

AN ETERNAL CITY OF LIFE AND LOVE

This summer I visited Paris. Perhaps saying that it's an eternal city of life and love would seem extravagant to anyone who has never been there, but in my opinion it is in no way an extravagant statement. People in love realize for the first time that life to them is eternal. The atmosphere of Paris makes you fall in love with life, and there you are, suspended in an eternal city.

Our plane from Bordeaux landed at the Air France terminal shortly before five-thirty. After thanking our smiling stewardess for the information she had given us on Paris, the three of us piled into one of the taxis lined outside the airway. It was a small grey Renault, hardly bigger than a baby carriage. Somehow the three of us squeezed in and then tried to explain to our driver where we wanted to go. He was quite tall for a Frenchman, slightly over six feet and he must have weighed well over two hundred pounds. After a few vain attempts at a French sentence, we finally made him recognize our pronunciation of the Champs Elysees, and he roared off, grinding gears and gabbling French a mile a minute. We flew towards the city at a speed that seemed well over sixty miles an hour. Bird, who was sitting in the front seat, whispered back, "She is registering seventy!" Just then the driver turned around and said to Don and me, seated in the back, the only words he knew in English, "It's verree beautiful, eh." Suddenly he snapped forward, twisted the steering wheel sharply and slammed on the brakes, missing a huge black Rolls Royce by mere inches. We still didn't slow down. He stepped on the accelerator, whipped around the Rolls and tore off, both arms gesturing wildly and laughing his fool head off. We found out later that nearly all speedometers on French cars register in kilometers, about six-tenths of a mile.

At six o'clock the three of us were standing on the Champs Elysees, no more than two hundred yards from the imposing Arc of Triumph. None of us said a word for about five minutes. Here we were in Paris, on the Champs Elysees,—hard to believe at first. We walked slowly to one of the quaint sidewalk cafes and sat down. Each passing minute there seemed to relax us more and more, as we drank in an atmosphere altogether foreign to anything experienced before. We sat there sipping beer until dusk. As the softly warm evening descended, gleaming stars merged into the blue velvet overhead. We had an evening in Paris before us.

We had all decided beforehand that we would spend the entire night and early morning visiting the cabarets and night-clubs and we would include either the Moulin Rouge or the Folies Bergere, both, to us, associated with Paris as much as the lofty Eiffel Tower, or the beautiful Seine.

Shortly after eight we emerged from the Metro or subway on to the Place Pigulle. Brilliant multi-colored lights greeted us. This was it. Flashing signs tore our gaze from one "night spot" to another. Which would we visit first? All advertised the best

champagne, the best floor show and the most beautiful women. Finally a young Englishman, seeing we were a little bewildered, stopped and spoke to us, telling us they were all in essence the same. After giving us a few other pointers on what to do and what not to do once inside the cabaret, he left with a friendly "Cheerio" and the three of us entered "Les Naturalistes".

I could almost write a book about the rest of the night. About the bottles of champagne, sunk in silvered pails of ice, and costing twenty dollars each; about the beautiful dancing girls and their complicated routines; and about the music one minute soft and romantic, the next stirring and exotic. Our last stop was the Moulin Rouge with its huge red windmill overhead, outlined in neon. As we entered, strains of the Moulin Rouge theme filled the air. I thought back a year or so and the haunting words filled my mind—"Whenever we kiss I worry and wonder—" Tender memories of someone thousands of miles away blotted out everything else for what seemed ages. And then we were inside. There were the can-can girls in their frilly many-hued costumes, legs flailing and skirts flying. We saw there some paintings by Toulouse-Lautree who immortalised the Moulin Rouge with his paint brush. And then it was over. The three of us were lying on our beds in the hotel, not saying anything, just puffing slowly on our cigarettes.

"I'll never forget to-night," Don said. That started it. We had arrived in our room shortly after four and we were still talking about our first night in Paris at five-thirty.

I awoke the next morning with a start, to see a bleary-eyed Don leaning over my bed, shaking me with frantic energy. When he saw I was awake he didn't say a word, just turned around and gave Bird the same treatment. I tried to focus my eyes on my watch, but something wouldn't stay still, either my head or my arm. Finally I saw that it was nine-thirty. When I tried to roll over to a more comfortable position, I landed on the floor with a solid thump.

"Must get up" I thought wearily. Half crawling, half staggering, I navigated my way to the bathroom and got my head under the cold water tap. Bird followed suit. Thirty minutes later the three of us were on the way to 127 Champs Elysees. The hotel clerk told us that there was a bureau at that address, which sponsored tours of the city.

The tour didn't leave until eleven-thirty, so we bought our tickets and decided to do a little shopping in the meanwhile. It was a beautiful morning, clear and fresh, sparkling in the sunlight. I can't do justice to a description of the Champs, but believe me it was beautiful.

Our tour finished at about five that evening. In those six odd hours we saw nearly everything at the mention of which Paris at once flashes into the mind's eye. To the Place de la Concorde, through the flowering Jardin de Tuileries, to the Louvre, housing Venus de Milo, smiling Mona Lisa and other masterpieces of art,

beloved to all those who appreciate the beauty of finer things. Across the Pont du Carrousel and ancient Pont Neuf to the beautiful and inspiring church of Notre Dame, perched on the Ile de la Cite and embraced by a small narrow arm of the quietly flowing Seine. We passed the Place Vendome, with its bronze column erected by Napoleon, and then up the Rue de la Paix, dear to the hearts of fashionable women the world over. Then we were on Montmartre; all of Paris lay spread before us. On our far left we could see the Eiffel Tower, and Arc of Triumph. In back of us was the gleaming, ivory whiteness of the Basilica of the Sacre-Coeur, resembling somewhat India's Taj Mahal. We strolled around Montmartre's narrow cobbled streets for a short while, stopping at an art shop to buy a couple of small paintings and then we were off again, through the steeply sloping streets, the haunts of some famous Parisian artists slipping further behind us. So it continued until five when we left our touring coach at the Place de l' Opera and headed for the Eiffel Tower.

The tower reaches upward for slightly less than one thousand feet. From its gusty peak we saw a miniature Paris below, with the silver ribbon of the Seine winding at our feet.

In a very small way, that is how I saw an eternal city, perhaps not everlasting in a material sense, but as long as there are people who love love and life, and that will be until man draws his last breath, there will always be a Paris—if only in memory. Its atmosphere of romance will be perpetuated in the hearts of lovers the world over, and in the hearts of those who forever seek beauty.

—A. T. S. '59—

CITY-CIDE

As Maud approached the streetcar stop, she attracted many a stare. Perhaps it was because of the way she strode along in her heavy-soled shoes, with her arms pumping vigorously. Or perhaps it was because she stopped every so often to pat one or another of her four-footed followers—animated bundles of dirty, mangy-looking fur and bones.

While Maud was patting yet another reasonable facsimile of man's best friend, she noticed the streetcar rapidly approaching the stop, and broke into a run. Such was her momentum that when she reached the stop, she was just in time to give the last passenger, a fastidious, very dignified gentleman, a little unexpected assistance as he entered the car.

"Oh, 'scuse me, Mister! Are yuh hurt bad?" she puffed, yanking him to his feet, and swatting dust from his formerly spotless grey suit. "Honest Mister, I just couldn't git meself stopped in

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