

## THE BIG FOUR TOUR.

The Big Four Tour is over, and Manager Ayers' expression is the most fitting to the occasion: "The great tour opens, passes away like a dream of enormous frolic, and is gone." And who of the participants did not find the prophecy fulfilled?

On Sunday evening, July 5th, the Genesee House, Buffalo, was fairly alive with cyclists, each adorned with the mystic circular badge "4," all anxiously waiting the advent of the tour, when they would be really started on the road, and on Monday morning, at an early hour, everyone was astir, cleaning wheels, packing gups, and getting everything into readiness, the weather being perfect. Precisely at 9.30, the long line moved down the sidewalk, the crowd of spectators being very large. After a spin over some of Buffalo's fine roads, they began to get a fair taste of road-riding, and the tour commenced to assume a practical appearance. The roads were not of the best the first morning out, but the whole party managed to keep well together, with a few exceptions. Alden was reached about 1.30, where an elegant repast had been arranged upon a lawn under the trees, and which was thoroughly enjoyed, judging by the sudden disappearance of everything eatable. The afternoon's ride brought us through Corfu, where the life of the party, Munger, of Detroit, well known to many Canadians, had the first opportunity of displaying his capability of making everyone laugh. By means of a pump and a hose, which he manipulated very handily, several of the party received shower baths, all of which was taken in good part and enjoyed. Pushing on, an enjoyable ride was had into Batavia, which place was reached about 7.30 P.M., everyone being well satisfied with the first day's run, 44 miles. They were entertained very handsomely here during the evening by the Batavia Bicycle Club. On account of the steady rain next day, special train was taken to Rochester, where the entire party were taken through Powers' art gallery, considered to be the finest collection in the world. During the evening, a spin around the principal drives was taken. Wednesday morning, a ride of eight miles brought the tourists to Charlotte, where special steamer was taken for Colourg. This was one of the features of the trip. The party were the sole occupants of the boat, and enjoyed themselves to their heart's content. Among the tourists were some very fine singers, notably Commander Bourne and Dr. Aitken, of New York city, whose efforts in the vocal line were greatly applauded. Others of the party, not musically inclined enjoyed ducking each other with pails of water. When Colourg came in sight, all the party commenced blowing their horns (for they were all equipped with hideous dinner-horns), and on a crowded wharf a quick landing was made, the horror of wheelmen, the custom-house officer, being on hand. After Manager Ayers had signed a \$12,000 bond, and got two citizens to go security, we were allowed to proceed to the hotel, where an elegant "hop" was tendered the tourists during the evening. On Thursday morning wheels were again mounted for a ride over Canada's once famous hundred-mile stretch, but which is now as poor

a piece of riding as can be found, causing great disappointment.

The Century road-racers, along with the manager of the race, W. K. Evans, stayed over in Colourg preparatory to the race, which took place on the day following. The tourists dined in Brighton, and arrived safe in Belleville, where they were elegantly entertained by the Belleville Tourists' Club, of which Mr. S. G. Retallack is captain. A "hop" was provided, and quite a number danced into the "wee sma' hours," and were obliged to take the tram next day. Friday was the last day in Canada. Napanee was reached for dinner, and after starting it commenced pouring rain, the last fifteen miles being ridden during the rain. On arrival at Kingston, a slight rest was made to wait for the road-racers, Cola Stone completing the distance first, a full account of which appeared in our last issue. Steamer was then taken for Round Island, the first week's wheeling being at an end.

The ambulance, which, by-the-by, consisted of two large covered wagons, having fallen a large distance behind, the boat which conveyed tourists to Round Island was considerably delayed, the wheelmen not arriving at the island till near 11 o'clock P.M. None of the tourists, or, in fact, the outsiders, will forget the scene at the Kingston dock while waiting for the ambulance. On board the steamer they had the pleasure of hearing "Canada's Own Orator" speak on "Woman's Rights." The hop which was to have been tendered the party at the Round Island Hotel, on Friday night, had to be postponed until the evening following, owing to the late arrival. On Saturday, the camp at "Shady Ledge" was taken possession of, and Commodore Taylor's hospitality partaken of. During the three days' stay at the island, all sorts of sports and games were participated in, some rowing, some fishing, and others sailing, while the gallants of the party found a field for their talents in devoting their time to the young ladies staying on the island. The hop held on Saturday evening passed off very successfully, an enjoyable time being spent by all the participants.

Sunday was put in very quietly, camp-fire service being held in the evening at Shady Ledge. Monday afternoon, the cyclists were obliged to tear themselves away from Round Island and Shady Ledge, where they had been entertained so elegantly. In glancing through the Commodore's autograph album, the writer came across an inscription by a friend that certainly echoes the sentiment of the big Four tourists. It reads thus: "Hospitality, thy name is Taylor!" At two o'clock, steamer was taken for Alexandra Bay, where dinner was served.

The manager of the local skating rink had papered the town with flaring bills announcing that the Big Four would give an exhibition drill at his rink. On that afternoon his rink was packed as it never was before. The wheelmen knew nothing of this, and were astounded when, after dinner, they were informed that they were expected to exhibit themselves. They protested that they knew nothing about drilling, and did not visit the island for any such purpose. But the manager implored so feelingly that twelve of the Boston men took pity on him and volunteered to do what they could. So, arraying themselves in their red coats, big hats, and all

their gaudiest apparel, they pushed their wheels into the rink and climbed astride of them, four during this operation taking headings towards a common centre. They began the drill, which consisted of riding around the hall three times in single file, twice in double file, taking three different styles of headers, and finishing with a grand collision dismount.

After the drill performance, the steamer was again boarded and headed towards Clayton, where special cars were waiting to convey the tourists to Amsterdam.

Having the cars to themselves, the wheelmen felt no restraint, but seemed to consider it their duty to make as much noise as possible. Exhaustion, however, finally conquered, and at 12 o'clock nearly all were sleeping soundly. Then some of the wide-awake men arose, and securing a lot of burnt cork, went through the cars, artistically decorating the face of every sleeping tourist. Then they yelled and woke them up. It was very funny the way the awakened cyclists for a few minutes enjoyed the ridiculous appearance presented by one another, each blissfully unconscious that his own face bore any unusual decoration. There were no more attempts at sleeping in that car, and Amsterdam was reached at 1.30 A.M. The headquarters were made at Hotel Warner, and the tired wheelmen hurried off to bed as quickly as possible.

They were the next day to cycle down the Mohawk valley to Albany, but the rain came down, and they were forced to take the train. The only disagreeable feature of the tour was the weather, which was very unfavorable, and spoiled many a good ride.

The morning hours were passed at Amsterdam, the wheelmen disconsolately sitting around and wondering how the weather could be so mean, writing home to dear ones, or playing pool. This quietness soon pallied upon the Boston men, and it was with a yell of delight that they greeted the suggestion that they go out and buy some cow-bells and have a parade about town. In less than half an hour the town's supply of cow-bells was exhausted. Those who could not obtain cow-bells purchased sleigh-bells, and fastened them to their legs. Thus supplied, they paraded about town, creating a din most horrible, and terribly frightening the inhabitants. The noise so disturbed the editor of the local paper, who was conceiving a leader on the present as compared with the hereafter of the potato-bug, that he rushed madly after the chief of police and tried to induce him to arrest the whole crowd. But the policemen had more sense than the editor, and refused to interfere with the boys' fun.

The day night was passed at Albany, where the local cycling club entertained the visitors hospitably. The Albany Club has the finest house of any cycling club in America, excepting those of the Massachusetts and Boston clubs. The weather concluded to favor the cyclists the next day. All were heartily glad to once more mount their wheels, and the day's ride proved the most enjoyable of the tour. The route was over the old post turnpike, up and down innumerable hills, and then through the beautiful valley of the Hudson. A halt was called at almost every farm-house along the route, and the residents relieved of everything drinkable about the premises.