THE MOST DARING RIDE.

It Is Taken by a Cyclist Over a Two-Hundred-Foot Gorge.

[Copyright, 1898.]

Across the Hoosac river close to the Vermont state line swings and sways a bridge that makes a person with nerves shudder when he walks across it. The bridge is 180 feet long, and one looks down from it 200 feet to the river beneath. It was across this structure that George Round, a bicycle rider, scorched on his wheel recently, accomplishing a feat that to those who watched him seemed sure to result in the rider's death.

The bridge is composed of stringers, held in place by two wire cables. For a guard rail a single wire is strung, low down, so that a person riding at a height at which the cyclist rode stood every chance of plunging headlong into the gulf below the bridge should he lose his balance or his wheel become in the least degree unmanageable.

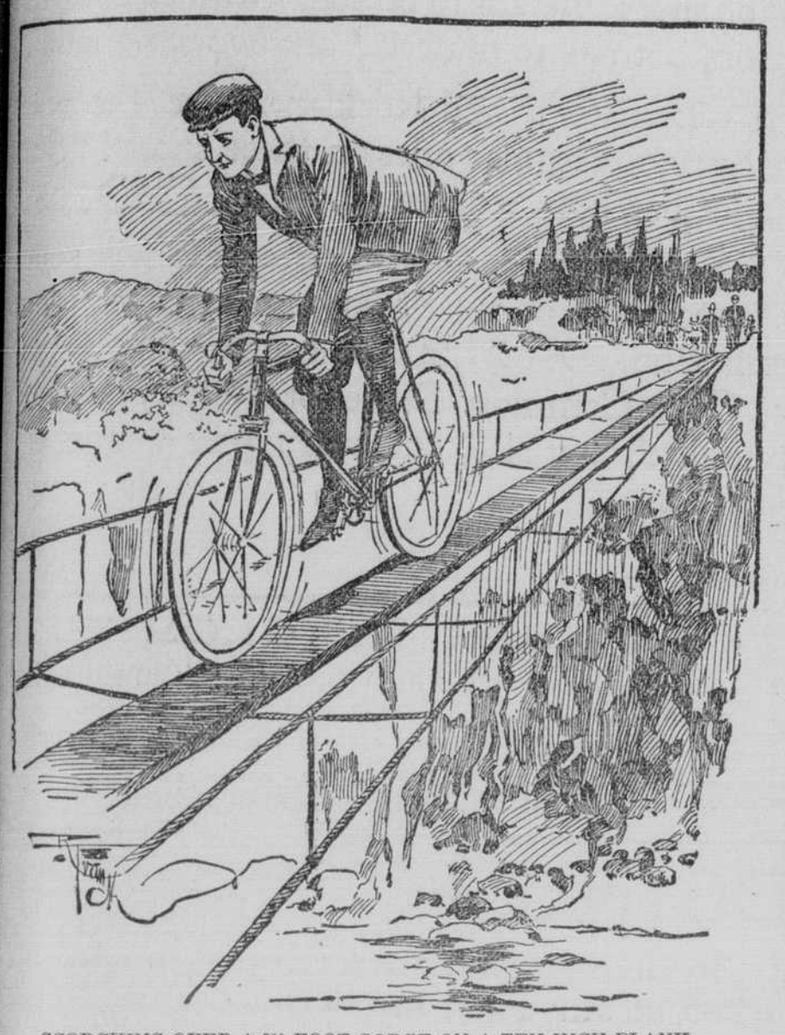
Cyclist Round considered all these chances, but made up his mind that he was equal to them, as he had ridden across bridges at dizzy heights before. When he told the people of Williamstown, Mass., what he intended doing they tried to persuade him that his thought was foolhardy. When one stops to think that the pathway across the structure on which it was necessary for Round to ride when he attempted to cross was a single line of ten-inch planking their belief seems wise.

Mr. Round has been asked to describe his ride and the accompanying sensations, and in response to this request says: "The ten-inch planking which constitutes the pathway across the bridge is lower in the middle than at the ends, because the bridge supports, two wire cables, naturally sag at that point. The actual difference in height between the middle and the ends is eight feet, and when you consider the swaying nature of the structure that is considerable.

"I had walked the bridge several times, and the moment I stepped on it I noticed that it swayed with me in a rather unpleasant fashion. Any wheelman knows that a motion of this sort greatly increased the difficulties of riding. I was very sure I could ride the bridge safely, and was not in the least frightened, although I fully realized that a fall from it was certain death. If the water had been deep I would have stood a chance of escaping with my life in case of a fall, but as it was only two feet in depth and ran over a bed of almost solid rock it was plain enough what would happen if ever I should drop.

"Well, I started a little bit slow, and then it came to me that the sooner I got to the other side the sooner I would be away from any possible danger, and so I just scorched it across as hard as I could. The bridge shook a great deal and once I held my breath for a second when the wheel struck something and swerved a bit, but as a matter of fact I was not frightened, for the simple reason that I was too busy paying attention to moving my wheel.

"After I had made the trip across some of the folks said I was frightened. If I had been I would not have minded their saying so, but that made me angry, seeing, as I have said, that I was not frightened at all. So I just turned round and rode over the bridge again, this time without any feeling except that of exhilaration."



SCORCHING OVER A 200-FOOT GORGE ON A TEN-INCH PLANK.

TO FIRES BY ELECTRICITY.

The Indianapolis Fire Department Introduces an Innovation.

[Copyright, 1898.]

Indianapolis deserves the credit for a new plan for fire fighting. It came into the mind of Thomas F. Barrett, chief of the fire force of that city. He decided that the electric roads could give valuable aid in conveying fire apparatus to the scene of the conflagration.

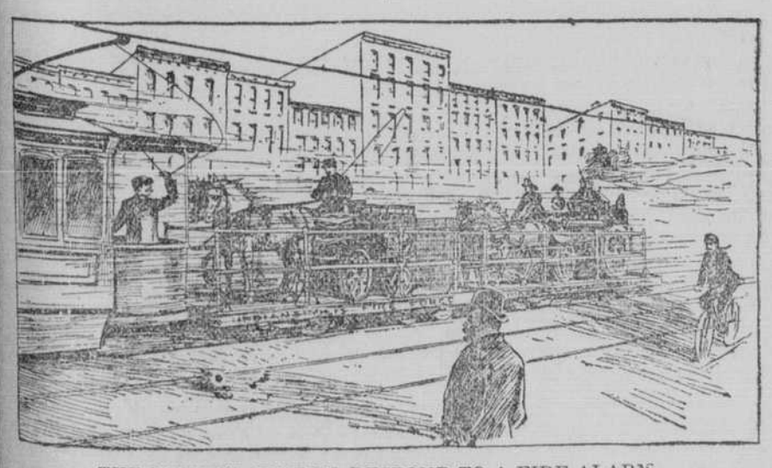
"My attention was first called to this subject by a recent fire in one of the buildings at the Indiana state fair grounds, located about six miles from Indianapolis, and connected by an electric railway," said Chief Barrett in a recent letter replying to an inquiry about his plan. "At that time I suggested that a large fire cistern be built on the premises, to be filled by water from the roof of one of the buildings, and that low trucks be constructed by the street railway company, with a tail board to let down, so that an engine and hose wagon could be driven quickly upon it and be carried to the fair grounds in case of fire. One engine, with a sufficient supply of water, playing two streams, could accomplish a great deal.

"This led to a more extended discussion of the subject. Indianapolis is a peculiar, though beautifully, built city. It is not compact; in fact almost every street in the resident portion is a park. So extended is the territory upon which the city is built that it requires much more apparatus for fire protection than cities of equal size. The suburbs therefore are correspondingly hard to cover on account of their distance from the city.

"The electric lines running from Indianapolis being well constructed, and telephone connections being had with the suburbs, my plan is to have the trucks constructed, as referred to above, and ordered out by telephone, one of our engines of medium capacity, meeting it en route and quickly loading as above described and proceeding rapidly to the fire. A combined hose wagon and chemical engine could be sent so that the latter could be used if water was not available."

An experiment with the apparatus arranged as shown in the accompanying picture has proven very successful.

It will be wonderful if this plan is confined to Indianapolis. New York could certainly benefit by it. The city, now that the street railway combine has been made, will soon be covered with a network of roads operated by the underground trolley system. This permits high speed—indeed the cars run 30 miles an hour through the Fourth avenue tunnel. If a switch system could be provided by which, on alarm, the tracks could be cleared; and a sufficient number of such flat cars as Chief Barrett suggests, could be built, there is no doubt that great saving of time could be made in cases of need, especially when it was desired to rapidly concentrate the fire apparatus around a particularly threatening blaze.



THE NEWEST WAY TO RESPOND TO A FIRE ALARM.

REGULAR MIND READER.

A Music Box That Knew What Air to Play.

"I am fond of music, and, as I do not play and have no little ones about the house, I bought one of the finest music boxes that I could find. It was a large box and had nearly a score of melodies, from the sacred to the catchy negro airs, stored up within its recesses. There were bells and cymbals, too, and a tiny drum. It was a swell music box and no mistake. Well, one day I lost my position and was in absolute need of ready money. My prospects were excellent, and I did not want to injure them by borrowing from friends, on whom, however, I knew I could depend. To tide me over my difficulty I determined to pawn my music box (it cost me upward of $100—imported, you know), and I readily secured $25. Well, things did not pan out exactly as I expected—things seldom go just as they are scheduled to go—and it was a year almost before I found myself in a position to redeem the music box from the pawn shop. I took the ticket, went to the shop and told the man in charge that I wanted to redeem my instrument, and asked whether it had been kept in order and had not been injured. He assured me that it had not been tampered with, and, in proof thereof, he offered to let me wind it up and make it play before I paid back the money I had secured by its pledge. I accepted, and, after winding the box up, it started to play. Now, what do you think that darned old, long-forgotten musical instrument played?"

As he looked around the crowd no one could suggest the name of the air, and he said: "Darn my buttons, if it did not start right in and reel off 'I Know That My Redeemer Liveth.' Almost human knowledge that, almost human, sirs."—N. O. Times-Herald.

RAINY REMINDER.

Characteristic Bit of "Ould" Ireland in America.

A Cleveland landlord has one of his houses tenanted by a family that is out of all proportions to the size of the dwelling. In fact, he strongly suspects that there are at least two distinct families in the house, and he is quite anxious to get rid of them. He doesn't want to turn them out, and he has been hoping they would take the frequent hints he gives them and seek some other location. Lately they have complained of a leaky roof, but the landlord has determined to make no repairs until they leave.

A few days ago the head of the household waited on him.

"Well, sor," he said, "that roof has been leakin' agin."

"Has it?" asked the landlord.

"Yis, sor. It leaks right over me sister's bed. Draps right down on her, sor. This marnin' she came out o' the room a-cryin', sor. It had been raining on her all night. Yis, sor, cryin'."

"Well, why in Tophet," inquired the landlord, "didn't she move the bed?"

"'Twasn't that, sor," hastily remarked the tenant. "'Twasn't that."

"What ailed her, then?"

"Why, you see, sor, she were just a-cryin' because it reminded her so much of home."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

It's about as hard for a man to keep a diary as for a woman to keep a sharp lead pencil.—Chicago Daily News.

We wonder why people are always giving us things we don't want and nothing we do want.—Washington (Ia.) Democrat.

When a man gets up saying he isn't prepared to make a speech, you may as well make up your mind to stay an extra hour.—Washington Democrat.

"Papa," said Sammy Snaggs, who was seeking for information, "how much is gold worth an ounce?" "I can't tell you what gold is worth an ounce here; but in the Klondike I understand that gold is worth its weight in doughnuts."—Pittsburgh Chronicle-Telegraph.

Papa Brindle—"Matilda, I seriously object to your encouraging the attentions of that young Spooler. He is the most rakish-looking youth I ever saw." Matilda—"What do you mean, papa?" Papa Brindle—"Why, I mean the way he wears his hat on one side." Matilda—"That isn't rakishness, papa." Papa Brindle—"What is it, then?" Matilda—"It's a boil."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Fuddy—"Talk about saving women! I suppose my wife is the most economical woman going." Duddy—"What has she been doing now?" Fuddy—"She has been wanting a new cloak, and the other day she said: 'I wish I had $50 to get that cloak with!' Then she thought a moment, and added: 'No, I won't be extravagant. I wish I had $40. Perhaps I might be able to get it for that.' Now, that's what I call economy."—Boston Transcript.

Force of Habit.—"The habits we form in our youth," said the self-made philosopher, "stick to us all through life, no matter how hard we may try to shake them off. Now, there's Quakerson, for instance, who was brought up in Philadelphia—look at him!" "Why, what's he been doing?" "Haven't you heard? He's got the creeping paralysis."—Chicago News.

She—"Yes, these are expensive materials; but I agreed with Polonius; 'Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy.'" Her Friend—"That was his advice to a young man, was it not?" She—"Certainly! No man would find it necessary to give such advice to a woman."—Puck.

Advantages of the Sleigh.

The man who owns a sleigh has no difficulty in making himself solid with the girls. As girls soon get cold and are ready to go home he can take as many as six in one afternoon, taking each girl home as fast as she freezes and going for another. The man who gets a girl in a buggy in summer isn't allowed to turn back till the horse gets lame.—Atchison Globe.

The Brass of Critics.

"I often marvel," said Pennington, the author, "at these critics who in an hour's time blast a work over which the authors have spent a year."

"Yes," replied Cawstik, who had read Pennington's latest, "when a minute would suffice them to say all that is necessary."—Philadelphia North American.

The true culture of personal beauty is not external; it is heart work.—J. R. Miller.

In Vienna.

First Citizen—And is Herr Von Pommeler a proper candidate for the reichsrath?

Second Citizen (impressively)—My friend, you should see him punch the bag.—Puck.

Every man remembers having been rejected as juror in some lawsuit.—Washington Democrat.

A girl puts in a great deal of her spare time reading advertisements and wanting things.—Washington Democrat.

Hawaii and Japan.

Despatches from Washington state that there are about to be important developments in the Japanese imbroglio with the government of the Hawaiian Islands. However this may be, certain it is that the disturbance of the stomach caused by simple indigestion will develop into chronic dyspepsia unless checkmated at the start. The finest stomachic is Hostetter's Stomach Bitters, which promptly rectifies gastric trouble, and does away with irregularity of the bowels and liver.

Just a Scheme, of Course.

Tenpenny—Here is an account in the paper of a man who was shipwrecked in mid-ocean and cast away on a desert island with another man's wife.

Mrs. Tupenny—The wretch! I hope his wife got a divorce from him!—Town Topics.

Talk isn't cheap when you hire a lawyer to do it for you.—Chicago Daily News.

Our idea of being just rich enough is to be in such circumstances that one can send telegrams instead of having to write letters.—Atchison Globe.

Talk is cheap, but somehow gossip always gains currency.—Chicago Daily News.

The earth goes 'round, but it would not go round if divided up among all the parties who want it.—Puck.

The long-headed clergyman preaches the shortest sermon.—Chicago Daily News.

A. N. K.—I 1692