

modern ones, had a habit of developing themselves very rapidly, and it was not long before the harpsichord became a formidable instrument, in some cases a sort of cross between the organ and pianoforte. Certainly the one-keyboard pattern was very similar in shape to the modern grand piano.

Its notes were produced by the same action or mechanism as that of the spinet, but whether the pressure of the fingers upon the keys was heavy or light, it made no difference in the volume of tone produced. All told, they were "grander" (*i.e.*, nearer approaching the "grand" of to-day) in tone, because where the virginal had but one string to a note, the harpsichord was fitted with two, three, and four strings of brass or steel wires.

But how did matters stand for that all-important element in practical music—variety of tone-power? There were no "loud" and "soft" pedals as in the pianoforte. Well, this was got over by a supply of "stops," by means of which the player could intensify or diminish the tone. These "stops" constituted a mechanical device for moving the key-mechanism off the four wires on to one, and *vice versa*, just as the shifting keyboard of the piano does to-day. In some instruments the lid was so made that it would gradually open and shut, thus producing the "swell" effects in organs. Another plan was to build

harpsichords with two keyboards, the notes of the upper one having only a single string, and therefore much lighter than those of the lower or "great" keyboard.

Of course, no one wishes to see a harpsichord in the place of every pianoforte, even if that were possible. None the less it and its music furnish a delightful field for those lovers of music who feel betimes a longing for an excursion into the far-off musical past.

Composers for the harpsichord proper date from Graziani (1609-1672) down to Haydn's time (1732-1809). There was Lully, Purcell, Scarlatti, Buononcini, the Bachs, Boyce, Handel, and a host of others. Their suites and early sonatas abound with ingenuity, and are a long way off being unlovely. Now that the harpsichord is being revived, it would prove no unprofitable study, historically and musically, for lovers of music, so inclined, to look back into this almost forgotten and certainly neglected field of practice. Of course, most of the harpsichord compositions can be played upon the modern pianoforte; but nothing equals the peculiar touch and tingle of one of the old instruments. Now and then one of these can be bought "for a song," as the saying is, at sale-rooms; and it is possible, for those who can afford it, to get a brand-new copy made of one of the old originals.

## GIRL-LIFE, NOW AND TWENTY YEARS AGO.

IN NORWAY.



Do you know anything of girl-life in other lands one must live with the girls, share their daily life, sympathise with their pursuits, and, above all, not ridicule habits and customs simply because they are strange to us. On the other hand, while seeking to learn girl-life in foreign lands, it is not at all

needful to give up one's own national characteristics. On the contrary, for the honour of our country they must be maintained.

Those among us who have lately visited foreign countries with the purpose of studying the character and condition of their women and girls, are struck with the changes wrought by the last twenty years.

In Norway, for example, a change marks the very first hour of a girl's life. The old custom was to wrap the newborn infant in swaddling clothes, whereas now she is put into a loose dress—"a symbol," says a Norwegian lady of the old school, "of her future freedom from all restraint and authority."

During her early years she lives at home, merely going to a kindergarten school for an hour in the morning, but when she reaches the age of six she attends regular day schools for three hours daily.

Boarding schools are almost unknown. There are but one or two in the whole country, and these, as a rule, are frequented only by delicate girls.

The practice of studying some particular branch of knowledge in order to ensure the girl's future independence, even if she be in a good position, is universal, and it is an almost unheard-of occurrence that a girl should stay quietly at home without some object of study or some occupation by which she can earn money for herself.

In the schools themselves a marked change is to be seen. No longer is education simple; on the contrary, it is most complex. Teachers are often in despair, not only at the number of subjects considered necessary for the examinations, but also because of the many new ways of teaching the various sciences.

The tendency towards the establishment of national or board schools has so greatly increased of late that if it should continue at the same rate, we shall find in a few years that the board schools will be used by people both of high and low degree, just as in America.

At present schools are divided into two great divisions, each consisting of five classes—the first five being preparatory, the second five for advanced students, and terminating with a grand examination, the result of which has a great influence on the girl's future success in obtaining a situation as book-keeper or teacher.

Another feature in the education of girls in the present day is the introduction into the schools of daily gymnastics according to the Swedish method.

Religious instruction is, as a rule, systematically given in the schools. Before lessons commence a portion of Scripture is read aloud in class every morning, and once or twice a week a devotional service is held for the pupils by the head master, who also gives Bible lessons to the upper classes and prepares them for Confirmation. This ceremony has always been obligatory to everyone belonging to the Established Church. There are not many Dissenters in Norway.

Of late years Sunday schools have become quite a feature in Norway, and are zealously attended by girls, quite a contrast to years gone by.

In consequence of the great desire for book-learning, the practice of needlework, both plain and artistic, has, in a great measure, gone out of fashion. Neither is it made of any importance in the schools, and it is feared that this important part of a woman's education will gradually pass out of their lives. The feeling has been strong among a certain class of the people that something should be done to preserve its practice in so poor a country as Norway.

A society, therefore, has been called into existence and named "The Friends of Needlework," with a head committee in Christiania, whose object it is to raise the value of woman's work in town and country, and to open out opportunities for obtaining patterns and tuition in the various branches of work, and with an eye to keeping up artistic ornamentation and colour.

The art of weaving from old patterns and pictures is gradually finding favour among the women and girls of Norway, and it is no unusual thing at the present moment

to find them preparing the wool, dyeing it, and finishing it up without any assistance from men or machinery.

At the National Exhibition three years ago in Bergen, there were many samples of weaving and embroidery, showing fine taste and workmanship, and a great variety of patterns all bearing witness to the revival of this industry among Norwegian girls and women.

There is a decided tendency in girls of the present day in Norway to be free from restraint at a comparatively early age, which is detrimental to the progress and development of individual culture, and old people, who look upon life in a different way, find it hard to contend with.

Twenty or thirty years ago, when the old people were young, a girl would ask her mother's leave to go out for a walk. The next stage was, "Mother, I am going out." Now the girl goes without a word one way or the other.

When a girl is engaged to be married it is made public at once. No secret engagement is thought of. If her father be wealthy, he provides her with means not only for the purchase of her trousseau, but also for the purchase of the household linen and furniture for the new house.

Many girls make their trousseau at home, and embroider and ornament the various articles of dress and house-linen with great taste.

The style of life in Norway does not require that a girl should have an elaborate outfit, still "Fashion" has been busy in creating new wants and frequent changes in the toilet.

In private schools all pupils are well dressed according to their taste and means, and in the public schools there is an absence of untidiness or apparent poverty among the girls.

There is in Norway, as in most other countries at the present time, a cry from the girls and women for independence and freedom from tyranny in married life, which has resulted in the alteration of old laws.

The grammar schools and colleges have lately been opened to girls, and at the University of Christiania the increase of lady-students yearly is considerable, which is strange, seeing the difficulty of obtaining proper appointments afterwards even for the masculine competitors.

The unsettled climate of Norway prevents the girls from distinguishing themselves in outdoor sports. Especially is this the case in Western Norway. In winter, however, when ice and snow cover the roughness of the ground, skating, and what is called ski-racing, is practised

vigorously by the girls, and it is quite a pretty sight to meet them in their becoming costumes, carrying their long "ski" (snow-shoes) on their shoulders as they go to the sport, or to meet them returning from their long excursions to the snowfields between the mountains, where they have been racing down the sloping hills and laboriously climbing again to the top in the deep snow just for the pleasure of coming down again. Such a day's sport when taken rationally strengthens a young girl physically and mentally.

On the whole, the present age offers to Norwegian girls of every class of society a great many advantages as to means of self-support and mental cultivation. On the other hand, they seem less inclined than formerly to enter the married state. It is astonishing to find how few marriages take place now among the upper classes compared with some few years ago. The demands for comfortable arrangements and the expenditure of the household have increased in proportion to the easier communication with foreign countries and the improved circumstances of the masses of the people.

The increase of cafés and restaurants in the towns draws far too many young men from the domestic circle, and the attractions of the variety entertainments entice the young people of both sexes evening after evening, and the consequences speak for themselves.

Although one must acknowledge that a decided and rapid progress has taken place in the education and social position of Norwegian girls of late years, yet one cannot shut one's eyes to the evils and temptations which beset them in the present day, nor can it be said with certainty that the girls are happier now than formerly.

A peculiarity of the girls of Norway at the present time is that none will be servants. They all desire to serve in shops or be clerks in offices. The farmers in the country deplore this, as the girls who formerly were glad to work for them now go off to the towns, where they find the work easier and the wages better.

A great feature of the present day is the intense care bestowed by the Norwegian Government upon the health of young girls, especially during school life. Minute information is demanded at stated intervals from all schools in the country as to the condition of health of the pupils, and during a certain number of weeks in the year, doctors visit the schools at fixed hours, examining and comparing the bodily weight and growth of each pupil.

## VARIETIES.

### MUSIC AT HOME.

The unmusical members of a musical family will appreciate the following conversation:—

"Do you play any instrument, Mr. Timp?"

"Yes, I'm a cornetist."

"And your sister?"

"She's a pianist."

"Your brother?"

"He's a violinist."

"Does your mother play?"

"She's a zitherist."

"And your father?"

"He's a pessimist."

### CHEAP BICYCLES.

*Friend*: "I don't see how you can afford to sell bicycles at such a price."

*Slimspoke*: "I make my profit on the repairs."

**BRUNETTES HAVE THE BEST CHANCE.**—A medical man some years ago collected statistics on the chances of marrying enjoyed respectively by brunettes and blondes. Of the brunettes he found that seventy-eight per cent. were married, while of the blondes only sixty-eight were married. Thus it would seem that the brunette has considerably more chance of getting married in England than a blonde.

### HOW SHE WAS SAVED.

"The fact that I was a good musician," said the lady from Windsor, "was the means of saving my life during the flood in our town a few years ago."

"How was that?" asked the young lady who had just finished singing.

"When the water struck our house, my husband got on the folding-bed and floated down the stream until he was rescued."

"And what did you do?"

"Well, I accompanied him on the piano."

**OUR PIOUS ANCESTORS.**—Almost every system of laws which was formed in the middle ages abounds with moral precepts and religious exhortations. King Alfred incorporates the Ten Commandments into his law-book; and quotations from the Scriptures are commonly found in the legal compilations of both his predecessors and successors.

**THE RABBIT IN THE MOON.**—The Chinese have very strange ideas about the moon. They say there is a white rabbit in it pounding rice. The dark and bright spots on the moon's face suggest the idea of a rabbit on its hind legs pounding rice in a mortar.

**RUNAWAY TEMPER.**—Nobody keeps a runaway horse, but many keep a runaway temper and think nothing of it.