

# Northern Messenger

Wm Bronscombe 30 03

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## The Women of Scandinavia.

(Minneapolis Journal.)

As in most countries where the struggle for existence is keen, where a rigorous climate and an unfruitful soil have minimized luxury, the women of Scandinavia inherit with their brothers vigor of mind and body. Tall, finely proportioned, with regular features and a much less Slavonic cast of countenance, one sees everywhere, in city and village, splendid types of beauty which are

Notwithstanding the fact that the Salic law in Norway has barred the succession of a woman to the throne, women, nevertheless, have enjoyed a remarkable degree of freedom and authority, due in part at least to their physical and intellectual force.

### SCHOOLS OF NORWAY.

There is a three-fold system of government schools, to which girls are admitted on equal footing with boys, although they are instructed separately—in the lower grades by women and in the upper—gram-

As in other countries, they have shown signal ability as trained nurses and in medicine—practicing among women and children.

Society is divided into distinct gradations, as elsewhere throughout the world, in which the old nobility take precedence, the clergy and the wealthy manufacturers and tradesmen ranking second and third. Extreme deference is paid to rank and position, the great lady of the community monopolizing an undue share of honors and attention, to which, frequently, her natural acquirements would not entitle her.

### EATING AND DRINKING.

The vast amount of eating and drinking which goes on everywhere makes abundant work for the housekeeper and servants. So far as this refreshment can be classified by the foreigner, there are, first, the rolls and coffee served in one's room at 7; breakfast at 9, which is a generous and substantial meal; a light luncheon at 12; dinner at 2; coffee again at 4; supper at 7, and, if the pangs of hunger must again be allayed, a moderate luncheon is sent to one's room before retiring. Of course, the cold climate permits this frequent eating, but it is difficult to believe that it is absolutely necessary.

### SPEAK ENGLISH.

There is, in and around Christiania, an American aspect that is a continual surprise; the marked difference being the beautiful cleanliness of the parks and the streets. Women are occupied in business everywhere, and everywhere, in shops and hotels, the women in charge speak English with wonderful fluency and correctness, for it is a language that they are taught from early childhood in their schools. Like the women of Sweden, they dress with great taste, and the clothing of the very poorest is clean and whole. The fish wives in the market are the very antithesis of those of Billingsgate, London. With their neat black stuff gowns, black straw hats—the broad brims tied down with white kerchief—their fair skins, bright eyes and cheeks like roses, they are as attractive in manners as in appearance.

On the farms, strong, rugged girls do more than their share of the work, since they must not only help in the planting and harvesting, but prepare the food for the family, take charge of the dairy and make and mend the clothing, which, it seems, is never permitted to become shabby or ragged. Sympathy is wasted upon them, however, for they themselves would be the first to repudiate it, since their free, natural life has endowed them with the strength to perform easily whatever share of the labor may have been allotted to them. The stout peasant, with sturdy muscles that a man might envy, climbing the incline—not a ladder—up the wall of a growing building, handles her burden of mortar easily, erect as a ship's mast. It is probable that, if consulted, she would not change places with her feeble sister shut up in a sweltering kitchen, with her back bent over a steaming washtub or a red-hot kitchen stove. The fisherwomen, too, assist with the nets, landing them, sorting and



A NORWEGIAN GIRL.

by no means confined to the lower classes. The women are the fairest types of blondes, with yellow, silken hair, blue eyes and good figures, enhanced among the peasantry by the picturesque national dress of blue and scarlet, with white bodice, peasant waist and coquettish white cap. With this costume antique silver ornaments are worn, pins, chains and brooches, not unlike those of the Swiss, which represent no small part of the family wealth.

mar and high schools—by instructors of both sexes. In the higher schools tuition is paid, and religious teaching is compulsory, regular examinations being conducted by Lutheran clergymen—the exponents of the national faith. Women are also admitted to the technical schools, where they largely devote themselves to the decorative arts, although a few, of late years, have given evidence of decided ability in the study of architecture.