

Written for this Paper.

THE BUTTER QUESTION.

However impatient some may feel in regard to the progress which is or should be made in Utah, it is easy for the old residents (or in fact the modern observer) to see that there is a quiet advance which is vastly less indicative of splutter and failure than of caution and ultimate success. In no small thing (?) is this more noticeable than in the article of butter. The experiences and methods of the old times provoke many a smile when something wakes up from memory things in which we have taken personal part. The storekeeper and the butter-vendor were friends even from the beginning, and one of such experiences dates back to the winter of 1854, when a customer presented a round of butter of some twelve or fifteen pounds in weight. It had been pressed in a large home-made milk pan (Second ward crockery most likely); it was attractive in color and the flavor was more than fair. It was consequently put aside for the special use of the family, who within a few hours made their call. The piece being rather large it was cut in two, when the cunning of the seller was exhibited, for the small original form was all mouldy and unsaleable, while the outer "smur" was fresh and fair and showed enterprise worthy of a better cause.

It need not be wondered at, however, that butter varied very much in those and later days, for appliances were poor and meager, while the majority of butter workers were as unfamiliar as the one, who on the plains, innocently asked, on being presented with a cup, as to "which cow gave the butter-milk?" Long years though after that, the housewife counted on getting her tea, pins, spool cotton and smaller things for her little "jab" of butter, and the ever present shoe box was the usual receptacle for the heterogeneous purchases of this article in almost every store. Every variety as to color, flavor, age, was as a rule, bought and combined, for few men had the courage to tell any woman that her butter was not good. Few cared to decline it for fear of losing a customer or intimidating an insult. Every maker would have sworn, if need be, that hers was good, though the milk had stood in the kitchen amid its odors and dust until it partook of each. And many a time in those days of scarcity the rag around still had on a button by way of illustrating Shakespeare's saying "To what base uses may we come at last."

Who of that time does not remember when impetuous President Grant, speaking on the public stand in regard to his butter supply, asked as a favor, that the maker would in the future bring the butter on one plate and the hairs on another, so that he could mix them to suit his taste! And yet it would be libellous to even intimate that there was neither good butter nor good butter-makers in the Territory or within reach of this city. The names of many could be easily recalled and they and their descendants make and sell a really choice and toothsome article to this day.

Toward the sixties this butter supply of Utah was less of a problem. Trade outside began to increase, and from

the principal dealers—after much manipulation—tons went out to Nevada, Montana and Colorado, to ranches, stations and other places where it was a luxury, albeit, strong, streaked, salty and greasy almost to perfection. Amalgamation, however good it might be in some directions, does not seem to apply to butter; and the butter could not help it, for from the time it left the maker's hands—yes before, it was undergoing decided deterioration. If we were teachers and wanted "to point a moral or adorn a tale," it is to be had in this self-same butter, for a good piece or churning took on the contagion of its neighbor on the dish or later in the shoe box, just as readily as "evil communications corrupt good manners," or as "one sickly sheep infects the whole and poisons all the rest."

The writer hereof was among the earliest advocates of a change, if only for the money export. The necessity for cleanliness, for system, for milk-houses outside the dwelling or kitchen, and finally the advantages of combined dairies, was suggested and enforced in connection with an almost unlimited market in all the surrounding mining camps. But the ideas fell on unsympathetic and dubious soil, and some time after the inauguration of Z. C. M. I. their wholesale business had in part to receive produce—including butter—to keep the wheels of trade a-moving! Our spiritual-minded and beloved Apostle had charge of the produce department then, and the accumulations of "smur" were increasingly great; exportation was the only outlet, and after a serious time in handling, blending, washing, with sundry additions of sugar, saltpetre and native salt, the compound was packed and a carload shipped to California. It was another illustration of "love's labor lost," for when the consignment reached the Coast, dispute was rife as to whether this was "the product of milk at all." Had the days of oleomargarine then dawned, the transaction might have been a profitable one; whereas this (southern product mainly) which had cost at home twenty-five cents, leaving out the remaking, netted ten cents to some tannery for the grease that there was in it.

It was said ages ago that "the Lord laughed" at the days of ignorance, but after experience, "He commanded men everywhere to repent." So we may smile at the *contretemps* of the past, but the smile is audible today with drift toward systematic and profitable dairying now established, and growing fast as experience and circumstance will allow. We noted but the other day, however, that in the long-time prosperous city of Tooele, butter was nearly unreachably. There was none in the market for the non-producer, and a suggestion was made that the creation of a dairy would be a profitable investment. We do not doubt it, for if even the home markets were fully supplied, there are other markets within our reach. It was said but a little while ago that the state of Colorado sent out annually over a million dollars for butter, some of which Utah could surely reach.

If we were writing a dissertation on butter, it might be pointed out that from time immemorial some com-

pound has had that pleasant and suggestive name. One of old said he had "washed his steps in butter," and another prophesied of one to come, "butter and honey shall he eat that he may know how to choose the good and refuse the evil;" and the modern user, the modern table, has learned fully how to choose the good in regard to butter. It is said that there are families in New York who year in and out pay one dollar a pound for their table use—but then that is butter—bright, clear, waxey and with an aroma fitted for the gods. For the production of so choice an article there is selected butter stock; every part of the process is marked by science and experience; the highest and most scrupulous cleanliness is obligatory; and the feed from which this rich and fragrant perfume comes is the best of clover and a feed of grain. It is doubtful whether such butter can come from lucern at all, or from the average butter-maker, who gives but little thought to the sensitive character of milk, cream or butter after it is made. Many estimable persons invariably make good butter. Experience does for them what the certainty of rule and science does for the dairy. But the average housewife never uses a thermometer, knows nothing of temperature, is mystified when after hours of churning "the butter does not come," and when it does, it is more of accident than of understanding.

It will be a good day probably when the owner of one or a few cows can turn their milk into a dairy, when their so-called butter-making will be "a lost art," giving way to that certainty of manipulation, that uniformity of texture, color and flavor, that unity of appearance which assists local demand and suggests importation. And then there will come system on to every farm; better stock will be in demand; butter cows will command a price; when milk is tested the seller will want to feed different—to sow clover, to give grain, cracked or shorts, to give better shelter, cleaner yards and utensils, closer milking than the best and richest may not remain in the udder, general cleanliness all around and in connection with stock. Then importation of butter or oleo—which after all today is yet heavy—will give way as cheese has done, to the home produced article, although there is still much room for improvement in that.

THE GREAT SNAKE RIVER.

REXBURG, Sept. 1.—A few miles from here and standing athwart the western sky with a relief which is subdued only in tone, are two mounds mis-called buttes. They are the monuments or perhaps the joint monument of one of the pyrotechnic glories of nature that prevailed thousands of years ago perhaps, at a time when the hardening of the earth's crust had not acquired so much headway nadirward; and wherever there was a fissure, the great masses of mother matter came hissing and hurtling forth from the realms of Tartarus and were scattered upon the landscape far and wide. Great boulders surround the mound at irregular intervals, looking like the mummified remains of dusky sentinels still standing guard over what