

very imperfect water-supply. As, however, the control of this has been placed in the hands of the Agricultural Department I shall not further remark upon it. There is one phase of the question, however, the treatment of which I consider devolves upon this department—*i.e.*, the conservation and care of the meat when it is passed from the slaughterhouse to the butcher's shop. Were the retailers of any other article of diet to expose their wares in the way in which the butchers, large as well as small, do, there would at once be a great outcry. Take even the best shops that we see in any of our large towns. The meat is exposed to every wind which blows, and to every particle of dust which is carried by that wind. There is no question whatever but that disease can be spread in such a way, and I feel it my duty to draw your attention to this most important matter. To remedy this should not be a difficult problem. The meat could be enclosed between two layers of glass, which space could be properly aerated by means of a fan. The meat would in this way be protected completely from contamination by the hundred-and-one forms of filth which is blown about in every large town, while the appeal to the customer's eye would still be as strong as it is now, and far more pleasing would be their reflections.

Milk.

The consideration of the milk-supply occupied the attention of Parliament last session. The result was expressed in the Dairy Inspection Act. Under this Act the Agricultural Department require all dairies, or places where milk, butter, &c., is deposited or exposed for sale, to be registered. They also require that these places shall be constructed according to a certain model, which is a very good one. So far so good. They endeavour to insure that no contamination can take place during its journey from the cow to the dairy; but it must not be forgotten that its journey from the dairy to consumer is attended with very great risk.

There is, unfortunately, not the slightest room for questioning the truth of many of the statements which have been made in reference to dirty milk. It cannot be otherwise when one considers the slipshod methods in use by the retailer as well as the buyer of the milk. It would be unfair to a great number of milk-vendors to say that all are dirty, but the fact remains that not a few of them take little or no trouble to profess the virtue of cleanliness, even if they have it. The cans are not bright, the carts are often dirty, and the clothing of the dispenser not infrequently shows unmistakable evidences of a rubbing acquaintanceship with cows and cowbails. Then, again, the customer does what he can to aid and abet the vendor by providing an open vessel like a jug to receive the dust and dirt as well as the milk. It seems marvellous that no company has seen its way to undertake the retailing of milk in the tasteful, cleanly way in which one sees it done on the Continent or in some parts of London—bright clean carts, clean polished pans, pasteurised milk from guaranteed herds, and, above all, clean, tidy servants dressed in spotless linen, and success, I feel sure, would be attained.

The local authorities have power to control and prescribe the conditions under which the sale of this article of diet alone can be conducted. The department has in many cases urged upon local authorities the necessity for constant and careful supervision of this important article. We have offered to analyse any samples of milk they care to send to us, and we trust by this means many complaints which are now, with more or less justice, urged against the condition of the milk, as supplied in some of the large cities, may be removed.

HOUSE-REFUSE.

The common practice of burying house-refuse, in close proximity of dwellinghouses, is not always the innocent-looking innocuous operation it would seem. It has been suggested that this method of disposing of house-refuse, consisting of papers, rags, old boots, &c., can do no great harm. If the composition of this mixture was always of such a nature, possibly there might not be. Any one, however, who has visited a house-refuse depot will have seen that the contents of such places are not in any sense such as described. Dead cats, unsound meat, potatoes, portions of uncooked food, all go to form this mixture which is termed "house-refuse." There are only two ways in which this can be at all satisfactorily disposed of. First, by means of a destructor. There can be no doubt that this is the best way, and it is only a matter for the near future when every town of any importance will be required to establish such a factory. I do not intend here to enter into the varying qualities of destructors, but there are several kinds upon the market, each one of which is able to do the work required of it. Secondly, house-refuse may be got rid of by burying it. If this mode of disposal be decided on, the cemetery ought always to be some considerable distance from any dwellinghouse. The plan of making up land or reclaiming boggy city areas by means of house-refuse is one to be condemned. Only by a liberal mixture of good soil, and daily burning and burial can all nuisance be avoided. The building of houses over such made-up ground ought not to be permitted until several years have elapsed.

NIGHTSOIL.

The disposal of house-refuse naturally leads us to the consideration of how to dispose of the nightsoil. The best method of removing and destroying excrementitious matters in places where no water-carriage system is in vogue is one of those sanitary problems which seem well-nigh impossible to answer with any sense of finality. In New Zealand many methods are in vogue—from the self-willed advocate of freedom, who buries it in his own backyard as an odorous protest against what he terms an interference with his rights as an individual, to the local authority which collects and disposes of it without nuisance or danger.

In sparsely populated districts, where houses are far apart, no better plan can be adopted than the burying of the nightsoil in the garden; but even here there is a right and a wrong way. The practice often followed of digging a deep hole, and simply throwing in the stuff until it becomes full, is the wrong way. As the destruction of all faecal matter is effected through