

The winning by the young native peasant of the Marathon race (graphically described by Coubertin, the originator of the games, in the book, as well as in *THE CENTURY* for last November) helped to arouse the national pride and a spirit of emulation in the entire people. For weeks after the games, wherever one went one saw impromptu contests. Not only the athletic, but also the heroic and the national spirit of the country

was aroused, and it may be that the excitement was not without its effect upon the minds of the masses in precipitating the desperately unequal struggle with the Turks.

Alas! poor Greece! Alas! as says Coubertin, the stupidity of Europe, which, having consented to make a kingdom of Greece, made it too little and too poor to exist, though still it does exist by its own indomitable spirit!



OPEN LETTERS

Dangers and Benefits of the Bicycle.

DANGERS.

IT is easy to understand that anything has its merit which entices into the open air a people too devoted to pen, ink, and printed paper, and too sedentary in habit. It is also obvious that any muscular exercise not too severe or too prolonged must increase circulation and respiration, and indirectly promote the nutritive processes that lead to health.

On the other hand, it needs no elaborate argument to carry the conviction that the young hoodlum who spends his Sundays and the greater part of his shorter periods of leisure in straining his immature muscles, including his heart, in demonstrating how far and how fast he can propel his «bike,» is liable to shorten his life and sacrifice possibilities of usefulness unseen by those who despise his present vulgarity and curse him as a common nuisance of the highway. Equally evident is it that the elderly man or woman whose heart is no longer a perfect pump, whose blood-vessels are somewhat brittle, and whose other organs are more or less the worse for wear, runs the danger of speedy death from heart-failure (properly so called), apoplexy of the brain, or a similar hemorrhage into another organ, or from some other result of overstraining an enfeebled system.

As to the development of nervous diseases, eye-strain, the harmful results of improper saddles,—and none is altogether satisfactory,—the average reader of medical and semi-medical articles probably concludes that there is some truth and some exaggeration in the words of warning so eloquently and so repeatedly uttered.

No recourse to statistics is needed to prove that risk of accident is far greater for one engaged in muscular exercise than for the stay-at-home, for the man going ten miles an hour than for the one who is content with a three-mile gait, for one threading his way among horses, wagons, and electric cars than for one jostling his own kind on the sidewalk. Except for the increased number of bicycles, the wheelman is safer now than he was ten years ago. Not only is his vehicle better built, and the danger from falls minimized by lowering the center of gravity and placing it far behind the front axle, but he rides over better roads, and accidents due

to the selfish indifference or diabolical malice of drivers of horses are becoming less and less frequent as the latter learn the needs and the rights of wheelmen, and as the bicycle becomes more and more the vehicle of the masses.

SPINSTERS IN THE THIRTIES.

THE benefits of the bicycle are to be noted particularly in the case of women who have passed the heyday of youth and have not yet reached the calm of middle life, but who are passing through a period of mental fermentation and physical irritability of varying degree according to their social sphere, temperament, and habits. The matron with engrossing and for the most part pleasant cares may slip from youth to middle age with scarcely a realization that the glamour of the former is waning, and without the physical reflection of a purely mental disturbance. In some respects she is more prone to actual organic disease than her unmarried sister, but it is the latter who is especially liable to mourn over the lost gaieties of younger days, to feel herself becoming less essential to active life, and, in turn, life becoming less endurable to her. The spinster who is an integral part of some pleasant household, or who is born to that class of society which has money and leisure for making a business of pleasure, may also find growing old a tolerable, if not actually agreeable, process. But it is the solitary female, the one who commands the gaieties of life only so long as she can keep white hairs and wrinkles from appearing, who has not the prosaic but necessary basis of philanthropy, of social activity, or the various phases of new-womanism, who somewhere in the third decade of life realizes that the evil days have come, and the years when she is forced to say, «I have no pleasure in them.» Teacher, stenographer, seamstress, wage-earner in whatever field, or the unwilling parasite on some struggling relative, she becomes the prey of mental yearning and dissatisfaction, and it is little wonder that actual disease follows. Life, irksome enough in health, becomes doubly so now; and the two factors, mental and physical suffering, act and react on each other in a vicious circle. The manifestation of the nervous state of such a woman may localize itself in some one organ or apparatus; some special form of neuralgia may set in, or the supply of nerve-power to the stomach may be so deficient that, without organic

change, a serious dyspepsia ensues, or any one of a number of other organs may be similarly depressed in function, singly or in association. Such women are particularly apt to fall into the hands of the quack who assiduously circulates a list of questions suggesting complaints which the victim will imagine, if she does not already possess them. Even if the patient consults a regular physician, the result is not satisfactory to either. The particular symptom complained of may be relieved, but a relapse occurs as soon as medicine is discontinued. General tonics are tried, but the patient fails to reach the point of permanent good health. Something is lacking, and the wise physician very soon realizes that the lack cannot be supplied from the drug-store. To such patients the bicycle is a blessing. The woman who would not—yes, could not—muster courage to walk a mile in familiar and uninteresting streets, will gladly put forth the same amount of energy in pedaling three miles to reach a park or the real country; and once there, the temptation to further exercise is irresistible.

It may be an open question whether the bicycle is destined, as some enthusiasts claim, to revolutionize the social life of our people; there is no doubt that it can furnish an excellent substitute for ordinary social occupations in the class of women referred to as lacking in this element of worldly pleasure. The bicycle is more than a vehicle: it is almost as much of a companion as a horse or a dog, while the exhilaration of rapid motion, the accessibility of charming bits of nature, the mastery of time and space, afforded by this steed of steel, more than atone for social companionship which depends on no deep-seated affection.

It would be a mistake to suppose that the bicycle is the much-needed mental and nerve tonic of the poor woman alone. There is an opposite class of patients who, not being obliged to work, are simply too lazy to be well, and who fall into the loathsome habit of invalidism. Some—by no means all—of this class can be appealed to through the bicycle, and restored to a natural and healthy interest in life.

THE BICYCLE AND THE TENEMENT-HOUSE.

FEW men have urgent need either of a new machine for enforcing exercise or occupying the mind; yet there is many a middle-aged or elderly professional man who is exchanging flabby fat for firm muscle, is increasing his breathing-space, toning up his circulation, and putting old age five or ten years farther ahead, by discarding the carriage, buggy, or street-car for the bicycle. The wheel is also effecting a radical change in the lives of many poor artisans. A second-hand wheel can be paid for from the car-fare which would be spent in a year, and the ten or twenty cents a day saved during the wheeling seasons of the next year or two may mean added health as well as comfort. Or it may be that the bicycle allows the workingman to reach home for a good warm dinner during a nooning too brief, otherwise, for anything but the appetite-destroying dinner-pail or the dyspepsia-breeding cheap lunch, which, after all, is twice as expensive as a plain, wholesome meal cooked at home. Again, the bicycle, by annihilating distance, makes it possible to seek a home in the suburbs, or at least in a thinly populated portion of the city, remote from the noise, dust, and crowding of

the business center. Thus the hygienic as well as the economic and social level of the workingman's family is raised. It is no exaggeration to say that the bicycle is making self-respecting householders and property-owners of men who would otherwise become the victims of tenement life, necessarily dependent on the charity of the city physician,—for the poor have an enormously high susceptibility to disease,—and destined to succumb to a progressive pauperism which leads to dependence on one form of charity after another, till the professional dead-beat and beggar is evolved. Yet the simple explanation of this miracle is the centripetal tendency of all city valuations, the rent of the ill-ventilated three-room suite of the tenement, with its utter lack of indoor privacy and outdoor freedom, being the same as that of a five-room cottage a few miles distant, with good ventilation, sanitary plumbing, the possibility of at least a small garden, and the certainty of an atmosphere not only of pure air, but of independence.

MARKED MUSCULAR DEVELOPMENT NOT THE SEAL OF RUGGED HEALTH.

IT may surprise many of the readers of this article to be informed that marked muscular development is not the seal of rugged health that they have imagined it to be. Given, on the one hand, a professional or business man, whose fists are useless as weapons, whose chest expansion is only two inches and a half, and who is abundantly satisfied with a three-mile walk or a ten-mile bicycle ride, and, on the other hand, a trained athlete who can expand his chest to the extent of five inches, and who can trust either to his fists or legs for safety, and supposing them to be otherwise fair representatives of their respective types, the chances of life and freedom from disease are greatly in favor of the former. Remarkable muscular development is seldom attained save at the expense of some serious organic lesion. The ideal of the hygienist, therefore, is a man of moderate and symmetrical muscular development. Moderation excludes the factor of competition, which is the basis of all athletic sports. Symmetry is obtained from no one natural form of exercise or athletic amusement, but requires careful anthropometric study of the individual, and a tedious attention to the prescribed exercises at elaborate training machinery. This, in turn, means the sacrifice of the element of *fun*—a very important hygienic consideration—and of outdoor exercise, unless one has almost unlimited leisure for physical training. Hence, for the civilized man who earns his bread by mental acumen or muscular skill rather than by actual perspiring toil, and who trusts to a general regard for law and order rather than to his natural weapons, comparatively slight muscular development is necessary; nor is it worth his while to tax his leisure or curtail his enjoyment of outdoor sports in the attempt at symmetry. The tendency of all civilized athletics is to develop the locomotor power of the body rather than the capacity for stationary work; and so far as the health of the vital organs is concerned, experience teaches that walking or any other leg exercise in the open air is sufficient.

EFFECTS ON CLOTHING AND MORALS.

THE bicycle seems destined to effect a reform in clothing. Sensible shoes, and neckwear that will not inter-

ferre with the poise of the head nor compress the great blood-vessels, have already become popular. Otherwise the ordinary attire of men has no specially objectionable features, though breeches are certainly more comfortable than trousers during hot weather, for bicycling or any other purpose. The wheeling-costumes thus far devised for women have shown a realization of the unfitness of ordinary dress rather than an appreciation of the changes needed. The one hygienic result that has been achieved by all efforts in this direction is the elimination of the long skirt which sweeps the filth and infection of the highway into the homes of civilized man, and doubtless is the cause of many an inexplicable case of contagious disease. If the fashion would only extend to other street dress, we could forgive the many offenses of wheeling-costumes against modesty, good taste, and comfort.

If the bicycle were responsible simply for distracting the attention of thousands of young men and women from artificial fashions in dress, and for creating an honest though sometimes mistaken effort at dress-reform, a great good would have been accomplished. But it is doing much more than this. It is establishing an ideal of physical health, and making deservedly unpopular the sickly heroine of less than a generation ago. The wheel is affording a wholesome outlet for energies that would otherwise be wasted in frivolity or actual dissipation, and in elevating the physical is also raising the moral tone of the youth of our land. The half-grown boy who formerly thought it manly to fuddle his brain with liquor or weaken his heart with tobacco, has changed his ideal to the not very lofty but certainly more innocent one of maintaining a reputation for speed or endurance, and while in training he proudly foregoes bad habits that he would be ashamed to abandon as a mere matter of principle. The use of strong liquors among the class of young men from whom cyclists are largely drawn is on the wane, and even "soft drinks" are used with increasing discretion.

All of this means not that the bicycle is to be used by everybody, nor that it is to be the physical and moral salvation of the age, but that it is aiding in a tangible manner in the solution of many problems, social, economic, moral, and hygienic.

A. L. Benedict, M. D.

How Napoleon Impressed a Foe at St. Helena.

THE letter which follows, from Rear-Admiral Sir George Cockburn to Sir Alexander Campbell, comes to us from H. A. Wetherall, Esq., of Hill Crest, Addleston, Surrey, England, who found it among the papers of his grandfather, Sir George Wetherall, who was military secretary to Sir Alexander, and his executor, in which latter capacity he is supposed to have come into possession of the letter. Sir George Wetherall, who died in 1868, was also at one time adjutant-general of the English army. It is believed that this letter, which is here printed from the original manuscript, has never before appeared. In THE CENTURY for October and November, 1893, will be found an account by John R. Glover, secretary to the admiral, of the voyage with Napoleon to St. Helena. Sir George was relieved by Sir Hudson Lowe the day after this letter was written.

EDITOR.

ST. HELENA, 14th April, 1816.

MY DEAR SIR ALEXANDER Accept I pray you my best thanks for your very friendly Letter of the 20 Jan^y last and for the good things of Mauritius which accompanied it. Major Fluker was so obliging as to deliver them to me safe and I was sorry his stay here was so short as to put it out of my Power to shew him any other attention than merely giving him a Passport to see our *great Lion*, the which in fact almost cost him his Passage as his Ship was only here a few Hours & was under way waiting for him before he returned from Long Wood.

I should indeed feel very much Interest as well as Pleasure in visiting you at the Isle of France but under the existing Circumstances there is little or no chance of my having such gratification, as I am very particularly enjoined to continue at this place for the better insuring the Security of Bonaparte until the Admiral destined to remain upon this Station *during Peace*, & Sir Hudson Lowe destined to take charge of Bonaparte shall arrive, when of course I am to return straight to England as I only consented to bring the arch-Fiend of Europe to this Place & to keep charge of him here until the ulterior arrangements for the Island and the Peace Establishments for the Station should be fixed & completed, and indeed I have already been here much longer than I expected when I sailed, as I was given to understand in London that I might look for being relieved about the Middle of Jan^y last, *our Friends* the present Ministers however, as you probably know, are not given to hurry themselves much where they do not feel themselves much interested & therefore here I am still & without any positive Information as to Sir H. Lowe or my relieving Admiral but of course living in daily or I may say hourly hopes of seeing them, a long Sojourn here not being very enviable. After this Explanation you will not be surprised to learn that I never for a moment thought of bringing Lady Cockburn with me, but I am sure she will feel much flattered & pleased by Lady Campbell's & your kind Recollection & Invitation, of which I shall inform her in my next Letters, she was very well by my last accounts which were to the end of December and gave me Reason to hope that long ere this my Family may have been increased.

I perfectly agree with you with respect to the Indian naval Command & have not the most distant Idea of taking it or any other whilst Peace continues or is likely to continue.

I have got on here better upon the whole than I expected, My *Prisoner Extraordinary* is most securely lodged, *at last*, and with the Regulations now established here I do not hesitate in saying it is quite impossible for him to escape, he & I are not quite such good Friends as we have been, he having lately made some Requests which I did not deem it prudent or proper to acquiesce in, and unaccustomed as he has so long been to have his Wishes or his Whims controuled in any manner this made him mighty angry, & he has since shewn very distant & sulky with me, but as you may suppose his Sulks or his Smiles have equally little avail with my Determinations. I have given him as much Latitude as I think consistent with his safety, & you may rest assured he will obtain no more, until I hand him over to those destined to have the future charge of him. Were I to attempt to give you my opinion of him, it