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# *The nineteenth century butter markets of South Tipperary*

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By William Jenkins

Before the rise of co-operative creameries at the start of this century, the dairy economy of southern Ireland had been dominated for over a century from the second half of the eighteenth century by the famous Cork butter market, established in 1769. This natural export outlet for the Munster dairying province shipped Irish butter in firkins to a variety of worldwide destinations.<sup>1</sup> As many as 77,000 out of 209,000 firkins exported from Cork to designated termini in 1825 went to Portugal for re-export to Brazil and the British West Indies; in 1858, 60,000 firkins were shipped to Melbourne, Australia.<sup>2</sup>

However, the Cork butter market did not monopolise the rich pasture region of central Munster; ports such as Waterford and Limerick received most of the butter traffic from their hinterlands. In 1823, for example, a total of 112,450 cwt. of butter was exported through Waterford, with 54,473 firkins being exported through Limerick.<sup>3</sup> After 1850, the Irish export trade in butter tended to be confined more and more to Britain.

Peel's adoption of a free trade policy in 1846 opened the English market to all comers and Irish producers were faced with European competition in their geographically nearest market. South Tipperary was at the heart of a wide-ranging commercial network in which farm-produced, heavily-salted butter had been sold in firkins to the butter merchants at the markets of Tipperary town, Carrick-on-Suir and Clonmel and then exported through either the port of Cork, Limerick or Waterford.

In South Tipperary the dairying focus lay to the west around Tipperary town, where one of the largest butter markets in Ireland was located during the nineteenth century. A butter market building established by the local magistrates was in existence in Church Street around 1852, but the precise year of its establishment is not known.<sup>4</sup> This market, run from 1870 by a joint committee of merchants and farmers, increased in importance, producing what Marnane calls "a merchant elite" of butter buyers and agents in the town.<sup>5</sup> Milch cows as a percentage of total cattle for the six baronies of Tipperary South Riding help to identify where the core dairying areas were in 1880. They reveal that the highest percentage proportions (over 40%) were in the western baronies of Clanwilliam, Iffa and Offa West, and Kilnamanagh Lower.<sup>6</sup>

A government inquiry into the state of fairs and markets in Ireland in 1853 estimated that some 150,000 firkins of butter per annum passed through the market in Tipperary; in Clonmel and Carrick-on-Suir the corresponding figures were estimated at 20,000.<sup>7</sup> Clonmel's merchants were apparently purchasing a "vast quantity" of butter in outlying towns during the 1860s, none of which passed through the town's market. Instead, it was rather qualified (classed) and branded by the merchants in their cellars, so caution is required in using firkin throughput to indicate the volume of trade at a butter market.<sup>8</sup>

By the early 1880s, the trade in butter in Tipperary was estimated to amount to 160,000 firkins, some 60,000 of which were sold annually at the local butter merchant's private stores, while the remainder were inspected at the town's public market, still the second largest in Ireland.<sup>9</sup> Occasional information on firkin throughput in the butter markets of Tipperary and

Cork was provided in the *Farmer's Gazette*, and is useful for describing their comparative scales. Table 1 provides this information for nine selected days throughout the year 1880.

TABLE 1  
Firkins throughput at Tipperary and Cork butter markets on selected days, 1880

Day	Tipperary	Cork
January 8	73	309
March 13	20	206
April 17	219	708
May 29	586	1,7198
July 10	433	2,434
August 14	275	1,351
September 15	378	1,000
October 23	234	1,434
December 25	78	898

Source: *Farmer's Gazette*, above dates, 1880.

Cork was clearly a more important butter market; the merchants there exerted geographical influence over the whole of Cork county as well as most of county Kerry and a small portion of South Tipperary in the eyes of a large farmer from North Cork.<sup>10</sup> Tipperary's area of influence was restricted to its hinterland, which had a radius of up to twenty miles. The seasonal pattern is evident but is not as sharp as one might expect.

Cork's total firkin throughput in 1880 was 432,000.<sup>11</sup> Variation in firkin throughput was high even during the summer production peak. For example, the daily throughputs in Tipperary recorded for June, 1880 (not in Table 1) gave a maximum of 613 firkins (on the 26th) as against a minimum of 314 (one week earlier on the 19th). For such reasons, as well as the patchy nature of the data and the fact that there was a leakage of firkin butter direct to merchants' stores, extrapolating this data to estimate annual firkin throughput for Tipperary butter market may not be an accurate procedure.

In the southern dairying region milk was left for a number of days in the farmer's house until the cream had naturally separated itself from the skim milk. After rising to the top, the cream was then skimmed off and churned until butter was produced. This butter was then put into the firkin and it often took days or even weeks, depending on the herd size, for farmers to fill their firkins. Firkins were constructed by coopers who had an ubiquitous presence in nineteenth-century Irish towns. Because the firkin was being gradually filled in by butter over a period of time, the quality of the butter had often deteriorated dramatically by the time the firkin was full.

This pattern varied in response to scale. Larger farms with resident landowners benefited from direct investment in farm dairies and an overall attitude towards improvement. One large-farming landowner, for example, from north Cork farmed 1,000 statute acres with over 100 cows and had three separate dairies. The butter produced here was shipped on to London rather than Cork.<sup>12</sup> The scale of these farms and the size of herds meant that butter was produced quicker and was qualitatively of a higher standard.

Charles Hemphill, a county judge resident in Dublin with a Tipperary property, recalled a neighbour there with 70 milch cows who could make a firkin of butter in a day and perhaps send six firkins away in a week.<sup>13</sup> A production rate of roughly similar magnitude to this was



that of one of the Tipperary town butter merchants, Thomas Reardon, who kept a dairy for 60 cows and sold approximately 180 firkins a year in the mid-1850s.<sup>14</sup>

It is certain, however, that most Irish farmers who produced butter shared similar styles of production with a typical small farm in County Kilkenny. This farm, 15 statute acres in area, kept four cows and made five firkins of butter between May and October in the 1880s.<sup>15</sup> A resident near Tipperary town later estimated that around the turn of the century the milk of one cow could produce three firkins of butter a year. This estimate, mentioned at a time when the Tipperary butter market was all but finished, is similar to Reardon's production rate half a century earlier. This demonstrates the limits to the growth of the firkin butter production system.<sup>16</sup>

Analysis of the small-farm evidence above also suggests that the milk of four cows for butter could fill one firkin during a summer month. The evidence from Reardon and Hemphill above suggests that approximately 18 firkins would be produced during a similar month by 70 cows. These firkins found their way to the urban butter merchants and exporters via either direct sale or the butter markets. The buyers in urban areas visited smaller towns and villages in their hinterlands to purchase butter. The following describes the activities of two butter agents operating in neighbouring County Limerick:<sup>17</sup>

*On Monday . . . we start for a small village called Bruff . . . we generally arrive there at 11.35 a.m. A bell is rang at 12 o'clock, being the hour appointed for buying to commence . . . Along each side of the street . . . are lined cars, which contain the butter offered for sale. Of course it must be understood there is no such things as prices being fixed or butter qualified in any of the markets in this district. We have to do both ourselves. We go up to a farmer and examine his butter and ask him his price; if we agree, his butter is marked with chalk, each buyer having a different mark. The butter, when all sold, is then taken to a weigh-house, where we have to examine it for fraud, such as bad butter in sides, water, over heavy tares, all of which some years ago used to be of frequent occurrence, but are happy to say are rarely met with now. This being done, each buyer gets his turn at the scales and weighs his butter, which he then hands over to a carrier, who takes charge of it and carts it to Limerick for 4d. per firkin. Our next performance is to get the butter paid for and then . . . start on our road home, the butter purchased following us, being carted during the night, and reaching our [Limerick] store at six o'clock on Tuesday morning. Our work then on Tuesday commences by inspecting and qualifying butter bought in Bruff, the coopers stripping every firkin to ascertain the exact weight of the empty firkin, which is scribed at the time on the side of every firkin. We have two markets to attend on Tuesday – Shana Golden and Rathkeal . . . The butter bought in these markets comes to us by rail, and is delivered the following morning, when the same routine is again gone through. The principal market days we have in Limerick are Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, the butter brought in on other days being practically nothing. Buying begins each day at eleven o'clock. The buying in Limerick market differs considerably from that in the country markets; one of the first differences is that the butter is all weighed and tared before we buy it, each farmer getting a ticket of the weights and tares of his butter, which he hands to his broker, through whom nearly all the butter in Limerick is sold.*

This passage contributes much to our understanding of the butter trade at the level of the smaller rural villages. The trading areas of some butter buyers were evidently quite substantial; one Tipperary town butter merchant, Michael Coleman, bought butter throughout counties Clare and Kerry in the 1850s.<sup>18</sup> Another, Maurice Hayes, owned butter stores in both Clonmel and Tipperary town.<sup>19</sup> Such high levels of mobility for butter buyers and agents was greatly



facilitated by the development of railways and road transport. Tolls were charged to farmers when butter was sold in the town market; in Tipperary, the toll was three old pence (3d.) and in Limerick five old pence (5d.).<sup>20</sup> The butter was then sold on to the exporters at the ports.

Tipperary was the most important centre; thirteen butter buyers operated here in 1889, compared to three in Clonmel and one in Carrick-on-Suir.<sup>21</sup> The following retrospective description of the Tipperary butter market as it functions in the late nineteenth century captures the transfer of butter from farm to market.<sup>22</sup> (The writer was a doctor who practised in Tipperary town for many decades):

*On four days of each week from farm houses all over the surrounding country, many of them more than twenty miles distant, some hundred of firkins of butter, each weighing about 70 lb., were brought to the butter market. Here they were bought by six local butter merchants and afterwards removed to the stores of the different buyers and prepared for dispatch to England. Often, as a small boy on my way to school, I stood at the entrance to the Mart to listen to the voice of the salesmaster's clerk calling out somewhat musically the weight of each firkin as it was placed on the scales. The butter trade gave a considerable amount of local employment and brought a great deal of business to the town. When the market was over, farmers, who were often accompanied by their wives, purchased what they required in the shops. In the evening on all roads leading out of the town horse-drawn carts could be seen on their homeward journeys laden with provisions . . .*

It is likely that, given its relative proximity to Limerick, the Tipperary butter market competed with the butter market there. Tolls for butter-weighing were lower in Tipperary, and railway rates charged for butter transport were more favourable if the butter was to go to Tipperary town than Limerick from stations as near to Limerick as New Pallas.<sup>23</sup> A contemporary photograph of the New Tipperary butter market in the 1890s shows farmers standing in front of lines of butter firkins with merchants gathered around them and coming to agreements of sale.<sup>24</sup> This arcade was the centrepiece of New Tipperary, built in 1889 for the Smith-Barry tenants faced with eviction, and was located on the property of William Hurley, a leading butter merchant and tenant-activist.<sup>25</sup>

Changes in the numbers of butter merchants and butter agents in the main towns of South Tipperary between 1823 and 1870 plus the ports of Limerick and Waterford are shown in Table 2. Increased numbers of butter merchants in Tipperary town in the post-Famine (1847) period are noticeable.

TABLE 2  
Change in butter merchant/agent numbers in selected Munster towns, 1823-1870

	1823	1846	1870
Tipperary	6	2	12
Clonmel	4*	4	5
Carrick-on-Suir	3	4	2
Limerick	n.a.	9	n.a.
Waterford	12	14	11

\* denotes an estimate; n.a. := not available.

Source: *Pigot's directory, 1824; Slater's directories 1846, 1870.*

Butter merchants also acted as an important source of credit for many dairy farmers in the



nineteenth century. They formed part of the larger group of rural retailers, shopkeepers, and other traders who provided the most accessible supply of credit to a farming population excluded from an emerging banking system that was selective in its choice of clients.<sup>26</sup> Cork butter merchants were famous for their money-lending activities, which appear to have extended to a large portion of southern Ireland. Consider the following evidence from a Limerick farmer, resident near Donoman Castle:<sup>27</sup>

*Commercial ties bring [the farmer] to Cork . . . There are advances of money to farmers in the early part of the season, and they enter into a covenant to send all their butter in the season. On those conditions, they are advanced a certain amount of money for the purpose of purchasing stock or increasing their number of dairy cows, and they are supposed to send all the butter made by them to the Cork butter market, and they pay the merchant an excessive interest . . . the average being 6% . . . The smaller class of butter-makers, who have not sufficient capital, have to adopt this course . . .*

Since parts of southern Tipperary were not outside the sphere of influence of the Cork merchants, it is likely that they advanced loans to farmers there too. Did butter merchants in Tipperary, Clonmel, and Carrick-on-Suir undertake similar practices? There is no evidence to indicate that they did, although it is likely that the practice of money-lending by local butter merchants did exist to some extent. Certainly, the privately-owned creameries that displaced the butter market trade in the region around Tipperary town in the 1850s were not slow to advance loans to farmers in the area.<sup>28</sup> Many farmers had the usual ties of clientelism to other local shopkeepers and traders, in any case.

The butter trade in Ireland was not wholly run by the Irish commercial interests, however, as



Lawrence photo of Arcade – the entrance to New Tipperary butter market, 1890. – Photo courtesy National Library of Ireland.

butter buying companies from England employed agents in Ireland to purchase butter at country towns and markets. Increased prosperity within the manufacturing districts in Britain such as Manchester created a large demand for butter as an article of food, and Manchester was the base for two of Ireland's largest butter purchasers – Messrs. Pearson & Rutter, and the Co-operative Wholesale Society (CWS).<sup>29</sup> Use of archival material of the latter society gives insight on their butter-buying activities.

The CWS was established in 1864 as a federation of consumers' associations to act as wholesalers to the co-operative shops, and its policy was geared towards helping the co-operative consumer with the best quality goods at the lowest possible price, taking it not only into wholesaling, but also into manufacturing and primary production. Since its own production could not supply all the wholesaling requirements, it had buying depots in Europe, North America, and Australia. Its first butter-buying depot in Ireland was opened in 1866 in Tipperary town, followed in 1868 by another in nearby Kilmallock in county Limerick. Early in 1870, the steady growth of the large CWS trade in the salt Irish butter led to the establishment of a further depot and new headquarters in Limerick city.<sup>30</sup> Later depots were opened in Armagh (1873), Waterford (1873) and Tralee (1874).

During its first ten years the CWS prospered on butter, which was its most important single commercial article, accounting for one-third of its annual sales. The author of the Society's golden jubilee history stated that "by 1870, the Society had become the most considerable exporter from Ireland, albeit the trade was controlled in their spare time, or in time granted by retail societies, by a committee of working men who for the most part had never seen the sister isle".<sup>31</sup>

In 1879, approximately 3% of the CWS workforce were employed in Ireland, or 29 out of 964.<sup>32</sup> Guy's directory of Munster does not reveal any CWS buyer to be operating from Tipperary town for 1893, the only CWS butter buyer in South Tipperary being situated instead in Clonmel. However, two butter agents in Tipperary, George Harrison and John Heuston, bought butter for two other Manchester-based firms, Hudson and Miller, and J. and J. Lonsdale & Co., respectively.<sup>33</sup>

Irish firkin butter, farm-produced and heavily salted, maintained a dominant position in the British market until the second half of the nineteenth century, when competing countries such as Denmark, Sweden, France and the Netherlands began to make a significant impact. The repeal of the Corn Laws and the importation of cheap grain into western Europe in the 1860s and 1870s led other countries into dairying on a large scale, although Daly has noted that livestock numbers were increasing in Denmark (Ireland's main competitor in the British market in the 1880s) from the 1850s.<sup>34</sup>

The British dairy farmer by contrast had few worries, the industry there being in a phase of restructuring with more milk being devoted to liquid milk production to supply the expanding urban populations using the railway network. London's milkshed, for example, was extended from about 10 miles before 1840 to 20-25 miles in 1860, and to 200 miles by 1900.<sup>35</sup> Transport costs and the problem of quick spoilage ensured that British milk producers had a monopoly in the home market, and farmers who were suitably located could profit from their liquid milk, sold fresh, as from butter.<sup>36</sup> There were even reports of fresh milk being exported to London from the Netherlands.<sup>37</sup>

Opportunities for foreign producers to supply the British household's butter were now more pronounced. When British retailers and consumers looked for neatness in packaging, exact weights, freshness, and uniformity of colour, texture, and taste, they were more likely to find these attributes in continental produce rather than in Cork or other Irish butter.<sup>38</sup> The guarantee



from countries such as Denmark of a uniform product all year round soon produced in London a taste for fresh, as distinct from salted, Irish butter.<sup>39</sup> Irish farmers, on the other hand, preferred to accumulate stocks of butter during the summer months, which they worked off during the winter months, so butter production was still highly seasonal.<sup>40</sup> The shift in British consumer tastes away from salt Irish butter is clear in Table 3.

TABLE 3  
The decline of the Tipperary Butter Market, 1892-1903

Year	Irish Butter Packages (cwts.)	Foreign Butter Packages (cwts.)
1848	379,000 (39.6%)	577,888 (60.4%)
1858	292,571 (33.2%)	589,614 (66.8%)
1868	66,422 (5.6%)	1,116,126 (94.4%)
1878	14,167 (1.1%)	1,295,646 (98.9%)
1884	5,168 (0.3%)	1,703,772 (99.7%)

Source: HC (1885), *Report of the Select Committee on Industries (Ireland)*, p. 199.

The difference between Irish butter and the Continental brands lay in uniformity of quality, but this was not the only problem the Irish butter merchant and exporter had to contend with. Butter substitutes such as butterine and margarine were now coming on to the British market. Cork merchants, faced with a collapse in their butter prices, regarded butterine, a Dutch-American concoction of Danish butter mixed with margarine developed in the late 1870s, as the chief cause of their woes.<sup>41</sup> Having lost the bulk of its British market share to the Continental butter brands, Irish firkin butter now had competitors not only in Britain but also at home. A butter merchant in Cork city, W. J. Lane, described the situation thus:<sup>42</sup>

*One line of steamers from Rotterdam has brought no less than 14,00 packages of butterine to Dublin [for the first six months of 1885] . . . The Danish butter is only sold in Dublin in Ireland, but it has completely taken the place of Irish butter for all the higher grades. The lower grades in butter are supplied almost exclusively by butterine; so that as a matter of fact for some years past the requirements of the public in Dublin have been catered for by Danish butter and Dutch butterine, to the exclusion of Irish butter.*

The only logical response to this dramatic reversal was the construction of creameries to try to produce a uniform product to compete with the Continental brands. It would appear that the methods by which Irish butter was produced, sold, transported and marketed in Britain were at fault. Butter was still being produced at farm level in Ireland c. 1880, whereas in Denmark it was in the process of being centralised at the local level among a number of farmers. Thanks to agricultural reforms introduced in the second half of the eighteenth century, Denmark's farmers had more freedom to operate as regards farm improvement and political participation; moreover, the farmers there formed their own organisations to deal with political, technical, economic and cultural matters of common interest at local level.<sup>43</sup>

In contrast, the land tenure situation in Ireland was still dominated by the estate system. This in turn meant that the owners of a great number of farms, being in many cases absentee landlords, had little contact with the day-to-day operation of these farms. Neither were many of them interested in improving the structure of farms on their estates. It seems that a fundamental lack of structural improvement on many Irish farms which produced butter was



an impediment to progress and improvement in production. Most Irish farms had no dairies as such for the storage of milk, and where these existed, many were poorly structured with "earthen floors and dirty thatched roofs".<sup>44</sup> Lane commented on this situation:<sup>45</sup>

*I am very sorry to say we have no such thing at all as dairies in Ireland in the proper acceptation of the word. In the vast majority of cases, the small farmers use their ordinary sleeping and dwelling rooms as their dairy rooms; it is not an unusual thing to walk into a sleeping room of a well-to-do Irish farmer and to find the milk placed in pails all round the bedroom to set for cream; and even where they have dairy accommodation, it is of a character that is altogether inferior to what is in vogue in Belgium, and all over the continental countries, and in America.*

It is worth comparing this description of rather unhygienic conditions with a account of the structural state of the French dairy farms of Normandy at roughly the same time:<sup>46</sup>

*The farms in Normandy are generally large, from 30 to over 100 cows being kept. The dairies consist of three apartments; first, milk dairy; second, churning room; and, washing room (some with a boiler). They are generally flagged, the floors having a good fall to carry off water. All the farmers who made the best butter send it direct to Paris.*

It is not surprising that under such conditions uniformity of quality was not a characteristic of Irish firkin butter. Moreover, the salt content of Irish firkin butter did not suit the British consumers, and as butter was produced on a farm basis, uniformity was rarely achieved. Countries such as Denmark had also successfully promoted winter dairying and so their supply of butter to Britain was much more even on an annual basis than the Irish.

A cartoon depicting this situation shows boats carrying imports of Danish butter to Ireland during the winter and is juxtaposed with the image of the lazy and complacent Irish farmer. This cartoon from 1910 was well chosen by Ó Gráda, and shows that the problems associated with winter dairying in Ireland were a long way from being solved, although Ó Gráda argues that the small premium offered by creameries for winter milk probably would not have justified the costly switch from summer dairying.<sup>47</sup>

Apart from a price collapse, there were, it seems, few incentives available to the majority of butter producers to improve the quality of their product for export. Although it was not the only butter market in the Munster dairying region, the Cork butter market was the best-known internationally. By the second half of the nineteenth century the improved quality of competing continental brands meant that Cork butter was now receiving the highest prices.

The problems did not only exist in the production sphere. Such low prices combined with other abuses left the entire operation of the Cork butter market open to heavy criticism. Admittedly the Cork butter market authorities had little control over the quality of butter presented for inspection. However, they had it largely within their power to ensure that produce which received an official brand was equal to its stated quality. Despite this, Cork butter was inaccurately classified often enough to impair seriously its reputation as a reliable and trustworthy article of trade and the market fell in 1884.<sup>48</sup> Improvements were effected by the new trustees appointed to reorganise the market; yet they could not transform an antiquated system into a modern marketing instrument.<sup>49</sup>

Trade imperfections were also present at the privately-owned Tipperary butter market, although the extent of these is unknown. In the 1850s about two-thirds of butter there was branded first-quality, but butter merchant Robert Hewson noted that<sup>50</sup>

*the farmers fill the middle of the firkin sometimes with pickle; they also colour it with some sort of drug, and also buy the scrapings that are taken out of the tops of the firkins, and mix them with other butter; the latter is the fraud most practiced here.*<sup>48</sup>

At the public butter market in Clonmel the butter merchant was not obliged to accept the qualification of the market inspector. The inspector there, Thomas Chaytor, explained that in the 1850s “the merchant . . . could put ‘first quality’ on butter qualified as third-quality, although Clonmel butter ranges very high in the London market . . . no adulterated butter comes in here; when we catch them, we deal very severely with them”.<sup>49</sup>

While no evidence of such abuses are available for Tipperary, there was a decline in the firkin throughput at Tipperary market from 1892,<sup>52</sup> the years 1894-1898 being particularly significant as Table 4 shows.

TABLE 4  
Change in butter merchant/agent numbers in selected Munster towns, 1823-1870

Year	No. of Firkins	Tolls (£)	Costs (£)	Profit (£)
1892	35,931	No further information		
1893	31,676	389	283	106
1894	29,035	350	249	101
1895	18,476	231	230	1
1896	14,058	234	195	39
1897	11,281	188	136	52
1898	8,716	145	96	49
1899	6,101	102	87	15
1900	5,617	105	55	50
1901	4,271	No further information		
1902	2,817	No further information		
1903	772	No further information		

Source: Smith-Barry estate records.

The decline of the Tipperary butter market was hastened by the arrival of the Condensed Milk Co. of Ireland to the town in 1898. This firm, run by the Cleeve family from Limerick, was to establish an impressive network of condenseries and creameries all over the South by the early 1900s. Clonmel and Carrick-on-Suir were other favoured locations. In 1899, the firm was manufacturing 6,000 gallons of milk daily for condensing purposes – 15,000 gallons at the peak of the season – in the Tipperary plant, besides making butter.<sup>53</sup> With such volumes of milk being deflected away from on-farm butter-making and towards centralised creamery manufacture, it is no wonder that James Power of Donohill commented in 1902 that “very little butter is sold [at Tipperary] as the farmers in general send the milk to the creameries . . . the few farmers who still follow the old system send the butter salted and packed in casks to the market”.<sup>54</sup>

Not only in production and marketing but also in transport was the functioning of the Irish butter trade being criticised. Usually, the effects of train movement and hygiene would have adverse effects on the taste of butter. Such problems were minimised for continental exports through the use of special butter vans. The same level of attention was lacking in Ireland, which had one Cork butter merchant complaining that

*The butter arrives in a very filthy condition, thanks to the carrying companies between Ireland*

and England, which are almost all Irish . . . the chief complaint being of the line from Cork via Dublin to Liverpool.<sup>55</sup>

It is important to remember that the continental invasion of the British butter market predated the invention of the centrifugal separator. The Danes experimented with the idea of butter factories in the 1870s. These first attempted to undertake a wholesale trade in Danish butter with the blending and mixing together of different farmers' butter, its subsequent freshening and washing to try and create homogeneity. These factories, privately-run, were not economically successful as the farmers lost time and money bringing their butter to the market. There were numerous intermediate profits between them and the consumer.<sup>56</sup>

Private creameries (*mælkerier*) were next established in Denmark, collecting cream from the farms of the surrounding districts, and although they centralised butter production, the mixture of cream of different ages constituted a material of uncertain quality.<sup>57</sup> However, the invention of the centrifugal separator in the 1870s revolutionised butter-making.

Two decades later there were few farms in South Tipperary that were not within six miles of a creamery, whether it was built with co-operative or private capital. The introduction of creameries effected changes in the structures of labour and production in the farming household, as well as creating new interaction patterns in rural communities of both an economic and social nature. *Ach sin scéal eile.*

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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#### FOOTNOTES

1. A firkin was a small oak cask which holds about 70 lbs. of butter.
2. Donnelly, J. S. (1971), "Cork Market: Its Role in the Nineteenth Century Irish Butter Trade", *Studia Hibernica*, 2, pp 130-131.
3. *Pigot & Co's City of Dublin Directory and Hiobernia Provincial Directory 1824*, pp 316 and 281.
4. House of Commons (hereafter HC) 1835, *Report of Commissioners appointed to inquire into the State of Farms and Markets in Ireland, Part II, Minutes of Evidence* (hereafter *Report on Irish Farms and Markets 1835*), evidence of Robert Hewson, Q. 3749.
5. Marnane, D. (1987), *Land and Violence: A History of West Tipperary since 1660*, Tipperary, p. 67.
6. HC (1881), *Agricultural Statistics of Ireland for the year 1880*.
7. *Report on Irish Fairs and Markets 1855*, evidence of Thomas Chaytor (Clonmel) Q. 4050 and Thomas O'Neill (Carrick-on-Suir), Q. 4508.
8. Donnelly, op. cit., p. 314.
9. Ibid.
10. HC (1881) *Royal Commission of Agriculture, Part XV: Minute of Evidence before Her Majesty's Commissioners on Agriculture* (hereafter *Royal Commission on Agriculture*), evidence of William Bence Jones, Q 9985.
11. O'Donovan, J. (1940), *The Economic History of Livestock in Ireland*, Dublin, Appendix E, p. 443.
12. *Royal Commission on Agriculture*, evidence of W. Bence Jones, QQ. 9938-54.
13. Ibid., evidence of C. H. Hemphill QC, Q. 27697.
14. *Report on Irish Fairs and Markets 1855*, evidence of Thomas Reardon, Q. 3765.
15. *Royal Commission of Agriculture*, evidence of Patrick Phelan, QQ. 14961-997.
16. NATIONAL Archives, Irish Agricultural Organisation Society correspondence files (hereinafter NA-IAOS), Ballinard file 1088/29A/5, Form A, February 20, 1901.



17. Co-operative Wholesale Society (1880), *Almanack and Diary*.
18. *Report on Irish Fairs and Markets 1955*, evidence of Michael Coleman, Q. 3770.
19. *Slater's National Commercial Directory of Ireland 1881*.
20. HC (1889), *Report of Royal Commission on Market Rights and Tolls on Charters and Records relating to the History of Fairs and Markets in the United Kingdom: Report of the Commissioners into the State of Fairs and Markets in Ireland* (hereinafter *Report on Irish Fairs and Markets 1884*), evidence of R. Hickey, Q. 1749.
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