

## The Dairy.

### Skim-milk Cheese.

Are our farmers over dainty, or are they so given over to eating pork that they can be satisfied with nothing else? In olden times in the old country, both farmers and farmers' men were satisfied with a good skim-milk cheese as an addition to bread for either breakfast or supper, and often for dinner. Few who have not tried it have any knowledge of what an excellent article of food can be produced from skim-milk cheese. It is quite true that some is of inferior quality, and very hard, but on the other hand, some samples are so really excellent, that in most country gentlemen's houses in England in years past, the skim-milk cheese was presented alongside of its richer brothers of various titles, and was by many preferred. To be sure, it was only the very best of the kind that was so honoured, but the fact that some skim-milk cheeses were of surpassing excellence proves that inferior kinds are the result of want of skill only.

In English farm-houses of the old fashion, small beer, bread, and skim-milk cheese, were always placed at the command of all. There was no stint, and these articles were considered to be by all equally good and wholesome as human nourishment. The cheese was always believed to be a good "stand-by," which enabled the eater of it to hold out in his labour from meal to meal without extra fatigue. In those days these matters were not looked into scientifically, but now we know that cheese of this quality is rich in muscle-producing food, whilst from the absence of fatty matter it does not induce obesity and its consequent shortness of breath.

Skim-milk cheese was always made in the following manner, and entirely by the "rule of thumb," such a thing as a thermometer being then unknown in the dairy, and neither wanted nor wished for. The dairymaid saved the milk, after skimming, putting the two meals together. The morning was the time for making it, but when the weather admitted it, two days' milk would be kept. The whole of this milk was placed in a brass kettle, set in what in Canada is called an arch, that is, brickwork with a fireplace underneath, rennet was added, and a fire lighted with straw, furze, or other light material. The milk was brought to the right heat in the estimation of the operator, was then well stirred round, the rennet was taken out of it, and it was left to repose for an hour or more. If the milk was heated too much the curd would be stringy and tough. If not enough, the curd would be soft, but it was never heated a second time. As soon as the heat was sufficient, the fire was put out, if it had not burned out previously, which was generally the case. The kettle

was covered, the dairymaid then went to her other work. When the time suited, she came again, ladled the contents of the kettle into a broad shallow cheese tub, with a cheese-cloth strained over it so far as to let the greater portion of the curd rest on the bottom of the tub. The curd was then cut through and across many times with a wooden knife, and the whey allowed to drain off through the cloth, and it was caught in a vessel below. There was always a hole about two inches in diameter in the bottom of the tub, and this was covered with a flat wooden dish or bowl turned over it, which thus formed an excellent strainer. When the whey was sufficiently drained off, the curd was churned and mashed up with the fingers and hands, until it would make a kind of creaking noise when handled. It was then salted more or less, according to taste, but not fully salted, and, with the cheese-cloth folded round it, placed in the hoop, and under the press. This was either a screw press, or, preferably, a large heavy square stone hoisted up by tackle, and allowed to settle on the cheese. The next morning the cheese was taken out, and the cloth turned. The edges which had gone over the hoop were cut off, and given to the chickens, and the cheese was replaced in the press for consolidation. After it had become a solid mass, easily handled, it was taken out of the hoop and cloth, and placed in a vessel containing wet salt, and turned therein for a day or two. It was then put on the rack, and occasionally turned and examined, sometimes being rubbed with butter and sometimes not. In the course of a month or two it ripened and became tasty and good to eat, having attained a full cheese flavour, but oftentimes being very hard. Some of the cheese would become affected throughout with a kind of blue mould called "blue veins." These were the most admired, and were put by for better use. The others became, like bread, the food of the family, to be used at discretion, as the French say.

The poet Bloomfield, in his celebrated poem of the "Farmer's Boy," soundly abused this kind of food, and after supposing it in every position, and rejected by all, deposits it in the pig trough, where even the swine nose it about, as "too big to swallow, and too hard to bite;" but, fortunately, the condemnation even of a poet cannot ignore usefulness, and we fancy that even yet skim-milk cheese will be adopted extensively as food in the Canadian farmer's family.

### Cheese-making in Small Dairies.

Cheese has been high in price the past year, owing, perhaps, partly to the overdoing of the business of cheese-making the year before, when not only were large quantities made, but much of it was of so inferior a quality, that the consumption of the article could not be encouraged, and so prices rolled below a paying point, and many left off

cheese-making last year, which, together with the short supply of milk from the pastures being dried up with the excessively long summer drought, brought up prices again. The lesson learned the year before caused more care to be given to the process of manufacturing the past season, and a better article was the result, and now consumption has been somewhat stimulated by a supply of really eatable and good cheese, prices will not be likely to again reach so low a point, for a really good article, at least; and no other ought to be sent to market.

But will cheese-making in small dairies or by single farmers pay? We are inclined to think not. At least, we would advise such to give their attention to butter-making rather than the manufacture of cheese, for the reason that they cannot hope to compete in the market with the cheese produced under the factory system, where capital and talent combine to produce an article of first-rate quality, at a much less cost than can be done in small dairies. Cheese-making is a nice and intricate business to carry out to perfection, and few indeed there are possessed of the knowledge and knack of applying it that is requisite to ensure perfect success in producing a superior article of cheese. Butter-making will, we think, commend itself to those who have a small herd of good milch cows, and we think will pay the best, especially if such an article is produced as can be commended for its sweetness of flavour and perfect cleanliness, by those among our wealthier classes who can and will appreciate and pay for a really good article.

**FEEDING COWS AT MILKING TIME.**—It is a bad policy to feed cows moist food at milking time. It is like purchasing the good behaviour of children with *bon bons*. Discontinue the practice for a short time and the cows will be restless and intractable. Besides, its practice will be likely to interfere with the milking, the cow not giving down her milk with the same readiness as when not occupied in cramming down the food before her.

**ABORTION.**—E. J. Yorke writes: "I have a very fine heifer, of which I designed to make a cow. But about six weeks or two months before her time, she slipped her calf. How shall I treat her, as she has considerable milk in her udder now? Should she be dried or milked, the object being to secure good milking qualities in future? Will she be more liable to slip her calf than if no such accident had occurred?" **REPLY.**—If it be intended to keep the heifer and breed from her, it would certainly be better to milk her, and encourage the secretion as much as possible, with a view of developing milking qualities. She would be liable, however, to a recurrence of the accident, and great care should be exercised as her season of calving approached. By the time this note can reach the writer of the above enquiry, the matter must have been practically decided. Still, for guidance in similar occurrences, we give our opinion of the right practice under the circumstances.