

in dairy work. We use it empirically with a sort of blind reliance on its unknown agency, and always with a degree of uncertainty as to the precise results obtainable in each individual operation. A nearer acquaintance with it might put us in a position to employ it rationally instead of thus empirically. Almost all we know concerning rennet, as yet, is that its efficacy depends upon a peculiar active power, which is destroyed at a temperature of about 122° Fah., is most energetic at blood heat, and gradually lessens as the temperature declines from that point. We have yet to enquire—

First.—Does this active power belong to a certain peculiar principle, or does it proceed from organisms living in the rennet?

Second.—What would be the chemical and physical properties of such a principle?

Third.—Of what kind are the organisms referred to?—are they animal or vegetable structures?—whence are they derived?—of what are they composed?—and what becomes of them?

Fourth.—In either case, how is the action of rennet to be explained?

Fifth.—How should the preparation of rennet be conducted?

Sixth.—How can the goodness—that is, the activity and freshness—of rennet be estimated comparatively in the same way as the degree of sweetness or of acidity in a given solution?

Seventh.—What influence does the addition of a greater or less amount of rennet to milk at different temperatures, and of various degrees of fatness, exercise on the quality of the cheese?

Eighth.—What chemical, physical or organic changes does damaged rennet undergo, and what effect has such rennet on the cheese made with it, according as it is more or less spoiled?

Till these points are satisfactorily investigated, all cheese-making must be more or less hap-hazard business, and any good result that may accrue is due rather to a happy accident than to the success which legitimately attends a careful compliance with well-organized, firmly-based principles.

Now, although calves' rennet has been found the best agent, so far, for coagulating the milk for the purpose of cheese-making, it is by no means improbable that a substitute may yet be obtained fully equal, if not superior, to rennet; and this substitute may possibly come from the vegetable kingdom, or from some other source—perhaps electricity.