

A MODERN INDUSTRY.

THE PREPARATION OF CONDENSED MILK:

Most people are familiar with the appearance of a tin of Nestlé's milk, for this far-famed brand is used all over the world; but probably comparatively few people know precisely of what this milk consists or how it is prepared.

It was my good fortune to see the process under ideal conditions at the Aylesbury Condensery, one of the most important of the English factories of the Nestlé and Anglo-Swiss Condensed Milk Company, St. George's House, 6 & 8, Eastcheap, London, E.C.

An hour's run from London with only a stop at Harrow, with its far-famed hill and steeple-crowned church, brought us to Aylesbury, the courtly town of Buckinghamshire, with its interesting market-place where stands conspicuous the virile statue, in bronze, of John Hampden, known to fame as the Buckinghamshire patriot who refused to pay the 'ship money' levied by Charles I, and whose honourable public and private life was ended at Chalgrove Field where he fell mortally wounded in a skirmish with the King's troops under Prince Rupert. The verdure of the surrounding country and the luxuriance and beauty of the creepers on many of the houses of Aylesbury made one realize that the valley in which it is situated must be ideal for dairy purposes, and one was not surprised at its widespread reputation as a centre of dairy farming.

Manifestly, the Anglo-Swiss Milk Company did wisely to plant a Condensery just here.

Its object is, of course, to procure fresh, rich milk, and to preserve it under hygienic conditions in portable form, so that it can easily be transported far and wide.

Milk, as originally drawn from the cow, contains approximately 87.55 per cent. of water; therefore, if you can eliminate a considerable proportion of that water, which can be replaced by the consumer before use, you have solved the problem of portability and easy distribution, and this is what is done so successfully at Aylesbury. The

full-cream condensed milk sent out from the factory contains only 24 per cent. water, the odd 63 per cent. being extracted in the process of condensation.

Many things, however, must contribute to the perfection of the finished product; and essentially the quality and purity of the milk condensed. Therefore, supervision by the management begins before the milk—drawn as by a magnet from the surrounding farms—enters the factory gates, and inspectors frequently visit the farms under contract to supply the factory with milk, so as to ensure that only milk of fine quality, dealt with under sanitary and hygienic conditions, is used.

It is interesting to see the milk arriving at the Condensery in great cans, and, contrary to one's pre-conceived ideas, not measured, but weighed, in huge copper pans, so that the amount sent in by each farmer can be correctly estimated; from

these it passes on to a reservoir, from which it is pumped up into great tanks.

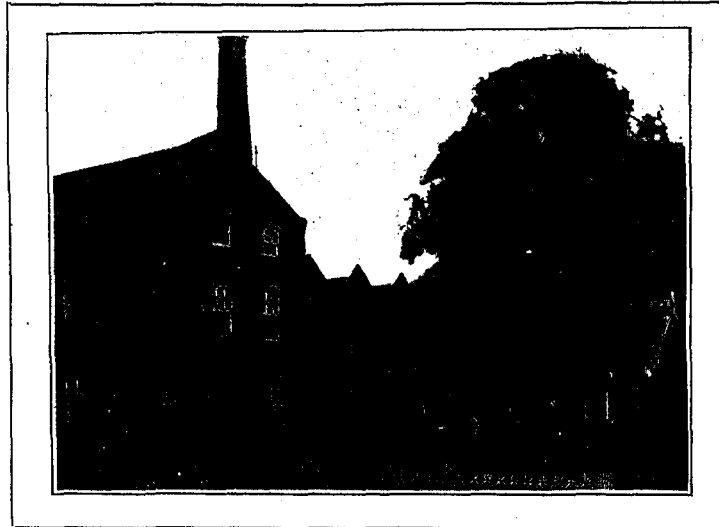
One next saw the care with which the empty cans are treated before being returned to the farmers. First they are thoroughly cleansed in hot water by brushes, one of which rotates inside, and the other scrubs the outside of the can, which is then turned upside down and a jet of steam

sprayed into it.

To return to the milk. On leaving the receiving tanks it is raised to a temperature sufficiently hot to dissolve the sugar which is added to it as a preservative, although the "Ideal Milk," the brand supplied to the Navy and Army has no sugar or other preservative added. It is found in practice, however, that when used for infant feeding, the sweetened milk ordinarily gives the best results. In these days of the strict rationing of sugar, to pass through a room containing sack upon sack of glistening white sugar, is calculated to arouse feelings of envy, but the whole of the supplies to the Nestlé's Factories are "controlled." After the addition of the sugar the milk is passed through a series of fine sieves, so that any fibre or other foreign body inadvertently introduced from the sugar bags is removed.

CONDENSING.

Then comes the all-important process of condensing. For this purpose the hot milk is drawn



AYLESBURY CONDENSERY, FROM THE OFFICE GARDEN.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)