
"LIFE'S LIKE THAT"

Z-I-N-G went the alarm clock. A start, a jump, and from a cloud of confusion down crashed Thor's hammer on the alarm. The perceptibility was not very high as the mist and fog of sleepiness had not cleared but hung in great blotches between my vision (somewhat less than 20-20 at best) and my foe, that orgy of time pieces, the alarm clock. 5 A. M.! could it be? Ha! the deceptive little thing, but on, alas! my degraded spirits went plunging to the realms of despair.

With a great spasm of pain and suffering, my spirit and body suffered to be bullied by that common enemy of all pleasure seekers, Sense of Duty. With a feeling of reluctance I dressed, (a common denominator), and ate.

Work is a great thing, qualifying, (if someone else does it).

Off to work with the morning sun

To continue the job by Adam begun.

I grabbed my hat and coat—Watch out! Here comes the billy-goat.

No, I grabbed my hat and coat and was off to work. I shut the door behind me and walked down to the tram-stop. Standing there alone waiting for the trolley to come at 5.30, I was deep in thought. The city, devoid of its humanity, gives one un nouveau frisson. It is hardly a gracious thing to say about a city. And it is not entirely true, but the tall masses of still structures lurking in their snug gloom, even people, have an elfin, unsubstantial appearance among the shadows. The plainest girls are mysterious till one hears their voices. The porches of the theatres are filled with a blue mystic light that would make one speak in whispers. Night certainly falls on a city like a blanket and dawn is its glorious resurrection.

Like some Greek hero of old, hurtling in his war chariot over the ruins of Troy, came bouncing toward me the 5:30 tram, the 3A special.

Entering a tram that has one seat unoccupied is a great consolation, but try to imagine my exuberant joy on finding all the seats unoccupied, a feat rarely done. Could I not feel like some top state official on a chartered flight holding the destiny of nations?

The street-car came to a jolting stop amid the rumbling wheels and the screeching of brakes. "Rue Beaubien, Beaubien Street", growled the half-awake conductor, who was in the act of yawning and stretching simultaneously. It had become a habit with him. He had been on this same route and on the same shift, three A.M. to seven A.M., since that day as a vigorous and ambitious young man of twenty on his first maiden voyage, he had made his first stop at Beaubien. Time had sapped his vigor and stifled his ambition. He had put on many pounds since that time, and mostly around the middle. He could now recite the names of the streets with the alacrity of a stuffed drum, "Papineau, D'Orleans, Beaubien".

The routine, the routine, that was it. He was its helpless victim, the prey of mechanism.

I alighted from the tram and walked across to the stop on the other side of the intersection. The city was still asleep except for the few workers going on the early morning shift to their respective employments.

Beaubien is a beautiful avenue at dawn, perhaps because it is not marred by humanity or mechanism.

The symmetry of it just strikes the eye. The apartment house which line both sides the the avenue are alike in structure, consisting of three stories with the same general pattern of facing. Each apartment block consisting of three apartments, has a winding stairway on the outside with three balconies, one for each apartment. The only demarcation between one apartment block and the next is the shade of the bricks, color of the winding stairway and balconies and the apartment numbers. The orderly effect which this gives is tremendous. These winding stairways with their balconies, painted generally in colors which contrast with their surroundings, charm the observers.

How many children look down these same stairways to watch for their father coming home from work and when they see him run to announce the news to their mother who is busily engaged in preparing supper? How many young men waited at the bottom of these stairs for their sweethearts to come tip-toeing gaily down these same stairs? How many milkmen, mailmen, errand boys cursed the very builder of these stairs? What a comfort they were during the cool evening that followed a sweltering summer's day! What a hazard they were in winter with their coating of ice and snow!

There were a half-dozen working men waiting for the tram at the stop. They were grouped together and were talking and laughing. The brisk morning air kept them shuffling their feet and moving their bodies, especially their arms. One man who appeared to be in his thirties lit a cigarette, took a puff, and threw the burning match into the street.

"A damn good crew on our gang this year, eh Riley?", said the man with some composure. "Yep, ain't had the beat of its since these last twelve years that I have been there," chirped a chubby little man who was nicknamed Riley because of his ruddish complexion and an ounce of humour. The men laughed.

Dawn was breaking into daylight. The streetlights seemed feeble and insignificant as dying torches, pale and wavering in their final hour of endurance, when the sun performs its wonders and exalts this city of dwellings into a beauty equal to that of a Byzantine court.

One of the men who was better dressed and groomed than the others stood reading the morning paper. Another, who was tall and rather thin, with a weather-beaten face and wearing a jacket as weather-beaten over long loose coveralls, shook his fist in the air and exclaimed: "Somebody's got to do something about this tram service. It's getting worse every month." All the men nodded in assent. Silence reigned supreme for a while as the men saw Father O'Malley approaching. He was coming from the Rectory and going to say Mass at the Sisters' chapel. Father O'Malley, a tough, lovable Irishman, was held in high esteem by his parishioners.

"Good morning, Father," chorused the men, doffing their hats, those who had hats, and the rest acknowledged by nodding their heads. "Good morning, men," said Father O'Malley smiling, "and may God bless you today." The men looked on with reverence until the last ripple of his cassock faded around the corner.

A taxi pulled up to the curb on the other side of the street. Two women got out. They were rather well dressed. The fresh air seemed to surprise them. They stopped, took their compacts out of their purses and began a reconstruct-

ing job. One of them lit a cigarette, inhaled and exhaled a couple of times and then threw it into the gutter. The men looked at them, then turned their heads away. The two women went staggering arm in arm up the street and then out of sight.

A few people were now to be seen hustling up and down the street. The milkman came, darting from door to door, leaving the full milk bottles and carrying the empties back to the wagon, whistling all the while and then he too was out of sight.

A pretty girl came walking rather haughtily up the other side of the avenue on her way to a busy day in an up-town office. The youngest of the men waiting for the tram whistled at her and the pretty girl indignantly tossed her head in the air and with a quickened pace disappeared around the corner. The men chuckled.

A young tot appeared as if from nowhere and approached one of the men in the tram-line. "Newspaper, mister?" The man threw him a dime. "Thank you mister, anyone else? Aw you! you want a paper mister?" another of the group threw a dime and was promptly given a newspaper. The young tot disappeared as strangely as he had come.

Just then the streetcar came rumbling around the corner. A figure could be seen scrambling up the far end of the street with a lunch-box dangling from one arm and a coat fluttering from the other. A few people got off. At last we were ready to go again. Our latest arrival barely got in, but not quite, for the coat he was carrying got caught in the door. The irritated conductor stopped the tram and loosened the coat all the while moaning to himself in tones that told of the horrors of Hades.

Our young friend donned his coat, adjusted his bow-tie and swallowed the last bite of his breakfast. The well-dressed man with the paper was just finishing the sports section and was rather indisposed to talk since his favorite team had gone two weeks without winning a game. So he preferred to remain silent and brood over it, not knowing whom to blame for such a misfortune. "Hi ya, Bill!" exclaimed our latest arrival, having regained his composure, slapping the well-dressed man with the paper on the shoulder. "Just made it this morning. Darn fine party last night, mighty fine."

Bill carefully folded the paper, put it in his pocket and turned his gaze out the window.

"What's the matter, Bill?" asked his friend, "life's not that serious, is it?"

I could not help but laugh to myself. The diversity of life is strange but it is wonderful. I could not refrain from pondering over the words of Oliver Wendell Holmes: "Life is a great bundle of little things; human behavior is made and not born."

—RALPH GAUDET '55

ABANDON THE RED AND WHITE !!

Abandon the RED AND WHITE ???

If you are a student and a loyal Saint, your thermo-controls are already crying danger and you will soon be at the point where you can spit the fires of vengeance at all and sundry tainted with the smear of even association with such a degrading thought. If you are still reading this (because students are not supposed to read editorials), and have finished your vituperation and remonstrating, then get this: the chances are ten to one that you have not this year yet done a thing to really help the RED AND WHITE. Certainly, both tongue—and fist-swinging support are necessary (for they give you a chance to prove your "College spirit"), but let's put an idea on that tongue and a pen in that fist, and boy will you feel silly! Now too that we have disclosed the ingredients of the RED AND WHITE we bet you dropped through the small end of your megaphone.

Getting back to the suggestion,—it is made in all seriousness. The RED AND WHITE is supposed to be a student effort, and that means all students who have the ability. As it is now, we can come to two conclusions: either a very few have the ability or the vast majority are not even trying. In either case, why painfully extract substance from a suffering few in order to sustain something which amounts to not much more than a 45-year-old tradition? Yes, the RED AND WHITE has struggled through 45 years of semi-ardidity, but are we coming to an oasis?