

MUSIC'S EMPIRE.

By ANDREW MARVELL.

FIRST was the world as one great cymbal made,
 Where jarring winds to infant nature played ;
 All music was a solitary sound,
 To hollow rocks and murmuring fountains bound.
 Jubal first made the wilder notes agree,
 And Jubal tunéd Music's jubilee ;
 He called the echoes from their sullen cell,
 And built the organ's city, where they dwell ;
 Each sought a consort in that lovely place,
 And virgin trebles wed the manly bass ;
 From whence the progeny of numbers new
 Into harmonious colonies withdrew ;

Some to the lute, some to the viol went,
 And others chose the cornet eloquent ;
 These practising the wind, and those the wire,
 To sing man's triumphs, or in Heaven's choir.
 Then Music, the mosaic of the air,
 Did of all these a solemn noise prepare,
 With which she gained the Empire of the ear,
 Including all between the earth and sphere.
 Victorious sounds ! yet here your homage do
 Unto a gentler conqueror than you ;
 Who, though he flies the music of his praise,
 Would with you Heaven's Hallelujahs raise.



THE CYCLING CRAZE.

By A. T. SCHOFIELD, M.D.

NOTHING has been a more astonishing proof of the omnipotent sway of fashion over our thoughts and judgment, and we might even add ideas of propriety, than the way in which they have all been changed with regard to cycling, by the simple fact that it has become the thing to do. Right of course remains right, and wrong remains wrong, in spite of what fashion can say ; but there are a great many questions which cannot be placed under either category, and which very largely depend on what is the custom of the time. We notice this very markedly in every fresh departure in dress—the moment a new fashion arrives from Paris, there are always a number of unfashionable people that are ready to cry it down, and to protest, in no measured terms, against its hideousness, its unsuitableness, if indeed they do not say something worse ; and yet in time these very people, habituated to see what they once despised constantly worn by people whom they respect, and fain would imitate, become in time themselves wearers of the very fashions they at first decried.

It has been little less than ludicrous to see how this has taken place with regard to cycling. I have myself been consulted by young ladies with their mothers, to whom I felt this new exercise would prove a real boon, if used in moderation ; I dared not, however, propose it, as at the time it was hardly supposed to be within the bounds of propriety. It is possible that even now, in remote and old-fashioned parts of England, objections on this score are still strongly raised.

Now propriety is not altogether a question of right and wrong ; but it must be conceded is largely connected with custom. What is perfectly proper in one country, is improper in another. Nothing, indeed, so scandalises the upper classes in China than to receive our ordinary illustrated papers, which are everywhere read in the strictest domestic circles at home. They consider the pictures there given of evening dress and of balls as absolutely improper, and cannot be brought to understand how we can regard them in any other light.

Against the tricycle no great feeling has indeed ever been shown—all the wrath poured

out upon the pastime being reserved for its slender sister the bicycle. And this is perfectly intelligible. The tricycle is obviously a safe and useful machine for the exercise of ladies ; but with regard to the bicycle, there are as many objections as spokes in its wheels.

Fashion, however, not attempting to argue or to answer these, calmly adopts the objectionable machine ; a few crowned heads and leading members of the aristocracy are well advertised as using it, and lo and behold ! howls of disapproval subside into a dull murmur that can scarcely be heard, while the numberless objections are effectually reduced to two or three. Let us see, very briefly, first of all the utmost that can be said in its favour, and next what must still be pointed out as drawbacks to its use.

The age in which we live, though sometimes described as frivolous, can scarcely be called idle ; indeed, we think that the number of girls who are purely and absolutely frivolous, is decreasing from day to day, and we are quite sure forms a most insignificant minority amongst the readers of this journal. Indeed, our time is so valuable now, that we seldom do anything without a purpose. If we read, it is not for the pleasure of reading, but for the value of the knowledge we acquire. If we sing or play, it is not principally for the pleasure of the art, but in order that we may become sufficiently proficient to use it to some purpose. Even our games are often underlain by a purpose, and if anything is to be defended it must be shown to be useful in itself.

Now with regard to cycling, whether "bi" or "tri," many points may be urged. In the first place it is an out-of-door exercise. This at once gives many points in its favour. It is not generally known that the mere fact of living in London no more produces ill-health, than the fact of living in the country produces good health. In both places the real factor as regards health is the amount of time spent in the open air ; and the reason why cities are so much more unhealthy than the country, is not so much the difference in the atmosphere, as the fact that in the former so much more time is spent indoors. We have all been struck, indeed, with the pallid and unhealthy faces

that we often meet in the country, which are the result of an indoor life.

In the second place, the cycle delivers us from the network of iron-rails, which is gradually converting the surface of England, as seen from a balloon, into the resemblance of a large gridiron. It is no small thing to open up once again our by-ways and country roads, and by means of this new exercise to place within the reach of thousands the beauties of English scenery, that otherwise would be left utterly unknown. Few more healthful and delightful ways of spending a holiday can be imagined than by touring in easy stages as one of a genial party through the park-like roads and scenery of our southern counties.

In cycling it is obvious, too, we not only get air and exercise, but on the bicycle, indeed, this exercise is of a very unique character. Sir Benjamin Ward Richardson once remarked that walking on a tight rope was as much an intellectual exercise as the conjugation of a Greek verb ; and those who have never studied physiology have little idea of the complicated brain processes that are necessary to maintain the erect attitude, even when we are on our feet, to say nothing of the vastly more complicated process that enables us to maintain an equilibrium when balanced on two wheels. There can be no doubt that this exercise, therefore, develops capacity and strengthens the brain, without any risk of strain ; and, inasmuch as life is now so very real and so very earnest, that the old easy days of mere pleasure are almost gone from this busy workshop of England, it is no small recommendation of this new exercise that it is indubitably not only a healthy means of relieving the brain of over-pressure, but that it also exercises and strengthens this organ at the same time.

I need not here allude to the tremendous strides in learning that women have taken, and are still taking ; and it is because of these that we hail every fresh departure of out-door exercise that can be devised.

I have always held that rowing with a pair of light sculls and a light boat was the ideal exercise for women, inasmuch as the legs,

which are constantly used for walking, are kept perfectly at rest, while the muscles of the back and chest and arms, which are comparatively little used, are perfectly developed.

Bicycling, of course, is pretty nearly the opposite to this; but we have lived long enough to see that the first storm of disapproval which it very naturally met with, has not really been borne out by facts. The position, of course, on a bicycle is entirely different from that assumed in any other exercise, and is one that has been very generally condemned by medical men. It is by no means the same as riding on a side saddle, or as the seat in driving, or as the sliding seat in a boat, nor even is it the same as working the sewing machine. One main evil of the position is the form of seat used. What we should like to see on ladies' cycles is a nice padded cushion, flat in front, and perhaps rounded behind, instead of the hard leather saddle that is very much like the section of a long-necked pear.

It is one thing, however, to bring a horse to

water, and another to make him drink. There is no difficulty in making a saddle which shall be entirely unobjectionable, but it seems practically perfectly impossible to induce ladies to use it. The swaying from side to side, which always occurs in bicycle riding, even with the most practised riders, seems to demand some central support, in order to prevent the seat from being shifted, hence the necessity—so we are told—of the peak. I cannot enter further into the technique of this vexed question, but surely we may hope that saddle-makers, who are now as much specialists as oculists, can devise a better seat for women than that universally used by men.

The other points of the modern bicycle certainly call for praise. The value of the pneumatic tyre is as yet but imperfectly understood. It is found that business men travelling up to town every day from Brighton are very loquacious when they start, and very silent when they arrive—the rapid jogging motion of an express, however smoothly the lines may be laid, produces an innumerable

number of slight concussions of the brain substance, which have, in the aggregate, a slightly stupefying effect, and after being repeated for some years, exercise a weakening influence upon the power of the mind and brain. I often have brought before me railway men and others, who have been promoted to be conductors on railway and other omnibuses. They come complaining of a curious sort of nervous debility, caused by the incessant vibration of standing on the foot-board of buses.

We can readily see from these two illustrations—remembering also that the time of life when girls ride most is that in which their nervous system is still being evolved—that the invention of the pneumatic tyre is of the greatest value in lessening the constant vibration. Machines for ladies are also not so highly geared as those for men. Besides this, it may be useful to suggest that in winter, when the roads are heavy, the gearing should be less than would be used in summer. In short, in every way strain must be avoided.

HALF-A-DOZEN SISTERS.

By EVELYN EVERETT-GREEN, Author of "Greyfriars," "Next Door Neighbours," "Barbara's Brothers," etc.

CHAPTER XI.

INTOXICATION.

"My dear, you and Beatrice must come every day. I shall want you both, for I have a whole household of people to entertain, and we must really get the pastoral play into shape. You don't know what an art critic Lord Woodmayne is! He will give us all sorts of useful hints! It will be a great thing to have his opinion, and we may be sure that if he is satisfied everybody else will be. Come to-morrow, directly after luncheon, and make up your mind to be my slaves for the next fortnight. I have all sorts of plans and projects, and I must have a girl or two of my own to help me!"

So said Mrs. Masham before leaving the house on the night of the Wilberforce party, and Guinivere blushed and kindled with pleasure at the words. It was Mrs. Masham's way to speak of the two sisters in brackets, but Guinivere knew by this time that she stood altogether the first with the amiable lady, and that Beatrice was included in all invitations rather as a matter of form, and because she could be depended upon to lead any games and fun that happened to be going, rather than because their hostess found any particular interest in her.

Beatrice in fact voted the pastoral play and Mrs. Masham's fashionable guests rather a bore. They were too languid in their ways to please her. They professed to like tennis, but dawdled over it in a way that exasperated her, whilst as for the perpetual dressing up and posing, and going through the scenes of the play—Beatrice grew heartily tired of it, and wished she had not been let in for one of the important parts.

She was a shepherd boy in the play, and clad in a graceful tunic with her curly hair cleverly arranged to look like

a boy's short locks, she looked very picturesque and charming; her natural frankness and slight brusquerie of manner giving a piquancy to her acting which was quite in keeping with her part. In the little love-making scenes with her sister—before the appearance of the glittering hero who wins away the heart of the guileless maiden—both of them were pronounced to be charming. Guinivere of course looked lovely, and Mrs. Masham had spared neither trouble nor expense to enhance her natural beauty by every accessory which could be thought of.

No wonder if the girl's head was turned by all the adulation she received. It was the fashion with Mrs. Masham's guests to pet and praise her "pretty new *protégée*," as Guinivere began to be called; and the notice bestowed upon her by Lord Woodmayne would have won her attention in any company.

No one ventured to predict of a man like Lord Woodmayne whether or not his attentions were of a serious kind, whether or not his admiration for this beautiful girl would lead to anything else; but that he was constantly to be seen at her side, that he talked to her for sometimes a whole evening together, that he overlooked every detail of the play where she was concerned, and spent hours in putting her through her part, were matters patent to all the company, and were commented upon openly.

Lord Woodmayne was one of those fashionable idlers, who have trained the critical faculty to a high pitch of perfection, and his judgment was appealed to upon every disputed or doubtful point.

In the long run he became practically stage-manager in the matter of this little pastoral play; but it was observed that he only really concerned himself with any lively interest in Guinivere. He would give general instructions to

all the company. He would arrange the groups, and tell the actors how to move and pose themselves; but he put Guinivere again and again through every line of her part, giving her what might almost be called elocution lessons, so that by the time the play was ready for presentation to the public, the girl was as nearly perfect in every detail of her part as it was possible for an amateur to be.

News had gone forth of the coming representation at Mrs. Masham's, and all the neighbourhood was excited thereby; whilst paragraphs had found their way into fashionable London journals respecting the event, and a large company was expected down from town to witness it.

Guinivere seemed to tread on air, and to live in an atmosphere altogether different from that of the daily round. Almost all her time was spent at Beechcroft—a very large proportion of it in the society of Lord Woodmayne. He singled her out for those attentions most flattering to a girl. He made her feel that she was superior in some way to those about her—that she possessed a something lacking in others, that she was fit to be queen of any society in which she found herself, and that he would teach her how to reign and how to hold her own.

Was it wonderful that Guinivere's head was turned? that she drank in this insidious flattery as though it were the elixir of life? Was it strange that she came to regard Lord Woodmayne as a paragon of all perfection? that his thin aristocratic face, his cool, semi-sarcastic utterance (to others, not to herself), his quiet faultless attire, and even his slightly supercilious behaviour toward the world at large should appear to her in the light of so many perfections? Was it unnatural that she unconsciously yielded to him that homage of submission and admiration which is as sweet