

competitors already, and must be prepared for keener competition in future. The foreign competitor is very much on the alert. In 1850 the imports of butter amounted to only 330,000 cwts., or less than a pound and a half for each inhabitant of the Three Kingdoms, whilst in 1895 the imports were 2,600,000 cwts., or about 6½ pounds per head. There are no official figures of the home production, but it is reckoned that in 1876, when attention first began to be paid to dairy matters, the product was 1,800,000 cwts., and in 1895 about 3,200,000. Denmark and France are the principal sources of supply abroad, with Australia next. Butter is sent from Australia for a fraction less than a penny a pound, which includes the cold storage charges and everything else. Margarine began to be imported into England in large quantities in 1883, and the price of butter, which had been selling well for thirty years, dropped, especially that of the poorer grades. At first margarine was palmed off as butter, but by the Margarine Act it has to be sold under its proper name, stamped on the wrappers and packages. The margarine imports exceed a million cwts. annually, coming chiefly from Holland. It is useless to send poor butter to England. There is plenty of poor home-made, to say nothing of the margarine, the import price of which is under 60 shillings per cwt. Nor does it do to send "uncertain" butter, butter which is good to-day and "strong" to-morrow; unless the quality be uniformly good there is no money in the business. The call for Normandy butter arises from its uniform character; it is not a first-class butter, but it is never bad. An English expert said recently: "They make capital butter in Canada, but the general quality of that sent here is not good enough and cannot be relied upon."

The imports of cheese into the United Kingdom have risen from 850,000 cwts. in 1850 to 2,800,000 in 1895, and the home production has increased from 2,500,000 cwts. in 1876 to about 3,000,000. Canada supplies one-half of that obtained from abroad, the United States comes next, and then Holland. The importation of imitation cheese, made of lard and other

stuff, has begun. "Canada," says the authority just quoted from, "has improved the quality of her cheese and gained in reputation, whilst the United States has hurt itself by adulteration." There is a growing demand for soft cheeses, such as those of France and Switzerland, but they must be well made and uniform in quality. The price of cheese of every sort has been affected of late by the growing cheapness of meats and fresh mutton. The fresh mutton trade has reached immense proportions; it is believed the imports this year will amount to 3,000,000 cwts., principally from the Argentine, Australia and New Zealand.

The dead meat trade, omitting fresh mutton, is also very large. The British trade returns for 1894, the latest in detail, give the imports of unenumerated meat, salted or fresh, at 178,000 cwts., of which 109,000 came from Holland, 34,000 from the United States and 670 from Canada. Those of beef, "preserved otherwise than by salting," were 291,000 cwts., of which the States sent 205,000 and Canada 3,600. The preserved mutton imports were 113,000, mostly from Australia; the imports of all other preserved meats 150,000, of which the States sent 68,000; Australia, 40,000 and Canada 2,300. The salt beef imports were 242,000, nearly all from the States, and those of fresh beef, 2,100,000 cwts., of which the States sent 1,775,000; Australia, 800,000; Canada, *nil*. This fresh beef trade is the trade Dr. Montague is trying to establish here, and the fast Atlantic service, with its cold storage, ought to be of some assistance. The import price in 1894 was 40 shillings per cwt., or fourpence per pound. At this figure not much was made by American shippers. Their fresh beef had to compete with fresh mutton at an import price of 87s. 6d. The Argentine and Australia have unlimited supplies of mutton, and it is bound to run fresh beef a hot race; an English paper thinks it will shortly be laid down in the English market for 25 shillings, or less. While these figures should not discourage us from trying our hands at the business, they make it sufficiently clear that we need not look for big money in it.