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in the big bakery it mixes three-quarters of a ton of dough at a time—but no one ever feeds it eggs. The cunning and time-saving and hand-saving devices in the big bakery (for instance, the automatic cutter which divides a certain weight of dough into the required 36 equal pieces to make three dozen penny buns so even in size that not even a schoolboy could complain that one is bigger than another) are repeated, sometimes on a smaller scale, in the small bakery. But this is not so everywhere.

An Old-Fashioned Trade

"The baking trade is a very old-fashioned trade," the small baker told me. "In some bakehouses they're still making bread and cakes exactly the same way their great-grandfathers made them. You'll find that in many cases the business is handed down from father to son and is run by a whole family. Each member is a skilled tradesman and can do any branch of the work, but they don't introduce many new inventions or devices to save time or handling."

I looked at his long tables and benches, the wood a golden cream colour from long years of use and long years of scrubbing, and I imagined the line of father, grandfather, great-grandfather working at them since Auckland began. The old man at this bench now was working shortbread dough. I watched. Flip and flap. And then the new device; it could have been a clothes wringer; the dough came through it (thick, thin, very thin, according to the setting) and then slid down a tray to the long wooden bench to be cut into strips. That wringer was certainly a time-saving device. The alternative is the rolling-pin, domestically known as the husband beater.



The old man, the owner told me, was an expert; he had retired but had

come back to work for the duration of the war because of the shortage of bakers.

I thought I was handy at pikelets myself; but now I know just about where I stand. Here was a man turning out perfectly - browned, perfectly - rounded pikelets at the steady rate of 60 dozen an hour. Perhaps it was the bag he piped them through that made him so speedy, perhaps he wouldn't be so quick if he used my kitchen spoon, perhaps it was the great expanse of hotplate he had to work on, perhaps, perhaps, perhaps . . .

"YOU'VE got to move with the times," the manager said as he began showing me through the big bakery. "Now I can remember the time when I used to be sent up to the brewery for a gallon of yeast; and then we used to make our own yeast, slow-acting stuff it was too. Nowadays, for a rush job, you can have a batch of bread out two or three hours after you start. In the old days you had to leave the dough nine hours in the troughs while it proofed."

"Do all bakers call troughs *trows*?" I asked.

"Trows, trow, yes; rhymes with dough," he said, and explained that this was the despatch room. There was a fleet of delivery vans drawn up against a long wall of cubicles from which the drivers would take their quotas in the morning.

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