

CELLOPHANE HEAVENS

ADVENTURES ON A VELOCIPEDE

I have been out traveling on my tricycle again - again? this is probably the very first time, come to think of it. Anyway, after a big breakfast consisting of a bowl of Instant Ralston, two glasses of chocolate milk, and an egg (once over lightly, but mother allowed the yellow to get too thick, so I pushed it off on the floor), I managed to pedal away at 9:23 a.m., leaving behind my G. A. Henty collection and a big green bullfrog named Alcibiades. We had had a rainstorm only two months before, but now the weather was OK, if you like the kind of weather that is OK.

Pedaling down Burlington avenue was very interesting. There were a few palm trees along the street. Also some phone poles and a bunch of mailboxes on the street corners. Some were red and blue and some a dull green. The sidewalk was concrete and had cracks in it. I turned right when I reached Sixth and followed the street till I reached Bonnie Brae.

There were some buildings and houses and even some stores along the way. Some had people in them. Some didn't. Or at least I couldn't see any evidence of people in them as I passed. I was sitting pretty low and the windows were pretty high and I felt like an ant crawling along and I hoped nobody would

step on me. Hardly anybody looked at me except for a few people.

When I reached Sixth and Bonnie Brae the temperature was 66.2° , or .3 of a degree warmer than it was when I left home. I got off my trike and bought a bag of potato chips (10¢) at the Bonnie Brae Liquor House. They were salty.

I headed south on Bonnie Brae and started to coast down the hill. I have finally found the best way to go down hill on a tricycle - at least for me. I find it's best to take a death grip on the handlebars and lift your feet off the pedals. Soon the empty pedals start to churn like crazy and you go real fast. Sometimes you fall off and skin your knees, but this time I was lucky. I didn't skin my knees.

Pretty soon I crossed Wilshire boulevard and then in rapid succession such interesting streets as Seventh and Eighth and Ninth. Olympic boulevard was a fascinating street. There were cars whizzing along it, as well as a big red truck that said "Hi-Precision Swiss Screw Machine Products, 7209 Santa Monica" on the side. I looked at this big red truck till it went out of sight. It made my tricycle look small.

At last I reached Pico boulevard. Pico was its usual self. Need I say More? (Utopia!) Things along Pico were quite blah. I saw a lot of laundry and Chevron gas stations and lamp posts as I trundled along in the gutter looking for nickels. The temperature was now 66.3° . There wasn't any Thrifty drugstore in

sight and I felt like a disembodied spirit passing through a world out of space and time on my tricycle with red wheels.

The sun kept rising higher in the sky till I thought it couldn't get much higher. I was right. Soon it started to get lower. I sat on the plastic seat of my tricycle and looked at the sun. I was the only hardy soul in sight who was sitting on his tricycle staring at the sun. The temperature was still 66.3°. There was a wind, but not much. Just enough.

About 3:19 p.m. I passed Hoover and Pico and noticed some interesting looking objects in the distance, but I didn't stop to look at them. I just pedaled on, wishing I was born 20 years ago when I could have ridden on one of those magnificent Marx Mark DCCC Velocipedes of the Barney Oldfield series. Those were wonderful trikes, especially the ones that had a squeeze horn that made a sound like a cat breaking wind. At Pico and Vermont I splurged on another bag of potato chips. They still cost 10¢ and still tasted salty. Just then the traffic signal turned amber and then red. It was interesting.

Heading toward Western I passed a dog making a steady unhurried assault on his eternal enemy, the fire hydrant. It made my petty troubles seem pretty unimportant, that is, petty. I was glad I was not a dog, and especially not a fire hydrant, but just a tad spinning along in the Pico gutters, even though I was finding amazingly few \$5 bills.

At 4:54 p.m., at the corner of Pico and Normandie, I was met by an old woman with yellow teeth and grey hair and we talked and she bought me a bottle of orange pop and we talked. She asked me what my name was, and she was requested not to tell a soul. She got revenge - for the first time I got a ride in a squad car, as a lost boy. A curious crowd soon gathered and we talked and drank orange pop and talked and it was just like Sunday school, only it was Tuesday. The temperature was 67.5°.

You know, it made me feel like a god, with all those people gathered around me. Or maybe a god isn't good sense. I guess I mean I felt goddam stupid.

The squad car drove me back to Vermont, then up Vermont past San Marino, Francis, Leeward, Wilshire, and other streets. The temperature at Wilshire was 65.3°. We drove along Sixth, passing MacArthur park, and turned up Burlington. I was back.

I grabbed an apple, a piece of Swiss cheese, and two saltine crackers, glanced at my mother, who was snoozing on the sofa with her mouth open, and headed out again on my tricycle.

I pedaled down Burlington to Sixth, turned right to Bonnie Brae, and - oh, hell, why should I tell you about it? It really isn't that important anyway.

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