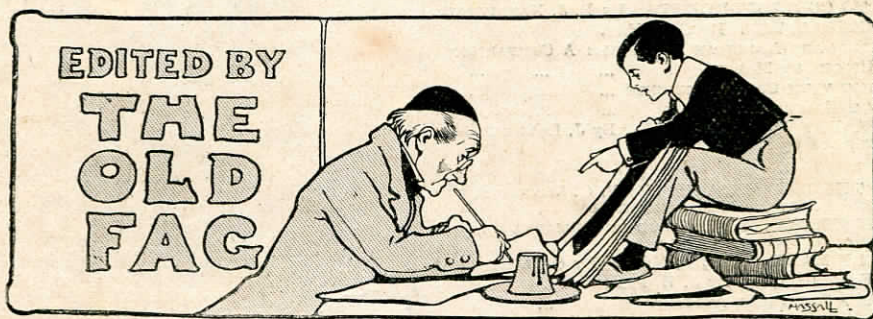


# THE CAPTAIN

A MAGAZINE  
FOR BOYS & "OLD BOYS".



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# THE CYCLING CORNER

By  
HAYDON PERRY.

## THE CARE OF THE MACHINE.

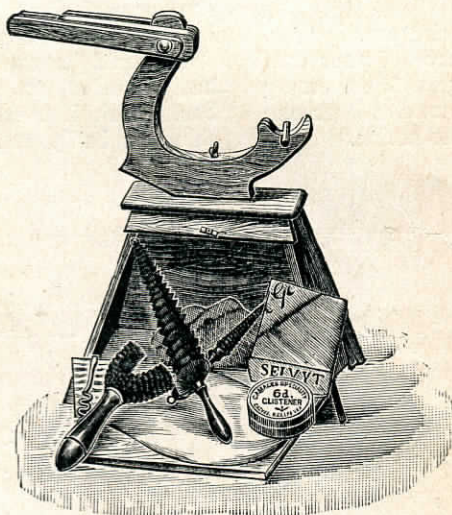
**I**T would be difficult to find a more important subject, from the point of view of those cyclists who value their machines and wish them long life, than this one of the proper care of the bicycle, as distinct from the proper handling of it when in use. Most important of all, perhaps, is it in winter, when so large a number of riders—quite foolishly as I think—allow their mounts to remain idle, and deprive themselves of the exhilarating delights of winter riding. And yet there are ever so many fellows of my acquaintance who habitually neglect their bicycles at nearly all times, and who, needless to say, when they put a nice one away for the winter, only find when spring comes round that they are in possession of a heavy-running, dingy-looking, and spoilt “old crock”; for age is not a question of time only, but of good or ill usage as well.

I will deal first with the question of external cleaning. To begin with, fix the machine upon a convenient cycle stand. Supposing there be mud on the machine, it must be removed while soft. If, for any reason, it has been allowed to harden before cleaning operations are commenced, it must be softened artificially, or its removal will almost certainly involve the scratching, or even chipping, of plating and enamel. In the case of enamel, a good way to soften is by dabbing with a moist

cloth; but another cloth, this time moistened, not with water, but with paraffin, should be employed to soften any mud that may have become caked on the nickel plating. Care should be taken, however, that neither softening material is used in excess. No water should be allowed to trickle anywhere near the bearings, and no paraffin should on any account be allowed to touch the tyres or other rubbered parts. Paraffin is just as well kept out of the bearings too, for reasons I may explain later, although I know that many cleaners and repairers use it habitually and in large quantities, and its use in America is almost universal.

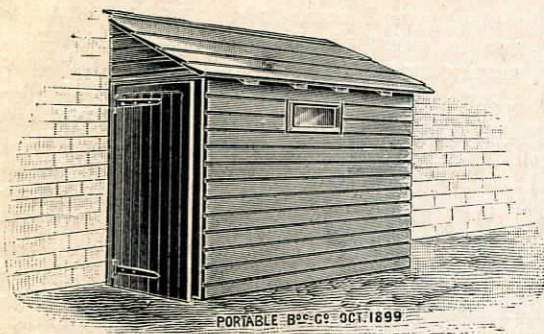
When the mud is all removed, a perfectly dry cloth should be used to get the last trace of moisture away as well as the last trace of the paraffin. The next thing to do is to tackle the rust on the bright parts, in case any should then be discovered. The paraffin

itself will already have done something in this direction, but I should not advise completing the process with that cleanser. It is much better to employ some one of the good preparations now upon the market. Personally, I have found the substance sold in tins, and described as “matchless polishing paste,” to answer all expectations, but there are plenty of other things that will do the trick satisfactorily. The cloth known as “Selvyt”



GAMAGE'S "CLEAN-ALL" OUTFIT.





PORTABLE BUILDING COMPANY'S CYCLE HOUSE.

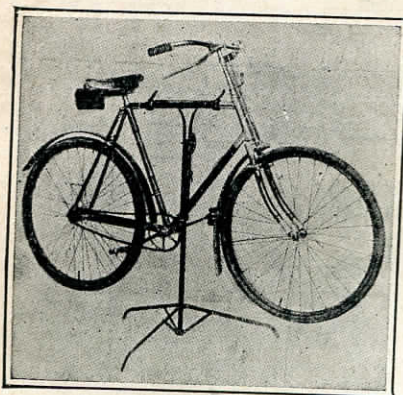
is a capital polisher, and is much easier to wash and soften than is chamois leather. The material called "engine waste" is excellent for the earlier stages of cleaning. Gamage's "Clean-all" is a self-contained cleaning outfit of great value. Having effected the polishing of all bright parts as a first stage of the cleaning, because it is very important, you can make your next task of the kind much easier by employing some rust preventive. Vaseline has long been known in this connection. It takes off a little from the apparent brightness of the metal, but it is a good protector, and makes such an incident as a light shower of rain, or a month's neglect when at rest in the cycle stable, a matter of but little account. But there are other substances which are more easy to handle, and which do the work at least as well. Among them I can speak highly of that known as "anti-rustine," for I have given it a lengthy trial, out of which it has come with honours.

Let me go back for a moment to the mud stage again, in order to speak of the care of the tyres. Many riders treat their tyres as they might if the latter were made, not of a delicate substance such as indiarubber, but of iron, as in the old "bone-shaker." This is all wrong. The tyre should be cleaned as well as the rest of the machine, and there is, of course, a proper way of setting about the work. In this case there should be no attempt to soften any caked mud which may be attaching. The mud should be removed dry, either with a piece of stiff cardboard, or with a thin edge of wood, or, if great care is used so as not to injure the face of the rubber, the edge of a blunt knife may be

employed, this always being held at right angles to the rubber surface. If there are mudguards, they should be made as clean inside as out, and if a certain amount of polish is given to their inner surfaces it will be found that they will not accumulate mud so fast in future. The tyres may be finally wiped with a dampish cloth, but it must not be damp enough to allow of any moisture exuding, for if the smallest amount of water should steal in and touch the woven fabric, trouble may be expected in the near future. Many preparations, both home-made and manufactured, have been recommended for the application to the insides of inner tubes in order to improve or resuscitate them. All of these mixtures are more or less "messy," and I have not found any of them very effectual. But I once knew a pair of very old tubes apparently greatly improved by the introduction of a spoonful of common cold water into each valve. I now hear good things spoken of a mixture called "Tyreine," intended for application to rubber of all kinds, and said to preserve its resiliency, and other good qualities.

Some people give the finishing touches to the enamel of the frame with furniture polish. I think it is better done with oil. A cloth partly saturated, not with paraffin, but with some good lubricating oil, may be used. The palm of the hand makes a still better polisher than the cloth, but the operation this indicates must be characterised as dirty work,

and either "monkey" soap or the soap balls made of sand and glycerine will be needed to cleanse the hands afterwards. Indeed, something of the sort may be required in any case. If the machine is to be used again shortly, it is advisable to clean all the polishing oil away very carefully, or there will be too great a tendency to accumulate dust. The oil on the nickel may or may not be left as a protector. But if the machine is about to be put by for a length of time, it is well to leave the protecting films upon it until such time as it may



"KLENEZE" CYCLE STAND.



WOODMAN &amp; CO'S RELIABLE CYCLE HOUSE



be required again. It will then, after a few minutes' work, emerge quite smart and bright.

A word about the cleansing of accessories. Some riders oil or grease their saddles in order to make them softer, and of those who do so probably the majority oil them too much. To get this oil away then becomes an important cleaning process. It is best done by employing a little benzine, which should be stroked about the under side of the leather. With a bit of patience the saddle may be got right again. But the operation should not be carried out anywhere near a fire or a light, as the spirit is highly inflammable. Of the importance of cleaning the lamp thoroughly, both within and without, I have spoken on a previous occasion, and the bell, although it may perhaps be a trifle duller than the bright parts of the machine, owing to its being less heavily plated, is well worth the bit of trouble required to get it into a condition to match. The cleaning of the chain is so important that I shall give it a paragraph all to itself.

I will first assume that the chain is uncased, which, in my opinion, no chain destined for use off the racing track should be. In such an event the best thing to do with it is to detach it and place it in a shallow tray filled with paraffin. It may be moved about for a little while in order to allow all the links to get thoroughly washed. After that it should be dried quickly with a duster, care being taken not to allow any fluff from the duster to remain in the links. A lubricant should then be administered, and for all naked chains I consider a dry one preferable. There are several on the market, but ordinary blacklead makes a very good one.

The reason for using a dry lubricant is, that after its application there is less risk of dust and other deleterious substances collecting upon the chain again. If the chain is properly encased no paraffin need be used. The thing to do then is to run off the oil bath, for no gear-case is perfect which does not provide for one, add a new supply of oil, and spin the wheel round. This oil should then in its turn be run off, and fresh oil added.

And now I come to perhaps the most important point of all—the cleaning of those moving parts that are out of sight. I have already spoken disrespectfully of paraffin, and

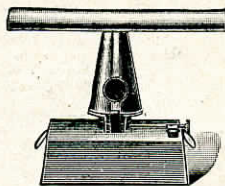
I should on no account employ it in this connection. With a little more time and patience bearings can be better cleaned with some good non-mineral lubricant. Flushing with paraffin is the quick way, but it has a tendency to roughen the fine surfaces of balls and ball-races. Good sperm oil, or highly refined neatsfoot, is far preferable. Many of the patent oils will serve the

purpose admirably, but I would employ nothing in the shape of a “double purpose” oil, that is, an oil for which the vendors claim that it is good for lubricating and lighting as well. Such an oil may be all very well in the lamp, but it is almost sure to contain at least one ingredient of the paraffin class. The reason I would treat an uncovered chain with paraffin, as directed above, is that the good such oil does in removing grit, etc., far outweighs any harm that its own contact can possibly do. The properly covered chain will, if run in its oil bath, almost take care of itself. There will be practically no grit to remove.

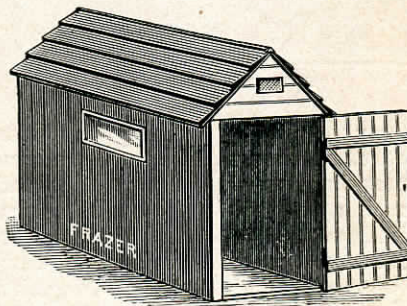
Lastly comes the question of where to keep the machine when it is not in use. If the periods of lying by are long the question is a vital one.

It is, perhaps, hardly necessary to say to any but the youngest and most inexperienced of cyclists that a cellar, a damp attic, or a washhouse, or any such place, would each be utterly unsuitable as a storehouse. Some quite dry and not too cold place ought to be selected. The ideal situation is a room in which people live and have fires, but that is very seldom convenient, so it is necessary to try and arrive at the

same conditions artificially. A cycle house offers us the means of doing this. Such a structure can be had at all sorts of prices, from about a pound upwards. But any fellow clever with tools can make one for himself, and will probably be able to please himself much better in this way than by adopting any of the standard patterns on the market. If the cycle stable is out of doors in an exposed position it should be warmed in some way.



PORTABLE COMPANY'S  
HEATING LAMP.



FRAZER'S CYCLE HOUSE.



Lamps specially designed for this purpose can be obtained, or a small oil stove will supply the want. But do not forget that a machine put by for the winter, or for any other period, will not improve while at rest. That is true of all machinery, whether it be of large dimensions, such as those of a steamship, a locomotive, or a factory, or whether it be a watch or a cyclometer. A bicycle, then, left alone without work for a long period, is all the better for an occasional visit and a bit of wheel and pedal spinning.

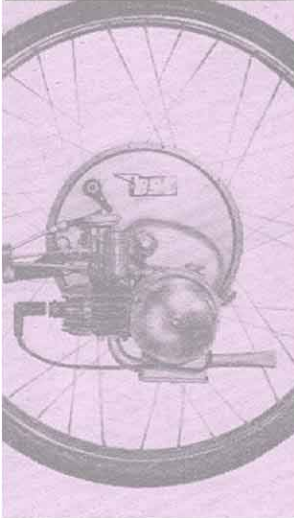
#### ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"C. H." (LONDON, E.C.).—You ought to give your name and your address, as a matter of courtesy. If you will send them, you shall have a reply. G. N. H. (THIRSK).—It is difficult to get grease and dirt out of felt handle grips, and that is one of the greatest objections to them. They are, of course, nice and warm as long as they remain felty; but they soon lose their soft texture as they become impregnated with grease, and after that they are no warmer than the harder forms of handle grip. The velvet that came into use some years ago went out of fashion almost immediately, because of its liability to collect dirt and its general unsuitableness. If the hands perspire at all freely, they will ruin any highly absorptive substance at once. Cork does not absorb the grease very rapidly, but it does in time, and on this account, as well as on the score of its nasty way of chipping and cracking, I do not like it. I know of nothing better than a grip of polished wood, or some similar hard and non-absorptive material. Some recommend the cleaning of felt by means of benzine; but it is exceedingly unsatisfactory unless the grips are first taken off. If this is not done, the real effect of the application of benzine is only to mix up and redistribute the grease, and to properly eradicate it. But if you can get the grips off, you have only to stuff them full of brown paper to act as an absorbent, and then apply benzine until the grease is driven into it. Do not attempt this operation anywhere near an exposed light or fire, as the substance is highly inflammable. The machine you name is trustworthy. See remarks below. L. F. (LISKEARD).—You should join the C.T.C. Get some member to propose you, and then send the necessary six shillings for the first year to the secretary, at 47, Victoria Street, Westminster, S.W. Yes, there will be a few changes in the form of the Rudge-Whitworth machines in the opening year. The firm have made the flush joint frames universal as a feature of their wares. It is stronger, and looks neater, than the old joint. They are also offering a new series of handle-bars, with forward lugs. These are of such varied designs that whatever position the rider chooses—and I need hardly say I hope yours is the correct one—it is easy to pick a handle-bar to suit. In brakes this company are strong. They give the option of four varieties. You can have a front rim pull-up lever brake, a front rim or a back rim cable-actuated brake, or a pedal-actuated band brake for the back wheel. I should recommend either the first or second, if only one brake is wanted; but, with a free wheel, you should have not only one of these, but the third-named for preference also. The par-

ticular free wheel of this firm, by the way, has been slightly improved in this season's design. Apart from the changes I have named, the machines will be as before, practically, except that the V fork-crown will, this year, be fitted to the "Standards" and "Specials" alike. W. F. (TODMORDEN).—I do not like the trilight lamp. It is apt to uncomfortably dazzle any friend who may happen to be riding beside you. By a double purpose oil is meant one for the lamp and for lubricating purposes also. I have already given reasons why such an oil may be all right for lighting purposes, but is very likely to be unsuitable for introduction into bearings. Harry B. (LANARK).—I don't see why your projected club-house should not prove a success. All you want is a sufficient number of enthusiastic members, and, with a membership such as yours, there ought to be enough among it. You should have a certain few enthusiastic enough to be *always* there, and that will ensure the attendance of a lot of others, who will go, knowing that "there will be something on." Music is, as you say, important. If you can't afford a piano, or, if the premises you finally decide upon are unsuitable for one, you can, I should think, find some member who can play a stringed instrument, if only the banjo. I have known some very jolly times spent in such club-houses, and the banjo has done good service in contributing to the jollity. H. B. (SURREY).—There is no reason why you should not learn in a covered playground. It oddly happens that I learnt in one myself. "Lysander" (LANCING).—You can have all the bright parts replated at comparatively small cost, but it would be a pity to let any other than the maker do the enamelling, as that would mean the loss of transfer, which, in the case of your Centaur, is a good hall-mark. The patching up of the enamel yourself with a brush might turn out all right, but, unless it is very skilfully done, it does not improve the appearance of the mount, and I have known cases in which the operation made it look even older. Ernest (LIVERPOOL).—There must be a small puncture. No tyre should require to be blown up every day. The valves being sound, as you tell me, I suspect a leakage under the valve seating. I have often found this a cause of riders' troubles, and a very obstinate one, because, if it is not suspected, the ordinary water test seldom reveals it. Possibly it is too "tickly" a job for you to successfully deal with yourself, but I should try to tackle it if I were you. "Job" (URMSRON).—There is no excuse for a rider overtaking on the left hand side, without having given any warning of his intention to do so. Should any mishap occur as the result of such an act, he would certainly be liable for damages. The practice is far too common. If, say, the road is flanked by a footpath much used by pedestrians, the wise cyclist will avoid riding too far down to his left, because he knows that there are many careless people who have a habit of stepping off without taking the precaution of a glance over the shoulder. Of course, the "stepper-off," as he is called, has himself to blame if anything befalls him in consequence of his act. This is not only common sense, but it is law also. Still, as I say, the careful cyclist has consideration even for such foolish persons as he. If, while allowing a good margin for the stepper-off, the cyclist is himself overtaken by a more reckless wheelman, who prefers skimming the kerb all the way, the man so overtaking is not only guilty of the grossest ill-manners, but he is breaking the law as well.—H. P.



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