

such a load until the old iron weighed out nine hundred pounds besides the oats.

A half century ago butter sold at nine cents a pound. It was gathered in up and down dash churns, either of wood or stone. Jersey cows and butter coloring stuffs were not in the market, but the public had never tasted gilt edged dairy productions, and were not so exacting as now. Butter was butter.

The winter market was slow, and grandma batted her churnings with heavy club paddles into wabby two-pound bricks—white as lard they

and if "stratered" with green mould, still quicker demand they had.

Winter-laid eggs were not expected in "good old times," and phenomenal, almost, they would have been with the wretched care the poor biddies then received. They were "wintered out" as cheaply as possible on whole grain in a barnyard scratching, without warm feed or any provision made for gravel, lime and dusting, that we now know are so necessary for poultry. Frequently, they rooted out of doors, and their warmest quarters were "o drafty corners of the log house, or an open shed. Little wonder was it that their egg basket went dry from November to April, and that for winter consumption every forerhand housewife must depend on a firkin of August-laid eggs, packed down in rock salt.

One day grandma said she was hungry for a taste of good old fireplace cookery, like what she made before cook stoves were invented. The children scudded up into the attic for an ancient tin baker stored there, and grandma stirred a Johnny cake and baked it in the baker before an open fire. She turned the cake twice, slipping the sheet from the queer old tin, thinking to secure an even bake, but she didn't, one side was raw and the other scorched, and both were peppered with white holes, and tasted smoky. Grandma admitted the cake wasn't half as good as those we bake in our cook stove, and acknowledged it was the hearty hunger of healthy childhood, a stinted diet, and not the manner of making and cooking those old dishes that made them taste so good. A half dozen of these by-gone fireplace bakers are stored under our attic eaves, along with a rusty tin "kitchen," with about nose for drainage of drippings, and cunning sawing door through which to watch the roasting of huge beef cuts and sparrow Queer enough they must have looked, mounted on their crooked, grasshopper legs and placed in a row close to the hot coals of the wide fireplace, buckwheat cake and Johnny cake baking away, with now and then an overturn from some meddling little foot, and an occasional sift and smooth from flying ashes and falling embers.

Smoke flavored, top scorched and raw bottomed, of course, they were, but keenly relished by the crowd of hungry children who were allowed no pickings between meals.

"We thought them the greatest invention possible," Grandma said of these tin bakers. Before their advent mother made spider cakes and baked

we have, but let us be thankful we do not need to blister our faces and singe our brows over swinging crabs and dangling pot hooks in red-hot fireplace; nor pebble-pound all spices used, nor need to make our soda by burning coals, and bottling and watering the little heap of white ashes thus obtained.

The march of years brought steady improvements in methods and means, both indoors and out. The hollow dip gave place to the mold candle, the whale oil lamp, the camphene flame, the kerosene blaze, and now to the strong light of gas and the electric current.

The herring-bone sanded floor of the "fore room," with its canopied bed and burnished andirons, and great kitchen with its cupboard of pewter dishes, its "settle" and clutter of loom and awl; spinning wheels and reel, cradle and ringed jaddler, leading to the overhead loft, long ago gave place to more commodious, convenient farm homes, affording more possibilities of comfort, but demanding much more work and care to keep in order. Our country is now so filled with



BAKE-KETTLE AND "TIN KITCHEN"

busy mills and factories, the slow home work of hand wheel and loom is unnecessary, and, under garret eaves, covered with dust and cobwebs, they rest.

With tenderest respect for our beloved ancestors, who long have slept on hillside and hilltop, with faces toward the east, waiting for the resurrection morning, we are compelled to believe they never learned how to spare themselves hard work. They had more strength than common sense in some matters. They builded their homes with no consideration whatever as to steps. The ingenuity they exercised in planning kitchens and butteries in detached regions, stumbling doorstep stairs, choked-off shutters that to draw required stomach wrenching jerks, and furniture so ponderous, the strength expended in moving it would have raised the health ratio of this generation a goodly per cent., was wonderful. The massive oak bedsteads and tables, without drawers, and heavy as metal, that daily required lifting back and forth from the wall, have given place to light, comfortable furniture that run on our hardwood, oiled floors as lightly as a toy wheel.

Thankful are we that we did not live in old times days of littering cedar brooms, and heavy earthen pans, ponderous iron dinner-pots, and water-



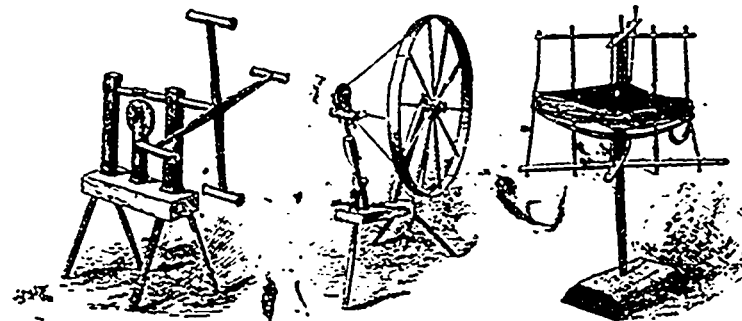
THE UP-AND-DOWN DASH CHURN

were—through the winter months. These were dumped into a barrel and kept in freezing quarters until the glut was off the market, and then it really sold.

The cream thermometer of that time was the housewife's work-gamed finger. On churning day, in freezing weather, the spot of chilled cream was brought in and placed on the warm bricks of the hearth. As it thawed, again and again, its temperature was tested by this finger thermometer, as inaccurate as it was useless. Frequently a whole day's hard pounding would not fetch the butter, in spite of hanging a horseshoe on the churn, adding to the cream a wad of wet rags, a sprinkle of salt, sugar and vinegar and other ingenious resorts.

Nowadays, who would buy such a grade of butter? Only the best, as sweet and fresh as dew-beaded clover, as clean as a June sky and dressed in daintiest mold, will satisfy our butter educated public, and blessings on it for forcing the dairy up to such a standard. Wouldn't the old housewives have opened their eyes to see the perfect dairy appurtenances we now have for making nut-flavored, wax-grained, perfect butter?

Fifty years ago, more home-cured cheese than now, was made. Without creameries, ice safes, cemented, airy cellars, or common sense planned, cool north milk butteries, it was necessary, for butter they could not make during hot weather. Good cheese, it was, too, grandma affirms, only crumbly with over-ripening, and strong with jug rennet. All the housewives of grandma's know edge used "jug rennet." The more urethane it smelled, the more virtue it had, was their sorry belief, and by keeping their rennet in a small nozzled jug, year in and year out, without cleaning, those old cheese makers could readily and surely brew fearful breaths in their rennet jugs. Grandma annually made about sixty two-pound cheeses, and always gave them winter storage. Toward spring, they sold like hot cakes.



GRANDMA'S SPINNING-WHEEL, REEL, AND SWIFTS.

drop cakes on green maple chips. The dough was made stiff and spatted upon smooth, clean, green chips. These were eaten just right before the fire and baked.

Great-grandmother's iron "bake kettle" is still without rust or crack. It has a heavy close-fitting iron cover with inch-wide, turn up rim, on which shovelfuls of hot coals were placed when the stewing meat it contained needed faster cooking, and three long straddling legs on which, for two generations, it roamed over hot coal beds in some corner of the big, glowing fireplace.

But the bulk of all gone-by cookery was done in brick ovens. Hard baking days, you and I think

logged water buckets, bulky wooden dough and butter trays and curd tubs, all of them just as big and heavy as they could be made. Give us these days of light, strong granite and white iron, ordinary ware, that is made for comfortable use and not to test muscle and develop gymnasts, or—kill the housewife.

Why? the other day I weighed the iron cover of grandma's old nutcake kettle—just the cover—and it weighed ten pounds! Kettle, lard, and all, what must it have weighed? How grandma's slight frame must have doubled and strained, lifting and tugging about that miserable old kettle the forty years she speared nutcakes from it!

