



THOUGH I've always had to *scratch* for a living, still it has not entirely subdued my literary aspirations. My *lays* are much sought after, and I manage to get off a little thing of my own nearly every day. I trust my remarks will not be considered too *eg-otistical*,

One summer day, I suddenly noticed a cloud of dust coming down the country road, and on a three-wheeled machine one of the prettiest summer boarders in our section came whirring into the yard. She wore one of the tallest of hats, and one of the brightest of striped costumes.

Imogen Jane came rushing out of the door, while Aunt, Maria Jane leaned out the window to greet her. Their attention seemed divided between their admiration for the tricycle and their interest in the news the rider was imparting.

I soon learned that a party of bicyclers was to arrive, and such rushing around as there was.

Aunt Maria Jane's famous pumpkin pies and Imogen Jane's new gown seemed the most important things about this time.

The table was spread under the trees and Uncle Jeremiah's new apple cider assisted



in making the hospitable board groan.

Arrangements were scarcely completed before another cloud of dust, preceded by the graceful wheelmen, came silently down the road.

Just as I was curiously observing all this, a most fascinating June-bug crossed my field of vision.

Now, I am not generally a very impulsive creature; I'm no chicken, but I'll acknowledge a weakness for June-bugs, though, after all, perhaps, it's more the excitement of the chase; anyway, forgetful of everything else, I gathered myself together and started in pursuit.

* * * *

In looking back on the exciting scene which followed, I presume that the evil-minded June-bug must have led me in front of one of the wheelmen; anyway there was a scene of wild, weird confusion, and it required some moments of careful attention to my feathers to make me again presentable among the *élite* society of our front yard; but I had my revenge. I roosted that night on that bicycle.



So, of course, Imogen Jane could do nothing less than to try and soothe and entertain him, and while the others were trying their hand at archery, they wandered by the brook-side under the impression that they were fishing, and in fact their lines seemed to have fallen in pleasant places. I, too, wandered by the rippling stream; it is a habit I have whenever I see the bows and arrows brought out.

The gentleman who so suddenly left his wheel on meeting me seemed indisposed to join in the active amusements which followed—he pleaded a headache.





Imogen Jane and the bicyclist had to be called several times before they realized lunch was waiting—and such a lunch!! Those pumpkin pies and doughnuts, those apple turnovers and cider, disappeared like dew before the thoughtful attention of the wheelmen.

“Whoa! Whoa! Whoa!” I suddenly heard Uncle Jeremiah calling out with all his might. I flew at once to a place of safety and a post of observation. And such a scene of confusion as I witnessed.

I've had some 'arrow escapes in my day, and now the sequestered nook is more in my line when such amusements are in progress.



The old white horse, while nibbling the grass around the bicycles, had caught his hind legs in one of the wheels, and such a circus!! The more they yelled at the



The result was that when the club resumed their journey, George had accepted Uncle Jeremiah's hospitality for the night.

The next morning they started with the injured machine for the village smith.

I don't know what occasioned the delay. I heard something about having to send to New York for a new piece; anyway, George acceded to the urgent invitations from all hands and remained three days

horse, the more energetically he kicked, and as luck would have it this particular bicycle belonged to George. George was the one who had been wandering by the brook-side with Imogen Jane.

When affairs were cleared up, it looked as if a great western cyclone had interviewed this bicycle—and the blacksmith five miles away.



POST OFFICE



Imogen, it seemed to me, neglected her usual household duties and developed a great taste for fishing and exploring the woods, when not occupying the hammock, and George was always with her.

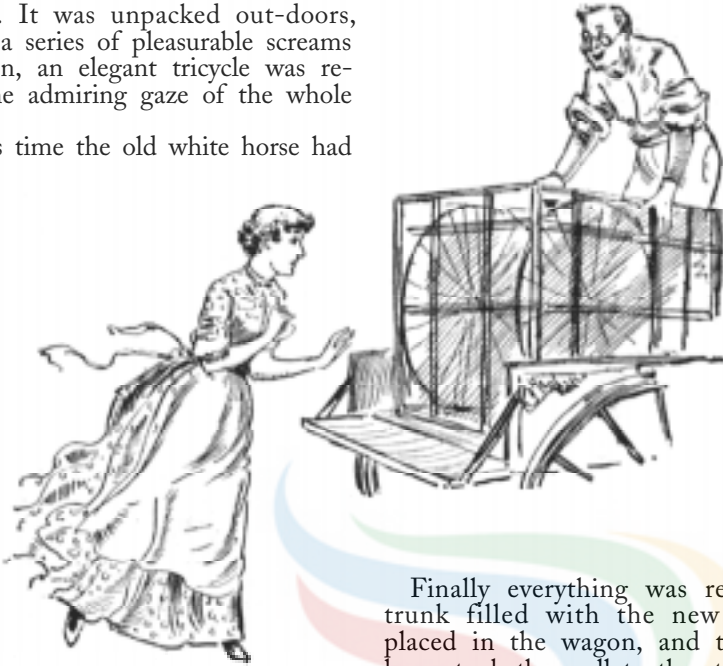
Finally, at the end of the third day, the bicycle, looking as good as new, carried away George, and how we all missed him!

After this, the old white horse was driven to the post-office with hitherto unknown regularity, and I observed there was always a letter for Imogen.

One day by express, there came a large something done up in a wooden

frame-work. It was unpacked out-doors, and amidst a series of pleasurable screams from Imogen, an elegant tricycle was revealed to the admiring gaze of the whole farm-yard.

From this time the old white horse had



Finally everything was ready; the old trunk filled with the new dresses was placed in the wagon, and the old white horse took them all to the station.

a rest from post-office duty; he gave up the field to his rival, or I should say he took to the field and gave up the road.

Imogen, with the new tricycle, was a much more picturesque and rapid agent.

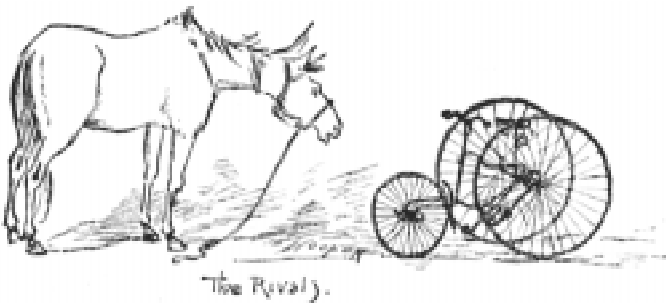
Miss Arabella, who had not returned to New York, came almost daily with her tricycle, and the two girls took long trips in company.

The result of this friendship was that Imogen promised to make a visit to New York, such preparations I never saw before!



In a few days Uncle Jeremiah returned from the post-office with a New York letter in his hand. Settling himself in his old chair on the porch, with Aunt Maria looking over his shoulder, they proceeded to enjoy Imogen's first letter from the city.

I was an interested listener and was not half as much surprised as they were when we learned that one of the



first persons she met in New York was their summer visitor, George.

It seemed very dull now around the farm, and I found myself watching far those New York letters with as much eagerness as the old folks.

importance of the affair, and his feet flew over the ground, urged on by the heels, the voice and the whip of Uncle Jeremiah; but it was a lost race. The tricycle quietly carried its rider into the dim future, and at dawn a dejected man and a demoralized horse limped into our yard.

What seemed to trouble the old people the most was the disappointment it would be to Imogen, the loss of her tricycle, and the very night before her return. All the morning they discussed how they could replace it

A neighbor's team had to be engaged to go to the station, our old horse being too much of a wreck; but the wagon returned without Imogen.

The second and last train arrived and still she came not. While we were all in a state of great excitement and alarm, a telegram arrived, saying: "Am coming on a special;" but this hardly pacified us. What could it mean? On inquiry at the depot we learned there was no special.

Just at sunset the old man, who had been gazing intently down the road, suddenly uttered an exclamation which brought Aunt Maria's head far out of the window, and pointing down the road she yelled: "There the critters come!" and sure enough, there was something whirling down the drive. I saw Imogen



The day was at length set for Imogen's return.

The old man took out her tricycle, carefully rubbed and oiled it, knowing it would be one of the most welcome things for her to see on her arrival.

That night I heard unusual noises. I roused the whole roost, and old Uncle Jeremiah finally woke up and turned out to discover the trouble, but he was too late. I heard him yell to Aunt Maria that some one had stolen the tricycle and was flying down the road. Pulling himself together and gathering on a few more garments, he dragged out the old white horse, climbed on his back and started in pursuit.

And such a race as it was! The whole country talked of it for years.

The old horse seemed to realize the





wave her hand, and she was not alone ; George was there too, and they were on a *double tricycle*.

After all she had no occasion to miss her stolen tricycle. She has no use for any except the double. machine now.

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