

When a customer treats me bad I go away from her and fix the stock. Just try it next time. Mercy, how fast your bang is growing; I'll have to trim it again."

I saw a girl pay 3 cents for a cup of tea, pour out a saucerful for herself and give the rest to her shabby chum who wasn't feeling well. Ever so many gave a bite of pie or tart to a friend who had no desert, and a slim girl named Mary, in the fringe-stock, spent her entire noon with a friend sewing the gathers in a skirt that had been caught in the elevator latch. The girl with the injured gown stood up and fed her benefactor mouthfuls of bread and meat and raisins between the stitches. When the rent was mended the girls wiped their face and hands in their lunch-papers, because there was not time to go down to the basement just then, although there is no restriction to their leaving stock any time during the day.

I had a dinner which an income of \$5 or less per week would doubtless have made a real banquet. It was spread on a leather-covered table and seasoned with pepper and Worcester sauce, vinegar, etc. The spoon was tin and the bowl almost as shallow as the handle, and the parting between the two prongs of my fork was less than an inch long. I had a black, wood-handled knife with either edge of which I found it impossible to divorce my roast veal. A lithe little colored girl, as straight as a reed, served me with cucumbers, cold-slaw, mashed potatoes, green peas, melons and coffee, but the best to my liking was a dish of nice bread and butter. The colored woman who kept the kitchen told me she charged 20 cents for dinner, but not more than 10 clerks bought it. They couldn't afford to pay that much and she couldn't afford to sell it for less. Nearly all the hands brought their own lunches, and she served them with tea, coffee, milk or lemonade for 3 cents.

"No, I don't pay anything for the kitchen. Mr. P. lets me have it rent free, just to help his clerks to be comfortable. He's a right good boss."

A girl whom I interviewed on the subject said she liked the dinner well enough, but would rather take a walk at noon. "I often bring my lunch and eat it and then go out on State street."

"Where?"

"Well, I'll tell you, but you musn't think I'm crazy, because I ain't. Sometimes when I want anything I go to other stores and make the clerks wait on me. If I have any money and see what I like I take it, but if I havn't I say it won't do. Then I go to another shop and look for something else, and I keep on shopping for nothing till the time is up."

"What for? To get rested? We havn't any seats in stock. There are benches up in the lunch-room, but it's no change to get up there. Anyhow, there's no place downtown here where girls can go unless it's up to the public library, and then all the seats are full. I'd go to the park front if it wasn't so far, but with that walk and only forty-five minutes, there's not much time to rest. Me and another girl used to go into the restaurants that were crowded and sit at the table. Often the waiters were so busy they'd never come near us till it was time to go. If they did hand us a bill of fare we'd pretend to be looking for something and he'd tell us to select what we wanted and go to wait on some other customer. Then we'd leave.

"Now we have a good scheme, but you musn't give it away. When we eat our lunch we go over to Field's or Gossage's and wash in the customers' room. It's awfully nice there, for they have white soap and clean towels and mirrors all along the walls. They don't know but we're customers, 'cause we price some goods first. We have towels here three times a day, but there's so many girls to dry on them that if you don't get down just as they're put up they are as wet as water.

"How much do I get? Oh, I'll not tell."

"One dollar a day?"

"Not much."