College Girls Earn Their Way In The Rockies

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Fortune favored me in permitting me to be an ear witness to the reminiscences of this alumnus, to-wit, George F. Frazier, the class of '84, now a banker at Anamosa, Iowa.

"Yes," said Mr. Frazier, "I came all the way from Nevada, Iowa, to enroll as a student at Iowa State College.

And as I smiled, "Well, I thought it was a long way and I know my family and I considered it too far to go home any during the year. I started out with twenty dollars."  

"Twenty dollars" I exclaimed, "Why, I couldn't pay a month's board with that."  

Mr. Frazier smiled. "Do you know what paid for my board per month?" I asked. "Two dollars and fifteen cents! In addition, we paid fifty cents a year, the year around, for light and heat. My room rent per month was not over one dollar and as I remember not that much. Any work I did for the hotel, cafes and tea rooms in Colorado."

Mr. Frazier continued: "It is estimated that by working in the hotels, where table d'hotel (a set meal) and la carte (meal according to menu) varieties of service are found. The girls who work on tables have an equal number of chairs assigned, so that the work is evenly divided and they know for which tables they are responsible. All side work, such as filling sugar bowis and salt and pepper shakers, replacing soiled table linen and setting the tables, is done after each meal so that the dining room is in order for the next meal. All waitresses work under the head waitress, who sees that guests and sees that they have prompt attention.

Waitresses must learn to handle large trays, remember individual orders and serve in the most correct and efficient manner. In most hotels and cafes boys carry the heavy trays of dirty dishes to the kitchen. Cooperation between the employees and the management is necessary for a smooth running establishment, and any one other than officials who tries to dominate over the others is met with much favor. In the kitchen the girls stand in line to receive their order from the chef over the steam table so that they are served in the order they enter the kitchen.

Salad girls have charge of planning and making the salads and mayonnaise and must keep the cost within a minimum. The amount of time spent in work depends on the place and season—usually there is time off between meals for recreation and rest. Hikes, steak frys in the mountains, trips by horseback and auto, spreads when mother sends a cake from home and other good times all help to make the experience a most enjoyable and memorable one.

It is often a test of patience to serve bad-natured people and the best of dispositions is ruffled at times by thoughtless guests, but the girls are urged to treat everyone with courtesy and overlook unjust criticisms. It is difficult to please the ever changing demands of the public for food and service, but college trained women have solved the problem by creating an atmosphere of refinement in the dining room, which brings respect for the persons there. A word of appreciation or encouragement from guests means a great deal to the girl who serves them and costs so little.

Suitable living quarters are provided for the girls, with an older woman who acts as chapron. Rules similar to those in college must be enforced so that every one is plenty of rest. There are a great many things that might be said about the valuable experience gained from such an enterprise, but in my opinion that all the work is hard, every girl would return to Colorado and work her way again if she could. The friendships, valuable lesson and good times will never be forgotten.