

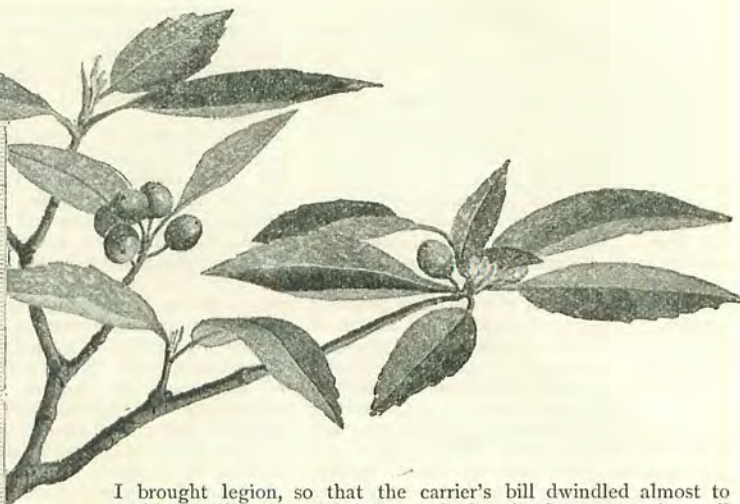


MY DONKEY-CHAIR.

ARDENT riders, and ardent lovers of the "bike" are no doubt the majority of the readers of THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER, and heartily do I congratulate all who are allowed to ride these machines. In my use of the word "allowed" I am not referring to the comparatively few whose parents cannot yet reconcile their minds to seeing their daughters so mounted. Solely is it to those on whom a special veto is placed by their medical man—a veto it would not only be unwise, but often suicidal to disobey. The mere prejudice against a girl riding a bicycle is fast dying out.

Eighteen months ago a lady of my acquaintance uttered these words, "If my daughter takes to riding a bicycle, I shall disown her." Some few months later she not only made her daughter a present of a beautiful one, but took to riding a tricycle herself!

To those however, who suffer from a diseased lung, weak heart, etc., such exercise should be regarded as "forbidden fruit." "You must not think of using one," said my doctor; "but you need drives, and to be out in the air without fatigue." Drives! We did not possess a vehicle, could not afford carriage hire, and personally I had a not uncommon dislike to both Bath and Coventry chairs. What was to be done? To make a long story short, with the advice of a friend, who drove a similar one, I started a donkey-chair. Hours and hours I spent in the air wandering up country lanes, exploring surrounding villages, the result being a great improvement in health and much refreshment of mind. Or I would drive from my country vicarage into the adjoining town, for it was wonderful how often something was "wanted" in those days! The errands Ned and I accomplished were numerous, the parcels



I brought legion, so that the carrier's bill dwindled almost to nothing. The cost of keeping a donkey in the country is small provided you have garden and house produce to give him and a little paddock for grass. In addition all that is needed, for such light work, is a small amount of chaff, hay, and corn daily.

Nothing is truer than that we have to pay for experience. It is to save any of my readers, who feel inclined to follow my footsteps, from this that I give the following particulars.

"An ass is not good for the soul" is an old saying. This to a great extent is true but there are many happy exceptions. My lot was to meet with one. My first experience of this animal was a disheartening one. A splendid donkey, prettily marked, and a prize-winner was kindly lent me by a farmer. "Keep it as long as you like," he said. A very short time showed however that "Blossom" was "master of the situation." Although I tried both kindness and severity, beating him with all the strength I possessed, nothing would rouse him from his sluggishness. "Boys could make it go," I was told. Alas! I was not a boy! Back I sent him. In the vicinity was a donkey for sale. I had learnt my lesson, so determined to prove him for myself before purchasing. For more than a week Ned and I "kept company." Oh, the delight that little creature was to me! Daily I returned more full of his praises. So gentle, obedient, and willing. It would run for two miles at a time without a word or a whip, I meanwhile enjoying perfect rest, the reins lying idly on my lap.

Ned I say he became mine. £3 10s. was its price; thirty shillings too much said the wisecracks, but I could not agree with them, and have never regretted my purchase. Donkeys range in price from thirty shillings to twelve pounds. True, Ned was "nothing to look at," but believing that "beauty is but skin deep," and "handsome is that handsome does," I was content, and good food and grooming soon made him quite presentable.

Fortunately he is not a vain individual or his head must have been turned long ago at the many complimentary speeches and glances passed on him. "Such a nice little turn-out," say some, while the children will exclaim as Ned runs or even gallops along, "Look, mother, at that dear little donkey! Is he not sweet?"



NED AND I.

List of expenses for first year :—

	£	s.	d.
Donkey	3	10	0
Chair (wicker, medium size)	2	5	0
Food	2	12	0
Second-hand harness	1	0	0
Shafts and front iron work	0	12	6
Shoes (sixpence each)	0	8	0
Basket wings	0	5	0
Donkey clipped	0	3	0
Whip, stake, halter	0	2	0
Blackening and polishing brush (combined)	0	2	0
Grooming brush and blacking	0	1	2
Incidental expenses	0	4	4
	11	5	0

Average cost per week 0 4 3

List of expenses for second year :—

Food	2	12	0
New tyres on wheels	0	17	0
Shoes	0	8	0
Donkey clipped	0	3	0
Chair revarnished	0	4	0
Incidental expenses	0	5	0
	4	9	6

Average per week 0 1 8½

Destruction to the tyres is caused, not so much by distance, as by driving over stones, especially granite stones; whose sharp edges make deep incisions. It pays to purchase the best rubber tyres. The large wheels will cost 7s. or 7s. 6d. each, the little front wheel 3s. 6d. The proper varnish should be obtained from a basket-maker. If you varnish yourself, which is quite easy, you can do it for half the cost. A basket-maker also will put the side wings to your chair to prevent the dirt splashing. To prevent flies teasing the donkey in summer, you should tie a bit of rag to the end of a stick, dip this into turpentine and touch the points on which the flies settle, such as the knees. The smell will keep them off for hours. Of course turpentine must not go near the eyes nor any wound. Donkeys have hard mouths; if at all unmanageable a curb will make all right. Don't buy a donkey that has been accustomed to stop at public houses in your neighbourhood or it will be sure to stop with you there! Their memory for roads and places is extraordinary and might shame some of us.

If you can afford it, get for £10 10s. a tiny donkey-carriage that will hold two persons, similar in character to that used by our Gracious Majesty. It would prove a sociable and delightful memento of the diamond jubilee year!

EMILY TREGELLES COOK.

A PAINTED SPLASH-BOARD.

THE panel from which the design given was taken was one I painted some time since, the *motif* being "Spring." The daffodil, crocus, primrose, wild hyacinth and sorrel are the plants used, and the branch upon which the two bullfinches are perched is that beautiful shrub the *pyrus japonica*.

Ordinary artist's canvas would be the best material to use, and the edges should be turned over to the back so as to prevent the canvas fraying. You could procure a piece of canvas of the requisite size at an artist's colourman. I should recommend you to paint the canvas over with a delicate bluish-grey tint made of cobalt with a touch of vermilion or Venetian red in it to grey it and with flake white to lighten it. This tint should not be at all heavy, so use plenty of white. Thin the colour with half linseed oil and half turps, and put on with a flat hog-hair brush about one inch to one inch and a half in width, and keep the brush work in the direction of the length of the canvas. This should be allowed to dry thoroughly before the painting is begun, and it would be better to leave it a week to harden.

You must either enlarge the design on paper and transfer to the canvas with carbon paper, or sketch it on in charcoal. As you are going to paint the design in oil, there is no occasion to outline the forms, though it might help you later on to use an outline, say, of burnt sienna thinned with turpentine before commencing to paint the panel.

The grass should be painted on in soft warm tones of green made of yellow ochre, raw sienna, cobalt, French blue and brightened with aureolin and lemon chrome; but be careful not to get the greens crude, such as a mixture of emerald green and chrome gives. Remember, too, that white has the effect of greying any tone mixed with it as well as lightening it. The distant grass should be a light grey so that it almost loses itself in the background colour. For juicy greens use less white—hardly any in fact. For grey-greens such as you get in daffodil leaves, cobalt with just a touch of yellow ochre and plenty of white will give you good tones. I should advise you to keep the greens all on the side of grey rather than yellow, and don't get them too strong.

