

separating ninety gallons per hour is in England £46. This machine has not yet been exhibited at any show in Britain."

This last-mentioned machine appears to be a great improvement on the original make, which required an engine with the necessary shafting, belting, and intermediate motion. This is dispensed with. The turbine is fitted to the opposite end of the spindle to the separating cylinder, and so gives the direct power. The price of this machine, with a capacity half as large again as those generally in use out here, seems very reasonable. The hand-power separator should prove of great benefit in small dairies, or to those who cannot go to the expense of setting up expensive plant.

The dairymen in New South Wales have within the last year or two recognised the necessity and advantage of using the separator, and have revolutionised the butter market in Sydney as regards the price paid for good quality. During last winter, when butter was selling freely at good prices, factory-made—that is, butter made from separated cream—was selling at 5d. per pound above the price "obtained for special brands from private dairies of established reputation," and from 8d. to 1s. above best New Zealand, and the factory-made butter has kept its advantage ever since.

But the high prices received for butter last year have disappeared, and our dairy-farmers find glutted markets. The demand from Australia has ceased for the present, as the splendid season the farmers are enjoying there has enabled them to supply nearly all their own wants in dairy produce, bringing about such a collapse in prices that, together with the duty lately imposed by New South Wales, our principal market, the producers find little or no margin of profit after expenses are deducted, as the Sydney price controls that paid here by the dealer to the producer.

During this present season stocks have been accumulating, and several large shipments have been made by the direct steamers to England, and, as I understand no extraordinary arrangements as to packing or storing the butter on board were made, it will be interesting and instructive to watch the result.

The system of selling to dealers obtains largely on the west coast of the North Island, and those makers who have established any kind of reputation for uniformity or general quality of their butter contract to sell all they make for a certain period at a fixed price; but the majority of makers whose produce has not arrived at this stage of excellence sell at the best price they can obtain for each week's make. Other makers, again, prefer to risk the chance of meeting a good market, and ship on their own account: these are the large makers, and whose brands are well known in the market.

The dealers buy large quantities in the course of the year. One carrying on business in New Plymouth bought over two hundred tons of butter during the year ending on the 30th September last, at a cost of about £18,000. The bulk of this was shipped to New South Wales, Queensland, and Victoria. The butter is received by the merchants packed either in kegs holding between 70lb. and 80lb., made of tawa, or in boxes of all shapes or sizes. The salt butter is usually packed in the kegs, and fresh is made up in 1lb. or 2lb. pats, each pat wrapped neatly in butter-cloth, and packed in cases varying from the humble soap-box to the patent enamel-lined boxes made by Pond, of Auckland, or Mofflin, of New Plymouth. The advantages claimed for these patent boxes are that they require no cleansing with lye or soaking with brine as the kegs do—they are ready to be packed at once; that, being square, they take less room; do not allow the brine to soak through; that the enamel protects the butter from touching the wood, thereby preventing any taste. Pond's cases are fitted together with screws, while galvanized hoop-iron is used on the Mofflin case. The butter can be easily taken out of these boxes for the purpose of examination and returned, and the price is about the same as that of the kegs, but the latter, as a rule, hold a little more.

A great deal of butter bought by the merchants is of a very poor quality, having many faults, often being streaky, made from cream that has been allowed to become over-sour and stale, badly worked with the butter-milk not sufficiently worked out, and overloaded with salt. It is impossible for the dealer to do much to improve this class of butter, but he has all these inferior lots well washed, put through the butter-worker, and repacked, and when a sufficient quantity of one quality is collected it is shipped off to one of the large markets; the better qualities are sometimes reworked and repacked also.

The inferior class of butter is too frequently to be found, and is caused by ignorance of proper methods and carelessness on the part of many of the makers. It is no uncommon thing to find, even on fairly well-appointed farms in other respects, the place used as a dairy a room in the dwelling-house, often next the kitchen, where such things as flour, sugar, and other articles of food, as well as tools of all kinds and seeds, are kept, besides being used as a workshop. Among some of the poorer settlers the milk-pans have been known to be set under the beds. Milk treated in this manner, exposed to all manner of odours and dust, cannot be expected to yield a high-class butter, as it is well known that nothing is more susceptible to a tainted atmosphere than milk, and the chances are that people who are careless in this manner will be quite as neglectful in the subsequent processes of churning and making up the butter.

Writers on this subject are continually urging on dairymen the necessity for scrupulous cleanliness in all details of handling milk, and this is the point where the factories are likely to be more successful than the majority of private dairies, and is one of the reasons that butter made in factories is of a uniform character, for to be successful in this business, either as producer or exporter, an even quality in the article is essential: this is becoming so well recognised in England that the following extract on the subject from the *Field* of the 22nd January ultimo is worth quoting:—

"That dairy interests should occupy a leading position in English agriculture is becoming generally recognised, as well as the fact that for some reason or other we are beaten in our own markets by the superior quality and greater uniformity of foreign produce. It is especially in this latter characteristic that our principal deficiency is most apparent. Factors cannot depend upon the