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## REMINISCENCES OF NORWAY.

By DORA DE BLAQUIÈRE.



SEGMENT OF NORWEGIAN BRIDAL CROWN,  
SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

THE charming little exhibition of objects of Norwegian origin, which was open in London in the middle of February this spring, must not be passed over without notice at our hands; for experience has shown us that many of our girls are interested in that land of great mountains, fjords, and forests. No doubt our constant readers will remember, too, that record of a girl's experiences (which appeared in *THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER* in 1885) in the months of July and August, 1884. Very full information was given in them, and prices and localities were all mentioned, so that we hear many of our girls followed so good an example afterwards, and paid visits of various lengths to that delightful land.

The exhibition may be said to have been made up of reminiscences of Norway, remembrances brought back, and pictures which recalled the features of its wonderful scenery. The contents of it were thoroughly Norwegian; but all were of the Norway of the present century, as it reckoned but few treasures of antiquity, and only one or two relics which could be called in any way historical.

The exhibition was held by the Norwegian Club, which was started in London about two years ago, with the aim of uniting those gentlemen and ladies interested in and acquainted with Norway, and giving them an opportunity of meeting in London. Ladies, as it seems, are eligible as members, and the club-rooms are at No. 11 Charing Cross. The exhibits at this exhibition, with few exceptions, were the property of the members of the club, and the charming and most picturesque arrangement of the Conduit Street Galleries was also due to their taste and skill.

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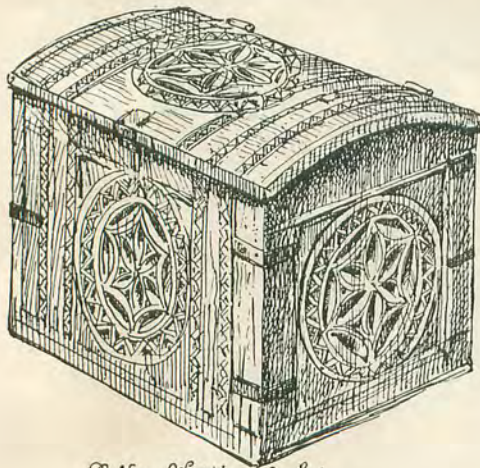
A VIKING.

(From the painting by Carl Haag.)



BORGUND CHURCH.

The chief interest centres in the collections of domestic articles of all kinds; of plate, personal jewellery, and ornaments, carved wood-work, and curiosities. Of these and the wonderful collection of Sir Henry Pottinger, of church plate, a very full account will be found in the *Leisure Hour* for April, with excellent illustrations as well. But we are naturally more interested in the feminine part of the exhibition, and to that we shall confine our notice for THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER. Beginning with the mention of the two pretty female heads, representing the unmarried girl and the married woman of Norway, one, it will be seen, wears the head covered, and the other



Brides Wedding Cocket.

not. These sketches should be carefully looked at first, as they show the dress, and where and how the ornaments are placed.

The Norwegian belts are one of the most beautiful portions of the attire of the women and girls. One of these we illustrate, which has on it the figure of St. Olaf, the patron saint of Norway, who, like our St. George, is a slayer of the Dragon; and on the two plaques we see both St. Olaf on his horse, and the Dragon that he attacks. This, like all the other ornaments, is in pure silver, the work being quite excellent; and from these belts various kinds of ornaments are hung, such as are seen on our *châtelaines*, which are only copies of the same thing. Next in order to the belt we shall take the beautiful necklace, illustrated, which dates from about 1650, and is a fine specimen of the

silversmith's art. Here we come to a curious characteristic of the Norwegian jewellery in the pendant ornaments which may be seen hanging from the central round or boss. These take various forms, such as little cups, crosses and balls, which hang from brooches, bracelets, and even from many of the rings.

There seems reason for believing that these are reminiscences of the bangles worn in eastern countries, and many of the Scandinavian ideas of art seem traceable to this source. A ring ornamented with other tiny rings is illustrated, and the two brooches show that a difference exists in Norway between the brooch worn by a widow and that used by a single woman.

The first is a plain round, with six small ornaments embossed on it, like the flower of the "forget-me-not," without the hanging ornaments of the single woman's brooch. Another brooch is also illustrated, which is remarkable for its delicate tracery no less than for its antiquity.

And now we may come to the few articles in the exhibition which specially appertain to costume and wearing apparel. The first of these is the bride's bodice, which was, alas! a modern example, showing that very badly done crewel embroidery, and dyes of aniline hues have displaced the beautiful native dyes which formerly existed. The front is of very thick crewel embroidery, the top portion of red cloth, and the buttons of silver. Of course, the whole is the copy of a portion of the antique dress of the bride, but much vulgarised in colour from its early ideals. The peasant's cap being older, was not so bad as to colour or embroidery; the hues of green and purple showed, even yet, what it might have been when new.

By far the most interesting bits of embroidery were furnished by the two linen collars; one of which is illustrated entirely, the other shown in a section only, to enable our readers to judge exactly how it looks. It is of fine linen or cambric; the material used for embroidering it being black silk. This style of embroidery possesses an interest for us in England, quite apart from its use in Norway. It was brought here by Queen Katharine of Aragon, and it went then by the name of "Spanish work," which it kept for many years. It seems to have been applied especially to the under-clothing of that day, as we are told that the "smocks," or chemises with high necks, and long sleeves, of Queen Katharine were decorated with it; and that our English ladies copied it from this. Throughout the reign of Mary Tudor, her daughter, this work remained in the highest fashion, for Mary was faithful to the traditions of her mother's and her grandmother's work; and we have lists of her "smocks," all worked in black and gold, or black silk only. Katharine of Aragon had learned her needle-craft from her mother, Queen Isabella; and this great queen always made her husband's shirts. In those days to make and adorn a shirt was an artistic feat, not at all unworthy of a queen. In the reign of Queen Elizabeth, as we may imagine, all Spanish fashions were at a discount; and even needlework followed the political tendency of the day; and



Embroidered Linen

Linen Smoother.





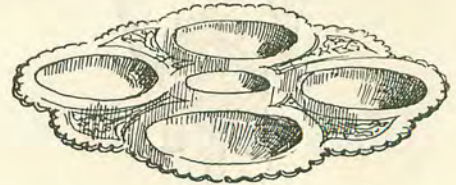
NORWEGIAN WOMAN.

thus "Spanish work" entirely disappeared. To-day it survives only in the dress of the peasants in the Low Countries, and in Scandinavia. Much of the needlework of Mary Queen of Scots was done in it; but she turned it to a different use, and employed it for figures. A piece of work executed in it, which I saw some years ago, was a representation of the Crucifixion, and the instruments of the Passion were done in black silk on white linen. This piece is quite perfect, and belongs to a great northern family, to whom it was given by the Scottish Queen herself. It has been engraved and photographed, I believe.

The silver links at the neck of this embroidered linen collar, or as it really is, an under-habit shirt, or chemise with long sleeves are worthy of notice. They form another item of the proper national costume of the peasant of Norway.

The small box, or trunk, which was the bride's wedding-casket, was also remarkable as a specimen of carved wood, with burnt decorations and bands of iron. It seems very tiny, but we must remember that the

bride also possessed one of the huge oak chests that we so often see now; and that this small casket only contained her more valuable treasures of jewelry, or papers. A round wooden box, which was not in itself sufficiently remarkable for illustration, was interesting as showing how the girls in Norway provide for the safe-keeping of their finery, when on those long, long boat journeys, that they have to take, if they wish to attend church. In these boats it is stowed away; and when she arrives, she proceeds to decorate herself on the shore; and there is a pretty picture of three or four girls, helping each other on the lonely shore on one of the great fjords, which they have just crossed to church. They sit one behind the other in a close line, dressing, smoothing, and plaiting each other's hair, and finally tying in the brightly-hued ribbons, which have been so carefully guarded in



Egg Dish.

the round wooden band-box. This sight may be seen on any fine Sunday in Norway.

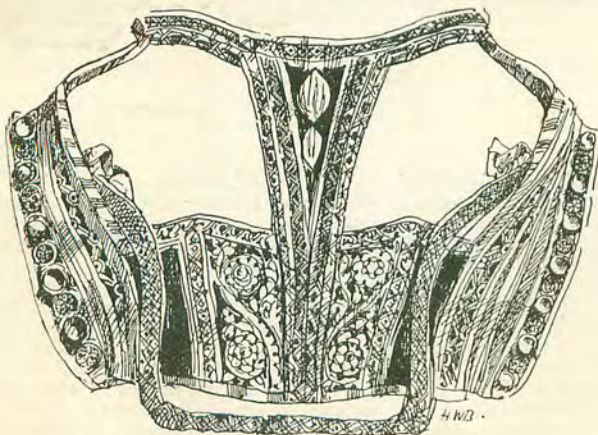
Amongst other articles of personal use were numbers of vinaigrettes, or ancient smelling-bottles, in which a piece of sponge was put, wetted with strong vinegar, and carried as people carry the smelling-salts of to-day, to revive and clear the head after fatigue or during a headache.

Then comes a silver egg-dish, used evidently to serve poached eggs, beautifully chased and delicate. The centre hole was, I suppose, for the salt.

The linen smoothers were perfectly delightful examples of wood-carving, which you can understand by looking at the illustration. They were all beautifully polished, and evidently cherished articles of housewifery. They were used, and indeed, still are

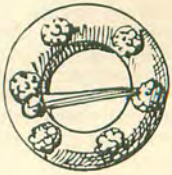


NORWEGIAN GIRL.



Brides Bodice Norway.

Widows Brooch



Single woman's Brooch



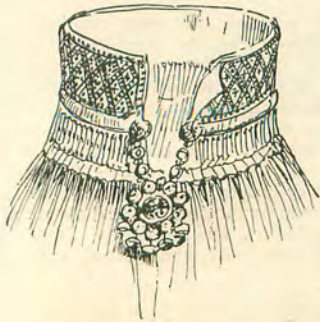
Ring



Vinaigrette.



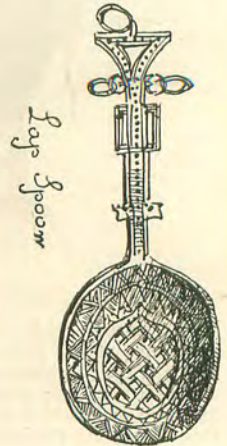
Urn



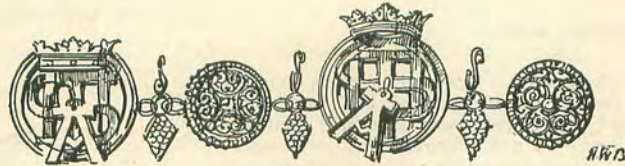
Embroidered Linen Collar.



Peasants Cap.



Lapp Spoon



Necklace Saterodatel about 1650



Brooch about 1500



Belt by Moeller

1844.

employed in many parts, to smooth over the household linen, which it was not the custom, nor is it now, to iron. Travellers will, I know, recall the almost rough-dried sheets of Italy, where linen in the country parts is never ironed at all; nor do they possess irons.

The last thing to be described and favourably noticed is the "Lapp-spoon," to a spoon-collector most attractive; and calculated to make them break the tenth commandment forthwith! This silver spoon is an early example of a combination article. It is at once a spoon and a babies' rattle; and as such is used by the Lapp mothers to keep the infant quiet and amused. The rattles are the

rings and chains hanging from the handle of the spoon, in the sketch, and they make a great deal of noise; more than would be imagined. The spoon seemed to me to be very flat, but I daresay it might hold enough for a baby.

There were some wooden beer-tankards, which were very curious. One of them, dated 1799, had a curious inscription on it; and as it held about two quarts, if the beer was strong, I am afraid the "mother" was "grieved" very often! This is the inscription:

"If the father will make constant use of me, then the mother will be constantly grieved." A very unexpected place, truly, for a temperance lecture like this!

I will conclude my article with a little exhortation to those of our girls who have a taste for drawing and painting, and who are now studying art. The water-colour sketches by ladies in this exhibition were in very large numbers, and some of them admirably done. Although the photograph is such a faithful transcript of nature, it never, at least to my mind, takes the place of a good water-colour; especially if you be the artist yourself. Thus I exhort all my girl-readers to endeavour to acquire the art of sketching from nature. It will double their pleasure in the sight of fine scenery, and in the enjoyment of foreign travel.