

FOOD MATERIALS AND THEIR ADULTERATIONS

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649521852

Food Materials and Their Adulterations by Ellen H. Richards

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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ELLEN H. RICHARDS

**FOOD MATERIALS
AND THEIR
ADULTERATIONS**



To Eleanor, 1950

FOOD MATERIALS
AND
THEIR ADULTERATIONS

BY
ELLEN H. RICHARDS
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THIRD EDITION
REVISED AND REWRITTEN

SECOND PRINTING



WHITCOMB & BARROWS
BOSTON, 1911

640
R51 for
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FIRST EDITION
COPYRIGHT 1885
BY ESTES & LAURIAT

SECOND EDITION
COPYRIGHT 1898
BY HOME SCIENCE PUB. CO.

THIRD EDITION
COPYRIGHT 1906
BY ELLEN H. RICHARDS

COMPOSITION, ELECTROTYPING, AND PRESSWORK BY
THOMAS TODD CO.
14 BRACON STREET, BOSTON, MASS.

1911

PREFACE TO REVISED EDITION

CONDITIONS have changed with marvelous rapidity in the twenty years since this little book was written, and in no quarter more than in the food problem. The original aim of the author and her collaborators was to arouse women providers for their families to the need of a study of the materials they purchased, both from a sanitary and economic point of view.

If such study was needed then, it is tenfold more important now, since, while the women have slept, the manufacturer has kept wide awake and has employed the chemist to help him impose upon the ignorant and credulous housekeeper.

With the establishment of state and city laboratories there is not today the need of the Housekeepers' Laboratory which the authors tried to introduce. Nearly every householder can find the information that she needs by a visit to one of these laboratories if not in the printed reports. To take an instance from a burning subject at this writing: Since 1896, when the Massachusetts State Board of Health first published a list of patent medicines containing alcohol, there has been no excuse for any citizen of the state to be deceived. Common sense would have told him that such a practice once started would go on and other names would cover similar compounds. Housekeepers should make use of the information which is paid for by their taxes.

It is to ring again the call to study facts and conditions that the author and her coadjutors have decided to revise this little volume, which has been out of print for some time.

They are unable to understand the slowness of young women to take up the study of chemistry after they have made it possible and have shown the practical advantage of such knowledge.

Doubtless some such universal excitement as the country has just been through is needed to focus attention. All this agitation over the pure food law has come about because the buyer has not kept himself informed as to the methods of manufacture, and because the impossible has been demanded. We are all suffering because thoughtless and ignorant women have demanded *red* berries, *green* pickles, bright catsup, and variegated candies, and have not even considered whether the results were possible without preservatives and coal tar dyes. It is, perhaps, an evidence of the ancient credulity persisting in the belief that science can work miracles. But it was to combat that idea with knowledge that this volume was written and is now rewritten. It seems incredible that intelligent women could have put upon their tables canned meats "largely corn meal" and not know the difference.

To the housewife and mother we say: For the sake of your children keep yourselves informed of the true state of the food manufacture. Do not accept all sensational headlines, but yourself study and give your daughters an opportunity to study chemistry in the high school. Encourage your grocer to provide honest goods. It will take time and thought, but on what can these be better spent than on that which gives health and vigor for the better enjoyment of all the good things of life?

BOSTON, July, 1906.

PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION

THERE is neither novelty in the information which this little volume seeks to convey, nor originality in the manner of presenting it; but when its preparation was begun, some years since, the facts here considered were for the most part found scattered through large and costly technical works, written for the conditions existing in England and Germany. The books claiming to be popular expositions were either so old as to be out of date, were sensational, or otherwise unsatisfactory.

One excellent English work has recently appeared which is so suitable and admirable in form, as well as in material, that at the first glance it seemed superfluous to issue the present one. Yet Church's "Food" was prepared especially for the visitors to the Bethnal Green branch of the South Kensington Museum, London, while the place which this little volume is intended to fill is that of giving useful information in a form available and attractive for schools and for home reading without technicalities or unnecessary details. It has been compiled from many sources, and it would be impossible to credit each book with the special facts derived from it, since the same thing in different forms is often found in several works. Quotation marks are intended to indicate all passages taken verbatim. The names of the books consulted will be found in the list at the end of the volume. It is in the hope that these works may be more widely known, and the subjects of which they treat more earnestly studied, that this slight contribution is sent forth.

The conclusions are a result of ten years' experience in laboratory examination of food materials.

The author is especially indebted to MISS S. MINNS and to MISS L. M. PRABODY for valuable aid, both in the laboratory and in the preparation of the text.

BOSTON, December, 1885.