never been a fashionable sport in the sense that it belonged distinctively to people of wealth and position. And it may be that this fact has contributed somewhat to the longevity of its popularity. Indeed, a would-be swell of vulgar appearance was heard to say the other day at Long Branch that gentlemen do not ride bicycles. This statement, however, as every one knows, is absurd. Gentlemen do ride bicycles, and ladies also; but others, very many others, than these also ride them. Hence the popularity of this machine, which is vulgarly known as a "byke" and a "wheel." We have the authority of Mr. Edward S. Martin for it that a bicyclist who will call his machine a "byke" or a "wheel" is pretty sure also to wear "pants" and to send "wires" to his "young lady friends."

Doubtless custom and the best opinion will in a little while combine to establish a bicycle etiquette which will be binding upon the language as well as the manners of those who ride these easily running and distance-reducing machines. When that time comes, we shall know the status of a bicyclist by the way he handles the nomenclature of the sport, and we shall also know where to place him by

his consideration for others, or lack of it, as he races along the streets and roads. But it takes time to establish by the mere force of public opinion customs that are binding upon thoughtless and selfish people. For such as these who ride bicycles there are general laws in all the States, and special laws in some of them. To ride a horse or drive a vehicle on any sidewalk, whether a city, a town, or a village, is an infringement of the general law, and in the State of New York it is made a misdemeanor by the Penal Code. Now a bicycle is a vehicle, and its rider has no right whatever on sidewalks with it, where, as a matter of fact, it is more dangerous than an ordinary wagon or carriage, and much more dangerous than a horse at full gallop. The flight of a bicycle is almost noiseless, and it approaches a pedestrian very frequently before he is aware. It is true that, considering how much bicycle-riding is done on sidewalks, there are very few accidents; but there should be none. And then, again, as a lady who had been nearly run down by one said to the writer the other day, "It is no worse to be killed outright than to be scared to death."

The privileges that bicycle-riders enjoy on the roads and in the public parks are not accorded to them specially as such, but because the law does not discriminate against the machines as vehicles. It is perfectly plain, therefore, that where other vehicles are forbidden to go bicycles are also forbidden. And the laws should be very strictly enforced against all who break them. But these general laws have not been generally put in operation, and cities and towns have enacted ordinances regulating the use of bicycles in the streets. In some New Jersey towns, when a new ordinance of this kind has been put into effect, the fines for using the sidewalks have amounted in the aggregate to large sums. But the bicyclists themselves, and the bicycle clubs, should endeavor to reform this abuse of the use of sidewalks. Public opinion is a greater force than a book-full of statutes, and the careless and reckless riders who use the walks specially designed for pedestrians should be put under the ban and made to feel that they have offended against the proprieties.

The wrongful use of the roads by too fast going, and going where only pedestrians are allowed by the law, are the only abuses of the bicycle enthusiasm with which the public has any concern. Some men, both young and old, overtax their strength in efforts to go distances beyond their endurance, and at rates of speed too great for their power. But such abuses are too individual to worry over, and each carries with it a quick and severe penalty. Not to use bicycles because some persons have so injured themselves is an argument on a parity with that which would declare that water must not be drunk because some persons injure their digestion by too much water-drinking.

As to the genuineness of the bicyclist's enthusiasm there can be no doubt in the world. A man once possessed by it will take any amount of time from his busy hours in an effort to make a convert. There is also in it a wholesome fellowship which inclines one who has been initiated in the pleasures to feel like offering them to every man who appears to have within him the elements of comradeship. Horseback-riding has not this effect upon those devoted to it; nor has rowing, nor skating. Walking has a similar effect in a marked degree; but bicycling, where there are decent roads, has most manifest advantages over pedestrianism. The ordinary walk of a healthy man rarely extends further than five miles there and five miles back, making ten miles in a day. The walker's radius is therefore seldom greater than five miles, and much more frequently it is only three. But the bicyclist can go four miles with the same effort that a walker employs to go one. His radius is therefore extended to twenty miles, and he can explore the country for that distance around his home. His increased capacity means more than it seems. The walker with the five-mile radius explores and learns the beauties and peculiarities of seventy-eight and a half square miles; the bicyclist, with the extended radius, sees all the beauties of an area of more than twelve hundred square miles—a territory more than fifteen times as great as that open to the man who plods along on foot.

The Home

Women and Politics

That women of all social grades should assemble to consider the best methods of securing honest administration of municipal affairs, on the eve of an election that has aroused more moral feeling than has ever been excited in the history of New York politics, means, not that woman is in danger of becoming unsexed, but that she sees how dependent are the health, morals, and refinement of her household on the condition that controls its environment. The close relation between politics and the home is being recognized. In spite of the declaration, often heard, of woman's rebellion against routine, of her restlessness under the conditions that limit her to certain fields of activity, women as a body are conservative. They prefer, the great majority of them, to avoid contact with the outer life called the world. Slowly but surely the conviction has grown, even among very conservative women, that a clean house is impossible in a dirty street; that health cannot be maintained without the active co-operation of the proper authorities; that morals are not a matter of precept, but of example, not merely in the home, but in the school, in the street, in the parks, in the street conveyances; that environment—which in cities depends so largely on honest municipal control—has a positive influence on the development of character; that familiarity with sights and sounds which dull sensitiveness, and cause indifference to conditions that minister to disease and vice, lowers the moral tone of the home.

To preach against intemperance and accept the violation of the law governing the sale of liquors, the only protest being the declaration that it must be endured, is not the way to teach respect for the law. To make gambling illegal and permit it to flourish under the patronage of the police is not the way to teach a child the dignity of authority. It is impossible to educate children to respect laws that do not compel obedience. To hear in the home only protests against the evils that beset it, and not see warfare waged against those evils, is the surest way to kill patriotism. To salute the flag as the emblem of the country, when the country stands for political corruption, tolerated, if not nurtured, by its own citizens, is like praying for salvation with your hand in your neighbor's pocket.

Women are realizing this. They see, as never before, their opportunity to educate voters to a sense of their responsibility. They know, as never before, that the ballot is but a poor instrument for the preservation of the country if it is not controlled by a moral sentiment and love of country.

This sentiment, this love, it is woman's to create, woman's to nurture. Not the number of ballots cast, but the intelligence, the honesty, the consecration that control them represent the salvation of the country. It is a beggarly thing to sit in comfort criticising the conditions that rob life and property of security, purity, and integrity, when the critic's indifference is a contributing cause to those conditions.

The character of every public officer represents the average character of the voters who put him in his place. They stand or fall together. A citizen of high character decides the character of the man he votes for, not at the ballot-box, but at the primary. He works, not ten minutes a day, but a year, two years, four years, to secure honest government; he works through organized efforts

to make bad government impossible, even in his village, all the year.

Who has had the greatest influence in forming the characters of the voters of to-day? Woman. These voters are the sons, brothers, husbands, pupils, of women. There are many of them to-day who never sat for one hour under the teaching of men. Can it be possible that the failure of woman to appreciate the value of civic and National responsibility is the cause of the present condition of politics in our country? Has her lack of appreciation of the responsibility of a citizen been the cause of the criminal indifference which to-day has put sections of our country in bondage to politicians? If so, she has the opportunity to educate the coming voters to a sense of the duties of citizenship. She can educate herself to appreciate the value of honest citizenship; she can give a positive meaning to the term "honest citizen;" she can make every voter under her influence feel that it is his private as well as his public duty to secure honest administration of government, whether of city, of State, or of Nation.

Laws cannot be administered above the sentiment of the governed, nor can they be degraded below the tolerance of the governed. Intelligence and sentiment are born and nurtured in the home. If they are personal and selfish, we must suffer from the maladministration of public affairs; if they are altruistic, good government is assured. Women must show their intelligence, not by building hospitals, homes, and institutions, but by struggling to make these institutions unnecessary, because the best conditions for the development of every child born under the American flag shall have been secured through honest and intelligent administration of public affairs.



"Dropped in Her Tracks"

By Margaret E. Sangster

The homestead, with its substantial house and ample barns and outbuildings, was set like a gem amid the green lawns and spreading elms and maples of a beautiful New England valley. Everything in and around it indicated the thrift of careful spending and equally careful saving; nothing was run down, nothing looked neglected. No field of the slothful here, but hard work which had kept everything in perfect repair, and pride which had suffered no falling below a certain standard, no contrast in any way with the best that one's neighbors had to show. Not a leaf allowed to lie on the velvet sward, nor a loose hinge permitted a single day on the gate, nor any defacement endured which hammer or paint-brush could remedy. A fine old place, conscientiously maintained in excellent order. The high-water mark of neatness reached, nothing less tolerated.

I went in, ushered by a young daughter of the house into a stiflingly dark parlor, clean and grim, and musty for lack of fresh air. As she opened a shutter the sunlight streamed in, and the dignified furniture, the unread books on the old-fashioned "what-not," the framed photographs on the wall, seemed surprised and abashed, as a nun might were her cell suddenly exchanged for a ball-room. "Kept for funerals" occurred to me, so little had this apartment the look of a place where the living had any business to be except in the rôle of mourners for the dead.

"Mother would like to see you," said the girl, hospitably, "but she is ill; won't you come to her room? She hasn't been out of bed for a week. She is all tuckered out and run down, and she doesn't get her strength."

It is of this mother, a woman prematurely old, who should have been in her prime, and of her daughters, slim and pallid girls, defrauded of flesh and color, that I am fain to write. I had lately been the guest of a woman much older by count of years than the one whose thin, feverish hand