

THE WHEELING WORLD

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THE WHEELING WORLD.
A Weekly Survey.
DICK TURPIN'S RANDOM RECORDS.

FROST has put an end to all regular cycling, and again brought the time round when my readers and I gather in fancy round an imaginary crackling wood fire in the jovial parlour of some picturesque old roadside hostelry - this, too, being a creature of our imagination. There we sample mine host's fare - which, alas! also has no real existence - whilst we review the events of the season that has gone.

We draw up our chairs.

The speed member is first with the poker; he vigorously stirs the fire, and as we gaze with half-closed eyes, the glowing embers change, and we see the Club fliers slogging away at road handicaps and medal rides.

In the panorama of flames Howard - the man of the year - emerges triumphant from the four road handicaps, with Fred Young, Willmer, Stephenson, and Coote close behind him.

Again a speedman takes the poker, and this time we see, one by one, the long distance men sally forth like King Arthur's knights in search of the Holy Grail. Only that our Sir Galahad and Sir Lancelot of to-day are out for Club medals!

Howard is again the leader, winning gold medals at both one hundred miles and twelve hours; Stephenson wins a special gold for the hundred; Henson scores a gold for the twelve hours and a gold-centre for the hundred; and Medhurst secures a gold for the twelve hours. Truly our scorchers have had a memorable year!

The tourist gives the fire a less violent stirring than did the speed merchants.

But amongst the glowing logs we catch glimpses of the irrepressible gaily pedalling across Sussex and Surrey, a bit of Hants, Berks, Oxford, a slice of Gloucester's solitude, and Warwick, resting for the night on the banks of the Avon.

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A kick from the Club Captain, and in the flying sparks we see a happy, laughing throng of wheelers - ladies and gentlemen. Now they have just finished an *al fresco* tea at the Club Honorary Secretary's abode, and are roystering at base-ball, sack races, dancing on the lawn, and singing the chorus to one of the Club comedian's songs.

Now they ramble to Shoreham or WASHINGTON in company, passing many a jolly hour together, whilst anon they potter in twos and threes to Arundel and Bramber. But always jolly!

It is the Veterans' turn with the poker.

The sparks show us Eastbourne, and we gaze breathlessly as again we see Henson and Sam Clark bolt from the other Sussex Veterans who would fain be Champion. We hear the bell ring and the crowd cheer madly. Sam has darted away, and a cheer almost bursts from our fireside group as we see him finish first, with his Club-mate Henson second, and the rest out of it.

Looking again, we see Sam administer a beating to the Veteran Champion of Hampshire. Bravo, Sam!

A gloomy-looking stranger, hitherto unnoticed by us, now gives a kick to the fire.

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In the smoke and soot we see a rapid succession of ugly spills. Sam Clark's better half is the first victim, and for weeks cannot cycle. Then poor Ben Rogers breaks a collar-bone twice; Harry Greenfield fractures his arm; Medhurst severely injures his knee; Turpin half-heartedly imitates Rogers with one of his collar-bones; and Secretary Fibbens is just sustaining his painful spill and shoulder dislocation when we fall on the gloomy stranger and drive him forth. But what a lot of accidents we have had this year!

Our Scribe uses his uninjured arm to trim the fire. We see the good old Excelsior Club still running well; true, the Race Meetings have not been money-making concerns this year owing to the bad weather, but from the sporting point of view they were real achievements.

However, there is still a shot in the Club's locker, and the members' roll is not on the decrease. We note with pride the hale and hearty appearance of the old boys - those who launched the Club - when the members gather round the festive board for the Annual Dinner.

We watch the flickering picture of the Annual Dinner with interest, for it is an animated scene. But presently we see the group rise, link hands, and give voice with true cycling gusto. It is Auld Lang Syne!

And so, my dear reader, we break up our imaginary fireside group, and leave the fanciful hostelry.

Outside, as we take our machines, we observe

the sun has sunk behind the hills, the day is over, and the evening mists remind us it is Winter.

Thus closes the season, and we ride home in the gathering darkness, full of the happy remembrances it has left us, and eager for the night of Winter to pass. Then, once again, Hurrah! for the wheel.

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