

Experiences of the University Waiter

Representative Waiter Talks of His Career in Lincoln Restaurants

"The student who undertakes to work his way through college," said a self-supporting University man, "takes upon himself a task that will try him to the utmost. Unless a person has some avocation mastered of such a nature as to cause his services to be in demand, it is almost hopeless for him to attempt working his way through. Some students, however, are able to eliminate a large portion from their expense by waiting, and to this class I belong. While my duties have often been arduous, I confess that I have not found the experience a distasteful one. In many ways I have enjoyed myself, but be that as it may, I have accumulated a fund of experience that will always prove valuable, enabling me to face the world with a knowledge of the ways of men that could not be acquired in any other way.

"My experience as a waiter dates back to the time when I first came to the University, fresh from the farm, with a large amount of confidence in my ability to become conspicuous and a small amount of coin to supply my needs. Upon the advice of a friend I visited the Y. M. C. A. room and after a short consultation with the officer in charge I bore away with me a couple of cards containing a request for waiters. The first place I visited suited me sufficiently and after going through a system of arrangements, I found myself a full-fledged waiter.

"The first day I was nervous and had some racking experiences. My control over the coffee-pot was by no means absolute, and I am sure that I poured more of the liquid on my fingers than in the cups. My head was in a whirl and things were hard to find, but somehow I blundered along and when the dinner hour was over I felt relieved, though not comfortable; for it seemed as if I had acted in a dream, without retaining a consciousness of hardly anything that had passed.

"I remember, though, when I took my first order. A man with big bushy whiskers and a morose expression on his countenance came in, and it was my duty to wait on him. Trembling in every limb and impelled by a consciousness that I just had to do it, I ambled out and enumerated the list of meats in a high pitched strident tone that I think must have startled him; for as soon as I had finished he looked up in a dazed fashion and said: 'What?'

Then I had to repeat the operation, striving to keep the words from choking in my throat, and when he finally gave his order, after long deliberation, I hustled away with a zeal that must have made him think I was very industrious. Loading my tray I sallied out again with the same calm self-possession as previously. To keep the tray in exact balance was something I could not do, momentarily expecting the cup of coffee to slide down the incline and fall overboard to death and destruction, but it stayed and I reached the distributing shelf in safety. Then I delivered the goods. As I laid down each dish the man eyed it critically, and my hands trembled with fright under the effect of his gaze. I feared greatly lest he should find some fault, and I was ready to jump at the sound of his voice. But he held his peace and I withdrew into the inner shrine and waited for a new arrival.

"After a few days I became accustomed to the work and the taking orders became a matter of course, causing me no concern whatever. I no longer feared lest some one would take offense at my serving and call me down—a thing that I had anticipated and dreaded greatly. I even felt at ease, lounging around when idle and watching the diners at work. Over some of the more timid and shy customers I actually began to feel a sense of superiority and it was with a great show of condescension that I ministered to their wants.

"As I began to feel more at home in the kitchen, my true personality asserted itself. I had formed the acquaintance of a brilliantly witless young blade by the name of Marks, who was

forever devising some mischief. Our boss had many virtues, but among them could not be numbered strict abstinence from intoxicating liquors. His wife, however, kept a strict watch on him and he seldom found opportunity to indulge himself. Marks was aware of his weakness and arranged a plan, diabolically to say the least. He hunted up a jug and entrusting it to 'Sharkey,' the roustabout of the place, sent the youth forth in the dusk of the evening to get it filled. When 'Sharkey' returned with his precious burden, we stowed it away and then Marks went into the dining room and gave the old man the tip. Soon he appeared, cheerfully rubbing his hands and winking knowingly at us. Prancing around in the brightest glee, he exclaimed:

"Bring her out, boys. Bring her out! The colored troops fought bravely. Bring her out, boys!"

"Well, we 'brought her out.' Settling himself into a chair, with his feet extended as far as they could reach, he sat—the picture of ease and content—hugging that jug to his bosom. Raising it to the proper height and tipping it to the proper level he began the downpour. He became so absorbed that he did not notice me as I slipped out of the room. I located the old lady at once and acquainted her with her husband's depravity. She got up and sallied out to the kitchen in a hurry, just in time to see the prettiest sight imaginable. There was the old fool, sitting there, quaffing deep, well relished draughts; pausing once in a while without raising his eyes to roll forth a prolonged and contented 'Ah! Ah! Ah!' and then falling to work again. The old lady got busy and boxed his ear so hard that he almost tumbled sideways. I never saw anyone look so cheap and witless as he did. Marks and I laughed so hard it hurt us, and when we recovered the old lady had piloted her dissipated husband out of harm's way and the jug lay a pile of debris on the floor.

"I became acquainted with a number of regular customers and with some as my intimacy with them waxed stronger, I felt free to exchange remarks. I remember particularly a lawyer who used to stray in at odd intervals. He was a good-natured, volatile fellow, with very little learning and a limited knowledge of the law. Every time he came he would dig his thumbs into his vest pocket and with a great air of proprietorship address me:

"Willie," he would say, "come here and give an account of yourself. Give me a full synopsis of your doings, misdoings and undoings since I saw you last. Tell them all to me, Willie; just as you would to your father, and I'll see if I can't give you a little beneficial advice."

"I grew to like him and enjoy his drollery, but finally he ceased to come. I presume he found practice dull and had to change his quarters. It's a pity that such a good fellow as he had to go unprovided for when plenty of less deserving people live in comfort.

"A romance sprouted, budded and finally blossomed and came to fruit in our kitchen. Nora, the cook, had been receiving attentions from a young countryman of a rather dispassionate nature, and as the courtship progressed she experienced a severe hemorrhage of the heart. But trouble grew up between them and marred the course of their happiness. One evening matters came to a crisis and the scene I happened in upon was a stormy one to say the least. Nora was seated at the table crying violently and her lover stood in the middle of the floor in a wildly picturesque attitude, suggestive of both noble dignity and utter nonsense.

"Go out o' me sight, Jawny," wailed Nora, "and don't let me ever see soight of ye agin."

"The young man braced himself up with a nobleness of mein and with a quavering, tragic voice exclaimed:

"O, Nora, you may depise me, but you'll live to regret it. Remember, Nora—this in a hollow, tragic tone—that I'll not always be poor Johnny McGuire. Some day you will be glad to know poor Johnny McGuire."

"The second year I worked at another place far more aristocratic. While I have no regrets to express over this place, yet I missed the democracy and good fellowship that characterized my

situation the first year. Everything was on the hurry-up scale and a fellow was liable to get bounced for the smallest negligence. One poor fellow named Robbins I remember in particular, who suffered through a sad mistake. A customer had ordered corn-meal, but by mistake Robbins brought him mashed potatoes. The man being hungry and absent-minded at the same time, poured out a generous supply of milk and sugar on his potatoes and raked in a generous mouthful. Whew! What a sputtering he did make! Everyone in the place turned to look and all was consternation. But Robbins was equal to the emergency. He picked up the gravy dish and drowned the potatoes, milk and sugar, and with a 'you needn't thank me' air, stood triumphantly by. Poor Robbins! He was born to misery, and he walked around in search of another job all that afternoon.

"I encountered many experiences, both serious and amusing, but these were of such a diversified character that now they have become confused in my mind and I cannot recall any of them. I grew to like my new place, however, and formed some close friendships. And now I have started on my third year's work and I have no misgivings as to what the future holds in store for me. I know that I will encounter some hard knocks, but these come in every walk of life, and I consider myself as well off as most of the fellows that don't have to work."

Unions Challenged by Doane.

The secretary of the Union Debating club has received a communication from Doane asking that the date for the annual debate be fixed and the question chosen. The debate will undoubtedly be held in Crete this year. This joint debate is an annual affair and has always been an enjoyable one. Last year it was held in Lincoln. Every one reported a splendid time. The question discussed was, "Resolved, That trusts are inimical to industry." The Union team consisting of Messrs. J. M. Paul, C. W. Melick and I. C. Baldwin, had the affirmative. There were no judges but unbiased spectators and even the Doane team itself acknowledged themselves worsted.

The debating club will take action upon the challenge at the regular meeting this evening.

A Student Opinion.

To those who love the campus as they should and who like to see it kept perfectly beautiful the path that is being worn from the library diagonally across to the Armory is an eyesore and a thing to be decried. If this had been meant for a walk in all probability one would have been placed there ere this. Of course, an iron railing can be placed along the walk a silent and ugly warning to keep out, but do we need such a warning? It takes just 22 seconds by the clock to walk around and surely this time can not be more profitably spent than in helping to keep the campus beautiful.

A campus honeycombed with paths and by-paths where grass does not grow nor ever will grow is certainly not conducive to anything aesthetic.

A STUDENT.

For the first time in the history of the University instruction is given in the metallurgy of the precious metals.

The electrical engineering department was the recipient Wednesday of a photometer from Philadelphia.

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