

## HOW TO CYCLE IN EUROPE.

BY JOSEPH PENNELL.



DESIRE for independent traveling is growing daily. The reasons for this are various. It may be the person who wishes to indulge the desire is egocentric and eager to make a show of himself. It may be economy which prompts him to leave a railway carriage and foot it. It may be because he imagines it to be "English, you know," though let me assure him that this is one of the many myths about the English. Englishmen as a rule are not great cycling tourists. More Americans, comparatively, have toured in England and on the Continent than Englishmen themselves, and the number is increasing daily. Or it may be that the tourist wishes to see the country in the only way it can be properly seen; and this is probably why in the winter and the spring so many Americans write to me, as the representative in England of the League of American Wheelmen, and ask for information about roads and routes.

I presume this last to be the real reason for the growth of independent traveling, and I leave out of consideration all walking tours, because, after having walked in one year 500 miles and cycled nearly as many thousand, I feel justified in saying that walking is not for a moment to be compared with cycling. I may some day compare these two modes of traveling, but just now this is not my purpose. What I say about cycling applies equally well to riding and driving, though of course you cannot ride or drive continuously the same number of miles you can cycle. I can very well remember the state of dense ignorance concerning the means of independent traveling in Europe, in which I was six years ago, as well as the almost utter impossibility of obtaining any definite information. Six years, every one of which has seen at least one tour, have, however, given me some little experience.

If you are a rider of an American cycle, of course it will be necessary to bring your machine with you. Ask the steamship

authorities whether to crate it or not. If it is a bicycle, and you carry it without crating, they may charge nothing. There is no duty on entering England; but if you ride an English machine, I should advise you to sell your present mount and make arrangements, either with the dealer you know in America or the firm itself in England, giving them three or four months to get your machine ready and to have it awaiting you at their agents in Liverpool, Southampton or Glasgow, or wherever you may land. Tell the makers what sort of a tour you propose taking, and you will probably find that they will understand your needs better than you. If, however, you are confident you know exactly what you want, you may be able to make suggestions.

Before leaving America—though I suppose what I say applies equally well to Australians—join the Cyclists' Touring Club. From their offices you will receive a vast amount of useful information concerning your tour. You can also obtain route-books, maps, guides, etc. Americans should apply to F. W. Weston, Savin Hill, Boston, Mass.; Canadians to H. S. Tibbs, 26 Union Avenue, Montreal; Australians and Indians to S. A. Stead, 19 Tabley Road, Holloway, London, N. The subscription is the equivalent of two shillings and sixpence, and the entrance fee is another shilling. Any amateur cyclist can become a member without trouble. Another thing to be provided is a Baedeker guide-book for the country over which you wish to tour. In it you will find the rates of the various hotels, and of course you will go to those which suit your pocket, remembering that now you are an independent traveler, and that if you do not like the outside of an hotel, there is no reason why you should go in. The C. T. C. hotels in England are mainly respectable, and with the hand-book you know where you are going. But the C. T. C. rates, except in the large towns, are frequently an advance upon the ordinary rates. You will find it almost impossible to obtain breakfast before eight o'clock in the morning, in many places before nine, without considerable trouble. A breakfast will cost from one to three shillings, according to the hotel. On leaving

the hotel it is necessary to fee the boots and the waiter, but sixpence goes quite as far as half a crown.

In riding, keep to the left, Englishmen differing in this, as in so many other respects, from all creation. Do not ride on the side paths or you will be promptly arrested. It is useless to expect any cyclist you meet to be more civil to you than the driver of any other conveyance. Cycling clubs in England are not what they are in America or on the Continent. Therefore you need not look for any of those attentions bestowed upon the touring cyclist at home, though you may encounter some very delightful fellows. Of course, it is a very good thing to have letters of introduction.

At noon, in any save the large towns and on market days, you will not be able to get a hot dinner without waiting a long time. But you will probably find excellent cold roast beef, or you can eat a succession of lunches of bread and cheese and drink a modicum of bitter ale, called beer. My practice is never to eat much in the middle of the day when touring. The succession of small lunches and short rests is better than a single long one. Coffee taverns—that is, temperance houses—may be found everywhere, but they range from very good to very bad, and you had better investigate them before deciding to stay overnight. It is unnecessary and quite useless to bargain for anything in England. Your lunch will cost from sixpence to two shillings, and you should give the waiter a penny for every shilling. You will have to order your dinner in the evening in the majority of places, and in the small towns it is wiser to have what is called a "meat tea," that is, a chop or a steak, one or two vegetables, jam and tea; or else a cold supper, that is, cold meat or fowl, salad, a tart and cheese.

If you arrive wet, you will find it possible to have your clothes dried, and very well too, as innkeepers in England rather expect to have to perform this duty. In fact you may receive many little attentions which are very pleasing, and there is a cozy, homelike feeling about an English inn which one finds nowhere else. It is not necessary to inflict the fact that you are an American upon everybody you meet; they have seen Americans before, and they probably knew it before you opened your mouth. I have seen it stated and hinted that one can obtain a room in an English inn or hotel for sixpence or ninepence a night. This is, of course,

absurd. You can, if you go to a house with the sign "Accommodation for Travelers; beds, sixpence a night." In the same way, in America, you can go to a station-house for nothing, or to a tramps' lodging-house for almost as little. It is necessary to count upon spending about eight shillings or two dollars a day for touring in England; but it is possible to do it for half that amount, though not comfortably or decently. Even this is a moderate figure, and is less than the C. T. C. rate.

In London I can recommend the Charing Cross Hotel, and, I believe, Burr's private hotel in Queen Square. There are thousands of hotels in London, but both of these are central, and can be reached on the wheel. London streets, however, require very careful riding, owing to the rapid driving, and, to the American, the fact that everybody seems to be on the wrong side of the road.

I have presumed that you are a practical cyclist, and therefore that you will carry whatever you are in the habit of taking with you at home, or will send your baggage from one place to another as you do there. In England it is wiser to use the Parcel's Post, as the express is very unreliable. Personally, I either ride a safety or a tandem tricycle, and, whether alone or with my wife, always carry every thing we want on the machine. We are consequently perfectly independent, and have been out for six weeks at a time.

On leaving England for the Continent, unless money is absolutely no object, you must go to France by Dieppe, Havre or St. Malo. By Calais or Boulogne the charges are extortionate, and you will have to pay in the custom-houses. The greater part of Belgium is paved with Belgian blocks, over which you cannot ride. To Holland you can go by way of Amsterdam, and I believe the riding is fairly good over the brick roads, but I have never been there. The principal attractions in Norway seem to be the cheapness and the scenery, and for both you have to walk about as much as you ride, which is not my idea of cycling. Anyhow, it cannot be compared to Switzerland, and the reason it is so much talked about in English cycling papers is because it is a fine pot-hunting ground for racing men.

Of Spain I am entirely ignorant, and the accounts of this country all contradict each other with the most wonderful unanimity. No reliable data of the roads have yet been obtained. I hope to go over

them myself before long. But in the first place, to visit any foreign country you must understand something of the language, the more the better.

The following, which is a portion of an article I contributed to the *Pall Mall Gazette* a short time since, contains all that need be said on touring in France: "You must provide yourself with good road maps, showing the main road, the *routes nationales* and the *routes départementales*. There are, of course, byroads all over France—that is, *routes communales* and *routes vicinales*—but it is never safe, save in the south, to make short cuts or detours or to trust to these byroads in any way. They are frequently as bad as the others are good. Stick to the high-road. Work out on your map the route you wish to follow. You can buy excellent road maps of Hachette or of Phillips. The maps sold by the Cyclists' Touring Club are not up to date, and you are compelled to purchase four sheets when you may only need one. Recently I was detained in Avignon for having these maps in my possession, being told by the *préfet* of the department of Vaucluse that it was illegal to carry them, as in France they are made and sold for the private use of the War Department. How true this is I do not know. I have usually carried them, and never before had any trouble. However, they are becoming rather out of date, and Hachette is bringing out new series all the time.

"Supposing you land at Dieppe, your machine will be taken to the custom-house, whither you should accompany it. If you can succeed in satisfying the officials that you intend to leave the country with your machine within three months, they will not charge you duty, and will not, unless you ask for it, give you a receipt. If you do get a receipt—this is, of course, the lawful method—you will be obliged to deposit 50*s.*, only two-thirds of which will probably be returned to you when you leave the country. But the French Government has usually been very accommodating in this matter, though at Calais the duty or the deposit is nearly always demanded. If you wish to go by train from Dieppe, have your cycle registered, for which you pay a penny if it is under 56 lbs. Two people can take a tandem for the same money, if it is under 112 lbs. But do not stand on your dignity, and write to the papers, and make a frightful row, because the Swiss, German, and Italian railways compel you to pay a big price whenever you carry a

cycle on their lines. Their rules are not those of France. In frontier stations you need never be surprised at any regulations.

"But let us suppose that you intend to ride away from the station at Dieppe. You are hungry, having been landed there at five o'clock in the morning. Have your coffee in any café on the Place, or in the very expensive one in the station. And this is the point where, if you want to live inexpensively, you must remember the customs of the country. In the station you never see a Frenchman, and on one occasion I paid two francs and twenty-five centimes for the privilege of having a pot of coffee and rolls and butter there. The next time, I went to a café in the street leading from the pier to the Place. It was full of townspeople, was more gorgeous, the coffee was equally good, and I paid seventy-five centimes. Why I should pay a franc and a half for having my coffee on the pier, I am unable to see. Cafés are always good, and charge just about half the price of an hotel or a station restaurant, and the French traveler, as a rule, does not take his coffee in the hotel unless he is in a great hurry. He goes to the café across the street, reads his morning paper, and pays half the price. The landlord does not object; it is the custom of the country. For lunch, if I know the town where I am going, I stop, not at the swellest restaurant on the boulevard, nor at the dirty *estaminet* of the workman—I object to one as much as to the other—but at a decent, clean, middle-class restaurant, where it is the exception if I do not fare very well at the cost of about a franc and a half. And how do I find it? Either by using my own eyes, or by asking the first decent-looking man who comes along. If it is between half-past ten and one in the day he will probably be on his way to or from his own breakfast, and will be only too glad to show you the place. If you do not like the place, there is no reason why you should go in. If it is good, and the people are jolly and talkative, as they usually will be, ask them for a good hotel, of the sort they, as Frenchmen, would go to, in the town where you purpose to spend the night. They will tell you readily. It may be the first, or more likely the last, on Baedeker's list; it may not be there at all. If it is a very swell place, don't be afraid to go in if Frenchmen have recommended it; if it is very disreputable on the outside, and the proprietor in cook's cap and apron rushes out to meet you, do not turn away,

for he will probably greet you as warmly and give you as good a dinner as you have ever had in your life. You will find at the table a lot of jolly commercial travelers, who will take pleasure in giving you a list of hotels from one end of your route to the other. And what will it cost you? The dinner will vary from two and a half to three and a half francs, and your room from one and a half to two and a half, and there will be no extras. Totting this up, we have eight francs fifty for the day. Say you give the waiter half a franc. That makes nine.

"But the next night, being a touring cyclist, you have not reached the town where you intended to stay, owing to something of interest on the road, or you have passed beyond it. You will stop in a decent, clean *auberge* by the roadside—and you will find many—or in the best inn in the village, where your bill will be about four francs for lodging, dinner and coffee. And so, in the course of two or three weeks, instead of exceeding an average of seven francs a day, you will fall below it. This is the way Frenchmen do. This is the way men like Louis Stevenson have done. And this is the plan I like to follow; not to go to an hotel where one has to pay for the dirty swallow-tail and bad English of the waiter, the sham plate and the stupid *table d'hôte*; nor, on the other hand, to stint one's self and to glory in saving a sou here and doing a man out of a franc there; but to quietly adapt yourself as much as you possibly can to the habits and customs of the

people, of the middle and characteristic class, whose country you are visiting. If you do not like to do this and cannot afford the swell hotels, you had better stay at home."

Very much the same Conditions exist in Italy and Switzerland. In Italy, however, you must bargain for everything; you must even know how much your candle is going to cost you before you go to bed, and how much you are to pay for the waiter and chambermaid. In Germany one lives more in English style. The laws of the road are the same in all these countries as in America.

Many of the hills on the Continent, owing to their S-shaped curves, are very dangerous. In England one finds warnings everywhere for cyclers. You can ride or be pulled or pushed up behind a diligence over every pass in Switzerland that is used by vehicles. On the Continent you will find yourself everywhere legally treated as the driver of a carriage. Carry a passport, and do not regard all foreigners as fools and thereby make a fool out of yourself. Do not regard yourself as the first man who ever visited the place, and do not try to paint the town red. I admit these foreigners do not understand our little ways.

As to touring singly or with a party, that is your own affair, not mine; only I can warn you it is rather lonely work to cross a great country by yourself. If there is anything I have not made clear, write to me to the care of OUTING. I shall be only too glad to answer your questions.

