

ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, APRIL 25, 1891.

MAN, WOMAN AND WHEEL

ASTONISHING RECENT GROWTH OF THE BICYCLE HABIT.

Nearly Half a Million Riders—The Question of Road Improvement—What Women Riders Wear—A Family Party on Wheels.

A few years ago there came a time when cycling seemed to have reached its limit. One would have said that it was likely to remain stationary, or even to decline in public favor.

Since that time a few things have happened, however, which have changed the appearance of things wonderfully. The perfection of the safety wheel has made it possible to ride without the constant fear of a broken nose. The invention of the ladies' bicycle has relieved the weaker sex of the burden of a third wheel and set women all over the country to cycling. The pneumatic tire has placed the bicycle racer abreast of the trotting horse for short distances and away ahead of it for long ones. The prices of "machines" have dropped as their quality improved. The improvement of the common roads has been due largely to the persistent clamor of cyclists and reacts to increase their number. Here in Union county, N. J., for instance, where road making has been reduced to a science, the valuations have increased \$2,000,000 in a very short time, largely due to wheelmen and road makers. "The Oranges" are the Paradise of bicyclists about New York, though the city itself offers nothing like so many advantages for them as Boston, Rochester, Buffalo, Washington, Chicago and even smaller places. The metropolis lags behind in nearly everything.

There are between 250,000 and 300,000 wheels in the country, not counting the myriads of children's velocipedes. As some of the cycles are hired out and some owned in partnership and some are tandems and carry double, there may not be so very many short of half a million regular and occasional wheelmen in this country.

That isn't all. In the past the athletic clubs frowned upon bicycling. They do so no longer. The great New York athletic club set the example in the new order of things by combining with the Citizens' Cycling club, and using the Citizens' club house as a bicycle annex. The Manhattan

A. C. not to be undone, set aside quarters for wheels, organized a cycling division and will give under its auspices handicap road races throughout the season, and the wheelmen are looking abroad for more worlds to conquer. By the time they have made the roads of the entire country as good as those in Orange they will be as numerous as the Russian army.

The safety or "goat" bicycle is the uni-



LAURA JEAN LIBBEY AND HER WHEEL.

versal favorite nowadays with men and women alike. The reasons are many. The certainty of avoiding tumbles is not the only one. Safeties are all practically of the same size, and if the owner ever gets tired of one he has no difficulty in selling it. If he has a big wheel the difficulty of selling is tenfold. First he has to find a man who wants a wheel of that sort, and few do nowadays, and then it's literally ten chances to one that the purchaser's legs won't be of the right length. The dealers like the safeties, too, as they are made in one size and three styles, and there is no necessity of carrying unsaleable sizes to suit an occasional long or short legged man. Even in racing the safety is only about five seconds to the mile behind the big wheel. Such a record as that of C. E. Kluge—twenty-five miles on the road in 1:26:40—show that the safety is by no means slow when vigorously propelled.

William Heyney, Jr., has travelled 6,000 miles in Germany on an American bicycle, and will this summer conduct a bicycle party through the

Hartz mountains. All will use safeties. Now that one American wheel—Mr. Stevens'—has been round the world, their merits are getting to be pretty well known abroad.

Perhaps the most interesting feature of the present cycling outlook is the number of women who wheel. Here the difference of motive in the sexes comes out strong. Men wheel because they want to, women because others do. Mr. Richards, the manager of the New York house of the great Columbia company, says that it makes an immense difference whether bicycling starts right or wrong in a town. If women of character and social prominence happen to take to the wheel first in a place, the dealers are happy in plenty of orders. If the sport "starts wrong" it may languish for years unless the leaders happen to take hold of it.

The cycle makers in England and America could afford to present the Princess of Wales a wheel in solid gold for her part in popularizing the sport.

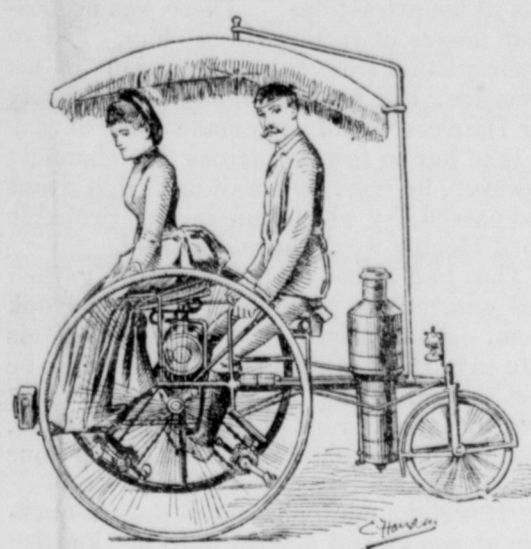
Robert Bonner says that the bicycle rider will never catch up with the trotting horse for a single mile, but Mr. Bonner is a prejudiced witness and apt to be mistaken. The mile record has been much more rapidly reduced by bicycle riders



WILLIAM HEYNEY.

than by trotters, and that the makers have not exhausted the possibility of improvement is altogether probable. The cushion tire proves to be not much of an improve-

ment upon the old solid kind, but great things are expected of the pneumatic tire, which consists of a hollow rubber tube blown full of air. The great trouble with this tire so far is that it has to be made soft and flexible and soon wears out and bursts. It may be doubted whether it will ever be much used on cheap road machines, but for track racing it is certainly a great invention, saving several seconds on the mile. One inventive Philadelphian has devised a steam bicycle which, he says, will go fifteen miles an



THE NEW STEAM TRICYCLE.

hour with no more labor than that of steering. With such huge profits to be made in the sale of wheels, the inventors are likely to keep improving them every year.

When the men began to ride bicycles they at once, as a rule, adopted practically the costume they now wear—something resembling a baseball player's suit, with the addition of a sack coat. Minute such as rubber soled shoes and club caps came later. With women the question of dress comes first of all, and it has been practically decided that she can wear almost any variety of dress, it is better to have one design especially for the wheel. The divided skirt was at first recommended for this, but here in Orange I doubt if there are three divided skirts—I refer, of course, to the dress itself—in use. Women who belong to the clubs wear the club caps or hats. When not so attached they wear a Tam O'Shanter cap, a pretty toque with bird's feathers, or anything that does not flap or catch the wind.

The owner of one of the nattiest cycling costumes in the country described it to me somewhat as follows: "It is made of dark blue serge with a Greek fret of light blue about the bottom of the short skirt another light blue fret upon the belt, and still another, narrower, on the collar. The soft felt hat is dark blue, with a light blue cord about it. Tailor made? Why of course, you goose."

Dark colors, black, blue gray and brown,

short skirts absolutely devoid of trimming, close fitting bodices; these have been the rule in ladies' cycling costumes. This summer an element of divergence will be introduced by the liberal use of starched shirt fronts and vests of a very manish aspect by smart young women. When the very hottest weather comes, thin loose silk blouses will be the most worn.

The English *Bicycling News* says that a ladies' college debated the question whether wheeling was a proper sport for women. Afterward the women voted on it, thirty-two favoring the sport, fourteen denouncing it, and seven "hedging." It is difficult to see why any one should wish to negative such a question, provided the woman has time and money and strength. But no; time and money alone are necessary. The strength comes by using it.

The best sport of all is sometimes seen when husband and wife go leisurely trund-



C. E. KLUGE.

ling along upon a tandem, and three or four children of assorted sizes come following after, mounted, singly or doubly, upon their own wheels. Such a sight is not uncommon in "the Oranges."

Their Ideas of Education.

The catholic priests who are at work civilizing the wild man of Borneo have a hard time convincing the older savages of the meaning and the value of education. The Rev. Thomas Jackson, protect apostle of North Borneo, who is now in New York, soliciting aid to carry on the work on the island, tells this story:

The priests induced the chief of one of the wildest tribes to let them take his son to one of their schools. The boy was in

the school two months. One day the chief and all his big warriors came sailing down the river in their canoes. They were heavily armed and called loudly for the boy. One of the priests came out of the school and said to the chief: "The boy is all right and in fine health."

"We must see him," said the chief. "The boy came out. The father looked disappointed. 'Your skin is not white,' he said."

"Oh, my," said the priest, "How can any one get white in this broiling sun?"

"But you said you would make him like yourself," said the chief.

"We did say that," replied the priest, "but we meant intelligent, like ourselves, not white."

The chief looked puzzled, and then called the boy to him. "When is it going to rain next time?" asked the chief.

The young man shook his head. The chief looked displeased.

"What will be the size of the rice crop next year?" he asked again. Once more the youngster shook his head.

"We have lost our great sword in the wood, we have searched everywhere for it but cannot find it. Where is the sword?" The boy shook his head the third time.

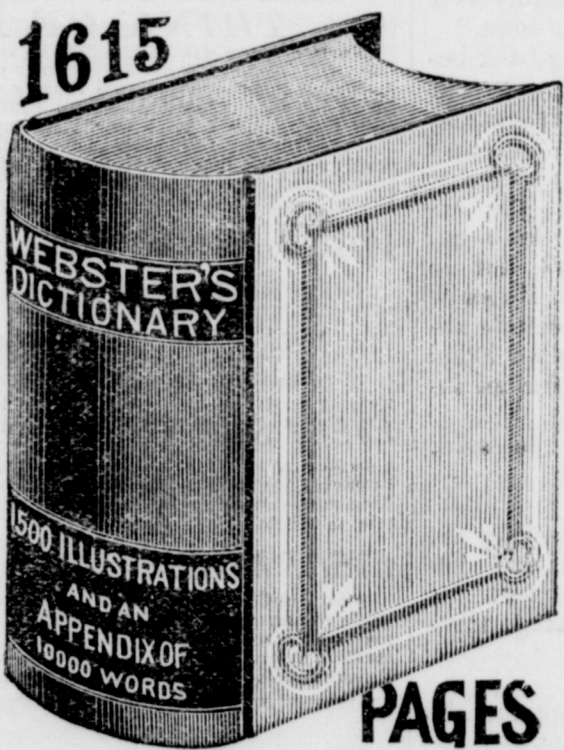
Turning to the priest the chief said angrily: "You promised lies. The boy is no more intelligent than he was when you got him." And taking the lad by the shoulder, he walked off with him, followed by his warriors.—N. Y. Sun.

Fish Hatched in the Sky.

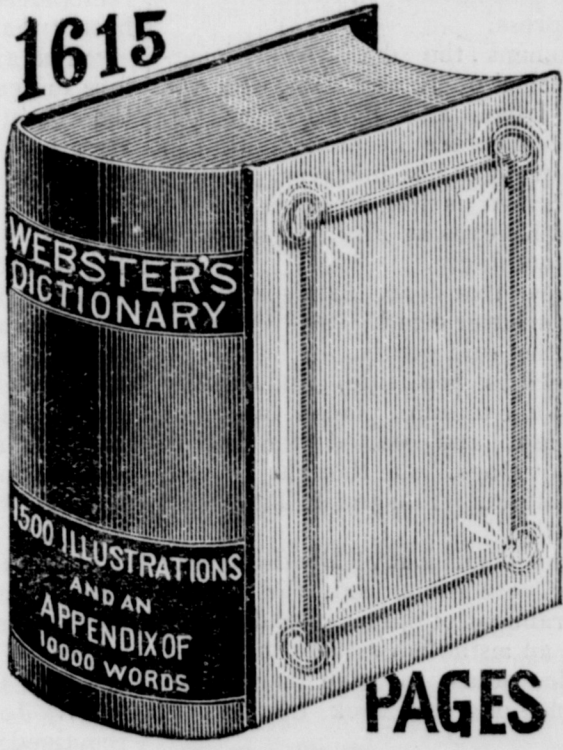
I observe a reference made in the *American Angler* touching upon showers of fish, in which it states that science has not yet fully explained the phenomena. This is perhaps slightly incorrect. Several causes have been suggested. Might it not very probably be that fish and frogs which fall apparently from the skies are really bred there?

Water fowl, it is known, very frequently carry eggs of fish to a great distance, having swallowed them, and in their flight disgorging the same unharmed where they can and do fructify and mature in water over which these birds pass. The eggs of many old fish are very glutinous, and readily adhere to substance brought in contact with them during particular times of their incubation. Is it not very probable that not only do those birds convey ova upon their wings as well as in their crops, and when flying at great heights the ova, becoming detached from the wings, may remain suspended in the moist atmosphere, which is quite possible under certain conditions of atmospheric pressure, and that when under development they become too heavy, and naturally fall to the earth.—*Nature's Realm.*

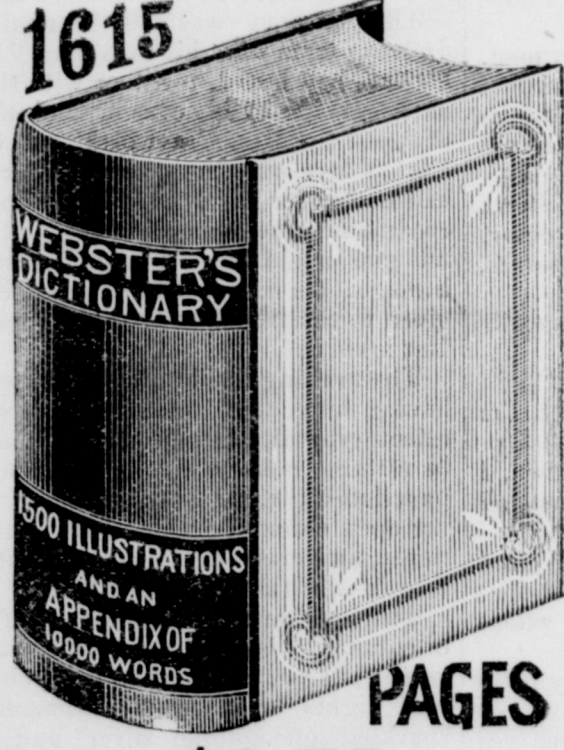
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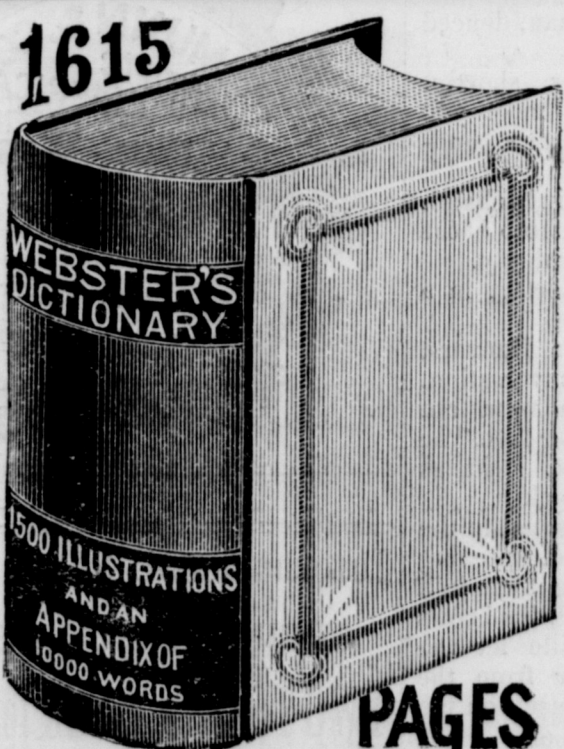


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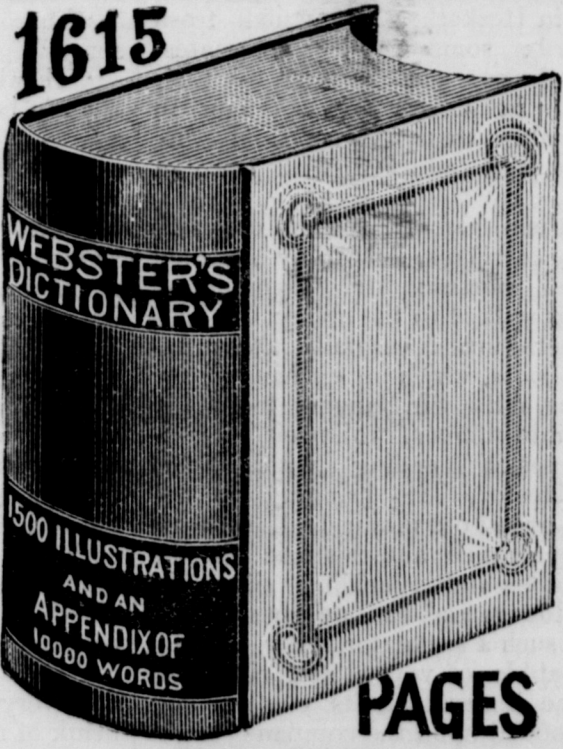


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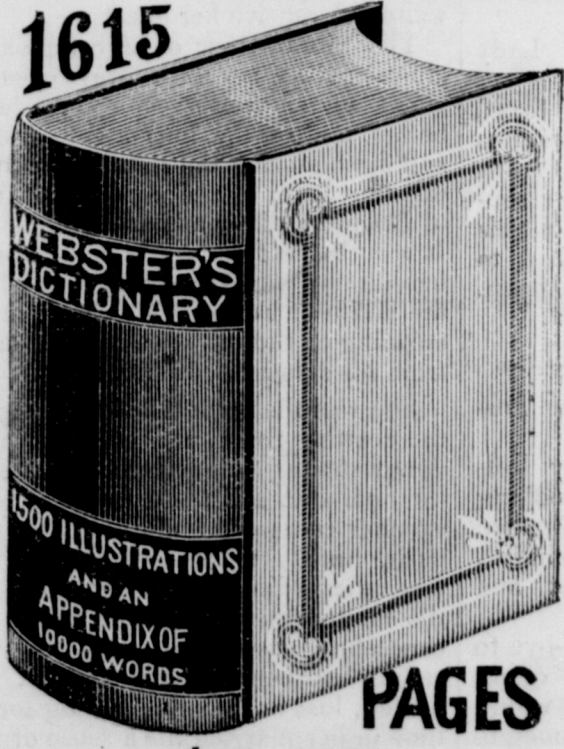
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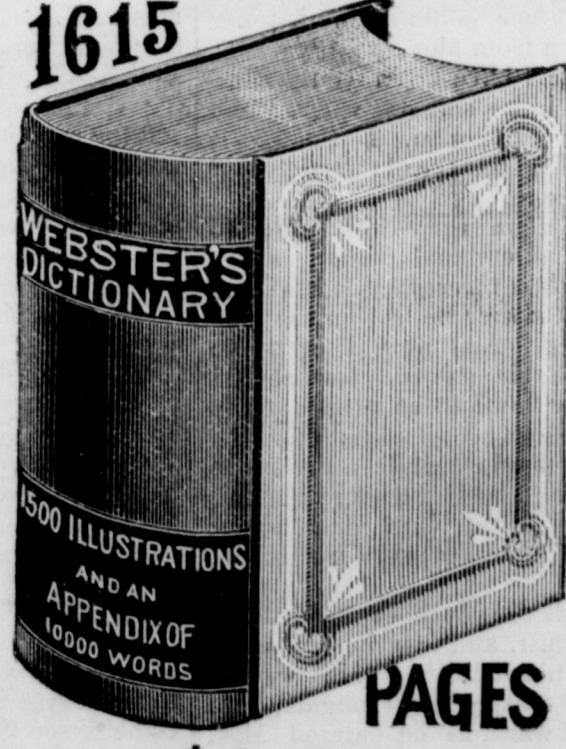
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