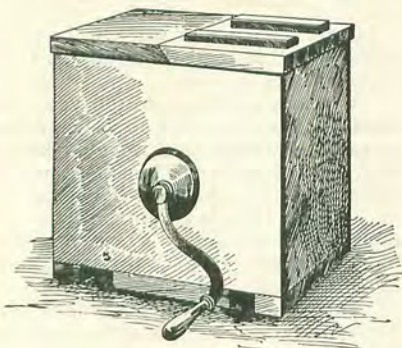


MY DAIRY AND THE WORK THEREIN.

By LINA ORMAN COOPER.

It all seems so easy to me now, looking back over the years at my first attempt at working a dairy in mine house. Yet I cannot help pitying the forlorn figure that stood therein one bright spring morning and had to work out for herself the problem of turning fresh frothy milk into sound household butter.



CHURN.

In my young days (inquire not too closely how long ago that may be) the management of farm stock, milking of cows, or making butter was not considered necessary, lady-like, or even delicate. It followed that all the mystery of drawing milk from the soft velvety bags of stately brown-eyed matrons of the bovine breed, was considered too deep for me to fathom. Brought up in London, I was even somewhat afraid of the patient, calm-mannered cattle that looked at me out of their soft liquid eyes with such contented trust.

But one day I was confronted with the fact that the dairy in mine house was full of flat pans of yellow-topped cream (for Cosy, our most valuable Alderney, had just presented



THERMOMETER.

us with a beautiful new child) and that Dorothy Draggletail, the last of a long list of inefficient dairymaids, had gone off on a spree and—not returned.

The cook in mine house is a generally reliable person—more or less. It was much “less” on this particular occasion; she declared it was “none of her business,” and calmly left her London-bred mistress to surmount the difficulty herself. I did surmount it by the help of handbooks and common-sense. In order to help others to do the same, I will describe my *modus operandi*.

The first thing in a dairy is to choose proper utensils. A friend of mine lately bought a churn for 7s. 6d. which was warranted to “bring” butter in fifteen minutes. I have seen that churn. It lasted awhile but soon was not, for it was made of earthenware, worked by a dash, and of course stood on



PATTERS.

the usual flagged floor. (N.B.—Every proper dairy has a stone or tiled floor.) I bought a small patent declivity churn and it still is in perfect order after ten years' work. The “P. D. C.” is a delightfully compact square affair, made of white wood with a double dash, easily worked by the most weakly of women. It cost 35s. and, having no corners, is thoroughly cleansable—a most necessary virtue. It is kept in order by being scrubbed out with boiling water, both before and after each churning. This actual cleaning I never attempt myself. It requires a stronger back and arms than most ladies possess, and it is better done by those who are accustomed to wield the brush. Still I always inspect with eyes and nose, and no “cat's lick and a promise” will pass muster.

It is necessary to examine very carefully. A minute quantity of sour cream adhering to the box-wood knot, through which the worm of the screw-dasher passes, is enough to spoil a whole churning of cream. It may be so small a portion that it is scarcely “visible to the naked eye,” and yet that tiny bit can give a terrible “tack” to the butter. Part of the furniture in my dairy consists of various-sized brushes for ensuring this necessary cleanliness of the “P. D. C.”

By far the most showy portion of the fittings



CARVED MOULDS.

are the various-sized pans which ring the dairy in mine house. There are bright tin pans, glazed earthenware ones, double ones for regulating temperature, and enamelled ones. A choice, however, can be made, if expenditure must be strictly considered.

Beside the pans lies a floating thermometer (1s. 6d.); standing up by the wall are a pair of wooden “hands” or patters (1s. 6d.) and several differently carved moulds for ornamenting pats. An oak trough is here, too, full of pure cold water for washing butter (7s. 6d.) (a cheaper cedar bowl would answer nearly as well) and skimmers of various sorts.

Now, the items I have named are all the things really indispensable to start and maintain a dairy. In mine house I have several additional luxuries. One is a waist-high, wood-surrounded, tray-like table, fitted with a fluted roller for working away skim milk from the butter. There is also an affair for pressing and storing it when made. A marble-topped weighing machine for weighing salt before adding it, and butter after it is finished.

And here let me say that accuracy in the dairy is a most useful thing. It is almost impossible for an intelligently-trained lady to fail therein if she will follow a rigid line of action and dispense with careless rule-of-thumb. In this way only will butter be always well made. The haphazard is more out of place in a dairy than almost anywhere else in mine house. The theory of butter-making is easily learned even from a book. It must carefully be carried out to ensure success.

Having chosen our few necessary utensils, the next thing is to see to the proper “ripeness” of that thick leathery cream which we

have lifted so delicately. I always let the milk stand for twelve hours before I separate it, and leave the cream untouched for four days in summer and a week in winter.

Before pouring this thick mass into the churn, I test its temperature by inserting the floating thermometer. If it does not



SKIMMER.

register the proper 70° the churn is scalded out, or even a drop of boiling water added to the cream. If it registers more than 70° the churn is chilled by holding under a spout or tap of cold water. Then, slowly at first, the churning is begun, and the motion regularly quickened until a swish of buttermilk tells that crumbs of butter are appearing in the churn. Instantly the motion is slowed, until a few rocks of the dasher “gather” into a mass those yellow beads of soft substance. The theory of this routine is as follows. At first a slow regular movement is necessary to break the air bubbles in the milk. The quicker one follows to beat them out of the butter crumbs. Rocking merely assists the butter to become of sufficient unity to lift out of the churn.

In a “P. D. C.” butter usually “comes” in about eighteen or twenty minutes, if it be churned at a proper temperature, and if the “P. D. C.” be not choked with too much cream.

There is a vital necessity for air in this operation of churning as everywhere else. I



FLUTED ROLLER.

once poured six quarts of cream into my little declivity, thinking to get therefrom six pounds of butter. It was nearly full up to the lid when I began to work. Sixteen minutes passed—the usual time—no sign of butter coming. Half an hour, one hour; cook condescended to give a hand. Ninety minutes, and nurse and housemaid were summoned to turn the handle. Two hours, and the laundry-maid was called in to help—still no result.

Three times over Bridget, the cook, repeated the “learned churchman's charm.”

“Come, butter, come!
Come, butter, come!
Peter stands at the gate
Waiting for a buttered cake.
Come, butter, come!”

But this “harmlesse charme” signally failed!



TRAY TABLE FOR MAKING UP BUTTER.

The ballade, "no less admired than a gyant in a paggeant," had no effect.

At last we lifted out more than a quart of still smooth cream, and, heigh presto! the butter came. But it was a butter very different from my usual yellow hard mass of "glycerides of the fatty acids." It was pale of complexion and weak in its substance—all from want of air.

After the butter has "come," all butter-milk is poured off into one of our big earthenware crocks. Then a little cold water is added to the churn, the lid replaced and a few quick turns of the handle given. This squeezes the remaining drops of thin milk out of the, by this time, solid block of "stearin, palmitin, and olein" which we call butter, and leaves less work for hands and wrists—wooden hands I mean, as butter must never be touched by human digits or palms.

Pure, dry, fine salt is next added, one ounce to every pound. It is pressed in and then washed. We know that the curious patch-work of salt streaks and fresh butter so often seen is no mark that wizards have bewitched

the milk. We do not need to add rennet to an eggshellful of the left liquid in order to discern the witchcraft. We soon learn to recognise that uneven manipulation of the salt has thus resulted.

Now there is only left to weigh, print and pat. The work is done, and a delightfully easy, interesting and cleanly work it is. I do not object to it in the least. No lady need do so on the score of dirt, difficulty, exertion or time. An apron tied over one's everyday dress does away with any damage to clothes. The difficulties are only initial ones and soon surmounted. The exertion is trifling—the time spent is three-quarters of an hour to actually churn and make up, say, twice a week, and a few seconds night and morning to set the new milk and skim the old.

Butter, however, is not the only thing we make in the dairy of mine house. When cream is plentiful we put dribbles of it into a muslin bag and let it drip and hang for several days. With it we place a handful of salt to keep it. When it no longer drops milky tears we place it under a weight, and

in a short time have cream cheese ready to pack in nettles and place on our table. Also, when the "oleagenous compound" is scarce, we lift a pan of fresh milk on to the range, and bring it to nearly boiling point. When the surface thickens, the pan is removed carefully without shaking the top, and when it is cold, behold, we skim off a pot of Devonshire clotted cream—made in Bedfordshire, however.

Now, in conclusion, I would say that "What is worth doing is worth doing well." It is no economy to dispense with a dairymaid and have to put up with bad butter. So there must be one visitor strictly excluded from the dairy in mine and every other house. No, I don't mean the cat. No well-bred feline would degrade herself by stealing from her mistress's domain (especially if her saucer of cream is provided without stealing). I mean chance. Everything in a dairy depends on perfect accuracy, scrupulous cleanliness and strict punctuality. Then the balls, shells, cows, pats, prints, swans, scrolls and rolls of butter will indeed be invariably very good.

WHERE CENTURIES MEET.



Nourbackward journey we have now reached the year 1400. We said good-bye to England when Dean Colet and Erasmus were heralding the New Learning in the days of Henry VII. We reach the year 1400 across a century

in which the towns indeed were growing to a fuller life, but in which the homes of the country were devastated by the Wars of the Roses. We may look upon the year as a half-way house between the noble age of Edward I. and the Renaissance that filled the time between 1500 and 1600.

Let us take a peep together, girls, at the Mediæval England of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and Wycliffe's Bible. The great-nephew of the historian Macaulay has just written a brilliant book called *The Age of Wycliffe*, which is bringing before folks' eyes the stirring times of Wat Tyler's revolution of 1381, when the peasants from half England came tramping up to London full of hopes to be rid of villain's bondage. Some sore mischief they did, for they killed the good Archbishop Sudbury and the Flemings who could not pronounce "bread and cheese" with an English accent. Yet, mighty host as they were, they dispersed for the most part quietly to their homes, when the fair-headed boy-king Richard II. rode to Mile End through the orchards of Whitechapel, and promised them on his own account to commute service dues for a rent of fourpence an acre. Try to get a sight of that stirring book, and of William Morris's beautiful romance of *John Ball, Priest*, and the *Stories from Froissart*, which Wells, Gardner and Darton have just published for Mr. Henry Newbolt, and then you will have some other idea of a great time than the cold string of facts you learnt at school. I want to suggest to your minds some pleas for that mediæval England which we are so ready to call the Dark Ages. We sometimes forget that "the child is father of the man" in the history of great religious reforms as well as of individuals. Mr. Trevelyan is full of scorn for the abuses of the age of Wycliffe, and well he may be, but does he always remember that the Church which

bred Wycliffe and his poor preachers must have had great nobility and life in it to bring forth such strong sincere children? Does he lay enough stress on Wykeham, the good Bishop of Winchester, who was spending his thousands on beautifying the nave of his cathedral, and in this very year of 1400 adding bells to his lovely "New College" at Oxford entered seven years since, for the first time, by the seventy scholars drafted on from his other great foundation at Winchester? The abuses were, no doubt, very real, but so was the religious life which had no share in them, and that which was determined to cleanse them at all costs. I have a fancy, girls, for seeking out the beautiful works of the Holy Spirit in every age of English History, and though, as Bishop Stubbs says, the fourteenth century was the age of chivalry, and not, as was the thirteenth, the age of heroism, yet it had in it the great battles of Crécy and Poitiers, the wonderful poets Chaucer and Langland, and stone poems such as St. Stephen's Chapel and Wykeham's Round Tower at Windsor.

I want to beg you to read Professor Skeat's little half-crown edition of *The Vision of Piers Plowman*, and then you will agree with me that very noble thoughts could come in those days not only to courtiers like Chaucer, but to a poor clerk who lived in poverty in Cornhill with his wife Kitte and his daughter Calotte. "How can we read it?" you will answer me; "it is like a foreign language!" So it may seem at the first glance, but remember how hard you worked over your French and German when you were at school, and believe me that when you have looked at the notes and glossary a few times, this poem will emerge for you as written in your own mother-tongue, and you will delight to notice that your fathers said "wanhope" when they meant "despair," and that the very words of the poem you are studying are themselves poetry.

It is wonderful that the gaunt tall man who earned such a poor livelihood by singing the seven psalms for men's souls, should have seen all the abuses of his time as clearly as Chaucer did, and yet should not have turned coarse and bitter. Again and again comes over the refrain that he puts into the mouth of the Church—

"When all treasures are tried truth is the best,"

and no one has ever sung in a more inward way of love—

"... the levest thing, and most like to heaven,
And also the plant of peace";

how

"Heaven might not holden it, it was so heavy of hymself,
Till it had of the earth eaten his fill."

You must read for yourselves how, because of this incarnation,

"Love is leader of the Lord's folk of heaven."

Also

"Love is leech of life, and next our Lord self,
And also the graith-gate that goeth into Heaven."

The "graith-gate" means the "direct way," and surely Long Will of Cornhill found that way. We all know from Green's *Short History* how Piers Plowman fell a-dreaming on the Malvern Hills, but the unfortunate system of cramming for examinations generally leaves us contented with a phrase. If you read the book itself you will be the richer for a life-time.

But England not only contained the poems of Chaucer and Langland, it was a country full of beauty and colour and very free from the ugliness which presses into every corner of modern life. I have beside me a copy of the will of that Richard Earl of Arundel whose head was cut off in 1397 by Richard II, for attempting to resist that king's assumption of despotic power. The will gives a picture of great beauty in household goods. He leaves to his dear wife Philippa "the hangings of the hall which was lately made in London, of blue tapestry with red roses, with the arms of my sons"; to his son Richard he leaves "a standing bed called Clove, and a blue bed of silk embroidered with griffins"; to his brother the Archbishop Arundel, who was banished by Richard and restored by Henry IV., he leaves "a cup enamelled with a stag at the top." Had we space we might tell of a hundred costly objects such as fretted head-dresses of pearls, and rich books, and "nouches" or buttons of gems. One of the many failings which ruined what was nobler in King Richard's character was his extravagant love