

THE CAPTAIN

A MAGAZINE
FOR BOYS & "OLD BOYS".



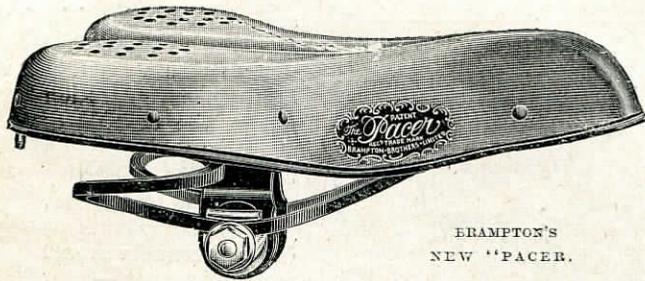
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**CONCERNING
CYCLE - -
SADDLES.**



BRAMPTON'S
NEW "PACER."

BY
HAYDON - - -
- - - PERRY.



CYCLE saddles have, in their comparatively short history, passed through an extraordinary number of changes as regards almost every detail of their form, size, weight, and even the materials of which they have been constructed, to say nothing of the varying

fashions of adjusting their position with regard to the rest of the machine.

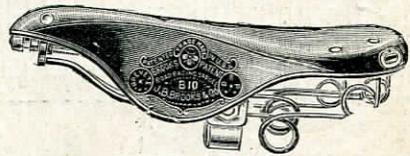
Those who remember the early bone-shakers, or who have opportunity of examining a good specimen to-day, will be familiar with the lumpy and ungainly cushion which in those far-off times did duty for a seat. It may have absorbed much of the painful vibration which was set up between the road and the iron tyre of the period; but at the best it was a highly uncomfortable perch, and nothing but the strange fascination of the new and scarce comprehended art of curvetting and wobbling about on wheels induced men to endure the discomforts of sitting upon it. When, by greatly enlarging the front wheel and reducing the back one, the tall "spider" was evolved, the bicycle became for the first time a practical vehicle for the purposes of



BROOKS' "BES" FOR LADIES.

them greatly modified to meet the needs of the new position, became general.

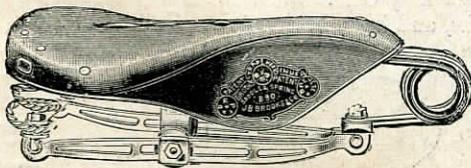
Some of the lessons learnt in those first days



BROOKS' "B10."

of touring stand as good to-day as ever they did, and many of the modern makers of new saddles which are not successes really owe their failure to a lack of knowledge of, or a disregard for, the principles then discovered.

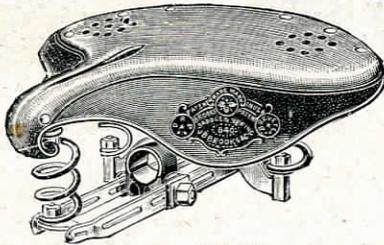
It was found, for example, that what had seemed the most obvious way of making a saddle comfortable, namely, the cushioning of it, was really the surest way of banishing ease altogether in the long run. For this there is a sound physiological reason. The functions of the bones are twofold: they are designed to support the outer organisms and to serve as a protection for the inner; and these dual functions they are able to perform at rest in a variety of postures as well as during the progress of many forms of motion. If you lie upon the floor you will find that the bulk of your weight is supported by the bony parts which protrude near the surface of the body—the skull, the shoulders, and so forth. Nature in this way protects the softer and more delicate internal organs from a pressure which they are unfitted to bear. It is for this reason that boys are not given feather beds at school, but stiffish mattresses instead. The feather bed is no luxury, except to him who by "using" himself to it has learnt to like it and want it. The principle that applies to the bed applies equally to the chair. There are, it is true, some people who cannot sit at ease except upon cushions.



BROOKS' "B91."

touring and travelling. Necessity goaded the genius of the inventor, and saddles of various shapes, all of them based upon the form of the saddle used in horse-back riding, but all of

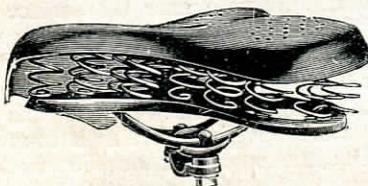
but they are not the young, the vigorous, and the healthy. To these latter the simple rule of anatomy still applies, that the weight should



BROOKS' "B 49."

be carried mainly by the bones. Luxurious upholstery has been tried in schools, and has failed miserably. This was because it took a portion of the weight of the body off the two ischial bones provided by nature to sustain it, and injuriously distributed it elsewhere. Those who studied the experiment found that the standard of attention was lowered and the alertness of thought became less. Hence the school desk and the plain office chair are the best seats to work upon.

What the early cyclists discovered was only a new application of this rule. They said: "The hard saddle is the long-distance saddle." Now, it is not to be supposed that the saddles of that day, even when they conformed to this essential requirement, were at all comfortable. Generally speaking, they were quite otherwise. But that was because makers had not mastered the art of building them upon a proper under-seating of springs. To absorb vibration by means of cushions is one thing; to intercept it before it reaches the saddle at all is quite



BRAMPTON'S "MULTISPIRAL."

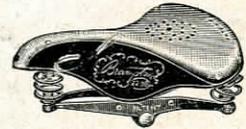
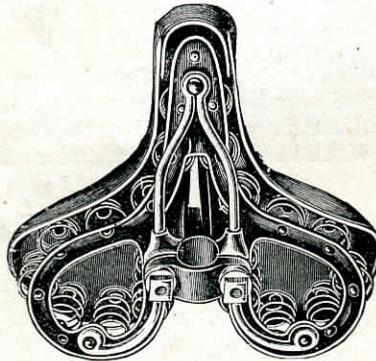
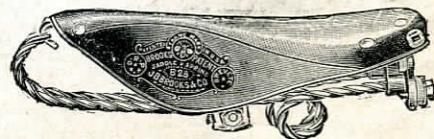
another. The first plan I have shown to be essentially bad; the second is on every score desirable. When one remembers the bumping

and rattling endured in the course of a hundred mile run in the early '80's it seems wonderful that tourists were found to persevere as they did. The explanation is that the delights of wheeling were such as to far outweigh its pains and inconveniences. Just as fellows used to deny themselves all sorts of things — new cricket bats, holiday trips, and a whole host of minor *desiderata* — in order that they might be able to spend £20 upon a machine which, even if in good order, would not to-day sell for as many sixpences, so, having at last possessed themselves of the prize, they felt that any further sacrifice in the way of constraint or discomfort endured was as nothing when weighed in the balance against the inherent enjoyments and delights of cycling.

All the early tourists were enthusiasts. The refinements of luxury in later times have brought many into the ranks who are not enthusiasts, and possibly even some who will never become so. There is no great call upon the beginner's enthusiasm nowadays, when the pneumatic tyre absorbs nearly all the vibration at its source of origin, namely, the point of contact between the wheel and the road, and when such little as escapes beyond this point through the framework of the machine is almost entirely intercepted by

suitable springs before it can reach the rider's saddle.

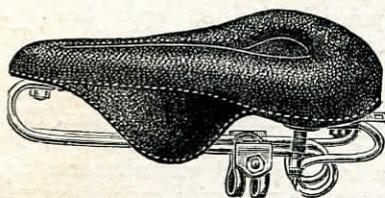
It is not my intention to recommend any one particular seat, for reasons that will be apparent, but rather to speak of the qualities which are essential to every good saddle, to show how each may determine what is a good saddle *for him*, and how, having once got hold of the right

BRAMPTON'S "3-COIL"
SADDLE.BRAMPTON'S "MULTISPIRAL."
(Under view.)

BROOKS' "B 2S."

one, he can adjust it to his best advantage. First of all, then, every saddle that is worth having is so constructed as to take practically

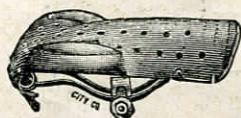
all of the rider's weight by pressure from the two ischial bones before mentioned. It must afford no support at the peak, and it must be so



LAMPLUGH SADDLE.

shaped that the play of the thighs can go on with a free up-and-down thrust and without friction. To attain these ends the saddle must be fairly flat, and provided with means of adjustment such that it may remain so even after considerable use. It must also be broad enough at the back—a matter in which many otherwise good saddles are lacking; and it must be well scooped out at the "crutch," because, unlike a chair, it is intended to seat the rider while his legs are dependent in a direction approaching that of vertically downward. As to the proper width of the seat at the back, where the main pressure should come, that must always depend upon the individual. Personally, I like

a saddle to be not less than 8 ins. across, but some require it to be much wider, while others can do with less. The length of the peak is a matter of very small importance so long as it is correctly formed. It should not be raised convexly, or there will be danger of its taking a portion of the weight. Some makers recognize this risk and build the peak depressed below the general level of the seat, while others—such as the makers of the "Sans-sec"—do away with the peak altogether. This, however, is not necessary, provided the seat be made firm and flat, and provided, also, that it be properly adjusted.



WOOD'S SADDLE.
(With cover.)

There are some riders who are never comfortable unless their saddle-peak is tilted upwards. This nearly always arises from the fact that the whole seat is adjusted too far forward on the machine.

Slide it back a little, and the need for tilting vanishes. That naturally brings me to the subject of the position of the saddle. Writers on the subject usually state it as being such and such a number of inches behind the crank centre, which is right enough as far as it goes. But they nearly always name the peak as the point to

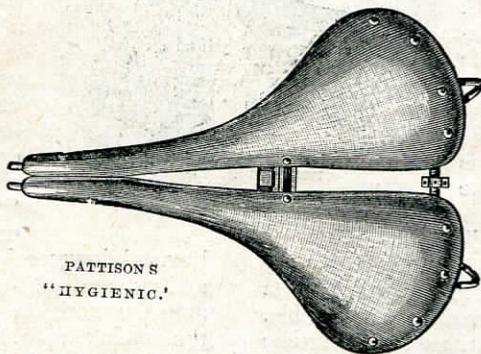


THE "WOOD'S" SADDLE.

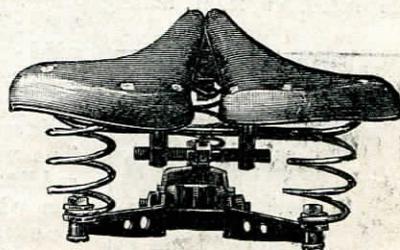
take the measurement from, and this is unscientific and inaccurate. Peaks may be of all sorts of lengths, or, as we have just seen, there may be no peak at all. To apply the rule usually given to all cases would be nothing more than insisting upon a different rule for each varying make of saddle. That, of course, would be absurd. The proper place from which to measure is that point in the seat which lies midway between the points which carry the

weight. In my own case I like this to be about 12 ins. behind the crank centre, or if anything rather more. But one's individual build has something to do with this. What is called the "personal equation" comes in, and probably the biggest factor in it is the length of the femur, or thigh bone. Pay no heed, therefore, to anyone who lays down a rule absolute for all cases,

but find out the best position for yourself. Remember, however, that the shifting and tilting of the saddle will alter the reach, and that the proper reach is a fixed and unalterable quantity for each individual. Changes in saddle

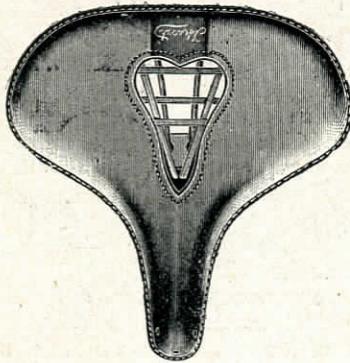


PATTISON'S
"HYGIENIC."



PATTISON SADDLE.
(Back view.)

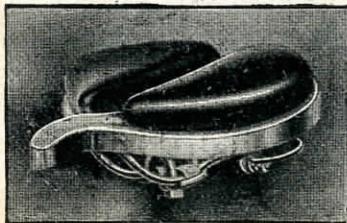
adjustment should therefore be compensated for by slight changes in the adjustment of the seat-pillar, so as always to maintain the correct length



HUNT'S SADDLE.

of reach. The amount of this reach that is best for you is easily determined by taking a "fork measurement." A rider's fork measurement is taken inside the leg, from the fork to the ground when he is standing erect upon shoeless feet. A saddle should be so placed that this measurement is exactly the distance from the line of support near the back of it straight to the pedal, when the latter is at its greatest distance away, that is to say, when it is nearly at the bottom of the stroke.

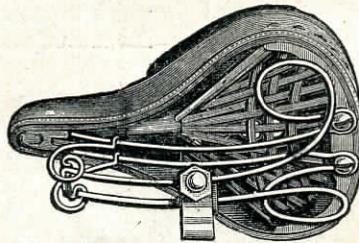
From the foregoing it will be readily understood that many types of saddle may fulfil all the requirements of a riding seat, at once serviceable, comfortable, and hygienic. The illustrations to this article show quite a number of appliances to which such a description can justly be applied. Messrs. Brooks & Co., of Great Charles Street, Birmingham, are, perhaps, the best-known makers of cycle saddles in the country. The variety of makes they have to offer is such that few riders would fail to be able to make a suitable selection from among them. The "B 10" is a road-racing saddle, hung on figure-of-eight springs. The "B 28" saddles and the "B 90" are also made for the road, while the "B 40"



CHRISTIE'S "ANATOMICAL."

is a full roadster saddle with a specially wide back. The Christie "Adjustable" saddle provides for the widening of the back to the

exact breadth the rider may discover suitable to him. But the name of the Christie firm was made by the introduction of their "Anatomical," which provides a seat in accordance with the first principle insisted upon here. Messrs. Pattison, of 86, New Bond Street, W., with their "Hygienic" saddle, achieve much the same result. The "Esmond" saddle, which comes from Nos. 10 & 12, Eastcheap, London, E.C., aims at giving comfort to the rider by providing him with a seat endowed with abundant side-sway, so that it see-saws with each alternate stroke. The device has to be got used to before it can be appreciated, but many who have learnt to feel at home on it prefer it to all others. Springs play an important part in nearly all saddles, save those destined for use only on the racing track.

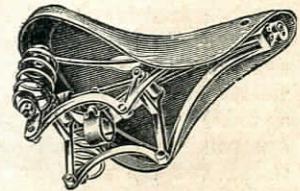


HUNT'S SADDLE.

(Under view.)

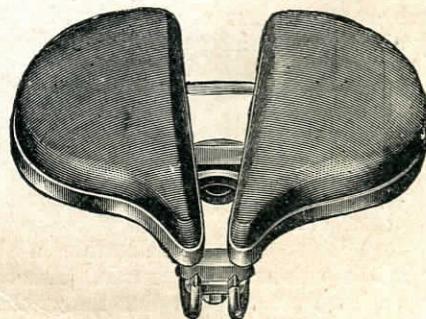
The figures of the Brampton saddles, which are made at the works in Oliver Street, Birmingham, illustrate several different types of springs. In the "three-coil," for example, a very usual method is seen, while the "Multispiral" is a very elastic seat, of which the comfort is enhanced by the breadth of back and the good design of the scooping out on either side of the peak. The "New Pacer," again, is an exceedingly firm seat, supported

by a minimum of springs, and suitable for work on the racing path. Another very old firm in the cycle-saddle line is that of Messrs. Middlemore & Lamplugh, of Coventry. Good points about the example of their saddles shown are the hollow down the centre of the seat and the nice deep



"ESMOND" SADDLE.

(Under view.)



CHRISTIE'S "ADJUSTABLE."

flaps on either side of the peak. I believe this firm were the first to introduce the long "hammock" saddles which were in great vogue years ago, on account of the ease and comfort they gave at a time when these characteristics were not obtainable in other ways.

Many makers now hollow out the centre line of their saddles, partly to obviate all chance of pressure, and partly for purposes of ventilation and coolness. Hunt's saddle, an American production, has the central portion of open laced work, while strong, taut thongs of leather support the under portion. The "St. Crispin" is an excellent saddle, with a flat canvased top, and a speciality in adjustment such that its flatness can be permanently assured. Instead of tightening a single screw the user of the "St. Crispin" tightens three, a central one and one at each corner of the seat backing. Uniform tension can thus be imparted to the whole fabric. It was until of late years a saying particularly applicable to cycle saddles, that there was "nothing like leather." Now,

however, a number of other materials have been employed with more or less success as substitutes to form the upper covering. Of these perhaps the most promising is woven wire. In this connection "Wood's Wire Saddle," made by the Longford Wire Co., of Warrington, was a pioneer. The company were also pioneers in an admirable trade custom, in which they now have many imitators. I refer to the practice of

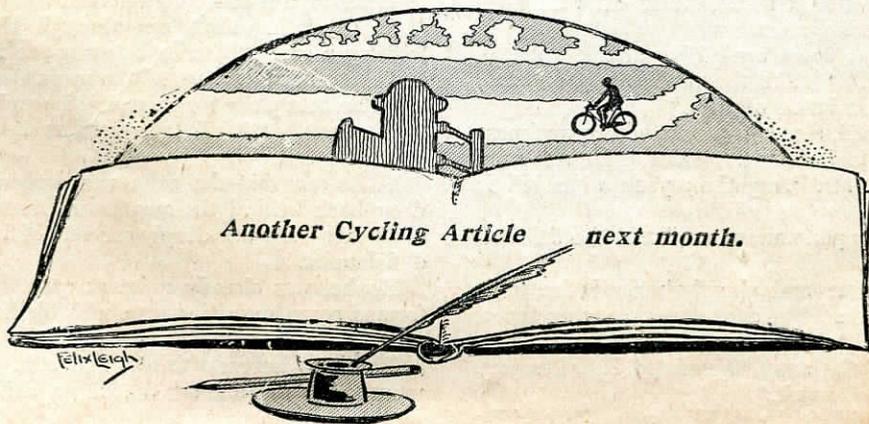
allowing intending purchasers a month's free trial of their saddle—a fine testimony to their own confidence in their wares, and a great boon to those who, while difficult to suit in the matter of seats, may still be pardoned for reluctance to go to the cost of experimenting with continual new purchases until the right article has been discovered. One of the latest comers in the way of wire saddles is the "Metallic," made in eight varieties by the Metallic Saddle Co., of 18, Ludgate Hill, Birmingham. It is open down the centre, and the lines of stress in the wire webbing are such that the seat becomes flatter the moment the rider's weight is superimposed. The saddle is well ventilated, cool, and light, and the wire fabric is so woven as to present a practically smooth surface, friction between which and the cloth of a garment is practically prevented by the give of the whole surface with the rider's motions.

With so large a variety of saddles to select from the most fastidious cyclist should be able to find a

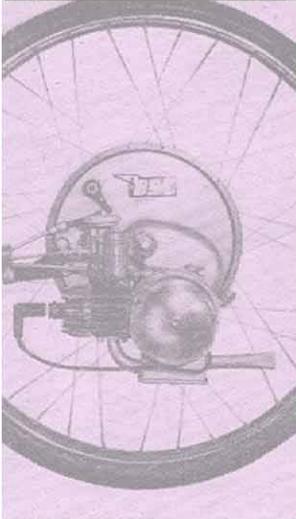
seat to his liking. I venture to believe that those who have hitherto been unable to do so have not gone upon the principles here enunciated, and I think that if they will be careful to do so now, they will succeed in finding the comfort they have before been at a loss for, and will in a surprising degree increase the pleasure that cycling is able to afford them.



THE "METALLIC" SADDLE.
Made by the Metallic Saddle Company,
Birmingham.



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