

Self Service

By W. E. Hill

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The counter. The busy hour around 12:30, showing what the food on exhibition has to look at during the noon rush.



The checker. Every tray full of food, from the grandest to the humblest, has to pass under the watchful eye of Madge, the checker. Madge is a clever girl and seldom, if ever, makes a mistake in the sum total against the house.



Eddie works around the Ideal cafeteria, his job being to collect the dirty dishes as soon as a customer seems to be tired of them. More often than not Eddie will remove a plate of food before a customer has finished, and this causes no end of backbiting and vituperation.



The coffee girl. Blanche works in the Red Bird cafeteria, and, it being a pretty swell place, all the lady workers have red birds on their caps and aprons. Colored birds are very lucky for most people, but somehow or other Blanche has had perfectly terrible luck. The very day she appeared wearing the red bird insignia she came down with ringworm on her neck, and that same evening her young man made the remark that Blanche had better forget about wanting the fox fur for Christmas, seeing it was a hard year, and anyway a good warm sweater was healthier. You can't blame the girl for being superstitious about red birds after that!



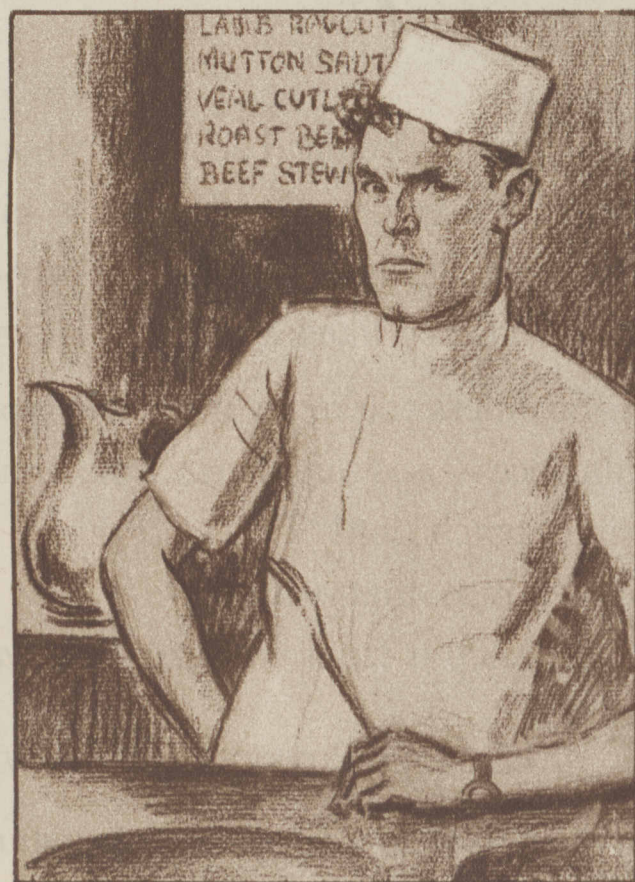
Just a lady luncher from a nearby office, pausing before the counter where they group the desserts for inspection. She's at a terrible impasse, being quite unable to choose between lemon meringue pie with butterscotch frosting and strawberry tartlet with whipped cream filling.



Shopper's lunch. Mrs. Alvin McKee; her sister, Mrs. Doolittle, and the latter's charming daughter, Patrice Doolittle, are partaking of a simple lunch in the bargain basement of a big department store, and Mrs. McKee is standing treat. Patrice is anemic and this is her day for eating nothing but liver, but she is going to break over this once.



A person unused to eating in cafeterias can always be spotted by the huge mounds of food on his tray. The novice seldom if ever knows where to stop, and garners enough fodder for a moderate sized family.



Behind the stews and the hash stands Morris, dressed up like a swell French chef, which, of course, he really isn't, ready at the drop of a hat to capture a floating carrot or morsel of mutton for the customer.