



## Our Homes.

**DRESSMAKING AN ART.**—Dressmaking is no longer simply a business. It is an art. If a lady have occasion to furnish herself with a new costume for a certain fete, reception or what else it may be, it is not sufficient now that she buy a fashionable material and have it made in a fashionable manner. Women do not, must not now, all dress alike. She must study herself with an artist's eye. If she cannot do this let her employ a modiste who can, and let colour, form, treatment, garniture of the attempted costume all be the result of the careful study and end in a climax of perfect adaptation to the wearer.

**A FAITHFUL SERVANT.**—At the town of Beziers, France, Mlle. Helen Sapte, who is now eighty-three years old, has been employed in the Fusier family. When the anniversary arrived a feast was provided, and Mlle. Sapte, the aged servant, occupied the seat of honour at the head of the table. The honour was deserved, for she had "served in this family with a devotion and zeal never for a moment relaxed." The individuals of the family which celebrated her "golden wedding" as a hand-maiden were by no means the same as those for whom her work was begun, but she felt her devotion to be none the less due.

**KEEP STRAIGHT.**—A stooping position maintained for any length of time, tends more to undermine the health than is supposed. An erect position should be observed, whether sitting, standing or lying. To sit with the body leaning forward on the stomach or to one side, with the heels elevated on a level with the hands is not only in bad taste, but exceedingly detrimental to the health; it cramps the stomach, presses the vital organs, interrupts the free motion of the chest and enfeebles the functions of the abdominal and thoracic organs and, in fact, unbalances the whole muscular system.

**REGULATING WOMEN'S COIFFURES.**—In mediæval times, when it was quite an everyday occurrence for laws to be passed regulating the quality of the material, as well as the fashion and embellishment of clothes to be worn by various grades of society, it is no matter of surprise to find that, as one instance, the mayor of Chester issued, in the thirty-second year of the reign of Henry III., an edict that, to distinguish married from unmarried women, no unmarried woman was to be allowed to wear white or coloured caps, and that no woman was to wear a hat unless when she rode or went abroad into the country.

**FANS AN OLD INSTITUTION.**—The Hebrews, Egyptians, Chinese and the miscellaneous population of India all used fans as far back as history reaches. Terence, a writer of Latin comedies who lived in the second century B.C., makes one of his characters speak of the fan as used by ladies in ancient Rome: "Take this fan and give her thus a little air." From this Roman origin the fashion of carrying fans was handed down to the ladies of Italy, Spain and France, and thence introduced into Britain. Queen Elizabeth when in full dress carried a fan. Shakespeare speaks of fans as connected with a lady's bravery and finery:

With scarfs and fans, and double charge of bravery.

**THE FRENCH COFFEE.**—The French have the reputation of making the best coffee. They take a great deal of care in making this favourite beverage, and the result is that when French coffee is taken one drinks the pure flavour of the berry. They always grind the berries just before they are to be used, and do not let a quantity of ground coffee stand and get stale. The French cook then pours boiling water on the ground coffee; then she filters this, and after boiling the water again, pours it on the coffee once more. This is repeated a third time. She never boils the coffee and water together, nor puts the coffee in cold water and then let it boil.

## A Horse-Dealer's Little Ruse.

BY WALTER BLACKBURN HARTE.

(Concluded from last week.)

The Misses Flewelling were all very pretty girls, and their name was legion, or at least, they could say, "we are seven." It was consequently a difficult matter to choose between them, but Mr. Smart was as good a judge of the fair sex as he was of horseflesh, and besides he felt himself equal to the task of amusing a colony of pretty girls much less a septenary. He possessed a superabundance of confidence in himself, and he had by constant endeavour developed in a high degree the delightful faculty of immediately making himself "at home" in whatever circle he might happen to be thrown. Of course, it does not follow that the happy persons upon whom he conferred the honour of his society invariably shared his keen enjoyment of the present hour, but certain it is that in the present instance the womenkind thought him a very agreeable person, and altogether it was the liveliest dinner to which the members of Mr. Flewelling's household had sat down for many a day. Mr. Smart's self-possession was admirable, and it had that necessary element of putting everybody else at ease in his presence at once, which alone can save familiarity from being a nightmare. He found his quarters so pleasant, although the home made wine was abominable, that it was with difficulty that he could be persuaded to look at the colt at all that afternoon. Wine could never detain Mr. Smart at the table a moment longer than he proposed to stay, but women were his weakness. However, upon a hint from "mamma"—(the girls always called her "mother" in the absence of strangers, but "mamma" sounds so refined and fashionable)—the ladies exhibited their knowledge of town-life by rising from the table and leaving the two gentlemen alone with their wine and cigars.

The farmer was not as entertaining as his fair daughters, and after the ladies had retired, Mr. Smart quickly began to observe that time was flying, and suggested that they should adjourn to the stables. Mr. Flewelling was equally anxious.

Upon reaching the yard everybody was surprised to find that the agreeable Mr. Smart of five minutes before had vanished—that is, metaphorically speaking, for he was standing there, with his hands thrust deep into his breeches pockets, and a look of the most stolid unconcern pictured on his face. He looked as if he had been just dropped from the clouds, and had taken the matter philosophically as if it was all one to him where he fell. He was idly chewing a piece of straw, and altogether had the air of a man who was being bored and was not at great pains to conceal it.

Mr. Smart, like many others wise in their generation, was a duality. There was Mr. Smart the uncomprising, and some said, unscrupulous, man of affairs; and there was Mr. Smart, a gallant in his own fashion, brimming over with insidious flattery and always ready to respond to the toast of "The Ladies," or join in a dance. But coming to business with him meant the extinguishment of the latter personality, and the resumption of a gruff speech, which in itself spoke volumes of stable wisdom, and the loss of all that guileless and pleasing chatter which enabled him to while away so many pleasant hours, and raised him so high in the estimation of the fair sex. The women dearly love rattles, no matter how jangled or stupid their noise may be. They are doubtless governed in this matter by their unerring instinct and the law of congruity.

It was one of Mr. Smart's noticeable characteristics that whenever he meant business he allowed nothing to distract his attention, and did not indulge in any frivolity, as, for instance, chewing straw. But there is no rule without an exception. In business the horse dealer was like an eel in the mud; one could never tell just what his tactics were. Everybody in the neighbourhood at all acquainted with Mr. Smart, however, knew that in his dealings he was all eyes and ears, and his judgment in the matter of horse-flesh was almost

infallible. On the present occasion, when the colt was led into the yard, he merely screwed up his features into what seemed a hopeless tangle, and appeared to express a mixture of suppressed amusement, disappointment and good-natured forbearance, and bestowed a cursory glance upon the animal. Then his features relaxed, and he began to hum an air, half under his breath, as if the whole matter was settled, and he had no further concern in it. That cursory glance was sufficient for his trained eyes to discover that the colt was all that its owner claimed for it, but he well knew the value of indifference. He had internally made up his mind to purchase the colt, but he was perfectly aware of the circumstances in which Flewelling was placed, and he was rapidly revolving in his mind what his best plan of action would be in order to obtain the colt, as he put it, "for a song." He knew that Flewelling was accounted one of the best judges of cattle in Greensline, and fully realized the difficulty of deluding him in regard to the value of his own property. His face, however, did not betray in the least what was really passing in his mind. He pulled a huge watch from his fob, and, upon consulting it, looked at the gathering clouds overhead.

"Well?" said Flewelling, with nervous quickness. The dealer's monotonous humming irritated him. It did not savour in the least of interest or admiration, but rather of a chilling indifference. "Well?" he repeated. "What d'ye think of him?"

The dealer made no motion that he understood the question. He walked slowly to a bundle of straw lying outside the stable door, drew out a long stalk, and returned to his former position. In dealing with the poverty-stricken, he always assumed a proper and becoming dignity, which was exhibited in slow answers and frigid deliberation, or hasty brusqueness, as the occasion seemed to demand. At such times he grumbled at everything or principle, or affected disdainful toleration. What his conduct was in his transactions with the rich concerns us not. He was a man of great parts, and, doubtless, fully rose to the exigencies of the occasion.

"Humph!" he replied at length, in a tone which one would have expected to hear come from the lips of a sphinx suddenly endowed with speech. "The colt may be very well for your purpose—very well, indeed—but he is of no use to me."

"What?—no good! The very best bit o' horse flesh in the country. There ain't his equal in the wide world. D'ye know his sire? 'Prince,' sir, 'Prince'—a horse what's won a reputation as universal as that of—" he paused for an appropriate simile, and then added—"as that of Queen Victoria herself! Come, Mr. Smart," he continued, lowering his voice, and trying to speak with an affection of confidential jocularity, "we understand each other. You know the worth of that colt as well as I do, unless I'm greatly mistaken. You know I'd never sell him if it were not that I'm a little pressed for money just now."

"Xactly," replied the dealer. "I understand your position, but I cannot allow sentiment to interfere with business. I reckon that I know something about horses, and I say that the colt is no good. I don't want to put my hand in my pocket to buy an animal that'd be eating his head off in my stable and never find a purchaser."

"I know something about horses, too," said Flewelling, "and I say that the colt has a future of great possibilities before him. Try his pace."

"Well, well," said the dealer, again consulting his watch; "I'm pressed for time, but if you care to go to the trouble of having him put to, I'll trot him down the lane."

He appeared to be acting under protest—inconveniencing himself in order not to appear disobliging. In reality a bright idea had occurred to him. He was gifted with Napoleonic quickness of thought, and he carried out his plans with a coolness and ability worthy of the great general.

In a few minutes the colt was harnessed into a tall dog-cart, and the dealer lightly stepped into it and drove out of the yard. Mr. Flewelling followed to the gate and watched him drive sharply