

The Right and the Wrong.

This afternoon, sisters, I was glancing through the columns of the "men's" portion of the *ADVOCATE*—not because of any mere curiosity—oh, dear, no! nor yet because of any insane would-be-masculine desires in regard to farm management, but solely and simply because, like many another farmer maiden, I choose to be interested in the dear, beautiful country, and the farms and all that pertains to them. However, this is nothing to the point! What I'm coming to is this: In my peregrinations through the pages, the "Beet Culture," the "Corn Planting," and all the rest of it, one thing struck me forcibly—in fact, almost glared at me from every paragraph—viz., this truth: that there are two ways of doing everything—a right way and a wrong way; that the right way is essentially sensible, economical, scientific, and must lead to the best results; that, on the other hand, the wrong way is invariably foolish, extravagant, haphazard, yielding only, in a greater or lesser degree, failure and discouragement in the end. So much for a preamble!

Now, following this idea out, I began to wonder how many of us farmer women ever pause to think that this same system of *opposites* runs into *our* work as well—into the tiniest detail of it, and that it is both to our interest and our profit to find out the very best way of doing everything, and to be contented with no other. To our *interest*, I say, and repeat it, for housekeeping, buttermaking, gardening, and all the rest of it, can never become mere drudgery to the bright, intelligent woman who is determined to make of her work an *art*. To our *profit*, I say, and repeat it, because the *best* way is invariably labor-saving, "worry-saving"—and is the sparing of strength and of "nerves," no small gain? Of course, from this point of view one cannot mark down the profit in hard dollars and cents, but, as Kipling says, "that's another story," and there is much to be said of it too, but not here and now.

Laying down, then, as an axiom, that, in housekeeping as in all other things, there are two ways of doing things, a right and a wrong, let us look for a moment at the different conditions brought about by each. I have seen, and so have you, again and again, these two homes: In the first, everything runs quietly, comfortably, smoothly, as by machinery oiled. The house is, except on rare, unavoidable occasions, in perfect order, and spotlessly clean; the meals are invariably cooked to a turn, with the "right taste" to the dishes served; and the people themselves bear about with them an unruffled cheerfulness that makes one feel the better for having been in the same atmosphere with them for a while. In the second, on the contrary, bustle and confusion seem to reign continually. The place is clean enough, but "mussy." The meals always seemed to be "slopped" up, and the people, especially the women, if caught unawares, are perceptibly worried and preoccupied in manner, as though conscious of deficiency in the appearance of things, and, consequently, ill at ease.

Now, in both of these cases the people are equally respectable—fine, upright persons, whom to know is to respect—and yet one cannot help feeling that in the second home there is an element of unrest and discomfort wholly absent from the first. One cannot help seeing, also, that this discordant element is probably due, in some way, to some lack upon the part of these same ruffled women, who ought to be the true homemakers. The men must provide, the women must dispose of the provision. Their failure to do so in a comfort-giving way may be due, occasionally, to carelessness or sheer want of energy; but in nine cases out of ten the whole fault comes of lack of system, or lack of knowing how to do things in the right way.

Now, there is really no excuse for this. There are good books on housekeeping in the world, and there are good housekeepers at our very doors who are only too willing and too glad to tell anything which may help others. Any woman, therefore, who has good common sense, sharp eyes, willing hands, and a tongue to ask questions, may become a good housekeeper. Even if she be able to keep servants, she should make a point of understanding how everything is done in the right way. Of course,

the whole art of domestic science cannot be learned in a month, nor a year, nor in five years even. But that is where the interest comes in. Some of our very best housekeepers go on learning a little here, a little there, perhaps during all their lives. Hence, there is no need for any to give way to discouragement. All things become easy with practice.

It is impossible, in a single letter, to touch upon more than the barest outline of "the right and the wrong" in this line. To the whole of us the thing immediately necessary is to realize that there is a right and a wrong. The rest has to be learned in the concrete, one thing at a time. Hence I shall close by promising to give a bit of personal experience in my next letter, which may help someone afflicted, as was I, in the matter of cakemaking! Don't laugh, sisters, at this sudden drop. Only be satisfied if the cake does not drop, should you try it. My homely old name is—*"CLARISSY ANN."*

"Parting of Edgar and Lucy of Lammermoor."

Scott's loveliest and profoundest tale—the im-



By the late John Everett Millais.

"PARTING OF EDGAR AND LUCY OF LAMMERMOOR."

mortal "Lucy of Lammermoor"—has gone around the world in every form: in opera, in picture, in prose translation. The painting shows the last stolen interview of the lovers. Edgar of Ravenswood, by his look of gloomy foreboding, seems to predict his future horrible death in the quicksand; while Lucy's air of utter and hopeless desolation is a fitting prelude to her madness and early grave. The painting, which is imbued with an intellectual depth of expression hardly to be found in the works of continental painters, shows at the same time a slightly artificial arrangement in its bowery ferns and branches, which reflects the formal traditions of the antique English school.

John Everett Millais, the most popular portraitist and genre painter of recent days, was remarkable also as one of the most precocious. He was born at Southampton in 1829, and was a boyish prodigy at the age of eleven, when he entered the Royal Academy. At the age of seventeen he exhibited a picture at the Academy, "Pizarro Seizing the Inca." In 1849 he produced his "Isabella," from Keat's poem, and about the same time associated himself with Holman Hunt, Rossetti,

and such younger disciples as Charles Collins, in the formation of the "Pre-Raphaelite School." The views of the enthusiasts cannot be fully explained in a paragraph; suffice it to say that, discontented with academic teaching, or the tradition of art based upon the Greek sculpture, were unearthed the Botticellis, the Peruginos, and the Bellinis. The new theory took different forms with the several practitioners. In the clear and practical mind of Millais it assumed the shape of photographic minuteness and accuracy. Accordingly, he produced an "Ophelia" drowning once more in a bleak gray enumeration of willow leaves; a "Prescribed Royalist" in which a royal oak and not the skulking lover was the true hero of the picture; and a subject of "Huguenots" in which, again, the accessories, the dresses, the still-life of the composition, distracted attention from the main subject. Violently championed by Ruskin, the "Pre-Raphaelite" clique had a great success of eclat, until it failed from self-fatigue and exhaustion. Millais himself, the most famous and intelligible of its adherents, changed his style, and instead of the old, insipid enumeration of the details of nature,

gives us now a broad impression and a sympathetic view. This almost single-handed war with the Academy did not prevent that magnanimous body from electing him an associate as early as 1853.

The painting here presented is to be found in the collection left by the late Mr. W. H. Vanderbilt.

Housecleaning.

"So many men, so many minds, every man in his own way." I suppose it is the same with us women, and if we only used those minds to advantage always, there would be fewer "squabbles" and consultations about those men, for if we would but remember that "discretion is the better part of valor," and that "every wise woman buildeth her house"—but there, it is about the house that I intended to talk, or, rather, the cleaning of it, about which there are "so many women, so many minds, every woman in her own way."

However, most women agree on two points, viz., that there must be a spring cleaning sooner or later, and that the men, for a few blissful weeks, must submit to feminine authority, and never say "boo." They usually do behave very creditably, too, poor things, lending all the assistance they can, despite the fact that for them "the melancholy days are come, the saddest of the year." It is we women, however, who have the greater right to such a martyr spirit, but it is a strange fact (one of the compensations that Emerson speaks of, I suppose) that those who perform the disagreeable tasks in life seldom feel the discomforts as keenly as do the onlookers. Some housecleaners proceed from garret to cellar; others *vice versa*. We prefer the former way, as there is less likelihood of littering the already clean rooms, and besides, the "downhill path is easy," and one has no desire to "turn back" in housecleaning time. Some take one room at a time; others seem to take the whole house. Some burrow into the corners with a stick like a knitting needle,

while others circle gracefully around them, with all due respect to the feelings of spiders, etc. Some look trim at their work, in neat collar and dusting-cap, while others tie a red bandanna about their heads and clutter about in "pa's" old galoshes. "So many women, so many minds." We always make it a point to paper and paint, more or less, in the spring, and in choosing colors, contrive to get combinations that will harmonize with the various lights of the rooms. There is no reason why we farmers' wives and daughters shouldn't have our houses as artistic as those of our city sisters. For instance, a soft yellow or pink, or some shades of red, suit a north room; blue, gray or tan, an east or west room; and dull greens and some blues give a depth and coolness to rooms facing south. In painting, we always use boiled linseed oil as a medium, as turpentine is apt to destroy the gloss, and is injurious to brushes.

It is better to begin housecleaning as early as possible, and then when it is over one has time to appreciate the delights of spring. But even while housecleaning, one can always take little sips of joy, as it were, from the cup of beauty and