

panions. How, as the spirits go down and the spirits go up, they slap one another on the shoulder, and even hug one another with most rapturous expression of devotion. But let trouble come, and help be needed, and how like the morning cloud and the early dew is all this sympathy. The friendship of drunkards is like the froth on the top of the beer-mug.

So Russell found it as these men walked away and left him lonely and despairing on the sidewalk. How fallen! Homeless, penniless, friendless! Six steps down.

(To be continued.)

HOMES ABROAD.

A SERIES OF PAPERS ON DOMESTIC LIFE IN FRANCE, GERMANY, AND BELGIUM.

FRENCH women are most charming when they have reached that problematic age known as middle. They know the art of growing old gracefully, and whilst their girlhood is generally uninteresting, their womanhood brings with it a store of experience, and a desire to please, which is delightful to their surroundings.

Such a Frenchwoman is Madame de Beauvais, a woman whose society is gain, whose conversation is instructive and witty, who has seen much and judged much. She has been from her girlhood the mistress of one of the best-kept Parisian homes it has been our happiness to enter.

Seated with her by one of those small tables, which, she wittily says, "do half the talking," we listened to her experience of housekeeping, house-furnishing, and the *ménage* generally. She spoke in pure and idiomatic French, with that liveliness of gesture and absence of prosiness which we seldom meet with in an English housewife in English homes.

"What do you call the fundamental basis of true domestic economy, madame?" we asked.

"Let me answer you with an anecdote. An old friend of mine, Madame de Villette, told me that on her wedding day, before setting out for the church, a friend, who had given her a wedding portion, presented her besides with a magnificent diamond parure. He placed the beautiful jewels in her ears, on her arms, round her neck. The effect produced general admiration and a natural satisfaction in the young bride.

"My dear child," said he, "I have just given you trifles—puerilities; the true treasure, the veritable wealth, is here."

"And he held out a book bound in red leather with gilt edges. On one of its sides was written, 'Receipt of the revenues of M. le Marquis de Villette'; on the other, 'Expenditure of the house of M. le Marquis de Villette.'

"There," repeated he, "is the true parure of a wife and mother. Never neglect the daily use of this book. Let the balance be exactly and scrupulously maintained; you will then be rich and happy."

"There is more confidence engendered," added Madame de Beauvais, "between husband and wife by order and economy in domestic details than by aught else I know. A wife should look upon herself as her husband's *ministère de l'intérieur*. Her accounts should be always ready to show at a moment's notice. Half an hour given each morning to writing the receipts and expenditure of the preceding day will suffice for this important occupation; it becomes habitual, and the balance of each month takes no more time.

"Every woman ought to know just what she has to spend every year. She

should be guided by the sum in the rent of the house, the number and the wages of her servants, the food for her table, the quantity of firing, her house linen, furniture, her own and her husband's clothes. This once seen to, she must divide her expenditure by twelfths, and see not only that one-twelfth is sufficient for a month, but that she has something left as economy at the end of it.

"I was for a long time intimate," continued Madame de Beauvais, "with Caillau, the celebrated actor at the Théâtre Italien. During the Revolution he lost so much money that he was obliged to be exceedingly economical in his habits. One day that I was at his house, a man we both knew well came to borrow a hundred francs for a few weeks. Caillau drew them from a small leather bag which he took from his desk, and gave them to his friend.

"When the man was gone I expressed my surprise to Caillau at his being able, without trouble, to lend the sum.

"As soon as I was in a position to get my own living," he said, "I have always rigorously made some monthly economy proportionate to my earnings. This economy goes into this bag, which I always look upon as a friend. I borrow from it sometimes, but I always pay back faithfully. My conscience would reproach me if I failed. Well, I have just been to it to oblige our poor friend, who is honesty itself. Although the means of my friend the bag are very different to what they used to be, it still lends me, as you saw, a hundred francs for several weeks."

"I should be glad, madame, if you would tell me what you mean by *le bien-être*, which I have so often heard you speak of when praising house-life."

"This *bien-être* is composed of an infinitude of imperceptible details, of such great importance, though, that each one should be studied. If you are going to fix upon a house, do not think that because you are young and well it does not matter whether the room you sleep in, or the room where you will pass most of your time, has a northern or southern aspect. The latter ought to be preferred before all. The former must be carefully avoided. The east or west is tolerable, but the south *avant tout*. Not only ought health to be the motive for the preference, but the clear sunshine often cures bad spirits, which its absence as often augments. A Paris apartment ought to be so chosen that the rooms little used, such as the antechamber, the pantries, the dressing-rooms, the box-rooms, and the room where the ironing is done, may have a northern aspect, whilst the inhabited rooms should have a southern one."

"Will you tell me all you can about the arrangements of your first home? I know it was at Paris for many years."

"We determined, my husband and I, that we would begin by having two bedrooms. Ours were separated by the drawing-room. We considered that there are many cases in which it is useful and necessary to have two rooms. In the case of illness, for instance, it is neither comfortable for the one nor the other, even with double beds, to occupy the same. Your husband's room, even if he does not inhabit it, may be looked upon as a spare room, and may serve him as study and library. The bed may have the canopy shape. His dressing-room should open into it; it is convenient for a man to have the whole place for dressing, etc., to himself. Believe my experience; there is no sentiment which obviates the inconvenience of a too great intimacy in certain details of life.

"Beware of the illusions one has in youth. If you have the same bedroom, have two beds. Never let this room look untidy; it should be not only clean, but even tasteful in its arrangements. I have always made my servants put up and arrange every article of clothing, etc. I have always had my husband's room prepared for his rising in order that he might begin the day with *bien-être*.

"When I was first married I had next my room, with the same aspect, a small retiring-room, clean, simple, and convenient. One of those *boudoirs*, whose very name is ridiculous, and which are only objects of luxury and frivolity, I would not have.

"I had this little room cleaned and prepared for my rising, and there I took refuge whilst the rest of the house was arranged. Besides this I had a dressing-room where I kept my large wardrobes, boxes, etc. The night-tables, lamps, pillows, etc., of the bedroom were kept here during the day. I had this room fitted up with bath and washing apparatus. Our rooms had doors opening into the dining-room; it was a very convenient arrangement for the service, etc.

"This dining-room opened upon an antechamber; some Paris apartments are made without them, but I do not like them; an antechamber makes the dining-room warmer, and keeps it cleaner. In a pantry out of the dining-room I kept my plate, porcelain, glass, dessert, jams—in short, all that is required for the table.

"I had a room on purpose for ironing fitted up with a stove, but a housemaid's bedroom (which ought to be near yours) does for the same purpose. Here I had an ironing and work table, so that my *femme-de-chambre* could work without interruption.

"The kitchen, like all Paris kitchens, was far away from the sitting-rooms. One is away from smells and noises, but the *surveillance* of the mistress is thereby made more difficult, and, however, it is very necessary! The meat pantry was near the kitchen—a dark and cool closet.

"Furnishing is quite an art, my dear. I have met with well-furnished houses amongst people of mediocre fortune, and I have met with ill-furnished and rich houses. Good taste consists in choosing useful, convenient, durable, and well-accommodating furniture. Wherever I have seen this last quality, I have felt the need of staying and returning. That is precisely the sentiment that every woman ought to feel for her own home. It is wise, then, to ornament your home, but utility ought to be the principal object in furnishing."

"How were your rooms furnished?"

ANTECHAMBER.

"Let us begin by the antechamber. Round the walls were boxes padded and covered with common Utrecht. These made seats, and held the wood for each day's consumption. A walnut table stood against the wall on which I had paper, pens, and a simple fukstand kept. Many people do not care to leave messages with servants.

"When I went out," continued Madame, "I left word that one of the servants should receive callers, and ask those who wished to write their errand. In the evening a lamp may be placed on this table. Here your man-servant or servants may read in the evening. Mine read books of my choosing. I also set them to copy books to improve their writing and spelling. Besides doing your servants a service, you are spared the noise of gossiping or snoring, which generally fill up their time whilst waiting to serve you.

"Round the walls of this antechamber were hooks for great-coats, etc. Some cane-chairs near the table, a little stove, some simple calico curtains, and you have the furniture of my antechamber.

DINING-ROOM.

"Sideboards, and cupboards in gray painted wood, with two small marble-topped tables. These tables may be of wood covered with oilcloth; they are simpler, not so dear, and no less useful. The chairs were covered with leather; in many houses they are simply cane. I do not like horsehair for a chair-cover; it wears out muslin dresses, and when new is very slippery. There are very good chairs made at 6 or 7 francs apiece; armchairs cost from 10 to 12 francs. I had no armchairs in my dining-room; they take up too much room at table, and make unequal distances. In some houses the master and mistress have armchairs and the guests chairs; but this distinction offends good taste.

"In the center of the dining-room stood an oval dining-table with leaves. These tables are on casters, and are the most convenient I know of; they cost from 44 to 45 in walnut. Mahogany, of course, is much dearer. An oilcloth cover is very convenient; it covers the table at its natural size; it is quite clean enough for breakfast, as it may be sponged and polished.

"Besides a carpet under the table, I had little straw footstools. Of course these may be much more luxurious. For a woman to be comfortably seated it is essential that her feet should be a little raised. I accustomed my servants to place under every chair that was to be occupied by a lady one of these footstools when they set the table. It is inconvenient to ask for them when once you are seated; it is troublesome to glide them under the table; it causes a movement that makes the repast begin disagreeably.

"Immediately after dinner these footstools ought to be put away in the dining-room pantry. Before the servants have their dinner, everything must be put away. The dining-room should be quite tidy, with nothing on the table but the oilcloth cover and a lamp.

"A stove is preferable to an open fireplace for the dining-room. It should be round or square, with a marble top to warm the plates upon.

"When these stoves are well lighted at eight o'clock in the morning, they give a warm temperature to the rooms till three o'clock in the afternoon. They should then be lighted again, to keep the same temperature during dinner; that lasts the rest of the evening.

"I have lately seen, in dining-rooms, little square tables with two or three shelves, which are called *waiters*. I never saw that they were of much use. They give all the trouble to those near whom they are placed. They are too small to contain all that is necessary for the service. They are only good for one person eating alone at a very small table."

For next month Madame de Beauvais has promised us all the details of an invitation dinner, and the proper furniture of a drawing-room.

CEMENT FOR AN AQUARIUM.

A CORRESPONDENT of a scientific monthly writes:

"A rectangular tank of about ten gallons capacity, and constructed of plate glass with a zinc bottom and massive wooden pillars, troubled me much for a