

then, happily for her, hardened her heart; his love would be but a poor prop to cling to, and she answered steadily—

"Indeed, I must say no, Adriaen, but we can still be friends."

"Friends," repeated he, darkening with anger and mortification, "only friends; you have never really cared for me, or you would not speak so coldly, Anna. For years I have loved you devotedly, and now—I have deserved better at your hands, Anna. I—I—"

A party of students approaching, he broke off and vanished into the darkness, and she, feeling little inclined to face her mother's fussy questions and comments, turned down a side path.

Poor girl, the longed-for day had brought her nothing but trouble and disappointment; even Adriaen's love was a delusion, and his persistency largely due to wounded vanity. These sorrowful meditations, however, were speedily ended by a sudden downpour of rain, a flood which extinguished all lights and caused a general stampede amongst the guests.

After tumbling over various benches and

other obstacles, Anna wisely took shelter under a tree to wait till Adriaen should return for her.

Steadily and soakingly the rain descended; ten minutes passed and Anna, shivering and weary, was on the verge of relapsing into tears, when she heard some one calling; a figure appeared with umbrella and lantern, and behold, not Cousin Adriaen, but Mynheer Jansen to the rescue.

"Ah, my dear Jungjuffrouw, how distractedly I have sought you, and the Mevrouw, your respected mother, is so concerned; but she has accepted a seat in Mevrouw Koninck's cab and confided to me the privilege of escorting you to the station."

His broad plain face beamed as he flourished his umbrella and proffered his arm.

"Walk in this rain," exclaimed Anna disconsolately.

"I fear much that so it must be," he returned with ill-concealed satisfaction, and led her off in triumph. "Ah, my dear Vrou Anna, what happiness if it might be ever thus," sighed mynheer sentimentally, as he

looked down at the little figure clinging to his arm, and it must be owned that mynheer had not taken the shortest route to the station. It was the first and last time the worthy man ever talked nonsense, so he may be forgiven.

"For ever under an umbrella," retorted Anna pettishly, as she slipped into the gutter. "You have extraordinary notions of happiness, Mynheer Jansen."

"You take me too literally," he returned rather huffed. "But I would that I might be always at your side to shield you from the storms of life; you have many to admire and love you, but not one who would make you happier than I," he concluded ardently.

If he for once was foolish, she for once was wise, as betwixt tears and laughter she answered—

"It shall be as you will; no doubt we shall be as happy as most people."

This was not very encouraging, but Mynheer Jansen found it eminently satisfactory; and what is more, he is still of the same mind, and there are few more contented people in Alkmaar than Mynheer and Mevrouw Jansen.



HOW TO FORM A GIRLS' CYCLING CLUB.



NOTWITHSTANDING the prophecy that the great popularity of cycling during last year was unlikely to be continued this, it is safe to say that there has been a large increase in the number of ladies and girls who have dis-

covered in bicycling a fascinating as well as a healthful amusement.

There will probably not be many amongst my readers who do not possess machines of their own, or at least who do not ride when occasion offers. And it must have soon become apparent to them that society, when riding, adds greatly to one's enjoyment. "Girls are not clubbable creatures," has often been said, and with some degree of truth, but the cycling club is such a charming institution when properly organised, that girls find a great deal of pleasure in belonging to or starting one.

A large club is not at all desirable, nor is it at all an indication of either success or usefulness.

From twenty to twenty-five members are quite sufficient for a most enjoyable and successful organisation. The great thing is to be clubbable; and, of course, the more numerous the members are the less intimate and truly friendly can the individuals be with all.

The first steps to be taken in the formation of a club, such as is practicable in most towns, and even in large villages nowadays, is to look round and see who cycles amongst one's acquaintances. This done, the preliminary meeting should be arranged at some one's house, which is the most central for all to attend. The circular which two or three girl friends can issue in their joint names to mutual friends should run as follows:—

"Blanktown,

"April 12th, 1897.

"DEAR —.—Your presence is asked at a meeting to be held on Thursday week next,

April 22nd, at the Elms, Cherry Tree Road, at 5 o'clock, to consider whether a ladies' cycling club can be formed. Please invite any friends you think likely to join to come to the meeting.

"We are, yours faithfully,

"A. B.

"M. N.

"Y. Z."

At the meeting the first thing is to discuss freely the chances of the club meeting with support if formed. All those present should then be asked whether they will promise to join, and their names be put down by the girl who is for the time-being acting as secretary. If these are found to be numerous enough to promise success the club is formally inaugurated. "That this club be named the Blanktown Ladies' Cycling Club" is the first rule, and the others can be easily drawn up from those of other clubs already in existence, and we need not, therefore, occupy space by setting them down. The next thing is to elect the captain and sub-captain, and both these should be girls thoroughly popular with the majority of those present or likely to join. Not necessarily the best riders, though that is desirable, if the fact goes hand in hand with popularity. The secretary and treasurer (unless the club be a very large one) may well unite in one person. Let her be a thoroughly business-like girl, with plenty of good humour, and above all tact. The possession of the latter quality will do much to help the club over hard places, should any occur. More than is generally understood depends on a good hard-working, painstaking secretary.

The committee should be small and well-chosen, so as to represent all parties and all parts of the town.

We have now got our officers; it now remains to settle the very important matter of the subscription. This need not be high. There are several excellent ladies' cycling clubs of which I know where half-a-crown a season is found ample, with good management on the part of the secretary, to meet all demands. It should, however, be paid promptly on election, or at the commencement of each season.

We will now suppose that the club is formed, the rules drawn up and passed, and the club-room at one of the member's houses agreed upon. The programme for the season is the next important item for consideration. This will naturally consist chiefly of rides on half-holidays and in the long summer evenings to places of moderate distance; the great fault of most club riders being that they wish to ride too far or to "do" so many miles in a given time. It is well to remember that a successful season is that which gives health and enjoyment to the greatest number of members, and is not that in which any given number of miles has been ridden. No ride should be long enough to overtax the weakest member; and the captain or sub-captain must remember that the pace is to be that which will allow of all members riding in comfort. To arrive at the end of the "run" with several of the members in one's charge knocked up, even although very fast time has been accomplished, is no credit to the captain. A very good plan is to divide the members into two sections, one under the command of the captain and the other under the sub-captain, and then those who are able to "push on" can do so without distressing the slower riders or causing them to feel uncomfortable.

A few words may not be out of place upon the subject of manners. Be sociable; and let every member at once put her foot down firmly on the slightest cliquishness should it arise. Because A. B.'s bicycle is second-hand or not a "highest grade" one is no reason for despising it or her. The machine will possibly carry her just as well through the season as your own. All members of a club whilst out together should be considered to be equal in social rank, and the true gentlewomen are those who try to make things pleasant and the club runs enjoyable to others.

A word also to dress. Let this be neat and unassuming. If possible it should have some claim (when club-riding at all events) to uniformity. A plain light or dark skirt, a neat linen blouse (for summer wear) and a plain sailor hat are within the reach of all, and are in most girls' wardrobes, and but little more is required.