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INVENTOR OF THE "WHEEL."

The Inventor's Luckless Lot Illustrated
in the Originator of the Bicycle.

The usual luckless lot of the inventor is well exemplified in the career of Pierre Lallemont the undoubted originator of the bicycle. He was not only the inventor but the first maker, rider, teacher and exhibitor of the "wheel." He has been a firm believer in the universal introduction of this method of traveling and has stuck loyally to his faith in the



future of the bicycle in the face of obstacles without number. He has lived to know that there are at present in use 500,000 bicycles. Others have reaped fortunes as the fruit of his invention, while his reward is a position in the workshops of the Pope Manufacturing company at Boston, and the little glory that an article like this may give him.

The original two-wheeled velocipede was patented in France in 1816 by Baron Von Drais, and was called the Draisine. It created a sensation at the time and was the subject of satire and much comment. Enclosures were built wherein the beasts of the period could practice balancing themselves on the new machine and exhibit their agility before their admiring belles.



THE DRAISINE.

The above illustration is from a print of 1819. It shows to the veriest detail the Draisine of that day. The rider balanced himself on a saddle midway between the fore and hind wheels, which were of equal diameter. The front wheel turned as does the present bicycle, while there was a cushioned arm rest to give steadiness to the arms. The machine was propelled by paddling with the feet, and when sufficient momentum was obtained, or when going down an incline, rests were provided for the feet at the axle of the forewheel where we now have the pedal. All that was needed at that time was a substitution of pedals for the foot rest. Still this vehicle was in use for fifty years, until Lallemont added pedals to it. It is said that our Charles Sumner disported himself in his younger days on a Draisine on the classic roads of Cambridge, where the bicycle is now a common sight.

It was in 1862 that Lallemont conceived the idea of adding pedals to the Draisine. He was then 19 and had left his home near Nancy, in France, for Paris where he found employment with a manufacturer of baby carriages and invalid chairs. His pay was so small that it was a full year before he could purchase and leg the parts necessary to complete his machine. But now his real trouble began when he attempted to ride it, as any one can understand who has tried it and remembers his early experiences. Supposing the reader was given one of the modern bicycles to ride. He had never seen a machine like it before, and was not certain that it ever could be propelled safely. Supposing also that in his success as a rider depended the introduction of the machine as a vehicle. How many bicycles would be in use to-day? Yet this was the task Lallemont had before him; heavy and awkward as his machine was he had to demonstrate its use. But with a persistency, the outcome of necessity, he succeeded so well that in July, 1863, he had confidence sufficient to give his first public exhibition in the streets of Paris. The poorly constructed machine soon shook to pieces on the pavements of Paris. No one assisted the young inventor with means to make another, so he was obliged to abandon the idea.

FIRST BICYCLE--1865.

Then Lallemont looked to America, where he believed the people were quicker to catch at new ideas. He gave his whole energy to acquiring sufficient means to carry him across the Atlantic. He arrived in America in July, 1865, with the two wheels of his machine. He sought out Connecticut, the land of wooden clocks and nutmegs, and settled in Ansonia. He soon found employment, and from savings from his earnings was enabled to complete a second machine in a few months after his arrival. Then he tried the first real journey on it, which was from Ansonia to Birmingham, Conn., a distance of four and one-half miles. Just twenty years afterwards Thomas Stevens starts on his trip around the world on a bicycle, but it is a question whether he undertook his journey with more trepidation than did Lallemont this one to Birmingham.



THE FIRST RIDER.

For the illustration of an incident in this first journey we are indebted to the magazine Gaiting. The picture explains itself. This accident occurred while going down a hill. Lallemont had no brake. He yelled in French to have an old farmer and his wagon give him room. The farmer, on turning round, spied the strange apparition that was evidently chasing him, jerked wildly on the reins, so that Lallemont, to avoid collision with the bewildered driver,

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