

east is the proper place for it to appear? But excuse the interruption. You may be in the right this time, only please don't use it as a settler with me too often. Go on with your proposition, and—"

"Not till I've taken it all back," said the College Girl. "It is an exception, but it doesn't prove anything at all, except that the rule we know is imperfect. When we know it all, there will not be any exception. There never is in the whole rule."

"Drop the metaphysics, if that's what they are," said the Average Girl, "and tell us about the bicyclers."

"For that," returned the College Girl, "I cannot give you reason, and I shall spare you rhyme. But it is a fact. Perhaps it's most strikingly exemplified in two girls I know who are very dear friends. One is a lady of luxury, the other a daughter of toll. At least, that's the way the last named would put it. In my own opinion, nature ordered things the other way, and chance mixed them. But that's neither here nor there. This is: They're both constitutionally indolent. They're too nice for me to say 'lazy,' to any one but themselves. The daughter has to be at her post at 9 o'clock six days in the week. On those days she arises at 8:40, and has time for a cup of chocolate before she leaves. Sundays she shakes off dull sloth at 10:20, and is a little late for 10:30 church. I've often remonstrated with her about wasting the most beautiful hours of the Summer day, but she jeers at me, and quotes Saxe about the man who first invented early rising, and says she has no use for a girl who gets up when she doesn't have to."

"I know," interpolated the Average Girl, dreamily. "I like being up on a lovely Summer morning as well as anybody, but it's the getting up I loathe."

"That has been said a number of times before, my dear. But, to finish about the daughter. She detests hot weather. It affects her physically, mentally, and morally, so she says. She won't walk three blocks to see a dear friend unseen for years, if the thermometer is much above eighty. Her dislike of early rising and of hot weather are prominent traits in her. I want you to appreciate that. Every one who knows her, knows them, just as they know her brightness, her wit, and her love for all the luxuries of life. Do you get a clear idea of her?"

"Oh, yes," said the listener. "She isn't so unusual, at least in the first two traits."

"She is in the rest, though, as you'd see if you heard her talk. But now, as to her friend, the lady. She is an education to those who love her, in true classic style. She doesn't do much; she is. But those who admire her must confess that she is just as indolent as the daughter. And, if possible, she hates hot weather more."

The College Girl paused, and the Average Girl said: "Well?"

"Well, they both got wheels in June, much to the surprise of those who knew them. They said they were not going to overdo the matter, but they didn't want to be out of date. The rest is simple and easily told. On the hottest days this Summer they rode furiously. Because the daughter had not much other time, they rose at 6 o'clock—mind you, at 6 o'clock in the morning to ride, forsooth! They are bicycle mad. They belong to the League of American Wheelmen. They try to convert their conservative friends, and they can't leave town for a day unless their precious wheels go with them. In short, they are energetic—energetic to a degree. That is no development of character; it's transformation."

"Whatever it be," remarked the Listener, "it seems to be a good thing. If the bicycle promotes energy, we soon ought to be a Nation of geniuses. Isn't it Matthew Arnold who says that energy is the most essential part of genius?"

"You're mocking a little," said the College Girl, sorrowfully. "Do be serious. In this case, and others I know of, too, a bicycle made lazy people energetic. Isn't that an improvement? And who ever heard of riding making an energetic person lazy?"

"They don't walk as much," objected the Average Girl. "They walk a good deal incidentally—sometimes more than they mean to. And the fact remains that they expend more energy. And in other ways it changes people, too. I know a really stingy man who bought a wheel as an economy, and spends, for him, a good deal of money on little excursions, &c. I've even heard it whispered that he was getting used to spending money in other ways. I know an extravagant boy, too, who has grown really economical since he has had a wheel. The pleasure it gives him is so much greater than the more costly ones that he doesn't waste his money on them. I defy you to show me a case where a bicycle has hindered a man intellectually or morally."

There was a moment's pause, and then the Average Girl said, pensively: "It's all true, I reckon, but you forgot the 'physically.' They do get so round-shouldered. They're horrid to dance with."

"That's only a phase, my dear. They'll get over that. And wouldn't you rather a man would be round-shouldered than stingy or lazy?"

"I'd rather he wouldn't be either or any," murmured the Average Girl. "I'd rather he'd be nice."

#### THIS IS A CONVERSATION CLUB.

#### A New Idea in Mental Improvement Varies Life in the Suburbs.

A novel society has been formed in a Hudson River town, the outcome of whose work will be watched with interest. A few girl friends have made up their minds that they are deficient in ease and grace in current talk; that they lack lightness and brightness and solid information on a number of topics more or less employed in every-day conversation.

One clever girl set the ball rolling. She discussed her idea with those among her friends who seemed most likely to fall in with it. Between them all they laid out a course of Winter's work, if work that may be called which, so far, is only an odd sort of amusement.

The little group meets once a fortnight in order, at each other's homes, at a luncheon which is restricted to themselves. They decided upon this gathering about a table, as they all echoed the observation of one of them: "We can talk so much better, and be so much more at ease if we have some other excuse for coming together than just talk."

So a simple, dainty meal is served, over which the guests discuss with their hostess a topic assigned by her. Subjects already taken up have been bicycling, woman and the suffrage, the Atlanta Exposition, and municipal reform. It is not probable that any very erudite matter will be brought forward, since the idea is not to become learned on any out-of-the-way point, but to be prepared to play a lively and pleasing part in the floating small talk of the hour. Thus there was no settled list of subjects with which to start the season; these would be too apt to vary from month to month to be arranged long beforehand.

At one meeting the coming entertainer assigns her selection, and in the following two weeks the half dozen girls read, ask questions, and think over what they are to say and how best to say it. It is the hostess's duty to see that each of her guests has an opportunity to entertain the rest, and that no one monopolizes the attention and that no other is neglected.

So unique a scheme would only be practicable with a few congenial people together, under no constraint and no severe rules. With these conditions it bids fair to work extremely well.

#### PARAGRAPHS FOR CHILDREN.

There is a little boy in a New-Jersey town who edits and publishes a paper of his own. His father is the proprietor of a newspaper, and so the boy has access to type and press with which to work. He has a large subscription list, for every one who has seen the tiny sheet is anxious to read, each week, his accounts of the village happenings, and most of the local tradespeople advertise with him. Here is a verbatim account he gives of an accident which occurred in the town lately:

"There was a man and his cousin who live over the creek, and the man had two pistols in his hands, and was making believe shoot her, he did not know, but one pistol had a bullet in it, and it went off and shot her in the breast, and the doctor went into the other room for something and found the bullet, and so it must of hit her on her breast bone and bounced out."

And here are a couple of what his father would call "locals":

"Harry Bates's dog Brownie will play nice, we throw a stone then he will go after it and then we hide, then he will come find us."

"Wednesday night at the lawn party they made \$260, or more, and they had candy, flowers, lemonade, fancy work, and donkeys to ride."

\*\*\*

Listen to this, girls: The manager of a village library says she finds that boys draw out much better—that is, more sensible—books than do the girls. She cannot interest the latter in anything except stories, but boys read travels, natural history, and some simple works on scientific subjects. Their dear delight, in the way of fiction, is the never-ending list of books written by Mr. Henty. These all have some stirring time or events for a pivot about which the young hero's fortunes are woven, and in which he always plays an important part. The librarian says again that she finds these historical stories do turn their readers' attention to the veritable accounts of the same happenings, and that it is not a rare case, as occurred recently, that a small boy

inquired for Josephus after he had finished the particular tale of Mr. Henty's imagination in which the hero assisted at the fall of Jerusalem.

\*\*\*

In a book by Miss Cobbe she tells her remembrances of the Crimean war and of some officers she knew in Ireland who afterward took part in that terrible charge of the Light Brigade, of which you have all read. They seemed very gay young fellows, fond of society and fun, rather silly, perhaps, and not at all heroic-appearing youths. A dentist told her that several of them had some work done on their teeth before they set sail for Russia, and he also said they kicked and screamed like naughty little children, and seemed unable to bear any pain at all. It is a comfort to any of us, old and young, though, to learn that Mrs. Browning the poet once wrote that all men are possible heroes. Those lively, boyish officers, who shrunk childishly from having their teeth worked at, had real grit and endurance, after all, and when the trumpet call of opportunity came, they were ready to cast self aside:

"Theirs not to question why;

Theirs not to make reply;

Theirs but to do and die."

And so they live in song and story, the Six Hundred.

\*\*\*

Those of you who have seen the name of Bessie Chandler attached to pretty verses for children that are often printed, and others, too, will be interested in this story. Miss Chandler is a daughter of Commodore Chandler of the navy. At one time in their family they had a little negro boy whose duties were to do anything that happened to need to be done. He was not very busy, and he spent his spare time idling about the rooms where the ladies sat. They would puzzle their wits to keep the youngster at work. One day Mrs. Chandler was busy and sent Johnny into the next room. "You may take your slate and pencil," she said, "and write me a letter." The boy obeyed. By and by there came a shrill call: "Please, missus, I've got it wrote. It says: 'Dear Missus: Kin I go down to the tennis court and see them play tennis?' Respectfully yours, Johnny.'" Mrs. Chandler was not ready to admit him as yet, so she replied: "Oh, well; write me a postscript." Again a silence so prolonged that finally she went into the room to investigate. There was no boy there. The slate lay on the chair, face upward. She read the message he had first called out, and underneath it this addition: "P. S. I have went."

\*\*\*

Little girls give their dolls very funny names sometimes. One once called a particularly ugly rag baby that was dear to her small mother's heart, "Grandmama," and the grandparent was a little doubtful whether this was a compliment to herself or not. Another picked up the phrase, "Feel better," which she had heard some one use, and, evidently liking the soft sound of the letters in the words, called one of her dolls "Feel better" henceforth. One more child named a lovely girl doll after a nice boy in the neighborhood, Henry. Another doll, she said, was "The Hale girls," after two sisters of whom she was fond, and thus it was always spoken of.

\*\*\*

It is now about time to put away bicycles for the Winter, and some directions for their care before they take a rest of a few months will be of value. First, says a writer on the subject in The Buffalo Express, clean the wheel thoroughly. Wipe off every speck of dust, and if there is any rust on the nickel parts, rub it off with some good metal polish. Pay especial attention to the spokes, the pedals, and the rear hub in the neighborhood of the sprocket. Take the chain off by removing the bolt that holds the two ends together, and put it to soak in a dish of kerosene while the rest of the machine is being doctored. Then, if you want to have an easy-running wheel in the Spring, fill a small oilcan with kerosene and run it through all the bearings until it ceases to run black and dirty, but comes out as clear as water. This removes all the old gummy oil and dirt, and clears the way for a dose of fresh oil, which need not be applied until you want to use the wheel again. The hub bearings are best cleaned through the regular oil holes, but the sprocket bearing is easily reached by removing the saddle post and pouring a pint or so of kerosene down the hollow cross brace of the frame.

After the bearings and chain are thoroughly cleaned with the kerosene, wipe off all superfluous oil and then proceed to bedaub the machine liberally with vaseline. Spread the vaseline freely and thickly, taking care that the nickel parts are thoroughly covered. The chain should be thickly coated, and it will not harm wood rims. Tires, saddles, and cork handles, however, are not improved by vaseline.

If the wheel is going to stand on the floor all Winter the tires should be left inflated to prevent the rim from cutting them. A much better scheme is to suspend the wheel from a rafter with a couple of ropes and deflate the tires. A wheel thus treated and kept in a place where the atmosphere is not positively reeking with moisture will be found in the Spring to be in perfect condition, and a few minutes' work with a woolen cloth will remove all traces of the vaseline and bring out all the beauty of the enamel and nickel.

#### THE BICYCLE AS A MORAL AGENT.

#### The Wheel's Value in Character Development Discussed.

"Have you ever noticed," asked the College Girl, "what a remarkable effect on character the bicycle has? Not on the character of the age, alone, but in radically changing the character of the individual."

"Isn't that too much to say?" queried the Average Girl. "You yourself have maintained in many a fierce fight that character doesn't change. It develops."

"But this is the exception that proves the rule, and—"

"I always desire," interrupted the Listener, "to ask the persons who use that as an argument if they ever happened to see the sun rise in the west. If they haven't, don't they consider it proved yet that the