

TOURING IN FRANCE.

The following very interesting letter has been received from Mr. A. C. Beasley, who is at present touring in France:

Montpellier, France, March 24, 1885.

DEAR WILL,—In case any of our Canadian cyclists think of touring on this side of the "herring pond" during the coming season, a few reliable tips from one who has just "been there" may not come amiss, and a little knowledge of routes, etc., gained beforehand is of great service to the intending tourist, for once started every bit of information costs heavily.

The very first thing to be done is to join the Cyclists' Touring Club. Mr. H. S. Tibbs, Chief Consul for Canada, whose address is 26 Union Ave., Montreal, will forward all necessary forms and give all information needed.—You must join the club before sailing, for it takes a month before you become a fully-fledged member, and you can share in none of the many privileges afforded by the institution until you have obtained your pasteboard credential.

If you intend purchasing a machine in England (by far the better plan), take train to Coventry direct from Liverpool, and purchase a *strong* machine direct from a reliable maker, and by so doing save the agent's 25% for commission.—Call at Hiffe & Son's and procure maps, guide-books, etc.

I need say nothing further concerning touring in the United Kingdom, because your guide-books give all necessary directions.

By all means purchase a tricycle, because you can carry all your luggage behind you on the luggage-carrier, and are saved all bother of forwarding, etc., and run no chance of taking croppers.

Before crossing the channel, make a tour of the Isle of Wight; it well repays the trouble taken in getting over. Then ride up to Newhaven and cross to Dieppe. It is the cheapest and best route; and besides that, the Chief Consul C.T.C. lives at Dieppe, and he is always happy to give the cyclist information respecting routes, etc. From Dieppe ride to Rouen, and then to Paris. From there the best route is to Bordeaux, travelling through Orleans, Tours, Poitiers, Angoulême and Libourne. Be sure and go through Libourne, for the other route is paved with rough cobble-stones for some fifty kilometres, as I found to my sorrow. From Bordeaux ride south through Toulouse to Narbonne, and east to Montpellier through Cette; then, if you wish to visit Italy, ride through Marseilles, Toulon, Nice and Monte Carlo; but if you do not desire that trip, return to Paris by way of Lyons. This tour is the best in France, because you will have comparatively level roads all the way, escape all the hill ranges and meet all the bicycle clubs.

CUSTOMS DUTY.—You will not be required to pay duty on your machine at the French frontier, but at the Italian custom-houses they collect the duty and affix stamped weights to your machine, and on your return refund the money.

ROADS.—The roads in France are under the control and supervision of the government, are broad, level, and well kept, constantly swept and scraped, and free from loose stones. Each

Rue Nationale runs between two large cities, and all along you pass metre and kilometre stones; the latter are a thousand yards apart; on the face is the name of the city the road leads to and the distance from it; on either side is the name of and the distance from the next place. In every town and village there is an iron signboard, white letters and arrows on a blue ground, fastened to front of the last house, showing the names of and the distances to the next three places, and at every cross-road you find a similar signboard. Thus you see it is next thing to impossible to get lost. The portion of the Rue Nationale leading through each village is paved, making it unpleasant and slow travelling; and, added to this, you are sure to have about a hundred curs and a swarm of children after you in each place. About the middle of December the metal is laid down, and this makes heavy riding; however, the workmen usually leave a narrow path at either side of the road.

HOTELS.—In England you will hear a great deal of the exorbitant hotel rates in France, and in a measure what you hear is true. I have been at hotels where they charged a stiff price for room and meals, and then had to pay extra for candles, soap, fires, wine and service; but this is only in what is known as tourist hotels. In every place, no matter how small, there is a hotel frequented by the commercial travellers (called *voyageurs de commerce*), and in that hotel one is sure to receive good accommodation at a reasonable charge. On entering a town, at once inquire, "*Où est l'hôtel pour le voyageur de commerce?*" and on being informed steer for it. You will get only two meals a day—*déjeuner* at 11 A.M. and *dîner* at 6.30 P.M. As you will start long before the morning meal, you will have *café au lait* and bread about 8 A.M. In Normandy, cider is used like water, and an extra charge is made for wine; but further south wine is supplied gratis. Water for bathing purposes is scantily supplied, but on being asked they will at once furnish all you want, and think you are unnecessarily cleanly.

RAILWAYS.—The cost of carriage for a machine on the English railways is considerable, and varies on different lines. In France your bike goes as luggage, for every passenger is allowed 30 kilos (about 60 lbs.). They seldom weigh the machine, but stick on a label and charge you the nominal sum of one penny for registration.—Usually you are required to sign a form exonerating the company from any damage that may be sustained; but if you are sharp you can escape signing this blank, and then if your machine is injured you can obtain recompense from the railway company. Another good feature in French railways is the absence of the system of tipping porters, etc., a custom that is obligatory in England. It is a good plan to take the train when you wish to escape any hilly country or are detained by rain. The third-class fare is cheap, but the accommodation is poor.

RESIDENT ENGLISH CYCLISTS.—After leaving Paris, you will meet with few cyclists until Bordeaux is reached. There you meet a great many, for the Veloce Club Bordelais (of which I am a member) numbers 500 members, and is the largest and best cycling club in France. An Englishman named Garrard has a bicycle

factory on the Boulevard Canderan. At Paris, Fred. de Civry has an agency on the Avenue de la Grande Armée. At Paris, Knowles will show you around; at Montpellier, H. O. Duncan has an establishment in the Rue Nationale. It is a great thing to know where to find an English-speaking person, especially in case of a break-down. There are numerous consuls for the C.T.C. scattered through the country, the majority of whom can speak English "a little few." Of course, a knowledge of the French language is of great service, but one can get along very well with the aid of a conversation book.

The rule of the road in England is to the left on meeting a conveyance, but here it is the same as our own, viz., to the right. The people are very accommodating, and always give half the road.

Be sure and don't compete in any races if you wish to retain your *status* as an amateur, because there is no distinction between professionals and amateurs; and I may safely say that every rider of any account is a professional, according to the definition adopted in England and America.

Buy all clothes and necessaries in England, where everything in that line is cheap and good. Have all letters forwarded to the *Poste Restante* at a town some distance ahead on your route. Drink little of anything at the *cafés*; peppermint and water is the best beverage; but better than anything is to eat lots of oranges when thirsty, for they are plentiful, good and cheap, costing about a sou apiece. The winter is the best time to travel in the south, the weather being neither too hot or too cold, and they do not cover the roads with metal, like in the north.

If you would care to hear some of my adventures, I will be happy to write you further.

Yours truly,

ALEC C. BEASLEY.

Coming Events.

MAY 25.—Second Annual Meeting of the Woodstock Amateur Athletic Association, including the Championship Bicycle Races.

MAY 25.—Second Annual Tournament of the Newcastle Bicycle Club.

JULY 1.—Annual Meeting and Races of the C. W. A. at Woodstock.

JULY 3 & 4.—Annual Meet of the L. A. W. at Buffalo, N.Y.

JULY 6.—Big Four Tour starts from Buffalo.

SEPT. 8, 9 & 10.—Annual Tournament of the Springfield (Mass.) Bicycle Club.

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What promises to be a very interesting race is shortly to be run at London, England, between Maj. Knox Holmes, holder of the one-hundred-mile record, and who is over sixty years of age, and G. Lacy Hillier, the ex-bicycle champion of England. Hillier is to use a bicycle, while the old gentleman, in company with D. Rucker, will ride a tandem bicycle.

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Hedge, the Buffalo flier, has made a mile in 1m. 47s.—on a home trainer.