

# GOURMET'S PARADISE

By BAYNE WILSON

WOULD YOU LIKE to order a half-pound beefsteak for thirty cents? Or a whole lobster with mayonnaise at thirty-five? Champagne at thirty cents per bottle? You can, but not in New York, London, or Paris. Gourmets with fat pocketbooks can still fare well in the "big three," but the little man who likes to eat in style would find that the price of one meal in any of these cities would send him on an enforced diet for a few days.

One of the last refuges in Western Europe for the "big appetite and little pocketbook" is still Madrid, where eating is not only an art, but also a chief form of recreation, and where the average meal takes two hours. With one American dollar in your pocket, you can pretend you are an exiled king and order breast of partridge, and keep a boy running to and from the wine cellar until you have found the bottle that suits your particular taste.

There are over 1,000 "tascas," or small restaurants, in Madrid, many hidden away in narrow streets, some having existed for 300 years. Quite a few have never seen an American customer. This writer has dined in "tascas" where the proprietor refused to present a check, being so awe-struck at serving an American.

Fairly typical of these "gourmet hideouts" is the Meson de Segoviano, in Cava Baja Street, which can be distinguished by the number of roasted suckling pigs hanging by their snouts in the windows. Upon entering, you are with great formality invited to inspect the kitchen, which hasn't changed since the days of Felipe II. The massive iron stove, baking ovens, kettles, ladles, and chunks of wood neatly stacked in the corner leave one wondering how such crude equipment and methods can produce such delicacy in the food, but any doubts are soon dispelled. At the Meson you are expected to order a roast pig, or lamb — both of which, in the opinion of this writer, are unequalled anywhere in the world. As a first course, you are offered lobster, or fried shrimp, or "gazpacho," an Andalusian soup of tomato, peppers, onion, garlic, red wine, and chunks of ice.

The average American customer about this time begins to wonder how much all this will cost him, as there are no price lists in evidence; and if he has dined elsewhere in Europe, he has learned to be wary. Upon inquiry, the proprietor will smile, shrug his shoulders, and dismiss the question as unnecessary. When pressed, he will finally arrive

at some figure less than one dollar, and present the bill almost apologetically, as if fearing that it will be considered too high. With all anxiety of an expensive dinner check allayed, the customer can relax and explore the maximum limits of his eating capacity.

AFTER the roast pig, or young lamb, one is expected to make a stab at the Spanish "nata," or whipped cream, which is prepared wonderfully well and served with all kinds of fresh fruit, or custard. The custard, or "flan," is very rich, and is served in every restaurant.

To mark the close of the meal, one is served coffee and Spanish brandy. The latter is believed to aid the digestion, and probably would if only one glass were consumed. The aroma and flavor are so exquisite that glass follows glass until the warmth of the brandy goes to the head, and the realization comes, with a pang of regret, that one has reached his limit.

For those with a preference for sea food, the "tascas" are unequalled anywhere in Europe. There is "pulpo," octopus served in a rich casserole, for fifteen cents, tasting like breast of chicken. There are "angulas," tiny baby eels served piping hot, with a flavor all their own. The squid tentacles, dipped in batter and fried, are an eating experience long to be remembered.

To most admirers of good food, the biggest treat in Madrid is the

"paella," a dish native to southern Spain, where there is an abundance of rice. It is always prepared in huge kettles, and while the basic ingredient is rice, one will find generous amounts of chopped shrimp, beef, peppers, onions, garlic, lamb, fish, snails and mussels, with a dash of olive oil and vinegar. As this wonderful mixture is simmering in the kettle, pitchers of lemon juice are added to unite the various flavors. A platter of steaming "paella," along with a bottle of red wine, is guaranteed to tickle anyone's palate. The price? About thirty cents.

Any visitor with a flair for the romantic, in addition to good food, can visit the Caves of Luis Candelas, just off the old Plaza Major. Here one dines far under the ground by candlelight in what were once bandit caves. Even though the furnishings are rather crude and ancient, the place has been visited by generals and ambassadors from many lands. The prices, however, are unchanged, still ridiculously cheap, and one still must eat the traditional fare of eggs, flamenco style, basted with a peppery blood sausage, onions, peas and asparagus, accompanied by "sangria," a sweet red wine mixed with lemon juice and soda, and served ice-cold.

All Americans who have experienced the Spanish "tasca," with the unpublicized advantage to the pocketbook, will quickly agree that the last "gourmet's paradise" is Madrid.

# Sore Feet Cost Money

BY ALBERT OWEN PENNEY

IF YOU run a small, one-man business and your pretty little helper takes, say, ten minutes once a day to slip out to the rest room and change her shoes, you won't feel any real financial loss, will you?

But suppose you have a big laundry and in the shirt-ironing department you employ 100 girls. And suppose all those girls take ten minutes at some time during the day, particularly in the late afternoon, to rest their feet. Ten minutes, 100 girls; that's 1,000 minutes; sixteen and two-thirds hours; more than two full eight-hour days. What does that add up to in wages? In loss of production?

In New England, the owners of such a plant suddenly got wise to what troublesome feet were costing them; so they called in podiatrists, fast. These specialists in foot ailments gave the employees careful examinations, treated those who needed it, advised them about foot care and footwear, and sent them back to work. Result? An overnight jump of 12 per cent in production. Foot care is now a regular thing in that plant.

One of the major problems in modern business is how to cut costs.

From the little retail shops in Main Street up through the huge department stores in the big cities, from Joe Blug's auto repair in Blinkville to any of the vast industrial enterprises throughout the land, many millions of dollars are being spent to learn the answer to this question: how to lower the expense of selling a necktie or of building a diesel-powered locomotive.

The human side, too, is receiving top-drawer attention, for human frailty in one form or another is also a real and tangible factor in figuring costs. So, thoughtful executives have introduced, for the physical benefit of their personnel, medical departments with doctors, nurses, dentists and so on; to this they have added insurance of various kinds and, on the cultural and recreational side, rest rooms, game rooms, meals at cost, basketball and other sports, singing clubs, and other builders of morale and *esprit de corps*. And beyond this, says Dr. Thomas Parran, former Surgeon General of the United States Public Health Service, there are business houses that require not only a doctor and a corps of nurses in constant attendance but also a psychologist, a physiologist, a