# A GALA OCCASION

## "Marie" Tells About The Splendour of The Falls Store Opening — Were You Present? If Not Read About What You Missed.

It couldn't be resisted, that impulse. The wily merchant announced his fall opening of millinery and other feminine wearables in last week's paper, and when I had carefully read the advertisement, along with scores of others of my "sect," as Samantha Allen used to say, I resolved to be one of the many who would throng to the big store on the corner to see the display of pretty things and to decide what I simply MUST have to complete my wardrobe for the fast-approaching winter. And now, for the benefit of many who were not numbered among the favored ones who visited the showing, I am putting pen to paper to tell them something about what I saw. But it would require the ability and the vocabulary of a Laura Jean Libby to do the subject justice.

That some "sect" must be held responsible for my impulse and my determined gratification of it. Ever since the days of Eve (to go back to the beginning of all things), who always insisted upon her fig-leaf tunic being cut strictly a la mode, until the present, when even the strenuous and stressful suffragette turns aside from her smashing of windows and harrying of cabinet ministers, to snatch a hasty look at the fashions, have women been deeply concerned about their raiment. Women praised by historians have been zealous in the acquirement of becoming attire, as well as have other women who have lived and died in obscurity. The three thousand gowns of Elizabeth, that maiden queen with masculine intellect, may well afford an adequate excuse for the more modest desires of her humbler sisters.

Therefore, to return to our sheeps (to give a free translation of the French phrase), last Saturday afternoon I proceeded to the business portion of the town to join the crowd who were eager to view the latest novelties and adaptations decreed by Fashion, that untiring and autocratic, albeit fickle, dame.

Passing through the streets of Simcoe, lined with the vehicles of the farmers who had come in from the surrounding country to do their "Saturday trading," a remark uttered not long since came to mind. A visitor who said that he had had many opportunities of judging, declared that Simcoe was far and away the busiest place, for a town of its size, that he had yet been in. Indeed, all Saturday afternoons justify his statement, and the present occasion formed no exception. And that day, farmers' wives and citizens' wives were all dominated by a like idea. The prevailing styles were ready for their inspection, and where but at Falls' Store could this be done so comfortably and so thoroughly? Thus, in company with others of similar mind with myself, I approached the beautiful large show windows of the store, where an artist had been at work. Most delightfully and charmingly arranged, and so displayed as to show to the best advantage, were the contents of these windows. Top coats of rich fur vied with like garments of velvet and brocade. Here was a handsome evening gown of [redacted] costume of corduroy, bearing all the hall-marks of popular style. Fre[redacted] with fur neckpieces and muffs and other accessories, all effectually combined to catch and hold the eye of the passersby. And many yielded to the allure. In front of a wax figure, arrayed in a gracefully draped silken dress, were a couple of girls. "Oh, look, Min," exclaimed one, "some class to that, ain't there?" Slangy as the language was, the tribute breathed of sincerity. A few steps farther, and a wife was revealed drawing her husband's attention to the attractive fur set that she saw in imagination adding to her own comfort and appearance. But Hubby was not to be beguiled, and betrayed a desire to get away from a place where he might be separated from part of his "roll." Around the corner, a pair of young men cast furtive glances at the many articles designed for feminine adornment, while hastening toward the windows devoted to their own peculiar wants.

Entrancing as this display was, reason said that the best goods would not all be placed in the windows, and yet other delights would be found within. Entering the big doors, a busy sight was beheld. All over the capacious and lofty room, circles piled high with goods were besieged by would-be purchasers. Courteous and attentive salespeople hurried hither and thither in the endeavor to satisfy the demands made upon them, and the automatic cash-carriers whizzed incessantly through the air, testifying to the fulfillment of these demands.

Near the main entrance I came across Mr. H. S Falls, to whom in so great a degree is to be given the credit for the planning and the erection of this prosperous place of business, and the growth of trade that made it possible. If, in 1900, the inhabitants of the town had been told that within five years' time so large a store would be built here, they would have treated the information as being chimerical and their informant would have been deemed a close second for Ananias. But here it is, a fact, and a very solid and important one, with a flourishing and ever-increasing clientele.

A busy man is Mr. Falls. Intimately acquainted with every detail of the business, full of plans for its increase, keeping his finger on the pulse of commerce, his is no sinecure. He is constantly in requisition. Now a clerk appeals to him for help in some dilemma; again, a customer seeks his permission to make such and such terms of payment; a traveler strives to interest him in the purchase of certain lines. And due attention is given to all. In addition to his hard work, another circumstance has helped make Mr Falls' store where it is. He has a personal acquaintance with the great majority of the store's patrons. All his life has been spent in this town, and its inhabitants and the dwellers of the environing territory within many miles' radius are well known to him. The personal factor is not to be overlooked in business.

Addressing Mr. Falls, I imparted to him the secret that I was there to satisfy my curiosity. He bid me welcome, and told me to wander about the store as I pleased. As it was Saturday afternoon, his time was too much occupied to accompany me, but he gave me carte blanche to visit every corner of the establishment. He suggested that the best place to begin would be the basement. Accordingly he directed me to the rear stairway, leading to this part of the structure. Descending, I was brought to a standstill by amazement. What a basement was before me! So unlike the usual hole that bears the name of basement. The first thing that impressed me was the perfect ventilation. No musty, damp odor pervades. The smooth floor, of cement, showed no trace of moisture, but was dry as a bone. The lighting facilities are excellent. And then the size! Two extremely large rooms give floor space for a couple of ordinary shops. If the establishment should call for increased space, this basement might well be pressed into service.

That the great erection is well and truly built may be seen by a glance at the massive piers and foundation walls. No jerry-built structure is this, but one that is designed to withstand the wear and tear of many decades.

In this basement is placed all merchandise upon its arrival, where it is checked with the invoices before being placed on the shelves. Bolts of cloth, crates and huge hogsheads of china, bales of carpets, boxes containing all the thousand and one things necessary to keep the stock in an up-to-the-minute condition were here in great piles awaiting the attention of the checking clerks. Nor were these large stores in disorder. Throughout the establishment maxims relating to orderliness are not treated as mere empty phrases. Their observation is enforced. No time is lost in unnecessary handling and rehandling and every device possible to facilitate the work has been adopted. As a result, time that would otherwise be wasted is turned into money.

I sauntered on into another division, not so large as the other two. Here the making of signs is carried on, and the window-dresser keeps his properties. The variety of appurtenances required to turn out artistic window results is amazing, more than one would have believed, if this peep behind the scenes had not been allowed.

In still another section are the enormous furnaces that are called upon to produce the "calorics" in sufficient quantities to neutralize the worst attacks of the King of Winter within these walls. Near by is found the equipment for the generation of the electric "juice" needed for lighting purposes.

Tempting as the prospect was of still further investigating the possibilities of the basement, which was far from being exhausted, I be[redacted] yet remained to be seen. By some process of logic known only to feminine minds, I arrived at the conclusion that the exploration of the basement should be followed by a visit to the top floor. I rang the bell for the "lift," and in a trice was whisked to the third storey. Away up here I found that preparations had been made for the opening, as well as down among the hats and suits and wraps. Alterations that were decidedly for the better had been effected, and a rearrangement of many of the articles was much to be commended. Housefurnishings take up the bulk of this storey. The young salesmen were all deeply engaged in making sales, and as I stood by I could not but see their experience and knowledge are largely drawn upon by purchasers, and it is due to them that many homes have in them articles combining more taste and elegance than would otherwise have been the case. For instance, in the large drapery department, a woman was looking at several curtains. She rather leaned toward a gaudy curtain. Upon an appeal made to the salesman, he adroitly pointed out the wearing qualities and superior attractiveness of a quieter curtain. The woman's choice became the latter curtain, and her new draperies will be much more artistic than they would otherwise have been.

Close at hand is the section given over to rugs, carpets and linoleums. Many shelves contain the carpets, from Union to Axminsters and Wiltons. Large, pronounced patterns are there, as well as quiet, subdued designs. Numerous rug platforms are loaded with rugs, both cheap and costly. If one is not blessed with an abundance of shekels, floor coverings of moderate prices, but tasteful withal, may be obtained. If one cares for expensive Oriental patterns and has a well-lined pocketbook, this penchant may be gratified. And the platforms and the many windows give every chance to buyers to fully inspect the stock and make an intelligent choice. Only too many times have the wall-paper and draperies in a room been in complete harmony, and yet they have gone for naught because the rug has clashed with them most fatally. The supply here is wonderfully large and attractive, and a look at it would greatly facilitate the housewife's efforts to make her home a place of beauty.

You want your furniture to be in accord with the balance of your domestic fittings, don't you? Then make all haste to visit this floor, and you will obtain satisfaction. Prominently shown are the popular wicker furnishings, and rooms that contain articles of this style are indeed pleasing to the eye. Inlaid mahogany is another line strongly emphasized. Some very rich-looking pieces, not yet upholstered, were here to be seen. Having a plentiful supply of Pandora's chief attribute, I glanced at the ticket attached to one skeleton chair. It was marked forty dollars! When it receives its dress of velvet or silk, it will indeed be fit for the most artistic and tasteful of drawing-rooms. And I may add that the coverings, etc., for this purpose are to be purchased in this department, a great profusion of patterns being kept.

A part of this section is set aside for the pleasure of the kiddies, a quantity of toy furniture for playhouses being in stock. Running about very happily just here was a small boy, who was having great fun with these eminently satisfactory play things, and who was thus delightfully filling in what would otherwise have been an irksome wait while his mother was being served.

Moving on, I saw a door swinging, and, looking within, found the explanation of why that very odious remark, "We are just out of it," is so seldom heard in this store. Everybody knows how very provoking it is to be told this when in search of some much wanted thing. In this room are numerous deep shelves containing a reserve supply of articles most in demand.

Two competent tailoresses are ensconced in another small room and devote their time to the alteration of ladies' garments. Few people are what is known technically as "stock size," and it becomes necessary therefore for minor alterations, such as lengthening or shortening sleeves or skirts, to be made. The work of these young ladies guarantees the perfect fit of every suit or dress purchased here.

I glanced through a neighboring window and saw a bit of country afar off. I approached the window more closely, and was charmed with the view, one, I may say whose like cannot be seen from many other store windows in city or town. In the immediate foreground could be seen the streets of the town, with their rows of houses. Farther away, what a vista of beauty spread itself. The tree-clad hills were just beginning to blaze forth in their autumn glory; farmhouses surrounded by green fields, peeped forth, and the whole was capped by the blue sky with its rolling clouds. Take a look at the view some day.

Going down to the second floor, I found a scene of great animation. Here was to be found the raison d'etre of the whole big opening, the millinery display. Of course, the floor space of this department was seething with excitement. It is not the affair of a moment, this buying of the crown of one's toilette. Careful discrimination should be exercised in the selection of a hat, and that this principle was appreciated was shown by the eager women who were trying on hat after hat, turning this way and that to get the full effect, in an endeavor to find the style that would best bring out their good points. Here surely such hats were to be found. Webster says a hat is a covering for the head. It seemed to me that most of the hats will render man more tractable, and will eliminate all those gibes and vituperations directed at the wearers of cart-wheels and merry widows.

The middle of the arena was no place for me, however, so I drew away and watched the hurry-scurry from a safe distance. Backed up against the wall, out of the way as far as possible, stood a man who had come with his wife and daughter to help (?) them choose their headgear. He was the only man present, and the bewildered look upon his face as his "wimmen folk" presented themselves for his approval was decidedly funny. He survived the ordeal, though, and when the selections were finally made he manfully footed the bill. Another occurrence that caught my attention was not so pleasing. Indeed, it was pathetic. A poorly-dressed woman was purchasing a hat. Judging by her clothing, I thought her a poor farmer's wife—or, should I say, a farmer's poor wife? Because there can surely be no poor farmers in Norfolk this year of grace, 1913 when every crop has yielded so bounteously. She looked longingly at the pretty things about her, but was resolute in trying on only very plain, cheap articles. It seemed to me that she must have saved and scrimped for months to enable her to purchase the hat that was to cover her head, with its scanty, tightly-drawn knot of hair, during the next two or three winters. But enough of hats.

Cheek by jowl with the headgear were placed the suits. This is as it should be, because it is imperative that one's hat and suit be in accord, and the contiguity of these two sections is of advantage to those who would be well attired. The bypass for the store scour every market for offerings, and the result shows great taste and discretion. The styles are exclusive, everything being in the latest mode, without any of the daring effects so much read of. The costumes are well cut in all particulars, and old Lady Fashion's behests have been followed closely. Such a range as there is. Draped, cutaway, Russian, Bulgarian, in broadcloth, velvet, brocade, silk, boucle, ratine tweeds — in short, every style and every material is here included, with unimpeachable tailoring.

The top coats are very dressy affairs, indeed, this fall. Some are very loose, others are semi-fitting. All, however, are tailored to perfection. The length most in vogue is the three-quarter. Many samples are developed in rough cloth, with very attractive finishings. To be alliterative, the garments are sensible and serviceable, stylish and satisfactory. No freaky fashions are here, but everything is designed for Canadian women with good, solid Canadian taste. For general wear, the separate coats have no substitute, and the numbers of crowded racks give promise of the wide selection possible.

It is not very long since that the well-dressed woman avoided the ready-made suits on account of their palpably readymade appearance. That objection no longer holds good. They are so excellently cut and put together, with such good material, that they are the equal of the ordered suits. Nor is there any need to patronize out-of-town stores, as the stock carried in the Falls Store is very large. Enormous as it is, however, there is no danger of having one's preference duplicated, as the assortment is carefully chosen with the view of having no duplicates.

This statement is applicable to dresses, too, which are offered in abundance. It has been remarked that the modes this season have been "adapted" from styles of all ages. Greek, Directoire, Empire, Louis XIV, Watteau—all have been pressed into service for the clothing of the women of today. Every figure, every facial characteristic, can here be suited. Garments that will be recognized as unusual may be secured at a moderate outlay. And if you are in the lamentable plight of Flora McFlimsey with nothing to wear, your wants can be met at the Falls Store. Modest house dresses and elaborate evening creations are all in this comprehensive collection. To be sure, some of the most exclusive have already been picked up. Visitors in town from various parts of Ontario have been numerous, and some have fallen victims to the allurement of this pretty showing of frocks, and have promptly become their possessors.

Now, a word as to the children's needs. The little ones have not been overlooked; the supply of diminutive articles of wearing apparel is immense. There are tiny coats, lace-inserted, hand-made robes for the wee baby, on up to the sturdy clothing required by the robust youngsters of school age, who are so indefatigably given over to strenuous romping. Prices have as wide a range. The humble mother with several children to outfit will find as good, substantial value given her for the county sum she has to expend, and as careful attention from the salespeople, as will the rich woman with unlimited means to draw upon in the adornment of her flock. A characteristic of the Falls Store is the courtesy and attention given to the buyers with the flat pocketbooks. No sale, however small, is scorned, and the clerks are one and all directed to be as painstaking with the poor as with the wealthy.

Maybe you have your new hat and costume, and yet there is some little note lacking. If so, go and take a look at the new, short ostrich ruffs that are so much favored this fall. That may be the very thing needed, as the distinction they confer on one's costume is marked. The saleswoman, in answer to my admiring expression, vouchsafed the information that the ruffs have been shown decided approval.

But the furs! For sheer luxury and richness, nothing could be more impressive than the Falls display. It would rouse the most phlegmatic of onlookers to staccato notes of admiration. Truly they are magnificent. One superb Persian lamb top coat, in three-quarter length, a most exquisitely fashioned piece, held me spellbound. I was in no way amazed to discover that the price ticket held figures in excess of three hundred dollars. The immense store of fur garments includes the ultra-fashionable yellow fox, ermine, mink, mole, lynx, sable, and the qualities of both peltries and workmanship called for recognition. Falls' quality is high quality. The latest ideas are all found in abundance in the dust-proof glass cases filled with charming examples of coats, collar and muff setts, etc. Correspondents from the world's fashion centres say that dyed furs are to be favorites this season, that exponents of the latest word in style are already wearing furs dyed in taupe, orange, canary and green. However, it seems to me that one can't help but fall in love with the furs in their natural state, as shown here.

Really, you ought to be told about the lingerie and white wear. The most fastidious can have all her wants amply filled from this huge supply. Piles and mounds and heaps of snow-white goods revealed charmingly sheer, hand-wrought garments that were truly beautiful. Even the cheaper grades were noticeable for comfort and style, and every requirement could be adequately met.

By the time I had reached this stage in my peregrination I began to feel tired. But even for this state of fatigue there was alleviation. Near me was a small, cozy room, with a pretty rug and with deep, soft armchairs. A table bore a sweet-smelling bouquet, and late magazines devoted to the tired ones, and well worn scattered about. This corner is does it bear out the name inscribed above the entrance. It indeed proved to be a rest room. Here is a source of comfort and repose to the patrons of this establishment, and it robs the tiresome hours of shopping of much of their terror.

Then there is a millinery fitting-room, where an excellent mirror, close to a large window, contributes to the ease of the shopper. A third room is set apart for the fitting of corsets. Until quite recently one asked for one's size and wore what was given regardless of whether it was adapted to the wants of one's figure or not. Now that "lines" are deemed so essential by the peremptory dressmaker, the greatest of care is exercised in the selection of the corset. This little apartment, with its glass and its attendant fitter, allows each figure to be fitted with just the garment best suited to it. And the resulting improved appearance of dresses and suits repays abundantly for the trouble taken.

Doesn't your china cabinet need replenishing? Haven't you broken some of the cups of that "open" set you purchased a while ago? If so, you may fill up gaps from the large stock in this store. A while ago I saw the wooden plate that was generally in use three or four centuries ago. It had a depression in one corner for salt. After one had finished the meat, the plate was turned over, and the sweet was eaten from the other side. The exigencies of polite society have elevated table necessities incalculably since that day, and our requirements have vastly expanded. On these shelves you will find everything requisite for one's table, as they contain a stock in quality and extent that may only be excelled by the largest department concerns. Coalport Limoges, Doulton, Haviland, Crown Derby, all find a place here, as well as the latest novelties. While I was looking about, three or four girls, evidently seeking gifts for a shower, were loudly exclaiming over the bewildering array.

Although I had not yet fathomed the possibilities of this storey, time was fleeting, and I wanted to see something of the main floor. Strolling down the wide and easy stairs, I halted about half way down, and I had a splendid view of the scene below. From this strategic point I watched the ebb and flow of the busy ing tide for some time.

It is said that nearly 4000 years ago a Chinese queen, charmed by the shining, gleaming filaments of the silk cocoon, succeeded in discovering the method of rearing silk worms, and of reeling the silk. Since then all womankind have followed her in admiration of the beautiful sheeny fabric. Modern dames are still favoring this material, and the silk counter on this occasion had a swarm of buyers.

Beneath me was a large assortment of club-bags, suitcases, steamer trunks, and the like. These leather articles were sincere in their claims to be "real" leather, and undoubtedly were good value for the prices asked. Warm, soft travelling rugs, in close juxtaposition, combined in tempting would-be travelers to acquire them.

Doesn't the word "linen" convey to your mind's eye the picture of emerald hills, lofty and wind-swept, spread with dazzling white lengths of cloth, with buxom Irish colleens seeing that it bleached properly? Some of this Irish linen may be obtained at the Falls linen counter. Here a young lady and her mother were among the customers, and, judging from the stock of tablecloths and napery that they were buying, as well as by the glimmer of the tell-tale ring on the girl's left hand, I was sure that the all-important event could not be far off.

Peering still further, I beheld stacks of downy comforters and fleecy blankets. One was easily convinced that, resting beneath these warm coverings, journeys to the Land of Nod would be made in record time, and the rigors of Jack Frost would be successfully defied.

Away over in the section devoted to men's wear could be seen busy clerks and deliberating masculine purchasers. For the Falls autumn opening is not devoted entirely to the wants of the fair sex. Men's needs and their shades of fashion are every whit as much matters of close attention from merchant and buyer. The exact roll of the hat brim, the angle at which the "tile" is worn, the depth of the "cuffs" on the unmentionables (as Dickens calls them) are all as carefully considered as if they were affairs of national importance. By taking into account this foible of the sterner members of humanity the Falls Store caters to men most successfully. Rack after rack laden with suits, box after box filled with cravats, with silk sox, with other manly necessaries all mean that the young men of the town are well-dressed and well-groomed.

Space forbids my drawing out further this story. Suffice it to say that as I stood there and listened to the reverberations of the hurrying feet of the purchasing public, it was easy to believe in the prosperity of the inhabitants of good old Norfolk.

Leisurely I made a circuit of this floor, passing with only a cursory glance the rooms allotted to the cashiers and the bookkeepers, upon whom so much of the accuracy and smoothness of the conduct of the concern depend. Further on, through the open door of Mr. Falls' private office, I glimpsed a fire-place, glass-panelled walls, a desk heaped with papers, where so many plans for the enlargement of the establishment originate, and whence the ideas emanate that are so largely responsible for the success of the store. A few steps more, and I was out on the street amid the Saturday crowds, homeward bound.

MARIE

Nota Bene—Not once in these columns have I used the word "dainty." You need not argue from that, however, that I am of the masculine persuasion.


# MADAM!

Honored we justly feel in being permitted to present to you our Authentic Catalogue showing forth exact correctness in Models for Fall, 1913.

These are the things at this moment in Fashion for Women. And most of them are things to be found in their finest qualities only in Falls' Store.

The H. S. Falls Co. of Simcoe, Limited

The Store of Satisfaction

Dear Madam :—

Moves reveal wants that must be supplied, supply them most economically. Make your money do its best for you. Our fall stock is now very complete, forthwith displaying extraordinary suggestions from the world's merchandising markets.

The styles this season are beautiful and our general exhibits are the most pronounced and comprehensive we have yet shown. We hereby extend to you a cordial invitation while in town to make our store your headquarters. At your service on the second floor you will find located an elegantly furnished Comfort Room with all convenience, a good place to meet your friends. Also all around you a bewildering sway of Fashion's tastes. You will find our price most reasonable with an assortment to meet all demands. No matter what your wants may be we can supply them.

## Check Over The Following List

### Main Floor

All classes of staple goods, plain and fancy linen, etc., men's and boys' clothing, hats, caps, furnishings, etc., all classes of fancy work, notions of all kinds, [illegible] handkerchiefs, gloves, embroideries, umbrellas, corsets, etc., ladies' underwear and sweater coats, dress goods and silks, hand bags, suit cases, etc.

### Second Floor

All classes of ladies' ready-to-wear, millinery, [illegible]

### Third Floor

Rugs, carpets, oilcloths and linoleums, furniture, brass and iron beds, and all classes of bedding.

We take pleasure in announcing to our many patrons the opening of a Corset Fitting Parlor, in which our Miss Jones will be pleased to fit corsets on Tuesdays and Thursdays of each week. The C. C. a la Grace $2.00, $2.50, $3.00, $3.50, $3.75. Nemo $3.50, $4.00, $4.50, $5.50.

Soliciting a call. Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours Very Truly,

H. S. Falls