

Tips Versus Social Equality and Self-Respect

TIP and be glad!" says Mr. F. Hopkinson Smith.

Tip and be sorry, say I, at least so far as I myself am concerned, and in order to give a great, big, strong, healthy man 10 cents, go without the dish of ice cream or strawberries which I need to properly round out my humble 25-cent luncheon—or rather, instead of expending the 25 cents on the meal, make it 15 cents, say a plate of baked beans and a cup of coffee, saving the rest of the quarter for the waiter!

Oh, dear! Would anybody ever have suspected the genial creator of "Col. Carter of Cartersville" of harboring such un-American sentiments, to say nothing to having the temerity to give voice to them in last Sunday's TIMES?

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A number of years ago, when I was a freckled-faced, red-headed schoolgirl working my way through a Western college I remember that Mr. Hopkinson Smith appeared as an entertainer in our chapel and delighted us by giving a selection from one of his own stories. I had been in the kitchen washing dishes (which dishwashing constituted an "hour's work," which I did as part payment for my board) when the chapel bell rang to announce the hour for the entertainment to begin, and as I hurried through the hall I pulled off my apron as I went along and left it in a corner of a recitation room, to be resumed when Mr. Hopkinson Smith had finished entertaining us. Fancy my surprise and indignation if I had passed Mr. Hopkinson Smith while I was still wearing my apron, and he, out of the exuberance of his heart and "the joy of giving," had handed me a dime or a quarter, saying: "Here, poor girl, take this to help you along in your college course!" Would Mr. Hopkinson Smith have lived to air his views on tipping in the Sunday TIMES? I doubt me much, for, as I have said, I had red hair—and a temper to match.

Yes, I performed various and varied "menial" tasks in those days in the en-

deavor to prepare a self-supporting way before me. I cleaned the lamps and set the tables and peeled potatoes and actually did on numerous occasions "polish up the handle of the big front door" which opened into that hall of learning, and if I haven't become a ruler in the Queen's navee I have become a humble member of the same noble profession to which Mr. Hopkinson Smith belongs without having added to my means and detracted from my self-respect by the taking of tips from any would-be joyful givers who happened to visit that college.

And, speaking of college girls and tips, let me show, with Mr. Hopkinson Smith as my witness, the effect of tip receiving upon college girl waitresses. He tells of his visit as a lecturer to a Nebraska college town, where he was waited upon at table by a college student. It seems the girl was "spectacled, thin haired, and short necked," and as she handed buckwheat cakes to Mr. Hopkinson Smith it suddenly struck the lecturer that she was a student—whether because of her thin hair, spectacles, and short neck I do not know—and he said to the girl:

"Are you a student?"

"Yes, Sir," was her reply, and I can see her cringe and bow as she said it.

"And you are working your way through college by doing all the work here? Is there nobody else?"

"Nobody, Sir, nobody," she said, and away at this distance from Nebraska methinks I hear her hot tears fall on the buckwheat cake plate and see her itching palm stretched out for a dime—or was it a dollar?

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Mark the servility of the girl's attitude and her meek and lowly "Yes, Sirs" and "No, Sirs"! Why should a college student, baking buckwheat cakes in the interests of education, address Mr. Hopkinson Smith or any other man as a superior, say "Sir" to him, and accept his pity and his tips?

Why? I'll tell you why—because the man to whom she handed the cakes was her superior! She made him her superior

by kow-towing to him and accepting a tip. Why in the name of self-respecting and self-supporting womanhood should a college girl working her own way assume a tip-accepting attitude? What if she is tired with the work—perhaps overwork—that she is obliged to do for a time? I remember I myself was often tired with my lamp-cleaning and silver-polishing. Weariness of the flesh is a part of the game. Let me make a prophecy concerning the Nebraska girl who took that tip: Her neck will always be short, or appear short, for she will never be able to lift her head high in the true pride of self-supporting American womanhood. She will go through life saying "Yes, Sir," and "No, Sir," and if she ever comes to me applying for washing and ironing and scrubbing, I shall let her eat in the kitchen and give her one of my worn-out dresses as a "tip."

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"I love to tip; I always do it," says Mr. Hopkinson Smith. "When I estimate the expenses for a trip abroad, I add \$200 for tips—money just to give away. If a man can't afford to do that, I think he should stay at home, or be content to travel as a poor man should, under such circumstances as his income will justify."

Unlike Mr. Hopkinson Smith, I confess all unblushingly that I hate to tip—though I, too, always do it, because I have to, not being able to get decent service if I don't. But when I go abroad I just can't add \$200 for tips. Why, bless you, I often have only a hundred dollars more than that to cover all my expenses! "Then," says Mr. Hopkinson Smith, "travel as a poor man" or woman!

Shall I, then, because I cannot afford \$200 for tips, put up at a third-rate hotel and ruin my digestion, sleep on a hard bed, live in a dirty room?

As I have said, though I hate to tip I have to do it, and so I am often obliged to deny myself many things that I really need in order to give money to my in-

feriors. For, mind you, I, good American as I consider myself, do look down upon certain persons as my inferiors, and those persons are the ones who accept tips from me, and I expect and demand that they shall treat me as their superior. The waiter who takes my dime, the cabman in London who extracts an extra sixpence over the legal fare, the college girl who waits on me at a Summer resort and accepts a quarter of a dollar from me or my escort, is not my equal. From such persons I demand "Yes, Ma'ams" and a certain deference. Tips and servility go together. The man or woman who takes a tip immediately becomes servile in attitude—unless, as I have sometimes found it since my return to my native land, the tip I offer is considered too small. Then the tip breeds impudence and sometimes curses, which go no further than servility toward making me consider the tippee my equal.

But Mr. Hopkinson Smith is contradictory in some of his statements concerning tipping, just as he several times confounds small amounts of money paid out for extra services with tipping. In discussing tipping at hotels and restaurants, he says in one place: "Of course, it is all nonsense to say that you will not receive proper service, and will meet with discourtesy unless you give a tip. No first-class hotel will permit that for a moment." But then further on he says:

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"You can afford to do it, [i. e., tip.] Spend a little less on your meal. If you intended to eat a five-dollar dinner, take a dinner that costs \$4 and give the waiter \$1. To look at it from a purely selfish point of view, it will pay you. You will have a better repast, and your stay at table will be made more enjoyable for you in every way."

I should, by the way, just like to ask Mr. Hopkinson Smith if he would be willing to invite the waiter to whom he gives that dollar as a guest at a dinner party given in his own home? Does he

give him the dollar as from man to man, or as from superior to inferior?

As I have said, he confounds legitimate payment for extra service with tipping. When I pay a man 10 cents for carrying my satchel I do not consider I am tipping him. If in a hotel I ask a chambermaid to help me arrange my hair or button my dress down the back, I gladly pay her for the service, for I do not expect a hotel to provide me with a lady's maid. If the deck steward of a liner is continually carrying my pillows about for me, makes a special trip to my cabin to fetch my salts bottle, goes to the library for books, I consider that I owe him for the service. If the janitor of my flat puts an extra bolt on my door, varnishes my floor, moves my furniture from room to room, he ought to be paid for it. These things are payment for services rendered, not tips. But I pray you, if in crossing the Atlantic I have not once seen the steward or stewardess, is there any reason why I should on the last day call them to me, and give each a 10-shilling piece?

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"I love to give darkies 25 cents. I always do it," says Mr. Hopkinson Smith. So do I love to do it, though I don't always do it, not being able to afford it. But would Mr. Hopkinson Smith give Booker Washington 25 cents?

The practice of tipping is un-American, and though self-respecting Americans have to give tips in order to secure their rights, for which they have already paid, I contend that no self-respecting American can accept a tip, and if the college students who wait on table at the Summer resorts are in the habit of accepting tips, they are selling not only their self-respect, but are throwing away their glorious birthright as American citizens, and they certainly have no right to complain if they are "looked down upon" by the people upon whom they wait. How can a young college man accept a quarter of a dollar from the American girl upon whom he waits at table, and ex-

pect her to treat him as her equal, if she later meets him out in society? Is it reasonable for the college girl waitress, to accept 15 cents from a man guest at the hotel, and expect him to put her on an equal footing with his other women friends?

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On the other hand why should not the best bred girl in America be proud to become the wife of a man who has honestly and honorably worked his way through college, waited on table, blacked boots and dug ditches in order to pay expenses? And is not the girl who, herself a true gentlewoman, has waited on table, washed dishes, ironed clothes and scrubbed floors in order to earn money for her education, the highest representative of American womanhood, and should we not all be very proud indeed to have her at some time as the First Lady in the Land, dispensing hospitality at the White House? But can this future First Lady demean herself by accepting tips? Rather, is the college girl who accepts a tip likely to have within her the spirit that will assist her up the stepping stones to higher things?

If it be said that hotel proprietors pay such low wages that tip-taking is a necessity, it may be replied that college girls have plenty of opportunities to work at other things during the Summer where good wages are paid and tips are not offered. Thousands of homes need housemaids, nursemaids, cooks. The same may be said of girls who are not college girls, yet who are waitresses in restaurants. If they cannot get a decent wage without tips let them take to household service, comforting themselves with the knowledge that no one whose respect is worth having will think any the less of them for doing housework.

In the course of my career, since I left college I have never but once been offered a tip. I was, as society editor of a Baltimore paper, stopping at a Summer mountain resort getting news for my page. In the course of my report of the

social doings I had occasion to mention the beauty and popularity of two Philadelphia girls, who afterward told me how much they appreciated my compliments. When Saturday came their father, a rich, good-hearted Philadelphian, came to the hotel and one of the girls brought him over and introduced him to me. For a time I talked with him as I would have done to any other pleasant man, when suddenly he said, "Nice thing you said about my daughters!" and slipped a bill into my hand.

To this day I do not know the amount of the bill. It may have been a dollar or it may have been fifty dollars. I only know that I threw the crumpled thing at the man's feet and left him in astonishment on the hotel piazza. My blood boiled. I had been offered a tip! My paper paid me for my services. I was not working for this man or for his daughters. Wherefore payment from him?

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I will leave it to Mr. Hopkinson Smith to say whether my attitude was a reasonable one. Perhaps I needed money just as much as the Nebraska college girl. Indeed, at that very time I was trying to save money for a European trip, which I felt would be a part of the education I needed to fit me for progress in my literary career. I remember that at the time I was broken in health—though not in spirit! And I may have appeared to the rich Philadelphian as an overworked, worried, melancholy little thing, so he thought he would give me a tip, just as Hopkinson Smith thought he would give the Nebraska college girl a tip.

Was the Philadelphian justified in offering the tip, and was my attitude in refusing it a correct one? Will somebody please answer?
ELIZABETH BANKS.

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