

PREPARING A BANQUET in a BOX

The Amazing System by Which You Are Fed on The Fat of the Land While Traveling at Fifty Miles an Hour

By Ida L. Brooks

YOUR train goes rushing on, leaving mile upon mile of rail behind it; the land, as you fly past, hardly feels your presence, knows only your approach and your flight. You, as a traveler, and the system that operates your migrations have become the commonplace of the day, although the system is unrivaled in its numberless complexities. You push on from station to station breathlessly, yet you enjoy the utmost leisure. That is the aim of the system.

Never has there been so much traveling as today, never such speed, never such comfort. All you do is to pay the price, sit back and enjoy. It would not be easy to estimate how many minds have been, are still, intent upon your welfare, how many hands actually engaged in your service. While you dream or read, play cards, eat, smoke or write letters, you are being diligently, unceasingly taken care of.

It is the enforced leisure of the railway coach; perhaps you chafe at it; nevertheless, it is yours. Your ease, then, makes you critical. And your criticism, however unreasonable, is the impetus of improvement.

This has been nowhere more evident than in the dining car service. It has been consummating its evolution ever since it first arrived to forestall the basket lunch or the quick, anxious meal at a station restaurant. When the diner was a debutante the public was lenient. Why not? The public wisely refrained from commenting on deficiencies in those days.

That was long ago. Nowadays, forsooth, the public demands that the service of a diner shall rival that of the best hotels. The demand has been met.

You order feverishly. You twirl your fork in impatience as you wait for the viands to be set before you. Does it not occur to you that the menu card presents in very truth a banquet and that it all proceeds from a box? That the floor space of the kitchen in a buffet car measures about 2 feet in width by 12 in length? That the time of waiting is miraculously short rather than tediously long?

The why and how of dining car service is a long story; chapter I is laid in the commissary storehouse of the railway yards. All the delicacies of the season you will find there, the pick of the market, everything at its freshest. It makes you feel as if you were back on the ranch. Grape fruit, melons, berries, tomatoes, lettuce, asparagus, peppers, egg plant—all, with the pride of the perfect product. In one refrigerator will be found quail, pompano, Spanish mackerel, scallop, trout, chicken, mallard, turkey, soft shell crab, lying there with all things accomplished but the final processes; in another, blocks of butter, crates of eggs, gallons of cream and milk; in another, choice cuts of beef, veal, lamb, pork and kindred meats. Your hungry gaze detects no lack of things that are good to eat, superbly untouched by the ravishes of time or of neglectful cultivation.

Two other equally important departments of the storehouse are the room in which are kept groceries and general kitchen supplies and the linen room. The former looks like a retail store. You will find everything in the category from a toothpick up and scores of everything. Bins, whose capacity is hundreds of pounds, house coffee, tea, rice, meal, flour, tapioca, spaghetti, etc. Loss from breakage is great, and glass and chinaware are bought in large quantities. A brand new bride, versed in all the modern improvements, could not name a culinary utensil that could not be found on the shelves. And everything seems to be a time saver.

Most surprising of all is the linen room, with its great stacks of towels, table cloths, napkins, table mats and

walters' coats and aprons. All day long electric and foot machines are run to the tune of making and mending the aforesaid articles. Laundering is one of the biggest items of expense in the service. For example, from the West Oakland yards of the Southern Pacific company alone between 4,000 and 5,000 pieces of soiled linen are sent away daily to be laundered.

In fact, cleanliness seems to be the keynote of the yards. It becomes fairly oppressive. A car is hardly allowed to get fully settled down after a trip before the washing process begins. Hoses and mops assault its exterior and interior impartially, and wooden troughs for carrying off the water are as numerous as the rails. It's always a wet day in the yards.

Immediately upon the arrival of a diner for a few hours' rest at home follows inspection by the head of the commissary department, or his assistant. It is the dining car conductor who trembles if the lockers and their contents are not absolutely immaculate and if he cannot in every respect give a perfect account of his stewardship. Evidence of negligence costs him generally 10 days' suspension without pay. If you have taken a napkin or a piece of silver from the car for a souvenir he may pay for it; it is not charged to profit and loss.

Every square inch of space in a diner is utilized. Behind every locked door on either side as you pass through the car and behind others not subject to your gaze are stowed the various goods of the storehouse.

Much in Little

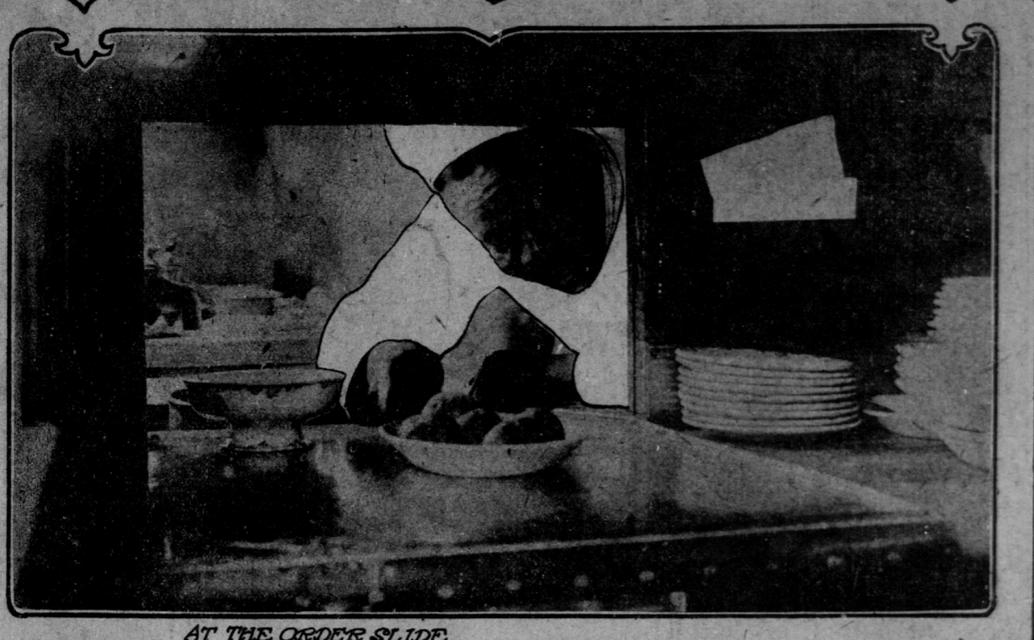
Let us take, for instance, one of the newest models in use on this coast. Stepping in from the front vestibule, at your right hand are the wine lockers, the red wines by themselves and the white in a Bohn refrigerator. The conductor—or steward, as he is popularly called—alone holds the keys to these lockers. On the left is the compartment of some few square feet, perhaps, that he can call his own and in which he keeps his collections, locked and double locked. He keeps there also tiny wall lamps to furnish the car with light should the Fintsch gas give out. The menu cards will be found there and a box full of rubber stamps whereon are the names of all the possible "specials" to be had during the run. And this fact may not be generally known—that each meal's menu is the outcome of conspiracy between the dining car conductor and the chef.

In the rear hallway is the sideboard, whose contents all may see, and the linen, vegetable and glass lockers. The linen locker is divided into two compartments, upper and lower berths as it were. Above is the clean linen. If the car is leaving the yards for a three days' trip this consists, under ordinary circumstances, of 1,000 napkins, 250 table cloths, 150 dish towels, 150 glass towels, 90 aprons and the same number

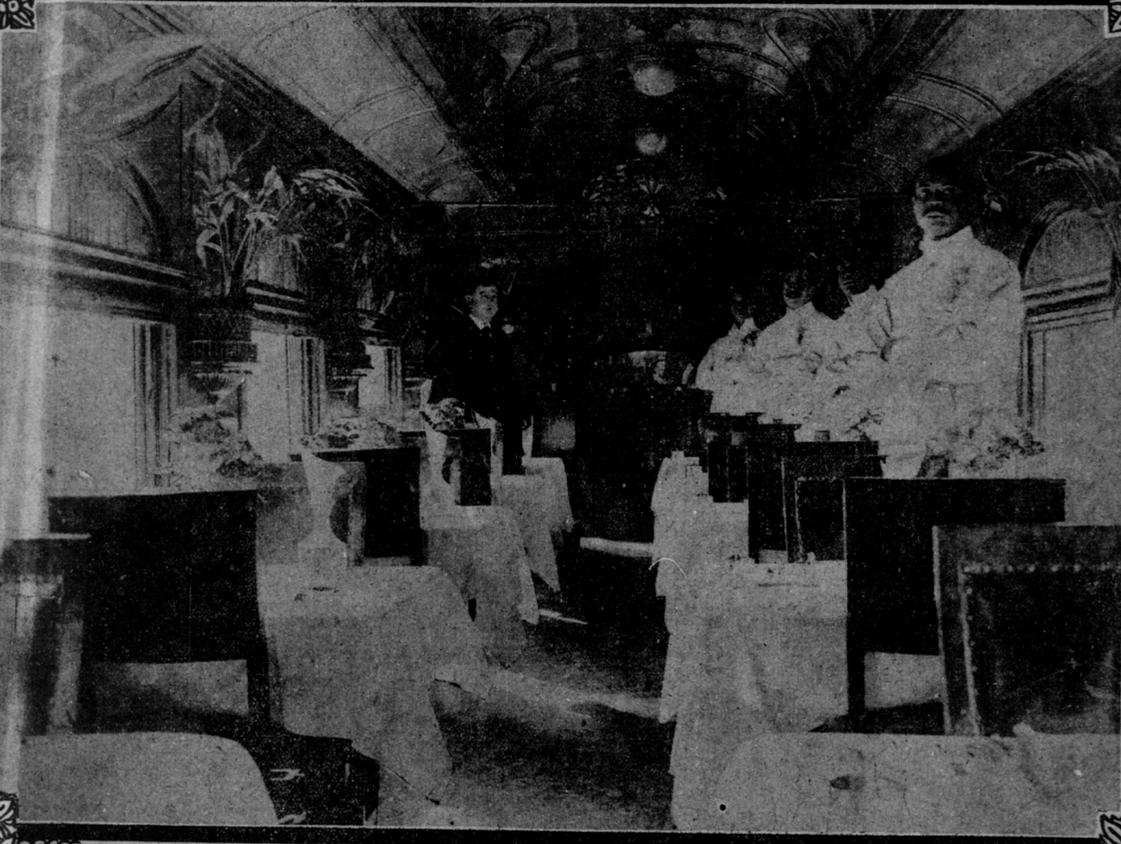
of coats. In the lower compartment is a huge canvas bag into which the soiled linen is put and, when filled, shipped back by a returning train to the yards. There remain, then, the pantry and kitchen for storing provisions. Their walls are a succession of lockers filled to brimming over. The pantry is just about big enough for two people to stand still in without having to touch each other. Nevertheless, during meal hours and before and after, five waiters are continually passing in and out. At the right of the entrance is a nickel plated filter, shining like a mirror, and next to that a glass rack to secure the tumblers against breakage. Along another wall of this room—or box, to speak more accurately—packed generously in ice, are 12 gallons of milk, 6 gallons of cream and 3 gallons of ice cream. A ton of ice is teapot in one hand and an individual package of tea in the other—no danger of your getting less than your full share by this arrangement—puts the

ware are kept in the pantry on shelves that rise almost to the ceiling. Canned foods are also to be seen in the high places. The silver service has a locker of its own and shines at you aristocratically when the door is opened. Clipping together in kind, stand the individual coffee, chocolate and tea pots, the soup tureens, toast racks and sugar bowls. Also by themselves lie the knives, spoons and forks, usually a "set up and a half," the "half" being for emergencies. The finish of the pantry is copper, shining amably if not with brilliance, which would be against its nature. Two copper faucets protruding, one at the right and the other at the left, from the wall dividing the pantry from the kitchen are suggestive of tea and coffee. You order tea and this is what follows: The waiter takes an individual teapot in one hand and an individual package of tea in the other—no danger of your getting less than your full share by this arrangement—puts the

latter into the former and fills the pot with water from the faucet at the left. The water running from this faucet is boiling, having been subjected to an instantaneous process and previously having been filtered. A rather easy way to make tea. The other faucet gives forth coffee from an enormous coffee pot on the other side of the wall. There are three apertures in this off mentioned, mysterious wall, on the other side of which is the long, narrow box called a kitchen. Two of the apertures are pass windows and the third accommodates a speaking tube. Your orders all go through the speaking tube direct to the chef. The kitchen is the really interesting part of a diner. You wonder how on earth—to use one of their favorite expressions—four darky cooks can move around in it. As a matter of fact, they don't move around very much; they stay put. To illustrate: The fourth cook, who is the pot wrestler and potato skinner, is nearest the pantry,



AT THE ORDER SLIDE



exception of the broiling, which takes place over a bed of charcoal coals. The fuel bins are conveniently adjacent. At the beginning of the trip the coal bin holds 75 pounds of coal, the charcoal bin four bushels of charcoal. Overhead are two water tanks filled with 60 gallons of water taken in through the roof of the car. To replenish any of these supplies en route the conductor wires ahead to a station agent. In a case of emergency perishable foods are also procured in this way. Every possible exigency is safeguarded.

Where Order Reigns

During mealtime everything is at high pressure, but there is no confusion. Suppose, then, your order for broiled pompano has just been breathed to the chef through the copper lined speaking tube. Out comes your pompano from the hidden recesses of his seclusion and on the broiling bars he goes next to a shad, a squab, a halibut, a chop maybe—always in good company. Nor will he find all his erstwhile associates broiling. In the big stove alongside there will be a mallard roasting—a worthy mallard, put down at \$1.35 on the card—a yum omelet making, a French pancake tossing, a veal poppie baking, a Scotch broth boiling. But nothing ever gets mixed up. And the pompano, when he is done to a turn and is all ready for the laying out, is placed in the gentle hands of the second cook, who has the platter prepared in the fashion becoming a pompano. Thereafter the waiter gives him his attention and you, yours. And the tale is told.

The waiters are not only that; they have duties relative to the maintenance of order in the car. One is a pantryman, with responsibilities in that direction; another a linenman, a third a middleman, and so on.

As has been said, the dining car conductor shoulders the great responsibility. His bond is \$1,000. He gets all the stockings of his car through regular requisitions. The silver is checked up after each run, and it must not only be all there, but it must be bright and shining—immaculate.

The dining car collections are large. In the accounting if there is a shortage the conductor must explain. Neither may there be any mysterious disappearance of wines and liquors. No one opens the wine lockers but himself; he keeps them strictly under lock and key. It would be somewhat difficult to purloin a bottle.

There is also a somewhat horticultural aspect to a dinner. Some one must take care of the plants that deck the wall racks. They are watered frequently, taken good care of, made to look chipper; and a temporary flooring is must be fresh flowers on the table. Inclosed in their own special locker and kept cool by ice, they last usually through the whole trip.

It must not be supposed that the diner is a penitentiary in the train makeup. Quite the contrary. The diner starting out with your train will only, then you may be entirely without a dining car until the approach of the next meal. Diners, like subjugated small boys, are never allowed to remain very long out of their own yards! This is doubtless the most important cause of the general satisfactoriness of the service.

With all the necessitated economy of space, it has been possible to set apart a breathing place for the chef—a sort of cooler for him. At one side of the rear vestibule a temporary flooring is made over the steps. This is his retreat from the hot, vaporous atmosphere of the kitchen. Leaning out from the small window space he may enjoy pure air for a moment.

The excellent service of a dining car is the result of an excellent system.

"FIRST CALL FOR DINNER IN THE DINER."



EACH COOK HAS HIS STATION AND NEVER LEAVES IT.

Odd Animal Friendships

"It is astonishing," says the Globe Democrat, "how pet animals of entirely different natures will remain peacefully together in cages during the period before they are sold."

"I have known the queerest affections spring up among creatures whose very instincts are antagonistic and whose meeting, under other conditions, would generally mean death to one. At present I have in my display window a half dozen pet mice—both white and black—and as I have just received a shipment of thoroughbred Maltese kittens and have no other place for them I just put them temporarily in the mice cage until their new quarters could be prepared. Of course, the mice are in a glass box and it is impossible for the kittens to get at them, but despite the fact that only a thin piece of glass is between pussies' sharp claws and their lives it does not in any way seem to make them restless or ill at ease."

"The first day I put the kittens in that window I watched them to see what would happen. The mice smelled the glass and sniffed about a little and then went on about their gambols. The kittens inspected their new quarters and after an introductory stare lay quietly down to snooze, and as far as I know have not noticed the little creatures since."

"I frequently put parrots in my window in the same cage with rabbits, fine chickens and dogs. They seldom quarrel and, in fact, I have found polly scratching away at Fido's hide as if he were her own. I had a parrot here once that became so attached to a poodle that she would not keep quiet if he was removed from her cage, and we used to think she would die of loneliness when the pup was sold."

Would another dog do? Not much! polly seemed very comfortable and no other one could satisfy her. That parrot died on my hands some time afterward and I always attributed her death to the separation from that dog she had formed a queer affection for."

"The tame rabbit is generally on peaceful terms with almost any creature a short time after it is locked up in the same cage. Young kittens frequently get along very well with bunnies, but we would hardly trust a large cat in with them."

"Some time ago I bought a large litter of pups of a fine breed and being crowded at the time and anxious to display them I put them right in the window where I had a dozen young kittens. Well, before night the kittens and dogs were boon companions one and all, and they lay quietly in the box together."

"Queer to say, I have found that monkeys and dogs get along very well together, and very often keep each other company. Perhaps if these two creatures met in the wild when the dog would be hunting game there would result some differences, I think, though, in captivity animals who are capable of becoming tamed feel less antagonism toward each other."

"On the floor in this bird store sat a large monkey with a chain about his neck and a collar. By him were two small pups, who were doing off for a nap. The monkey scratched away at their little backs and toyed with their ears in an abstracted manner. The puppies seemed very comfortable and far from complaining. The monkey afterward handled the dogs as one would hold a baby and paid not a bit of attention to a number of bystanders. "He has been doing that very thing for three days," said an attendant, "and only lets the pups go when we want to feed them and then we have to pull them away and then he fights us"