

this not the case and we are glad when the speaker sits down. There is an excellent chapter on "stuttering," with many wise suggestions.

J. G. M.

Practical Cheesemaking: A General Guide to the Manufacture of Cheese. By C. W. Walker-Tisdale and Walter E. Woodnutt. Pp. 182. (London: Headley Bros., Ltd., 1917.) Price 4s. 6d. net.

This book deals with the technical side of cheesemaking, and is intended to serve both as a text-book for dairy students and as a reference-book for practical cheesemakers. The subject-matter is well chosen, and whilst the explanations which are given at each stage are clear and simple, there is a great deal of practical information which it has previously been difficult to obtain in print.

Very properly, a considerable amount of space is devoted to the composition of milk and the methods which must be adopted if a milk suitable for cheesemaking is to be obtained. This side of the subject cannot be put forward too strongly, for, unless the cheesemaker can start with a reasonably pure product, no skill on her part can turn it into really first-class cheese.

Full working details of the methods used in analysing milk by the Gerber test and by the lactometer are given, also the usual tests for obtaining information as to the purity of the milk in respect of cleanliness. The nature and preparation of rennet are dealt with, and instructions given for the making of home-made rennet. The chapter treating of starter is a particularly good one, from both the theoretical and the practical points of view.

About half the book is devoted to the practice of cheesemaking, and the preparation and properties of all the best-known British varieties are dealt with in detail. This portion of the book is to be strongly recommended, for the authors' wide practical experience is drawn upon with the best results. The chapter on faults or defects of cheese should also be specially noticed.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

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On an Appearance of Colour Spectra to the Aged.

MAY I suggest that the appearances described by Mr. R. Brudenell Carter in NATURE of November 1, all harmonise with the assumption that their cause is in some way due to diffraction?

The fact of the blue internal band and the red external band, and that the diameter of the colour circle increases in size in approximate ratio to the distance of the light viewed, seems clearly to point to this, no less than the fact that when the pupil is contracted, or when the light is viewed through a pinhole, the appearances vanish, because the actual number of diffracting elements upon which the light impinges would then be too small to give rise to the appearance.

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The spacing and the number per unit area of the diffracting elements could readily be estimated from the data so clearly given. Whether they take the form of particles or of lacunæ in the humours of the eye, or whether due to some alternating structure of the lens, is a matter on which I am not competent to express any opinion.

It is interesting that Tyndall had a somewhat similar case brought to his notice, to which reference is made in his "Notes on Light" delivered at the Royal Institution in 1869 (Longmans, Green and Co., 1890, p. 54) in the following words:—

"One of the most interesting cases of diffraction by small particles that ever came before me was that of an artist whose vision was disturbed by vividly coloured circles. When he came to me he was in great dread of losing his sight, assigning as a cause of his increased fear that the circles were becoming larger and the colours more vivid. I ascribed the colours to minute particles in the humours of the eye, and encouraged him by the assurance that the increase of size and vividness indicated that the diffracting particles were becoming smaller, and that they might finally be altogether absorbed. The prediction was verified."

JULIUS RHEINBERG.

23 The Avenue, Brondesbury Park,
London, N.W.6, November 5.

I AM much obliged to you for permitting me to see Mr. Rheinberg's interesting letter, and am humiliated by the proof of my forgetfulness of the passage from Tyndall, which I must often have read in past years. But, as a pathologist, I incline to my supposition of lenticular inefficiency, perhaps only an excess of that which is universal as life advances, for I do not see how the occurrence of a cloud of particles in the ocular media, in otherwise healthy and perfectly effective organs, is to be explained. Nor is it probable that the cloud, if it existed, would be of similar density in the two eyes, or that it could exist at all without some impairment of sight. In my own case, at least, the colour circles of the two eyes are of equal size and brightness.

R. BRUDENELL CARTER.

76 South Side, Clapham Common, S.W.4,
November 10.

Paraffin a Scottish Product.

IN Lt.-Commr. Wimperis's interesting article on "Coal-gas for Motor Traction," which appears in NATURE of November 1, he says:—"Paraffin can be used quite well on slow-moving vehicles . . . but this, again, is not home-produced."

I should like to point out that paraffin is, and always has been, a Scottish product; and it is fortunate indeed for the country that it is so. No doubt Lt.-Commr. Wimperis is thinking of the similar petroleum products which are imported, but paraffin oil distilled from shale is exclusively a home product. So satisfactory is paraffin oil as an engine fuel that it has been adopted by the Board of Agriculture for Scotland for use by their agricultural tractors on its merits in preference to the foreign product.

H. R. J. CONACHER.

High Holm, Horsewood Road, Bridge of Weir,
November 3.

MR. CONACHER is quite right. I should have said that before the war Scotland was able to produce a very useful, though small, percentage of our home demand for paraffin. What the proportion may be now I do not know.

H. E. WIMPERIS.

November 8.