

Philadelphia College of Pharmacy

We were still suffering financial difficulties that followed in the wake of the Cleveland panic. Wages were low, the price of commodities the same but despite these conditions there was no actual suffering. My wages had reached the magnificent sum of \$2.50 a week. I started planning for college. For nearly two years I had been a diligent reader of the *Druggist's Circular* and of *Merck's Index*. These magazines then devoted themselves chiefly to the scientific phases of pharmacy and chemistry and from time to time commented on the achievements of several schools of pharmacy. They also carried the advertisements of these schools. Gleaning what I could from these sources I had determined that I would endeavor to go to the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy. It was the oldest school of its kind in North America, its faculty was considered the best of all American schools and best of all its tuition charges were no higher than other schools. Its curriculum was so arranged that each pupil would have time to work and further that it was customary in Philadelphia for drugstores to employ two students who could alternate their hours of employment. So I decided that I would go to Philadelphia. I told the doctor about my plans and why I had chosen Philadelphia. He thought that it was practicable and in a burst of generosity told me to notify him when I got there, what book I needed and the cost and he would send me the money.

For several months I had been buying clothes. I had bought an overcoat; secondhand, for \$10, dollar down and a dollar a week, and it was a beauty—dark navy blue beaver cloth, lined

inside with wool, and a velvet collar. So good was it that it lasted me for the next ten years and was only discarded because I had outgrown it. My supply of woolen underwear was ample. I also had some woolen socks. These I felt would protect me against the extreme cold of the North. My other belongings I thought sufficient for my needs. I had saved up about \$6 in cash.

So I spoke with Father and told him what I had planned and asked if he could help me. A look of sorrow came over his face, as he told me that he could not promise to give me aid. And then he told me of the meager wages he earned and how all of it was needed to support the home. I told him that I expected to work and knew that I could earn my support at least and perhaps some towards my tuition, at least what was needed after my first year. I also told him that I knew that I could get a job to work my way there on the Clyde steamship line and that I believed that Uncle [Allen] in Philadelphia would let me live with him until I got settled. My arguments won his consent and then he told me that he would see to borrow the money for my tuition and believed that he could get it.

I gave up my job at the drugstore on the last of July and then started to hound the Clyde Pier in hunt of an opportunity to work my way to New York. Very early one morning a few days later I met the Seminole (the old steamer, a new one by the same name has since taken her place) as she docked. I went aboard and found the steward and asked if he wanted a man to work his way to New York. He asked if I had ever worked on a boat, as he asked the question, I spied the Wisteria going out the harbor, so I replied that I had "waited" on the Wisteria, which in part was truth as on many occasions I had waited for the boat to dock so I could go to the galley to see Mr. Porcher, the cook and enjoy whatever he had in the form of leftovers. He asked if I had a black jacket. I said yes. Then he told me to be at the dock before 10 a.m. and he would take me. He also directed me to have my trunk there early.

It was 4 a.m. when the boat docked that morning. My interview with the steward ended at 5:30 a.m. From then until 7 I pondered about "my trunk" for I had never owned one. Neither had I ever given thought as how my belongings would travel. So I decided to buy a trunk. I stopped in at Mays General Store on King Street near Calhoun just as it opened and asked to see a small trunk. After much bargaining, I found one that suited me. Its price was \$2.50 and could be delivered immediately. It was a beautiful trunk, about forty inches long and twenty-four inches deep. It had a curved top, and black iron lock. It was covered iridescent metal in two tones of color, one beautiful blue, the other, a near tan. I rode on the wagon with the man who delivered it and immediately started my packing. Everybody joined in to help me. My overcoats went in first, the one I had bought on the dollar weekly plan, and a smaller older one that I had, my woolens, a copy of the Dispensatory that Dr. Harry Hancock, who worked at Dr. Baer's had given me, a bottle of Fellows Syrup of Hypophosphites that Mother insisted I take along with me and use whenever I caught a cold, for if taken in time it could prevent tuberculosis, and all of my other clothing, save what I wore, and the black coat, which I had told the steward I had when he asked about "black jacket." Now this black jacket was the coat to a suit I had. It was of black diagonal cloth, made in the semi-cut away style, then in vogue, with black braiding sewed on its edges. I was totally ignorant of the style of black jackets waiters wore and honestly believed that anything black would answer. The coat and an extra shirt I wrapped in a newspaper that I could take with me. I went around the corner on Mill Street and arranged with Mr. Thomas to take me and the trunk to the dock in time for the Seminole's sailing. After which we had breakfast and goodbyes.

On my way to the steamer, I felt some trepidation as I began to realize that the work I was to do was altogether new to me. I had never before been inside a public dining room and

the nearest to that was only when I had passed the Charleston Hotel dining room and looked in from the outside. However the die was cast and the Rubicon of Atlantic water from Charleston to New York awaited. When I put the trunk aboard I neglected to have it checked. That did not worry me then but later it did. I shook hands with Mr. Thomas and bade him farewell and then went aboard the boat. There was none of the red tape about boarding a boat then as we now find, so I found it possible to get aboard without any questioning and then proceeded to the steerage, where I decided I would stay until the ship reached the ocean, as I knew they would not turn back merely to put me off.

As the ship was crossing the bar, the purser came in and asked for my ticket. I told him that I did not have one as I was working my way to New York. He asked to know who hired me and why I was not at work. I told him that the steward had hired me and that I was waiting for him to send for me. He said, "You come along with me." I did. He found the steward and asked if he had hired me. The steward said yes, but this is the first I have seen of him since he asked for the job. He asked where was my jacket. I told him that it was in the steerage. He told me to get it. When I brought it, he gave me a white apron and a towel and told me to put them on. When I put the jacket on he looked and asked, "Is that a black jacket?" I said yes, it is black. He merely said "Hell," then he told me to go to the dining room and set up a table. As I said, I had never before seen a dining room and so it was a new world into which I entered. A number of waiters were there and were busy setting up their tables.

So I approached one of them and asked if he would show me how to do it and explained that I was only working my way North to go to school. Under his direction I got everything in good shape, the silver properly placed and the napkins in position. A few minutes later lunch was announced. The steward came in and took a station opposite me for as fate would have

it, the number of passengers on that particular trip was large, while the number of waiters aboard were inadequate to meet the passenger demand, so the steward had to perform the duties of a waiter. I had six people to serve. Soup was first on the menu. Three ordered oxtail and three ordered consommé. I took my tray and followed a waiter to the pantry and called for the soup. I got my six plates but for the help of me I could not distinguish oxtail from consommé. But that did not phase me and even though I brought my tray in by holding it front of me instead of above my head it did not cause noticeable comment. I asked each passenger what was his soup and gave him the first that came to hand. I doubt if any of them knew the difference between the soups. If they did none showed it. Then all six ordered different things, of which I could remember but one, a glass of iced tea. One of the waiters showed me. I filled a glass with it and started off, when one of them yelled "put the glass of iced tea on a saucer," then another said put ice in it and lastly one told me to put lemon in it. I spied the plate of sliced lemons and put in about six pieces at which another waiter cried, don't take all the lemon, one piece is enough. By then I was giddy but despite that I started off for the dining room with that lone glass of iced tea in the center of my tray. When I reached my table each of my diners asked, "Where is my order?" to which I replied by asking, "Did you order the iced tea?" Eventually I found the person who had ordered the iced tea but she instead of being thankful at receiving it, was angry because the rest of her order was not there. During the while I was seeking to find the iced tea diner, the steward had gotten himself as red as a beet with beckoning me. So I went to him, he took [me] outside and asked in no unmeaning terms "How the hell you told me you could wait?" I answered, "I could." He said, "Wait hell," and immediately demoted me to dish wiping.

Now dish wiping in the days before dishwashing machines and hot-air dryers was neither an art nor a science, it was just a