

## THE BICYCLE CLUB.

The annual dinner in connection with the Hastings and St. Leonards Bicycle Club, which is now in a more flourishing state than it has been since its formation, took place at the Swan Hotel on Wednesday evening, when about twenty sat down to a most sumptuous spread, served up in Host Collins's well-known style. The chair was occupied by Mr. A. J. Lovett, vice-president of the Club, and the vice-chair by Mr. E. C. Gilbert, captain; and there were also present, Mr. C. B. Gaitakell, Mr. T. Gilbert, Mr. French (captain of the Maidstone Bicycle Club), Mr. Butchers, Mr. White (treasurer), Mr. T. Ainsworth, Mr. F. Ellis, Mr. J. Stace, Mr. Carewell (secretary), Mr. Sims, Mr. Reed, Mr. Philcox (sub-captain), Mr. Crisford, Mr. Wellard, Mr. Veness, and Mr. A. Lovett, jun.

The cloth having been cleared, and those present having "charged" their glasses,

The CHAIRMAN gave the health of "The Queen, and the rest of the Royal Family," which was drunk with enthusiasm.

Mr. E. C. GILBERT next gave the toast of "The Army, Navy, and Volunteers." The former were too well known to them to need any remarks on their behalf from him. Of the volunteers he could only say that they had two or three corps in the town, and he thought they were as good as any throughout the kingdom. (Hear, hear.) He coupled with the toast the name of Mr. George Hutchings.

Mr. HURCHINS, in response, said he was not at the present time a member of the rifle corps, but he had served his three years, which he thought every young man ought to do, and he then left on the condition that he was to join again if he was ever wanted by Captain Cooper. In conclusion, he thought that the honour of England would be best served by the maintenance of peace.

Mr. HURCHINS proposed the next toast, and he supposed that why he had to do so was in consequence of his leaving the town, and of his being about the only member present of the original club. The toast he was sure they would drink in a most cordial manner. It was "Success to the Hastings and St. Leonards Bicycle Club," coupled with the name of Mr. A. J. Lovett, the Vice-President. When the club was started, they first met at Miss Garrett's rooms in Castle-road, and they had been established but a very few weeks when they were introduced to Mr. Lovett. That gentleman had been a kind help to them since that time through many difficulties, and the club would not be in the flourishing state it then was if it had not been for him (Mr. Lovett). He had also supplied them with a bicycle for learning, and introduced a new member in his son, who, though the youngest, was the pluckiest and best rider they had in the club. He (the speaker) himself thanked the Vice-president personally for the business-like manner in which he had carried out the duties of his office. He had known Mr. Lovett out-of-doors as a gentleman, and indoors as a thorough business man. He had much pleasure in proposing the toast.

Mr. LOVETT returned them his sincere thanks for the kind manner in which they had drunk his health, and also Mr. Butchers for the way in which he had spoken of him. With reference to the club itself, they could take a very cheerful view of the case. He saw around him all the faces that he had the pleasure of seeing last year, and he believed that they were steadily increasing in numbers. They had several very good riders, some were coming on, and he thought they would come out very well indeed. They had had some talk of challenging other clubs, and trying to win prizes; if not that, to give some away, as they had such a good sum in hand. Last year they had a substantial balance in hand, but this year there was a still larger one. If they went on in the future as they had done in the past they were sure to succeed. He again thanked them for the kind manner in which they had received the toast.

The CHAIRMAN said he had to propose a toast he was sure they would all drink with pleasure, and it was really the most important one of the evening—"The health of the Captain, Mr. E. Gilbert." (Applause.) He had all the drudgery to do, to pick out the muddy parts of the road, and to keep the recruits away from them. He was a kind of monthly nurse. He encouraged all those that could ride, and tried to make those ride who could not do so; and the least they could do was to drink to his good health.

Mr. GILBERT, in response, said he in no way deserved the praise their Vice-President had given him; he could not say much with regard to the club after that gentleman's speech. He (the speaker) would always do his best to carry out the duties, and he hoped they would have many pleasant runs during the year. He again thanked them, and said it would be his pleasure to do his best for the club—which he hoped would prosper in every way.

The CHAIRMAN gave "The Sub-Captain, Mr. S. Philcox." That gentleman always made himself agreeable, and kept the young recruits from looking too much after the girls. (Laughter.) He did not know what they should do without him, as he was very useful as well as ornamental.

Mr. PHILCOX, in responding, said that if the club needed his assistance at any time he should be most happy to give it. The little he had done for the club had been done most willingly. He thanked them most heartily for the manner in which they had drunk his health.

Mr. C. WELLS gave "The health of the Secretary, Mr. Carewell," and in doing so said he was glad that they had chosen that gentleman for their secretary, as he was all that could be desired, and had done all he could for the benefit of the club.

Mr. CAREWELL returned them his most hearty thanks. They were a young club, and it was rather difficult to establish one of that kind, the sport not being so popular as many others. He trusted they would all do their best, and work together to keep the club established. They were in a flourishing condition, and as regarded the funds, they had a satisfactory balance.

Mr. S. PHILCOX proposed "The Health of the Treasurer."

Mr. WHITE responded in a humorous speech.

Mr. E. GILBERT then gave "Other Clubs," coupled with the name of Mr. French, Captain of the Maidstone Club.

Mr. FRENCH thanked them for the hearty manner in which they had received the toast. He was happy to say that he thought bicycling was on the increase. With reference to his own club, he was sure they would be pleased to meet them at any time, and the Maidstone Club wished their Hastings brethren every success.

Mr. WHITE gave "The Visitors," coupled with the name of Mr. T. Gilbert.

Mr. GILBERT thanked them for coupling his name with the toast, and assured them that he was very pleased to meet them there. He was happy to hear that the club was in such a prosperous state, and he trusted to see them going on improving.

The remaining toasts were "The Ladies," proposed by Mr. Reed and responded to by Mr. Gaitakell; "The Press," proposed by the Chairman and responded to by Mr. Hutchings; "Mr. French, the Pianist;" and "The Host and Hostess."

There was some excellent singing during the evening by Mr. T. Ainsworth, Mr. Crisford, Mr. C. Wellard, Mr. T. Gilbert, Mr. E. C. Gilbert, Mr. Carewell, &c.