



## It Happened At The Wheelmen's Fair

John Morrow sat under a gold-topped umbrella out of which grew a paper tree laden with paper oranges. He was discussing the merits of John Brunner's Nature Studies with Lawyer W. G. Peckham. There were two unusual examples of the Brunner technique (early phase) which fascinated Mr. Peckham. One, "Bone Apart Crossing the Rind," was remarkable for its fidelity to detail; the other, "The Grub That Makes the Butter Fly" (a pancake), was done to a turn.

Across the way, Kip Pearsall had Parson Cornelius Patton in tow, explaining that his new read-as-you-ride bicycle gadget was made so that busy ministers could prepare their Sunday sermons while going their pastoral rounds. Nearby, the Misses Jane Morrow and Mary Carlyle were exhibiting Japanese doilies and kerchiefs to a delegation from the Ladies Sewing Circle, while, up in front, Charlie Affleck and Roy Embree were entertaining a group of interested politicians with a boxing bout between a jumping jack and a monkey-on-a-stick, "just to show you fellows how to duck and side step," explained the incorrigible Charlie.

It all worked out even better than planned. Dr. Kinch Sr. bought the bicycle gadget for Parson Newton Cadwell. Lawyer Peckham paid liberally for the objects de art for his infant son, Paul, to play with, and the jumping jack, which he gave to Charlie Coddling "with the compliments of Grover Cleveland". Parson Patton finally selected an Oriental tablepiece for his study, and the chivalrous but shy Democratic leader, Mulford Scudder, a confirmed bachelor, bought a five-pound box of sweets and asked the Misses Bertie Mason and Tutie Jackson to pass them around among the ladies.

Obviously, Mr. Coddling, being of the majority party, couldn't permit his rival to steal the show. He repaired at once to the apron booth and requested the Misses Addie Jackson and Turie Wyckoff "to see that all the charming young ladies at the booths receive an apron with the compliments of the Republican Club of Westfield". The boys tried to interest Luther Whitaker in the monkey-on-a-stick, but he covered his good ear with his hand and shook his head sadly. "There will

be plenty of 'em around when the '92 Presidential campaign gets going," he whispered. Then Ike Townley, master of ceremonies, took the floor and announced that the first patrons of the Westfield Wheelman's Fair would be rewarded for their generosity. "Gentlemen," said he, "step up to the lemonade well and Miss May Crosby will fill the beakers for you. The drinks are on the house."

By this time, Arcanum Hall was crowded to the doors and manager Ezra Bloodgood had quite a time reaching the ice cream counter where his best girl, Grace Smith (afterwards Mrs. Ezra), was talking with his sister, Martha. It was nearing midnight when the dancing started. Then, between waltzes, two steps and square dances, the Charter Members Sextette, consisting of Frank Reese, Ed. R. (Judge) Collins, Arthur Pierson, Arthur Irving, John Canberry and John Z. Hatfield, sang parodies on popular songs. That one about "A Bicycle Built for Two Little Girls In Gold and Orange" (the club colors) was a scream.

Coincidentally, several of the young ladies were observed holding their handkerchiefs to their noses, and soon it was rumored that Rufus Whitehead had a certain peculiar animal concealed backstage which he planned to exhibit. There was considerable whispering and sniffing and no little blushing until the animal was brought in. Rufe had it in a cage. It appeared to be harmless. It lay flat on its back as if dead. The young ladies sighed; their elders looked relieved.

Then a surprising thing happened. While Rufe was explaining the deceptive nature of his captive, he opened the door of the cage and out it sprang, a streak of dusky gray, and through the crowd it wriggled and squirmed, its long snout pressing against many a dainty ankle. What commotion! The ladies screamed and stood on chairs and tables! Crockery was spilled! A booth upset! The men grabbed anything within reach and gave chase. But that wily opossum found a safe hiding place and was never seen again. They say it perished in the great fire that destroyed the building three weeks later.

(The date—December 11, 1891.)