

CHESHIRE CHEESE.

From the Complete Connoisseur.

The evening's milk is set apart until the following morning, when the cream is skimmed off; it is then poured into a brass pan heated with boiling water, in order to warm: one third part of that milk which is thus heated. The new milk, obtained early in the morning, and that of the preceding night, being thus prepared, are poured into a large tub, together with the cream. To this is put a piece of rennet, which had been kept in warm water since the preceding evening, and in which a little Spanish annatto (the weight of a quarter of an ounce is enough for a cheese of six pounds) is dissolved.* The whole is now stirred together, and covered up warm for about half an hour, or until it becomes curdled; it is then turned over with a bowl, and broken very small. After standing a little time, the whey is drawn from it, and as soon as the curd becomes somewhat more solid, it is cut into slices and turned over repeatedly, the better to express the whey. The curd is again removed from the tub, broken by hand into small pieces, and put into a cheese-vat, where it is strongly pressed both by hand and with weights, in order to extract the remaining whey. After this it is transferred to another vat, or into the same, if it has in the mean time been well scalded, where a similar process of breaking and expressing is repeated, until all the whey is forced from it. The cheese is now turned into a third vat, previously warmed, with a cloth beneath it, and a tin hoop or binder put round the upper edge of the cheese, and within the sides of the vat, the former being previously inclosed in a clean cloth, and its edges placed within the vat. These various processes occupy about six hours, and eight more are requisite for pressing the cheese, under a weight of 14 or 15 cwt. The cheese during that time should be twice turned in the vat. There are several holes bored in the vat which contains the cheese, and also in the cover of it, through which long skewers pass in every direction, the pressure being still continued. The object of this is to extract every drop of whey. The pressure soon obviates all these punctures, and the cheese is at length taken from the vat, a firm and solid mass.

The following morning and evening it must be again turned and pressed, and also on the third day, about the middle of which it is removed to the salting chamber, where the outside is well rubbed with salt, and a cloth binder passed round it, which serves as a lining to the vat, but is not turned over the upper surface. The cheese is then placed in brine, extending half-way up it in a salting tub, and the upper surface is thickly covered with salt. It then remains for nearly a week, being turned out twice in the day. It is then left to dry for two or three days, during which period it is turned once, being well salted at each turning, and cleaned each day. When taken from the brine, it is put on the salting-benches, with a wooden girth round it of nearly the thickness of the cheese, where it stands about eight days, during which time it is again salted and turned every day. It is next washed and dried; and, after remaining on the drying-benches about seven days, it is again washed in warm water with a brush, and wiped dry. In a couple of hours after this it is scoured all over with sweet whey butter; which operation is afterwards frequently repeated. and, lastly, it is deposited in the cheese- or store room, (which ought to be moderately warm, and sheltered from the access of air, lest the cheese should crack,) and turned every day, until it has become sufficiently hard and firm. These cheeses require to be kept a long time; and if not forced by artificial means, will scarcely be sufficiently ripe under two or three years. The Dutch make their cheese nearly in the same manner, excepting that they substitute the

* Marigolds, boiled in milk, are also used for colouring cheese; to which they likewise impart a pleasant flavour. In winter, carrots scraped and boiled in milk, and afterwards strained, will produce a richer colour, but they should be used with moderation, on account of their taste.

† The cheese-rooms in Cheshire are generally placed over the cow-houses on a floor strewn with rushes. This is done, in order to afford them from the heat of the cattle below, that uniform and moderate degree of temperature, which is deemed essential to the proper ripening of cheese.

marino acid, or spirit of sea-salt, which imparts to Dutch Cheese the peculiarly sharp and salt flavour by which it has long been characterised. They also leave out the cream.

In making Gloucester cheese as well as the other kinds of thin, or *toast* cheese known as the *Trent side* and *Cottentham* the milk is poured into the proper vessel, immediately after it has been drawn from the cow; but being thought too hot in the summer, it is lowered to the due degree of heat by the addition of skimmed milk; or, sometimes, by pouring in water. When the curd is come, it is broken with a double cheese knife, and also with the hand, in order to separate it from the whey, which is ladled off. The curd is then put into vats, which are submitted to the action of the press for ten minutes or a quarter of an hour, until the remaining whey is extracted. It is next removed into the cheese-tubs, again broken small, and scalded with a pailful of water lowered with whey in the proportion of three parts of water to one of whey, and the whole is briskly stirred. After standing a few minutes for the curd to settle, the liquor is strained off, and the curd collected into a vat; and when the latter is about half full, a little salt is sprinkled over and worked into the cheese. The vat is now filled up, and the whole mass of cheese turned twice or thrice in it, the edges being pared, and the middle rounded up at each turning. Lastly, the cheese is put into a cloth, and, after undergoing another pressure, it is carried to the shelves, where it is turned generally once a day, until it become sufficiently close and firm to admit of its being washed. The only material difference is, that Gloucester and Trent-side are rather thicker than the Cottentham, which is not more than an inch and a half in depth, and is therefore sooner ready for the table than the others; and that the latter is put together rather sooner than the two former.

In the manufacturing of these cheeses, the curd is not so often broken, as in the Cheshire—the cheese is not skewered while it is in the press, and part of the cream is usually taken away in order to make butter. The scalding is to wash out any remaining whey, or, perhaps, to dissolve any portion of butter that might have separated, before the rennet had coagulated the milk.

Much of what passes under the names of *Double Gloucester* and *Cheddar* cheese, is made in Somersetshire, by the following simple process:—

When the milk is brought home, it is immediately strained into a tub and the rennet is added, in the proportion of about three table-spoonfuls to a quantity sufficient for a cheese of twenty-eight pounds, after which it remains undisturbed for about two hours, when it becomes curdled and is then broken to pieces. That being done, three parts of the whey are warmed, and afterwards put into the tub for about twenty minutes: the whole whey is then again put over the fire, made nearly scalding hot, and returned into the tub, in order to scald the curd for about half an hour longer, after which, part of the whey is again taken out, and the remainder left with the curd until it is nearly cold. The whey is then poured off: the curd broken very small, put into the vat and pressed; remains there nearly an hour, and is then taken out, turned, and put under the press again until evening, when it is turned, and put in once more until the next morning. It is then taken out of the vat, salted, put into it again with a clean dry cloth round it, and remains in the press until the following evening when it is once more taken out, salted, put into the vat without a cloth, and pressed until the next morning: it then finally leaves the press, and is salted once a day for twelve days.

Silton cheese has only been introduced since about the middle of the last century. It was first made by Mrs. Paulet, who resided in the Melton quarter of Leicestershire, but who, being a relation of the landlord of the Bell Inn, at Silton, on the great North road, supplied his house with cheese of such a singularly superior quality, that it became in demand beyond the consumption of the house, and was then sold for as much as half-a-crown a pound. It thus acquired the name of *Silton* Cheese; but the mode of making it having been soon discovered, it is now generally manufactured through all the neighbouring counties. The sale is no longer confined to Silton, and much of what comes to market under that denomination is of a very inferior quality. Its richness depends, of course, both on the breed of cows employed, and

the quality of the pasture on which they are fed, as well as upon the quantity of cream used in the manufacture of it; for, unless a large portion of this is added to the milk, the cheese will be deficient in all the essential qualities for which it is celebrated.

It is commonly made by putting the night's cream to the milk of the following morning with the rennet, great care being taken that the milk and the cream are thoroughly mixed together, and that they both have the proper temperature. The rennet also should be very pure and sweet. As soon as the milk is curdled, the whole of the curd is taken out, and put into a sieve gradually to drain, and is moderately pressed. It is then put into a case or box, of the form that it is intended to be, for an account of its richness, it would separate and fall to pieces were not this precaution adopted. It is afterwards turned every day on dry boards, cloth binders being tied round it, and which are gradually tightened as occasion may require. After it is removed from the box or hoop, the cheese is closely bound with cloths, which are changed daily, until it becomes sufficiently compact to support itself. When these cloths are taken away, each cheese is rubbed over with a brush once every day, and if the weather is moist or damp, this is twice done for two or three months. It is occasionally powdered with flour, and plunged into hot water. This hardens the outer coat, and favours the internal fermentation, which produces what is called the ripening of cheese. Sometimes it is made in a net like a cabbage-net, which gives it the form of an acorn. *Silton* cheeses are not sufficiently mellowed for use, until they are two years old; and are not accounted to be in good order unless they are decayed, blue, and moist. It is said, but it is scarcely credible, that in order to accelerate their maturity, it is no uncommon thing to place them in buckets, and cover these over with horse-dung. There can be no doubt, however, that small pieces of a mouldy cheese are often inserted into them by means of a *taster*, and that wine or ale is frequently poured over them. Large caulking pins are also stuck into them to produce the requisite mouldiness. Much of this, however, is bad policy, for they are in the highest perfection, when the inside becomes almost as soft as butter and there is not any mouldiness.

In making *Wiltshire* cheese, the milk is used as soon as it is brought from the cow; or if it is of too high a temperature, it is lowered by the addition of a little skimmed milk. The curd is, in the first place, broken with the hand to various degrees of fineness according to the sort of cheese intended to be made. For *thin* cheese, it is not reduced so fine as in the county of Gloucester; for the *thick* kind, it is broken still finer; and for *loaves* it is almost crushed to atoms. In the first breaking of the curd, care is taken to let the whey run gradually off, lest it should carry away with it what is there called the "fat of the cowl." As the whey rises, it is poured off, and the curd pressed down; after this it is pared or cut down, three or four times, in slices about an inch thick, in order that all the whey may be extracted. It is then scalded in the same manner as Gloucester cheese. In some dairies it is the practice, after the whey is separated, to re-break the curd, and salt it in the liquor; but in others, it is taken while warm, out of the liquor, and salted in the vat. The thin sorts are disposed, with a small handful of salt, in one layer; thick cheeses, with two handfuls of salt, in two layers; and loaves, with the same quantity in three or four layers; the salt being spread, and uniformly rubbed among the curd. In general, *Wiltshire* cheese is twice salted in the press, beneath which it continues, according to its thickness: the thin sorts three or four "meals"; the thicker ones four or five, and *loaves* five or six.

Dunlop cheese is made in the counties of Ayr, Renfrew, Lanark, and Galloway, of various sizes, from twenty to sixty pounds. After the milk is brought to a certain degree of heat, (about 160 degrees of the thermometer upon an average, though in summer ninety will be sufficient, and, on the contrary, during winter, a higher degree will be requisite,) it is mixed with the cream which had been previously skimmed, and kept cool. The milk is then poured into a large vessel, where the rennet is added to it, and the whole is closely covered up for ten or twelve minutes. If the rennet is good it will then have effected a coagulation of the milk, which is gently stirred; the whey then begins immediately to separate, and is taken off as