

# THE WHEELING WORLD

Source: Worthing Gazette.

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Turpin: 21.10.1908 P2C5-6

## THE WHEELING WORLD.

A WEEKLY SURVEY.

Dick Turpin's Cycling Gossip.

### More About Devon.

LAST week I told of the arrival of the Commodore and myself at picturesque Lynmouth, on the northern coast of Devon. As many of my readers are fond of touring, I should like briefly to complete the account of our travels.

Having devoted all the time we could spare to Lynmouth, the Lyn Valley, the Doon Valley, and the surrounding scenery, one morning saw us ascend by the Cliff Railway and take train for Barnstaple.

The Cliff Railway is worked upon a simple plan: two cars, attached to a wire cable, travel up and down a steep incline. A tank beneath the car at the top of the railway is filled with water; the extra weight thus obtained causes the car to descend, and so draw the other car to the top.

The Commodore and I meditated how we might adapt the idea to enable two wheelmen to scale the steep Devon hills. But it would have involved a lot of drinking for one of us! Our cable, too, might snap at a critical moment! So we gave it up.

The railway journey to Barnstaple was interesting, if not exactly exciting.

Drawn by a toy engine on a narrow track, we wound in and out along the sides of hills where grazing cattle looked up as if to resent our intrusion.

### Porter and Passengers.

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At one of the tiny Stations a solitary porter invoked the aid of some of the passengers, who alighted and helped to place milk churns on the train. I nearly offered to relieve the engine driver whilst he walked alongside to stretch himself; he could have kept up with the train.

At length, with a good imitation of a cock-crow, our conceited little engine pulled into Barnstaple, and we regained our bicycles. They had commenced the journey in an open coal truck; but some kind-hearted porter in the hills had treated the steeds to a whole first-class compartment! Bless him!

An easy road to sea-faring Bideford, with its famous bridge of twenty-four arches. Thence on to higher ground as we continued to Clovelly; a scramble down its steep, cobble-paved steps, and out on to a stone breakwater. Here we had a good view of one of the oddest little villages we have seen.

The small whitewashed cottages seem to have been carefully glued on to the steepest hillside which could be found. And glued on in a most perfect disorder.

We strolled out in the evening; Clovelly was well-nigh hushed to sleep. Certainly the steady song of the sea as it swirled at the base of the cliffs begat a drowsiness; and the moon climbed up over a far-off headland and illuminated the swelling waters of Bideford Bay just as the Commodore and I followed the general example of "Early to bed."

### We Reach Cornwall.

Southward on the morrow, a few miles bringing us to an open, bleak, rolling country. Across it ran an uncompromising road with a line of telegraph posts—and very little else was there in the landscape! This was our first bit of Cornwall: drear but impressive.

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Anon, Kilkhampton; it is an old village with a fine Church and lych-gate, with coffin-stone. Then the little, old town of Stratton; and Bude close at hand, a growing seaside resort.

We strolled on the fine, clean sands and admired the torn and rocky coast. Here the mighty Atlantic has made many a meal, leaving huge fragments of the repeat against which the stoutest ships are sometimes smashed in sight of helpless onlookers.

Still southward to Boscastle and Tintagel. Tintagel, where King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table may—or may not!—have sat.

Alas! First impressions were not favourable to dreaming of the kingly wielder of Excalibur, of Sir Lancelot, nor the quest of the Holy Grail!

For, since the death or departure of that cunning old sage, Merlin, Tintagel has dropped behind the times. Lo! the gramophone is to-day a novelty at Tintagel; one of the first of these machines to reach the place adorned (!) our table and enlivened (!) our evening meal!

At length it ceased its request that we would "put it among the girls," the crowd outside dispersed, and there was peace.

### The Final Stage.

Next morning we walked down to the sea, saw the ruins of King Arthur's Castle and a coast even wilder and more rugged than that at Bude. Then

over lumpy, hilly bye-roads to Launceston; over hilly main road to Okehampton; over rather easier travelling into Exeter.

On the morrow an hour or two about Exeter, and a look in at the Cathedral; then over the hills through Honiton, Chard, and Crewkerne. After tea a moonlight spin of thirty miles through Yeovil and Sherborne brought us to Shaftesbury.

Then came the final stage: an easy, interesting ride through Salisbury, where market animated the streets, a climb for a mile or two, then comfortable roads to Southampton, Fareham, and Chichester.

A dawdle home in the evening over familiar Sussex roads was a pleasant conclusion to our run of five hundred and twenty miles to see a bit of the West Country.

The only regret felt either by the Commodore or myself was that we could not spend a week at each stopping-place instead of a day. For much of the beauty must be sought afoot, and one day's tramping breeds a longing for another.

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For, since the death or departure of that cunning old sage Merlin, Tintagel has dropped behind the times. Lo! the gramophone is to-day a novelty at Tintagel; one of the first of these machines to reach the place adorned (!) our table and enlivened (?) our evening meal!

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At length it ceased its request that we would "put it among the girls,"<sup>1</sup> the crowd outside dispersed, and there was peace.

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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dick Turpin". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style. Below the name, there is a horizontal line that ends in a small flourish on the right side.

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<sup>i</sup> "Put me among the girls," a popular song of the day.