

FRIENDS OF GOOD STREETS.

WHEELMEN INTERESTED IN THE CAUSE OF BETTER PAVING.

If Kansas City Had Boulevards There Would Be Thousands of Bicycle Riders Where There are Now Hundreds—The Future of the Wheel.

Within a few years the sport of bicycling has grown to wonderful proportions. As the outgrowth of the old velocipede the wheel has made great progress, coming up through the tricycle and the high, intimidating "ordinary" to the "safety" wheel, which looks very easy and comfortable to the uninitiated. With the

progress of the wheel there has been no dishonour in the price of it, therefore on limited number have been able to indulge the sport.

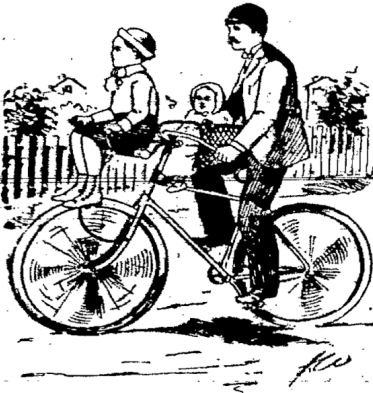
But it is not as a sport that wheel will gain its more lasting popularity. Wherever roads are good there will always be a large class whose desire for exercise is a speedy and comfortable means of locomotion will draw them to the bicycle. In many of the wheelmen, and the wheelwomen, too, that matter have almost forced good roads and good streets. In St. Louis the wheel have done much towards having the streets of that city properly paved and sprinkled. Kansas City they have not done so well. League of American Wheelmen has got into a powerful organization and is fighting everywhere for good roads and good streets. It publishes a monthly magazine called *Roads*, which has done and is doing effective work for wheelmen, for farmers and for

There is a club of about seventy-five wheelmen in Kansas City who belong to the League. They occupy a comfortable club house on Fifteenth street, and, to a man, are for good roads, and for a system of boulevards in Kansas City. But this club does not represent all the riders of the wheel in Kansas City. There are probably 500 in all, counting ladies, children, and sedate men of business and the professions who take their daily exercise on a wheel. All these are vitally interested in good roads.

A wheelman, who has pushed a pedal ever since the bicycle came into use in this country, said to a reporter for THE STAR: "Kansas City would have one of the largest wheeling populations in the country if we had roads to ride over. There are plenty of men who would like to buy a wheel and go to and from their offices every day for exercise, but this city is paved in such a manner that there are one or two blocks of pavement to ride on and then one or two of mud, or cable slot. It looks as if the authorities had laid the pavements in this way just to say to the wheelman, as he left the pavement and struck the mud, 'There, don't you wish you had that sort of thing all the way? Take some mud now, and you will know how to appreciate a good pavement when you strike it three blocks farther on.' That sort of thing may be very pleasant for the fellows who decide this pavement business, but it is keeping lots of men and women from indulging in the nicest and most healthful exercise in the world."

"What are the good roads about Kansas City, from a wheelman's standpoint?" he was asked.

"The Waldo road, to the limits of the Waldo stock farm, is a good road, but there are some



THE BICYCLE HAS GREAT POSSIBILITIES. muddy spots in it. The road to Leeds is good after you leave the city limits. Within the city the wheelman has to take the sidewalk, but, save outside, the macadam pavement commences. The Westport road is also a good road. The Wyatt's Mill road out to the Big Blue is a good road and much traveled. Fifteenth street is a macadamized road from the end of the cable track to the Blue. The Independence road, from the end of the cable track to the Blue, is also a good road. You see nearly all the good roads are outside the

city. As a matter of fact, there are not ten blocks of good straight-away road in the city.

"What keeps the price of bicycles so high? Is it on account of patents?"

"No, there are no patents on the various parts of the wheel. There are a few patents on the pneumatic tires, but there is so much competition between manufacturers of these that it keeps the price from being excessive. I'll tell you what's the matter in the first place and it's a little lesson in the protective tariff system. The English wheels when they were first brought over, had to be sold at \$150 each to pay the enormous duty and the profits of those handling them. This set the pace and when American manufacturers got so they could make just as good a machine they found they could demand just as much money

other reduction next year. The day will come when bicycles will be within the reach of all."

"Do you consider wheeling good, all-around exercise, and as an experienced wheelman, do you think that the exercise is confined to the muscles of the legs alone?"

"I consider wheeling the best possible exercise. There is a lot of rot occasionally told about every method of healthful recreation. For instance, I once read somewhere that an eminent physician had stated that lawn tennis would produce boys and girls with normally developed right arms, and that riding the bicycle would produce abnormally developed legs and a 'plunge' in the walk. What rot! After a man has spent his first day on a wheel the next morning he will wake up with the muscles along his back and shoulders aching. The leg exercise on a bicycle is most beneficial, as it develops sets of muscles that are ordinarily unused. If, on his first wheel, he can just touch the pedals by stretching his foot he will find in a few months that the pedals are short and will require a longer reach, demonstrating that the muscles of his hips and thighs have stretched and become developed. But the fresh air, the muscles of the back, shoulders and abdomen, which come into play, besides those of the legs, should testify to its benefits. The exercise of wheeling, the convenient and easy method of transportation and the clean record of the sport recommend it to ladies, gentlemen and children. Give us good streets and the thing would be perfect. Why, in some cities men can ride along on the streets on their wheels and read newspapers. I would like to see a man do that in Kansas City. Another bad feature of wheeling in Kansas City is the bad method they have of sprinkling the streets. It is either a flood or a drought. Main street some-