

A GHOST ON A BICYCLE.

A group of cyclists were seated round the fire in the comfortable inn of Pont-y-Pridd, in North Wales. Their talk was of thrilling experiences on the wheel, and, just as the interest was beginning to flag, Tom Bodkin asked if any of the company had ever seen a ghost upon a bicycle. Nearly all of them laughed at the idea.

"Don't laugh, gentlemen," said Bodkins, quietly. "I saw one!"

"The thing happened in this way. To begin at the beginning, Dick Naggs and myself were running neck-and-neck for a dear little girl whom I shall call Sophie Byles.

"Sophie was a tormenting little witch. She dived with both of us in a thoroughly impartial way; and it either of us attempted any of those foolish remonstrances that fellows desperately in love will sometimes venture on in such provoking circumstances, she would only toss her dainty little head, and, elevating her slightly retroussé nose, shrug her shoulders disdainfully, and say, 'Please don't speak to me any more, Tom—or Dick, as the case might be.'

"Now, Dick, and I, strange to say, were the best of friends, although we were the best of rivals. We had been chums for several years, lodging in the same 'digs,' and getting on together capitally.

"When we discovered we were both hopelessly gone over Sophie we had a long talk over the matter, and the upshot of it was that we shook hands over a fair agreement to go in for her, each of us, fairly and squarely, and let the best man win, neither taking any mean advantage of the other.

"Things went on very nicely under this working arrangement for about six months. I often met Dick riding back after visiting Sophie at her suburban cottage near Stepaside, and as he as often met me, but no oftener, for it was in the bond that such visits should be exactly equal in number.

"We always laughed good-humouredly at each other when we met thus, chaffed each other about our prospect of success, and went off and had a drink; so you see we were honourable chums.

"For some months we led this sort of life, and nothing could possibly be more satisfactory to either Dick or me—unless either of us would take himself to Jericho, out of the other's way. But as this was a very remote contingency indeed, we accepted the situation in a spirit of beatific cheerfulness, and made the best we could of it.

"Sophie had only one relative living—but that was quite a sufficient number. It was her father—and he was a terror.

"Among the virtues Mr. Byles rejoiced in—and they were too numerous to particularize—was that of rigid honesty. He had never got into debt to the extent of a penny in his life, he used to boast; and he detested people who did.

"The old man seemed to have an impartial sort of liking for both Dick and me. He didn't object to our paying our addresses to his daughter, but seemed to be trying, like ourselves, to find out which of us she liked best—perhaps with equal success.

"At any rate, he always met us civilly, and chatted to us in his own dry way on such interesting topics as the weather, and the crops, the stock and share markets, and the like.

"Dick and myself were then in the enjoyment of a modest income each—quite enough for him, for he was not of an extravagant turn; but hardly enough for me, for my tastes were more luxurious.

"However, financial matters were not in Dick's case, any more than my own, ever thought of for a moment in connection with our mutually dear Sophie. We would have taken her without a penny—but we knew very well she wouldn't come so, whenever she made up her mind.

"One evening I met Dick riding back from Stepaside, after one of the regulation visits, as I was going out to take his place. He jumped down off his bicycle, and came over to me in a state of great perturbation.

"Tom," said he, "I'm in great trouble, old fellow. I have to go away for a fortnight. There's a maiden aunt of mine very ill, over in Homburg, and she wants to see me. I'm to be her heir, you see, and I can't possibly refuse."

"I don't see why you should, my boy," I replied; "neither do I perceive why you should be so dreadfully agitated. You're a lucky dog, so you are—coming in for a fortune."

"Don't see it!" he cried, opening his eyes in astonishment. "What is Sophie to do in my absence?"

"Don't trouble your head about that," I answered. "She'll get along just as usual, I'm sure."

"But you—you won't surely take any advantage of my absence, Tom? If I had your promise on that I'd feel quite relieved."

"Well, that's rather hard," I returned. "I don't see why my arrangements should be affected by your maiden aunt's proceedings. The old lady is not going to make me her heir."

"But don't you see, Tom, that my absence would be giving you an unfair advantage? You're too honorable a fellow, I know, to avail yourself on it."

"Look here, Dick," I said at length, after he had gone on in this strain awhile. "I'll go this far to oblige you: I'll not come out here again for a fortnight. If you're back by that time, well and good. If you're not, the bargain is at an end."

"Do you give me your word on that, Tom?" he asked, brightening up.

"I do," I returned; "you may haunt me when you die, if I break it. Now be off."

"We shook hands and parted, and when I saw our beloved Sophie I informed her of the arrangement agreed upon. She said she didn't mind, as she was going on a visit to a friend in Wicklow for a week. But I thought she was secretly vexed all the same.

"I was discussing breakfast one morning about a week afterwards, glancing over the newspaper now and then as I feasted, when suddenly my eye caught the heading—'Fatal Accident to a Dublin Gentleman.'

"I immediately looked at the item, and to my horror, found that it related to my unhappy friend, Dick. He had jumped out of a railway carriage while train was in motion, got jammed between it and the platform, and was killed."

"The news upset me a good deal, although I could not help feeling that it cleared the ground for me in one important direction. Still, I was very much attached to poor Dick, and I couldn't bring myself to visit Sophie for a couple of days after I heard the sad tidings, in order to break them to her.

"The year was getting fast into the sere and yellow leaf; brown October had brought its short and its (sometimes) moonlit nights; and it was on one of these—a glorious one it was—that I started off, with an equally-balanced admixture of grief and hopeful elation of my heart, for the bower of my Sophie—my own Sophie, as I fondly hoped soon to call her now—to unfold my gruesome tale.

"I had got about half-way towards my destination, when it occurred to me that I ought to strike a match and have a quiet puff of the soothing weed, as nothing could be more in keeping with the peaceful quiet of the scene. No sooner thought of than done; and I was in the act of remounting, with pipe aglow, when my eye caught sight of another rider coming in the same direction, but at a considerable distance behind.

"This circumstance caused me no emotion in particular, and I forgot all about it as I sped on afresh. I slackened my pace to spin out the distance until I had finished my pipe, and was drawing on easily towards Stepaside, when some instinct or other made me glance backwards down the road again.

"The other traveller had gained upon me with amazing celerity. He was now not more than forty or fifty yards behind.

"What a wonderful resemblance he bore at that distance to my dead friend, Dick! His garments looked white in the ghostly moonlight. Dick, when riding all last summer, had worn a suit of white flannel, as the stranger's seemed be. And it appeared to me, as I paused, thunder-stricken and trembling, for a moment in my ride, that his form was exactly that of my dead friend!

"I was never superstitious, yet now for an instant a feeling of awe came over me; but as I wobbled to the ground off my machine, under its influence, I began to curse myself vigorously for a womanish fool, and, jumping up, with the celerity of fully recovered spirits, I set my steel steed off with a lively start, and began to race away from the awesome stranger.

"I went at a spanking pace for some time, but I could not help turning my head backwards again soon, to note how far I had left him behind.

"Horror of horrors! he was gaining on me still!

"He was only a few yards behind. I could not distinguish his face; but the figure, and the way in which it sat the machine, were the same as Dick's.

"Again I spurred madly. Great beads of cold sweat burst out upon my temples, and an icy feeling crept through my frame, even to the marrow of my bones, despite the heat into which the exercise had thrown me. My terror lent me strength. I must get away from this horrible phantom, even though my heart should snap in the effort. I tore along the road now like a maniac.

"I was just turning the corner of the rustic lane which led up to Sophie's bower, when my machine came plump against a form engaged in doing the same from the lane side of the angle. The consequences were disastrous to both travellers.

"Machine and myself threw a double somersault over the body of the pedestrian. When we both regained our feet I thought I should turn into stone when I encountered the Gordon-like eye of my intended father-in-law!

"Hang it, man!" he shouted, as soon as he recognised me and found his voice, "what the dickens are ye staring at me for, instead of apologizing for nearly killing me? One would think you had seen a ghost."

"I have seen a ghost, sure enough, sir," I answered with trembling lips; "the ghost of my poor dead friend, Dick; and see, there it comes!"

"The white figure had arrived at the corner of the lane, full in the ghastly glare of the dazzling moonlight. It dismounted and advanced toward where we stood.

"I held up both my hands to shut out the fearsome sight.

"Don't come near me, I cried, in an agony of desperation, 'until you tell me whether you are a man or the ghost of my dead friend, Dick!'

"The thing laughed; it was a horrible human laugh.

"No ghost, sir," it replied, as its coarse chuckle ceased, "but a messenger from a man who has ghosted you long enough in vain for this little bill of seven-pounds-ten for clothes—Mr. Tippet, the tailor, of Grafton Street. Here 'tis for you, sir, tomorrow I'm instructed to invite you to an interview with the Recorder, at Green street court-house."

"This was my romance of the wheel. It shattered my day-dream, and lost me my Sophie. Old Byles turned on me with all the scorn of an enraged money-lender who never owed a man a penny, and bade me never again show my face at the cottage.

"The fickle Sophie ratified this decision, and shortly afterwards married a wealthy pawnbroker who had, a couple of months before, laid his third spouse under the sod in Glasnevin; and I am left here alone with my faithful bicycle!"—*Tid Bits.*

An Easy Way Out.

In times of danger though fifty suggestions may be made by as many people, comparatively few of them are of practical use. Recently a girl, while crossing a railway track in America, caught the heel of her shoe between the side of one of the tracks and the pavement. She was terrified at the situation, thinking of the possibility of a train coming along at any moment, and in her frantic efforts to release her imprisoned foot only succeeded in pinning it the more.

Her cries of alarm soon attracted a large

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crowd. "Pull up the stone," said one, "Yes, run. Get a crowbar," exclaimed another bystander. "Cut the heel of the shoe," interjected a third, but the entire shoe was caught by this time, and the men could not reach to cut the heel. So it continued for fifteen or twenty minutes, each one offering a suggestion and extending sympathy to the now half-frantic girl, who saw no chance of speedy escape from her predicament.

At last an Irish laborer came up and elbowed his way through the crowd. He at once grasped the situation.

"Why, men," he said, "why don't you unlace the shoe, and let the lady draw her foot out?"

At once the problem was solved. The woman was released, and her shoe, somewhat the worse for the efforts of the men, was got out of the track and replaced upon her foot.

THINGS OF VALUE.

The religion of some people consists in a set of notions.

It is hard to be a friend to a man who is an enemy to himself.

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The trouble with the man who knows nothing is that he is always the last to find it out.

Will Asiatic Cholera Follow?

Mr. Joe Howard's theory that, one horror of a similar nature follows another to the number of three, has a chance for confirmation this coming summer if certain predictions prove true. First, it was La Grippe; "A whim the French define it. Second came deaths by scores from its after effects, or from the many atmospheric changes of the past few months. Severe cases of pneumonia, bronchitis, intense catarrh and general loss of strength were the results, until death was almost welcomed as a relief to sufferers. So that this epidemic and its sequence has proven to be the most terribly realistic "whim" that ever infested this country. And now for number three; the theory is said to be advanced that the Cholera is very likely to find fertile soil in the generally debilitated constitutions of our people resulting from the effects of such a winter and spring as has just past. Whether the theory of three will be confirmed in this case or not, remains to be seen. At any rate it behooves every person still affected by any of the complaints due to these climatic changes and epidemics, such as catarrh or bronchial troubles, to look well to themselves and see that every trace of the trouble is removed this present month; before the heat of summer still more debilitates their system. For years we have found that simple old remedy Johnson's Anodyne Liniment, used as directed, to be the most certain remedy for all forms of lingering summer colds, catarrh or bronchial affections, as well as a preventive and cure for all kinds of summer complaints. It is absolutely certain that a remedy that has survived for eighty years as Johnson's Anodyne Liniment has done, must have more than average merit. We suppose there is not a family in this country but what has this good old fashioned remedy in the house. If there is, we advise them to get it at once or write the manufacturers I. S. Johnson & Co., Boston, Mass., for a pamphlet describing its various uses for the last eighty years. Now is the time. Delays are dangerous, and an ounce of prevention is worth many pounds of cure.

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7—Neuralgia, Toothache, Faceache, etc.	.25
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Will arrive at St. John from Sussex, 8.30; from Quebec and Montreal (excepted Monday), 9.35; from Point du Chene, 12.55; from Halifax, 19.30; from Halifax, 22.30.

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Summer Arrangement.

On and after Tuesday 7th June, 1892, trains will run daily (Sunday excepted) as follows:

LEAVE YARMOUTH—Express daily at 8.00 a.m.; arrive at Annapolis at 11.30 a.m.; Passenger and Freight Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 1.30 p.m.; arrive at Weymouth at 4.15 p.m.

LEAVE ANNAPOLIS—Express daily at 12.55 p.m.; arrive at Yarmouth at 4.25 p.m.; Passenger and Freight Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday at 5.50 a.m., arrive at Yarmouth 10.55 a.m.

LEAVE WEYMOUTH—Passenger and Freight Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 8.30 a.m., arrive at Yarmouth at 10.55 a.m.

CONNECTIONS.—At Annapolis with trains of the Windsor and Annapolis Railway; at Digby with Steamer City of Monticello for St. John Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday; at Yarmouth with steamers Yarmouth and Boston for Boston every Wednesday and Saturday evenings; and from Boston every Wednesday and Saturday mornings. With Stage daily (Sunday excepted) to and from Barrington, Shelburne and Liverpool.

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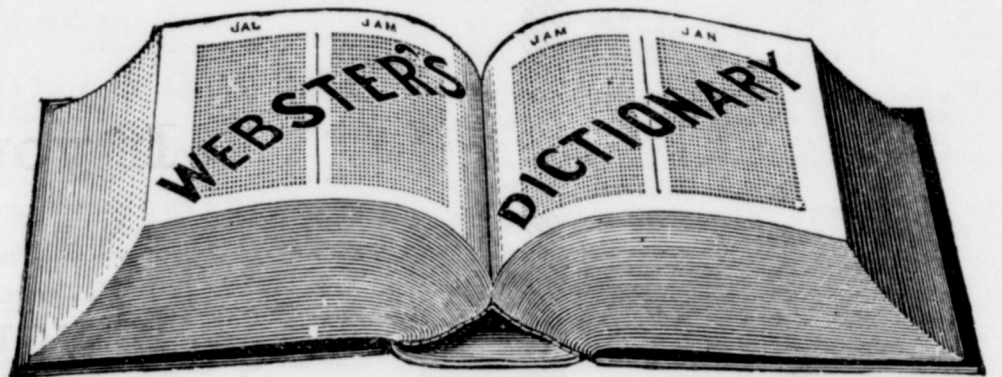
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