



NEAR-SIDE MOUNT.

## FANCY CYCLING.

By ISABEL MARKS.



WITHOUT THE AID OF THE HANDS.

TRICK-RIDING is a form of cycling which only requires to be known in order to be appreciated. Not only is it a most fascinating pastime and a welcome method of obtaining exercise awheel when bad weather prevents out-of-door runs, but it likewise gives such command over the bicycle that unexpected encounters with either horsed vehicles or unwary pedestrians lose their terrors and their dangers, and traffic-riding becomes as easy a matter as cycling along a quiet country lane.

The skill which enables the trickster to accomplish the many daring evolutions which she executes with facility and grace, is not obtained without labour. But that labour is well rewarded, proficiency in this special branch being not the only result of one's exertions. The excellence of the general riding is much improved by the cultivation of ankling which it brings in its

train. Even pedalling is of the greatest help in lessening the fatigue felt when ascending hills, lifting weight from the rising pedal

assisting the going in an extraordinary but quite comprehensible manner. This advantage is further heightened by the absence of jerky movements which tend to interfere with the speed of the machine and to adversely affect the steering. Proficiency in this direction may be attained by pedalling with one foot at a time. Whichever foot is to be idle should rest against the tubes of the frame, whilst the industrious other should follow the revolutions of the crank, putting weight upon the descending, and endeavouring, by pulling it up, to assist the rising pedal. At first this process will be found fatiguing, as the ankle muscles have become enfeebled through lack of practice; but this fatigue will speedily vanish with practice. A few minutes given for a few days to this exercise will increase ease of riding to an extent that must be experienced to be appreciated. Each foot must of course share in the lesson,



SKIPPING WITH A HOOP.



RIDING THROUGH A HOOP.

one of the cardinal principles in cycling, both for road and for trick-work, being the inculcation of equal capacity in either foot for any work it may be called upon to perform.

All mounts and dismounts should be practised from either side of the machine. We women have not many different ways of reaching the saddle. The near-side mount is a pretty variety upon the usual manner, although it involves much attention being paid to the proper arrangement of the skirt before seating oneself upon the saddle. To effect this mount, stand upon the left side of the machine, place the left foot upon the left pedal, lean upon the handles, and rise into your seat, bringing the right foot over the frame to catch the right pedal as it rises. Lithe and nimble girls frequently favour a running mount, which is effective and graceful. This result is obtained in the following manner. Stand upon whichever side of the machine you prefer. Hold the handles lightly, and start the machine by running alongside. When you are moving sufficiently quickly to ensure success, lean upon the handles and spring into the saddle,



DOUBLE-RIDING.



SKATING.

steering by body-movement and the help of the handle-bar. Catch the pedal as it rises with one foot and rest the other upon any convenient point, both being on the same side of the frame, and ride side-saddle, or, if desirous of cycling in the ordinary position, rise upon the pedal when it is at its lowest point, bring the unoccupied foot across the frame upon the other pedal, and ride on your tranquil way.

Two indispensable adjuncts to the practice of trick-cycling are (1) capacity to turn quickly and sharply to either side; (2) the ability to make complete small circles to right and to left. The latter is easy of accomplishment when one is going slowly, but to take a left-hand circle when riding fast requires skill and discretion. To attain proficiency it is well to practise at a quiet pace and to lean towards the inner side of the circle to be described, steering principally by body-movement. Winding among small obstacles such as balls, pieces of wood, toy skittles, etc., placed at given intervals, without touching any of the obstructions, helps greatly towards furthering this end, and it is possible to swing in and out among them when they

are separated by but very short spaces, the shorter the better for this purpose. This exercise adds ease and grace as well as skill to the fair one who practises it.

Riding without the aid of the hands upon the handle-bar is another easy feat, the acquisition of which will suffice to amuse one upon a rainy day. When riding fairly quickly in the usual manner, release the handles, whilst sitting well back in the saddle. Avoid rolling in your seat, and follow the movements of the bicycle with your body, remembering always that to incline towards the side upon which a fall threatens is the way to avert that disaster. The equilibrium is much assisted by even pedalling, by a careful avoidance of unequal foot-pressure. This initial proceeding requires some little courage and determination, as the fascination exerted by the handle-bar is at first very irresistible, and a feeling is aroused that if a fall over the head is averted a tumble over the side is inevitable. However, a little perseverance soon effects marvels, and enables the adventurous not only to accomplish this first part of the art of riding "hands off," but to proceed to the more difficult task of attempting circles and figures of eight when in this position, the latter consisting of a double circle whose lines intersect at one point, thus forming a good imitation of that numeral. The angle at which these turns must be taken undoubtedly tends to increase the natural disinclination to dispense with such a help to balance as the handles afford; but if the rules of bicycle equilibrium be rigorously observed, success will shortly reward your efforts, despite a little excusable wavering in the first stages of the attempt. The successful accomplishment of this evolution will mark a most decided advancement on the road to success. When these preliminaries have been acquired, innumerable tricks lie open to accomplishment. Perhaps in one particular only are they alike, that one point being a lack of pace. They are all taken at a medium rate, which may perhaps partly account for the immunity from accident enjoyed by those who favour this special class of riding.

Having discoursed upon the general, let us now descend to the particular, and turn our attention to the subject of skipping when awheel. The rope usually associated with this childhood's game is frequently replaced by an ordinary piece of cane, which can be bought for sixpence. The ends are tied with bows of ribbon, which produce a distinctly pleasing effect. At Mr. Neville's club and school, located at the Drill Hall, Abingdon Villas, Kensington, I recently saw some very good skipping, in which a hoop was substituted for the rope, executed by one of his pupils. The mudguards of the young lady's machine had been

removed, a precaution I believe to be necessary. The rider mounted her machine, holding the hoop in one hand. When going at a good pace, she removed the right hand from the handle to the hoop. Holding the latter in both hands, she raised it above her head, keeping the body erect, and steering by the feet and by body-movement. Pedalling on, she lowered the wooden circle until it touched the ground slightly in advance of the front wheel, which in its forward course passed over the obstacle. By a neat turn of the wrist she then slanted the hoop towards the back wheel, beneath which it slipped as the machine pursued its way, the cycle of operations being completed by the hoop being raised to the position first named. Of course this feat requires complete ascendancy over the difficulties of riding minus the aid of the handles, and should only be attempted when the experimenter is quite an adept in that particular manoeuvre. Another evolution in which the hoop played a part was gracefully accomplished by the same pupil. She rode through the hoop, a somewhat tricky thing to do, mounting in the manner described above, the hold of the handle-bar being however retained throughout the performance. When the right pace had been obtained, she leant forward in the saddle and brought the hoop in front of the wheel, beneath which it then passed as the bicycle was propelled forward. This effected, she raised the hoop between the tyre and the lower tube of the frame, and, bending her head, carried it over both head and shoulders, lowering it towards the back wheel, which then ran over the impediment to progress. The next and last step in the process was to swing the hoop round by the right side of the frame in readiness to recommence the series of events already described.

The pupils at this school have much liking for the exhilarating art of skating when practised in combination with cycling. This is not particularly easy to do, for it not only presupposes thorough efficiency in the capability of riding hands off, but also requires experience in accommodating one's movements to those of one's companion. Before attempting combined tricks it is advisable to practise riding alongside each other, in order to train the eye to keep in sufficiently close juxtaposition without venturing so near that a collision occurs. This accomplished, the two riders should ride round hand in hand. When turning corners or when making figures of eight, the outer rider must quicken her pace, to allow of her completing the larger side of the circle her position obliges her to take, and the inner rider must slacken her speed in order that the relative distances may be preserved. This is an important point which the wary are particularly careful to remember. A

sufficient interval must be kept between the partners to obviate any risk of either pedals or handle-bars touching. When these directions can be easily followed, the finishing part of the evolution can be safely attempted. The hold of the handles can be relaxed and the hands clasped in the manner beloved by the skater. Very sharp turns can be then easily and gracefully executed, in which swaying body-movements play a part, as each rider helps to steady the other. The Dutch roll can be most faithfully imitated by these means, and the smooth flying gyrations of the skater admirably reproduced.

The most expert occasionally disdain the use of the saddle when indulging in this particular form of recreation, preferring the support of the handle-bar. The mount for the latter positions is effected separately when facing the saddle, and a sitting position effected by raising the body to the level of the handle-bar when standing upon the pedals and holding the handles. The future partners ride side by side until quite steady, when, removing the hands, they cycle with them clasped either in front or behind the back. Before attempting the above evolution the difficulties of riding backwards with the face to the saddle must have been overcome. To ride in that manner it is necessary to stand on the right side of the machine looking towards the seat and to place a hand on either handle. The left foot is placed upon the left pedal when it is well forward, the body should rest lightly against the handle-bar and the right pedal be caught as it rises. The steering is effected by means of pedals and handle-bar, the body, when one rides in this particular manner, following implicitly the control of the latter, by which it is partly encircled.

Making one machine do the work of two, forcing it to support and carry two riders, is aptly called double-riding. This method of progression also requires considerable skill on the part of the performers, for their movements must be in exact unison and even to a degree. The pretty combinations clever folks can evolve are numerous and productive of much fun, for trouble shared is trouble halved, and pleasure shared is pleasure doubled. For these effects the bicycle is fitted with two steps, one on either side. The young ladies you see before you are the apt pupils of Mr. Emerson, of the Drill Hall, Heath Street, Hampstead. They attain their position by a simultaneous mount. The left rider places her right foot upon the left pedal when it is well forward, and having pushed off with her left puts the latter upon the step, leaving the former to propel the machine. The right-hand rider pedals with her left foot and keeps her right upon the step upon her side of the machine. They steer by body-movement and by the aid of the handle-bar.

