SHIRRED EGGS

Last week I dined in the streamlined train, the Hiawatha. The waiters were immaculately dressed in white and black uniforms. There was enough silverware on either side of the plate to feed a family. I ordered shirred eggs, potatoes, milk, and the rest of the usual trimmings. Each thing that was brought to me was in an individual dish, so before I was thru eating I had also used enough glass ware for a family.

The dining car was full of people. They all were stiff-necked and trying to act very dignified. The care they used in selecting the proper piece of silverware for each kind of food was very noticeable. The tiny bites they ate, the way they held silverware, all very correct, no doubt. It took an hour to eat. After eating the people walked out very quietly. No one slapped anyone on the back or called any cheery greeting. They were all very well-mannered people of money. They all were trying to appear sophisticated.

Today I ate dinner in the Short Course dining hall or "mess hall" as most of the boys call it. Everyone ate what they got and liked it. I took my silverware as I passed by. One knife, fork, spoon were sufficient. The more food put on one plate, the less dishes to wash, so one plate and two sauce dishes were all that was needed. The food all goes into the same stomach.

The boys came in and ate and were gone in ten or fifteen minutes. They didn't gobble down their meal, but ate it without thought of form or fashion. This gave them time to enjoy the food. When a fellow got thru eating he left. If he met someone on the way out, he said "hello", or perhaps asked how he came out in that quizz. The boys were comfortable and natural and I wonder if they were not more happy than the people who called fried eggs, "shirred eggs", and never forgot themselves long enough to be comfortable.

- Henry Helmsteter - '37