

The Proposed Bicycle Boulevard Over the "L" Road on a Summer's Night.



CYCLISTS PLEASED.

Warmly Indorse the "L" Road Path Suggestion.

THINK THE PLAN FEASIBLE.

Necessary Capital, They Say, Could Be Raised Without Trouble.

The movement to construct a broad double bicycle track in air twenty feet above the level of the "L" railroad tracks, on both the East and West sides, which was exploited in the Journal of last Sunday, has aroused the enthusiasm of the hundred thousand or more wheelmen and wheelwomen of New York.

Nothing else has been talked of at the cycle academies all week, where the attendance has been unusually large on account of the very bad weather. No word has been heard casting doubt upon the practicability of the plan from an engineering standpoint, and as to its financial feature, the cyclists claim that the necessary capital for its construction could be raised in less than forty-eight hours should Russell Sage, George Gould and their associates decline to make the investment.

The cost of construction of the superstructure would be but a trifle of that involved in the original building of the "L" roads. There would be no additional right of way to secure nor damages to pay. The small toll that is proposed to charge on the elevators leading up to the path would more than keep the structure in repair and pay the ordinary running expenses, and the rental of booths along the line of the unique pleasure and business track would prove a source of revenue that would undoubtedly pay the interest on the bonds and yield handsome profits besides.

A Journal artist has caught the spirit of a Summer night's scene on the grandest of all boulevard paths. The scene is made resplendent with dazzling electric lights, in pleasing contrast to which are the myriad festoons of soft-hued Japanese lanterns.

A steadily moving throng of wheelmen in natty costumes especially designed for evening wear and fair wheelwomen in the most modish of cycling garbs whirls rapidly over the smooth path. At the soda fountains, cafes and smoking bazaars, corresponding in dimensions with the "L" depots below, other cyclists and throngs of interested spectators recline in easy chairs upon the verandas to enjoy the entrancing, exhilarating scene.

Under the myriad lights the scene is of fairyland. The men all seem brave and the women fair. The sounds of cheerful chatter and gay laughter are heard above the soft music made by the rubber tires as they skim over the perfect surface. In the distance can be heard the strains of an orchestra—for there will be music by the hand at regular distances. Everybody and his wife, and everybody that expects to take a wife, or be a wife, will be there. Silver-mounted and pearl-inlaid wheels will be so common as to invite but casual comment, the wheels of luxe having already made its appearance in New York.

Through brilliantly lighted windows can be seen novices at their lessons in the academies, and this sort of commodious places of refreshment along the line on a level with the path will be reached by bridges.

What a delightful tour it will be on a balmy midsummer night, spinning over the Ninth avenue line from Harlem to the Battery, catching glimpses of the Hudson at the cross streets, until the moonlight bursts upon the view in all its silvery glory! This short rest for refreshment and recreation, while the music softly steals over the scene at the grand casino, which will be built overlooking the bay and the park!

Then the return by the Sixth avenue route, through the pulsing heart of New York, or, perchance, by way of either of the East Side routes, over the Bowers and Third avenue, with their teeming, ever-changing cosmopolitan life, or via Second avenue, with the East River rolling as a panorama before the eyes!

cyclist to make a pleasant tour all around the city. Many of the details of this plan are yet to be worked out. Although the New York bicycle boulevard would enjoy a world reputation, it is not to be considered only as a means of pleasure. Cyclists see the day when the wheel will be as much a feature of daily life as street cars and "L" trains are to-day, and the business man or workman will spin to his daily toil, just as he to-day rides to it. But this businesslike use of it will never destroy the recreative features of the wheel, and a happy people will participate in such brilliant scenes as are here depicted.

A mass of letters from cyclists enthusiastically endorsing the elevated path idea has been received by the Journal. The following has a semi-official tone:

Cyclists' Federation of New York, No. 113 West Thirty-eighth street.

Dear Sir: Your proposition to utilize the elevated railroad for an elevated bicycle path is an excellent one. If this matter is pushed the wheelmen of New York will endorse and further any movement to bring about the success of your plan. The elevated railroad ought to build this road, as a little thing will make it plain that it will pay them largely at a nominal charge. Yours truly, T. J. BURTON, Secretary of Cyclists' Federation of New York.

WHAT "X RAY" MEANS.

A Term Which Professor Roentgen Modestly Applied to His New Light, but Which Now Seems to Be Fixed.

It must have puzzled many people who have been reading about the great new photographic discovery by means of which pictures are taken through solid substances to account for the application of the name "X rays" to the peculiar electric light employed in the process. William D. Weaver, editor of the Electrical World, in discussing the new discovery yesterday with a reporter for the Sunday Journal, gave an interesting account of the X ray christening.

"It is a great injustice," said Mr. Weaver, "to Prof. Roentgen, who discovered this enormously valuable phenomena, that the rays should be alluded to as the X rays. It is also another illustration of the great power of the press, even when this power is inadvertently applied. It is the custom among scientists, that is scientists of the class to which Prof. Roentgen belongs, to practice exceeding modesty."

"When they make a discovery which give free to all the world, etiquette and the newspaper's etiquette prevent them from putting forward this discovery under their own name. That is to say, in Prof. Roentgen's case, for instance, when in making his discovery public in a scientific paper read before the body which he first addressed on the subject, he referred to his rays as the X rays, leaving it to the world to substitute Roentgen when he used X. This was perfectly understood, of course, by the scientists, and in passing the matter along, they always referred, not to the X rays, but to the Roentgen rays. Just as we refer to the Crookes tube."

"By some means, however, Prof. Roentgen's original paper was published, and the newspapers immediately began to call the new light the X ray, until now that name is stuck hard and fast, so hard and fast that Prof. Roentgen's name is gradually disappearing. Everybody almost now speaks of them as the X rays, and in a few months, when this excitement regarding the discovery has died out somewhat, most people will probably have forgotten all about the man who found this wonderful power and gave it to the world."

"The newspapers adopted the 'X ray' appellation from very natural motives. The X ray is a much shorter name than the Roentgen ray. In the headlines the newspapers would find great mechanical difficulty, if they were compelled to use the longer word at all times. They, therefore, jumped at this chance for abbreviating it into a simple letter."

TO FIRES ON A "BIKE."

Midnight Hobby of a Millionaire.

A GONG AT HIS BEDSIDE.

Wakes Up, Puts on a Sweater and Races to the Scene.

William H. Porter, otherwise "Billy" Porter, a young millionaire who is in business in this city and lives in Brooklyn, has developed a fad that promises to make him famous. Every night, rain or shine, snow or hail, in freeze or thaw, Mr. Porter turns out on a bicycle to every fire that is rung in in the city across the Bridge. In order that he may be promptly on the scene Mr. Porter has had a fire alarm rigged in his bedroom.

It is Mr. Porter's boast that he always beats the engine, except in the cases where he has a long distance to travel, when the firemen of the local district naturally get to the conflagration ahead of him. But on even terms he says he can beat the engine almost without an effort.

This millionaire with a queer hobby has spent a small fortune in getting his fire paraphernalia in perfect shape. In his bedroom is a gong that connects with Fire Headquarters. On this every alarm is sounded. There is an automatic connection by means of which the gas in Mr. Porter's bedroom is turned on and lighted at the first stroke of the gong. Simultaneously a gong is set ringing in the stable behind the house where the bicycles are stored. Lamps are always kept lighted in the stable, and the coachman, who sleeps just above the place where the gong is attached, turns out instantly to get everything in readiness for his master.

Mr. Porter meanwhile has slipped into a pair of trousers and a sweater, and with a celerity that would do credit to the most expert fireman he is up and away. The lower part of the house is flooded with light by the same arrangement that lightes the gas in his bedroom. The stairways, the halls, the dining room and the kitchen, through which his path lies toward the stable, are all brilliantly lighted up, so that he can run without any danger of bumping into tables and chairs and being bowled over. Usually in five seconds after the first alarm has been sounded Mr. Porter is in the saddle and scorching toward the fire.

Arrived at the fire the bicyclist turns fireman, helping to hold down a hose or steer a nozzle. The firemen all know him, and they say he is a willing and a brave fire fighter.

Mr. Porter inherited from his father a large manufacturing business, which he conducts. He is twenty-six years old. His office and salesrooms are at No. 271 Peck

street, the firm being William Porter's Sons. His home in Brooklyn is a beautiful old-fashioned brick mansion, at the corner of Park place and Vanderbilt avenue. He is married, his wife being a beautiful girl who formerly was one of the belles of the Hill.

To a reporter for the Sunday Journal Mr. Porter said, in explaining why he rides to fires at such unearthly hours:

"My cousin, who lives in the house with me, is in the fire insurance business. He found it useful to be at the scene of fires, and a year or so ago induced me to accompany him when I happened to be at home. He rode a wheel, as I did, and I soon became interested enough in the matter to go at it systematically."

"Last November I had this alarm gong rigged in my bedroom. That was very good as far as it went, but I have found it exceedingly uncomfortable and slow to hunt around for a match and light the gas each time the gong went off. So I had this relay switch put in that turns on the gas here and lights it. Then I found that there was always more or less delay in the stable before we could get away. So I had another alarm gong put up there to rouse the coachman, working it automatically by means of another relay switch. The alarm therefore sounds simultaneously in my bedroom and the stable. We keep half a dozen lanterns burning in the stable, so we are all ready for business then."

"But as it got to be rather difficult groping around through the lower part of the house on my way to the stable, I had this automatic scheme for lighting the gas all over the lower part of the house fixed up. That makes it pretty easy, and now no matter what the weather or what the hour I never fail to turn out with my cousin."

"We always reach the fires before the engines when we are on even terms. Of course, when, as in a case the other night, we have to go to a fire in Williamsburg, the engines beat us—that is, the engines in that neighborhood—but is the fire sufficiently large to draw engines from this end of the city we get there away ahead of them."

"Yes, I like fire fighting immensely. Whenever I get a chance I give the boys a hand. They know me pretty well, all of them, now, and always give me an opening when it is possible. Sometimes I have some pretty tough experiences. The other night, for instance, I had been out making calls in a brand-new suit of clothes. When I came home I forgot to put my usual fire paraphernalia where I could get it without trouble. When the alarm went off I grabbed the first pair of trousers that came to hand, and dodging into my sweater and grabbing up my cap I was out. Down in the stable, thrown across my bicycle, I always keep a pea jacket with a big collar which turns up well over my ears. Also a pair of gloves of heavy leather and a pair of big rubber boots strapped to the machine. This completes my outfit for the time being, though I am having a special rig designed now."

"Well, on this particular night I ran down as usual, got into my pea jacket and gloves and in a few seconds I was under way to the fire, which happened to be down on Court street, and an ugly blaze it was. We put up our machines and I was soon within the fire lines, leading a hand wherever I could."

"It happened that one of the hoses began to jump, and the captain sang out for hands to hold down the hose. I went down on it with both hands and one knee, and held on for grim death. In the excitement of the moment I did not notice that there was a strong back leak, but when I got up I found that my trousers leg was a mass of ice. The water had risen clear over my knees, and as it was a bitter cold night, it froze almost as rapidly as it touched me. Well, that was simply an instance, but when I want to draw myself out at a nearby fire I found that I had worn that evening."

Mr. Porter keeps in a book a record of his experiences. Each alarm is set down, with a brief summary of the damage done by each fire. He hopes, he says, to demonstrate by his work the feasibility of a sort of underwriters' bicycle force. He thinks

REAL TRILBY IN NEW YORK.

Mrs. Gage Can Sing Only Under Hypnotic Influence.

BUT NEEDS NO SVENGALI.

Believes She Is Under the Control of Some Long Dead Singer.

There is a real Trilby in New York City—a woman of wealth and prominence, who, like Du Maurier's heroine, cannot ordinarily sing at all, but whose pure vocal notes and marvellous performances on the piano charm all who hear them when she is under the influence of a hypnotic spell. She is Mrs. Adelle Belden Gage, who lives with her husband at the fashionable Hotel Empire, Fifty-fourth street and Columbus avenue. Her strange case has been the marvel of her friends, as, indeed, it has been of herself, for years. It differs from that of Trilby in that Mrs. Gage has no Svengali—the influence comes on, apparently, of itself. No one suggests it. Mrs. Gage feels no ill after effects. Of what occurs during the presence of the influence she is ignorant. She has never heard herself sing.

When the Trilby craze first took possession of the reading world certain wise men, while they submitted to the fascination of the story, declared that the author's main idea was absurd. That a woman who in her normal condition was totally devoid of musical ear and ignorant of technique could, under certain hypnotic influence, with the marvellous beauty of her singing uplift her audience to the greatest heights of passionate enthusiasm was, so they said, an impossibility.

But only a few nights ago a party of guests at the Hotel Empire stopped to listen as they passed to the sweet, clear yet weird music of a woman's voice as she sang in the reception-room to a few favored friends. They listened and were delighted. Later, one of them closely observed the performer, and remarked something in her demeanor which made her ask questions. The woman, as she sat at the piano with tightly closed eyelids, had a strangely white, intense, rapt expression on her face, while her hands did not move like those of other people over the keyboard; they seemed to be stiffened up and to fall without being in the least under the control of the player. But they drew forth weird chords and rippling arpeggios of perfect melody. Over this accompaniment the voice broke forth in melody sweet, but very, very strange. Without intermission the singer wandered from Gounod to Meyerbeer, from Verdi to Wagner, then to simpler melodies, and finally to "Home, Sweet Home." Gradually the voice grew softer and softer and lower and lower, until in the end it seemed—not to stop—but to vanish like an echo in the far-off distance, and the singer's hands fell relaxed in her lap. Her features lost the strained expression, the eyelids slowly opened, and with a peculiar, sighing pavan

and rubbing the backs of her hands across her eyes, she arose from the piano.

When she arose she did not know that she had been singing. From the time the hypnotic trance takes possession of her until it has entirely passed over she is practically non-existent. She knows nothing of her surroundings, or what occurs about her; neither is she aware of the fact that she is singing and accompanying herself on the piano.

Consequently Mrs. Gage has never heard her own voice when under control. Mrs. Gage positively asserts that it is not her own voice. She declares that it is the spirit of a great actress and a singer, long since dead, who seeks astral embodiment, and gives vent to its pent-up being, through the medium of her person and throat. Some thirty odd years ago Mrs. Adelle Belden Gage was born in Rochester, of a fine old aristocratic family. She received a first-class education and grew up to be an extremely bright and attractive girl.

About ten years ago, being then in her early twenties, Miss Belden went on an extended Southern trip with an intimate friend, Miss Billings. It was at this memorable epoch that the strange hypnotic spirit took sudden and simultaneous possession of both these young girls.

Though both musical, their voices were in no way extraordinary, nor had they attained any high standard of cultivation. But directly the power possessed them, all this was changed. Their voices grew to enormous compass and timbre, altogether different from former attainments, and became suddenly as flexible and cultured as that of an operatic star who had spent years in conscientious study. Though mutually aware of the peculiar gift bestowed on them both so mysteriously, the girls sought no notoriety; in fact, they shrank from it, and few but their most intimate friends have ever known of it.

Soon after this Miss Belden became Mrs. Gage. She married a wealthy Rochester gentleman, who had gone to live in Chicago. They recently decided to come East to live, and the last few years they have spent travelling between New York, Boston, Washington and Philadelphia. When in this city they live at the new Hotel Empire, and it was there, through the purest accident, that Mrs. Gage's strange experience became known to those outside her own immediate circle. Both Mr. and Mrs. Gage are much opposed to notoriety.

In the late Spring Mr. and Mrs. Gage are going to Europe to make a protracted stay abroad. The photograph of this modern Trilby, which appears with this article, is a very perfect likeness of its original, and was taken but a few months ago. The original is somewhat above the medium height, and has a round, supple and very graceful figure. She owns a quantity of beautiful hair of rare bronze color, which curls and waves all round her forehead and temples. Her eyes are blue and honest and her complexion is very fair and clear.

When singing under control, Mrs. Gage has fluent use of languages, which in her own personality and normal condition, she entirely ignores. The spirit, who possesses her while singing, must have been a great linguist. This spirit Mrs. Gage calls "Clotilde," but she never speaks much about her, other than that she was a very beautiful singer who retired from the operatic stage very early in a most successful career, owing to a disastrous love affair.

She says that "Clotilde," however, does not play the accompaniments, that it is some other power that moves her hands and produces the strange chords and harmonies which are among the strangest parts of a very strange performance. It would be an impossibility for any ordinary person, with tightly closed and hands moving in such stiff confusion as do those of Mrs. Gage when singing in the hypnotic state to produce such weird, but harmonious results from the keyboard.

All who are well acquainted with this remarkable woman say that she is a very charming person, with genial, gracious manners, and that she is the last woman whom any one could accuse of deception of any kind.



A REAL "TRILBY" IN NEW YORK. MRS. ABBE BELDEN GAGE.