

very fond, at one time without serious inconvenience to the assemblage.

These old kitchens are very ancient. Some are from 300 to 400 years old, and were the original and sole dwelling places of the founders of the family. Some have the remains of the central cone-shaped holes in the roof through which air and light once exclusively came, as is still found in some of the Scottish crofter huts of Lewis and Skye. The corner chimney and open fireplace which now are seen are comparatively modern, though often from one to two hundred years old. Tiny windows are now found in these ancient kitchens; but the floor is usually of beaten earth nearly as hard as stone. A few rude wooden shelves, the heavy iron pots and kettles, a strong pine table and a stool or two, complete the scant and cumbersome furniture.

The living-room is a more pretentious apartment. Huge pine rafters stretch from wall to wall and their natural reddish tint is deepened by age to the rich hue of rosewood. Often the windows have deep casements, with little diamond-shaped panes, and in the summer they are bright and winsome with plants and flowers. This room always has its wide, high fireplace, and occasionally two of them on opposite sides of the room. In one corner, near the fireplace, is a cupboard, wide, deep and extending from floor to ceiling, and if not flaming with paint it will be covered with a profusion of carving, often in imitation of various articles of tableware.

In the angle where the stairs ascend to the second story another curious closet or cupboard is let in to the projection. This will contain the family store of books and what-not for the long winter nights' amusement. A huge pine table stands in the center of the room, and its legs will be fairly flounced with carvings. Usually a smaller pine table is placed at the side of the room with the best chair or stool behind it, against the wall. This is the seat of honor, but no guest must ever occupy it without invitation from the bonde or his wife.

There are a number of shelves always laid on pegs or perched on grotesque carved brackets; and the stools and chairs are a curious collection of home hand-work. I have seen in many peasants' houses more than a score of chairs carved out of solid cross-sections of huge pine trees. The seat is hollowed deep and wide; the back is worked out thin and round with a fine oval top, in which is cut a curved hole for the hand in order to easily move the chair from place to place; wide, well-fashioned and carved arm-rests are at each side; and the bottom of this curious piece of furniture is always worked out as true, thin and perfect as an inverted chopping-bowl or cauldron kettle.

Usually the heads of the household sleep in this comfortable living-room, and the bed will always be found in the long recess behind the angle of the stairs. In many instances the beds are simply bunks built against the wall; and in most of these the chief portion of the bed clothing observable will be skins of sheep, or of the reindeer, beautifully dressed, and the hide itself cured as soft as loosely woven wool. In not a few of the more pretentious peasant homes the beds in these recesses are sufficiently wonderful for exhibition at world's fairs. They are big enough for giants to rest in, and are from four to five feet above

the floor. Steps lead up to them, and the single corner-post and the slide rail which show, in addition to being carved or painted in the most fantastic manner, will be covered, along with the sides of the ascending steps, with painted texts or mottoes, while a gaily painted rude panel let down from the ceiling above the front of the bed bears in flaming letters the names of the bonder and his wife and the date of their marriage.

In the larger gaards there will be a best room, usually the length of the living-room, but narrower, and if this is not possessed, the chamber above the large living-room bears the same relation to the Norwegian peasant home. It is in either case a sort of show room, where the possessions of the female members of the family are on exhibition, and a sort of huge family closet. Its furniture is always as rude and simple and of as primitive construction as that in other portions of the house, but it is more gaudily painted. Curious old pine bureaux and chéffoniers are here, marvelous in design and coloring, red, yellow and blue paint dominating. These contain the family underwear and all the general drapery.

One always has painted upon it the maiden name of the housewife and the date of her marriage, forming a sort of permanent marriage certificate; and undoubtedly in this, packed carefully away in aromatic leaves and bits of ancient finery, will be found that most glorious bauble to eyes and heart of all Norwegian women, the huge bridal-crown of hand-wrought silver or gilt. I have been shown some which were said to be over 600 years old, and no doubt there are hundreds of these huge and gaudy relics in Norway which have descended in unbroken line from mother to daughter since the days of Olaf the Saint and Hakon the Good.

If this room be the chamber, all around the wall will be ranged a curious collection of little pine trunks or chests. Some are elaborately carved, and all are gaudily painted. When a daughter of the house passes from girlhood to maidenhood she is given one of these chests. Her name is painted or carved upon it; and from this moment the highest ambition of her life aside from honorable marriage is the filling of this chest with bedding, underwear, trinkets, silver ornamentations and gowns, so that by the time she is betrothed she can make a fine showing of accumulated nick-nacks and necessary articles to her lover and her envious companions; and there is no sacrifice she will not make or drudgery she will not cheerfully undertake to worthily accomplish this object.

If this room be the chamber still, numbers of bunks are built against the opposite wall. Depending from ropes strung across the ceiling are rows of dresses. Many are woefully plain, but here and there are glints of tinsel and gimp, bits of wonderful coloring in grotesque embroidery, and flashings of silver buttons, claps and brooches. Along the walls here and there are hung curious embroideries, chiefly in wool. Plainly some are scarfs and wrappings, others seem to be patterns for bodices or best aprons; but most of them simply express the Norwegian peasant woman's ambition to provide unmistakable evidences of her skill with the needle. Brighter than all these however, are the flowers which fill the windows of

every Norwegian home. Huge fuchsias and gorgeous geraniums are most common; and these with the wonderful luxuriance of the wild mountain flora almost bring to Norway in summer the seeming of the odor and bloom of wanton tropic lands.

The inbred sturdiness and independence of character of all Norwegian peasants are best illustrated in the simple yet skilfully made belongings of these hamlet-like homes. Their handicraft is wonderful. The timber for their homes has been felled and fashioned by themselves. Every structure in the country—farm-house, storhaus, dairy, bake-house, barn, smithy, shed and bell tower, is built by the peasant himself. Every article of furniture he possesses has been wrought by his own hand. He beats out his cutlery on his own anvil, and carves its handles. All the utensils of the dairy—cheese-molds, tubs, firkins, bowls, churns, milking-pails, and presses, are of wood and of home manufacture. Yokes for the saeter-girl's necks, baskets, saddles, harness, snow-ploughs, and even comfortable stoll-carts and sledges are all made in the little family workshop during the long winter months.

The peasant tans hides for the family, a supply of boots and shoes, and makes all the latter beside his own fireplace. Nearly every article of clothing is made on the premises by the housewife and her daughters. The wool is carded and spun at home, the stockings, blouses and scarfs are knit at home, and the woolen cloth for the family clothing is woven in the chamber, the "best-room," or in the huge old kitchens. Even the buttons of wood, of horn or even of brass or silver are products of home-craft, and are often beautifully carved. In scores of peasants' homes where I have tarried the eye could not discover a single article of utility or ornament, save the glass in the windows, the oil lamps, the scarce supply of crockery and the huge clock reaching from floor to ceiling, which was not completely a product of Norwegian peasant ingenuity and skill.

The Norwegian peasant is equally independent of the rest of the world in all the food necessities of life. His chief articles of food are supplied by his own herds. Milk, butter, cream, and cheese are found in startling quantities in the lowliest peasant's home. One or two cows are kept at the farm-house for summer use. The remainder of the herd are at the mountain saeters, from which comes an endless procession of mountaineers and saeter-girls, often accompanied by sure-footed ponies, all laden with huge panniers of butter and cheese, or flasks of sour milk and whey. The butter and cheese are constantly being conveyed to the fiord-side markets, or are stored against the winter's needs; while the sour milk is used for food and the whey aids materially in fattening the swine. There are thus always animals for killing, the flesh usually being dried.

Many peasants are fishermen, and cure their own fish. If not, dried fish can be secured in exchange for the peasant's own products, probably cheaper than in any other country in the world. Each peasant farmer raises his own barley, rye, oats, potatoes, and often a little wheat. On nearly every farm, and certainly in every neighborhood, there is a water-mill for grinding the grain. I know of no other country where strawberries and raspberries grow wild in