

The economics of gastronomy

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THE ECONOMICS OF GASTRONOMY.

The third volume of Walter Bachmann's great gastronomic encyclopaedia "*Professional Knowledge, The Art of Cookery*" has appeared, thus bringing the work to completion. It is published by MacLaren & Sons Ltd., price 63/- for each separate volume or £9 for the complete set.

Food and drink and their preparation have always loomed large in the history of mankind. From the fleshpots of Egypt and the epicures of antiquity down to Brilliat-Savarin and the culinary artists of modern times, they have been man's constant preoccupation. Much has been written on the subject, cookery-books are legion, but we doubt whether there exists any reference book as comprehensive and up-to-date as Mr. Bachmann's. One cannot but wonder at both the wide scope and the minutiae of its contents. It is an impressive study of the catering trade in all its ramifications and will, we are sure, establish itself as a pre-eminent standard work and a classic of its kind.

The lay-out is admirable. The fact that each volume is bound in a different colour and that clear and detailed indexing is provided, make for rapid access and easy reference to any particular subject on which the reader may wish to seek information. The numerous illustrations, also, are most helpful and the many attractive coloured plates endow the work with a rich beauty.

In the third volume such matters as Raw materials, Beverages, Kitchen installations, Hotel furnishings, Maintenance, Service and Accounts are exhaustively dealt with. Nothing that a caterer should know is omitted:— kitchen equipment, linen, silver, glass and china, the correct method of serving, all these and many more, are subjects of Mr. Bachmann's survey. The section devoted to wines, beer and spirits affords, even to the layman, fascinating reading.

Book-keeping, management, calculation and the peculiarities of accounting in the Hotel trade form the concluding, and not least important, section of the last volume.

Though the publication is primarily intended for the English-speaking world, it possesses a distinct Swiss flavour. It is to some extent inspired by Dr. E. Zimmermann, lecturer at the Professional Hotel School in Lausanne, and by Charles Finance, another well-known Swiss lecturer and teacher of professional cookery. Moreover, it has the support of more than forty eminent Swiss specialists and experts whose collaboration Mr. Bachmann acknowledges.

In his preface Mr. Bachmann discloses the interesting information that when he undertook the formidable task of preparing this monumental work, he did so, as he puts it, in his own way, at his own risk and expense, and with no thought of pecuniary gain. His object was to offer some contribution in return for the hospitality he was accorded in Great Britain to which country he emigrated from his native Switzerland thirty years ago to be allowed to become a British citizen and start a successful business career.

But Mr. Bachmann is not only an accomplished craftsman and skilled expert in his line, he is also a philosopher. To anyone engaged in or intending to enter the catering trade, we commend the "Psychological Remarks" with which the final volume is rounded off. They represent the wisdom born of long practical experience and the expression of a reflective mind.

J.J.F.S.



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