

## AMONG NORWAY PEOPLE.

WAKEMAN DESCRIBES A VISIT TO NORWEGIAN LANDS.

The Wonderful Scenery Which Equals That of Switzerland—The Hospitality of the Inhabitants and an Interesting Description of a Trip Around the Coast.

LONDON, Oct. 21.—At the outset of these brief sketches of Norwegian scenes and folk, there is strong and irresistible impulse upon me to make the sort of confession few travelers in foreign lands are very willing to do. I have no Norse blood in my veins. I am not a Norse scholar. I have not had the time to even casually read the scant literature of travel in Norway. I never possessed a guide-book to that country. I have acquired only a few hundred words and a few score sentences of the Norwegian language, and those compulsorily through temporary exigency; and my wanderings in this land of wondrous sterility and marvelous fertility, of dreadful heights and awful depths, of savage grandeur and sunniest nooks, have only comprised three short runaway trips from the British side of the North sea.

Yet so much can be seen in so little time in Norway; its scenic wonders are so impressively and startlingly massed; its government and social systems are so plain and simple to the stranger; and above all its people are so responsive, hospitable and kind, and so like a good book set open before your eyes for the reading; that out of the little opportunity I have had for observation and association, when I look back to the stern north land and its crags, valleys and homes, there is such a sense of panoramic completeness of sight, scene and feeling, the task of reminiscence has in it something like the tender pleasure of telling about olden scenes and friends.

This is no doubt true for two reasons. One is that Norway's scenery is as tremendous, if that word may be used, as that of Switzerland, being vaster in extent and infinitely more varied. When you look upon snow-capped mountains above the clouds, a few thousand feet of altitude more or less, in particular instances, are almost incomprehensible to sight or mind; and nearly all of these majestic presentments of inert nature in Norway have that added powerfully weird fascination of immediate contiguity with a fierce and thunderous sea. Indeed, I am not sure but it would be a true statement that, considering the many often soundless fords piercing her entire western coast almost to the Swedish boundary as arms of the sea, which they truly are, there is no portion of Norway's measureless and transcendent scenic glories which is not intensified in charm and sublimity by this peculiar marine influence and effect. Because of this, in whatever land you may have stood in awe before the uplifted, ragged ribs of our good old globe, these Norway mighty heights and chasms remain clearer, sharper and longest in the ever-changing photographs of the traveller's memory.

The other reason is a purely ethical one. You cannot be among the people of Norway, know them ever a little, and leave them, without having gained the most blessed of all consciousness to the traveller, of having come upon a place in the universal human allotment which is sturdy, genuine and true. There is a directness without affect, a simplicity without ignorance, a sturdiness without niggardliness, an honesty without assumption, a geniality without effusiveness, a hospitality without trucking, and a piety without pretence, about these folk, minute, specific and universal. Your liking for them grows with every new experience. In the Latin countries the sunshine of entrance dazzles you with anticipation ever fading to the darkest shadows of insincerity. In Norway the greeting is as quiet as the silence of its land-locked fords; but every successive experience is as lightful and assuring as each new scene from the strong stone ways leading to her glowing upland dalen. And so your heart takes root where your feet have trod.

My first visit to Norway was made from Hull to Bergen, and thence on a Norwegian coasting steamer in and out of the fords along the wonderful coast to Vadsø. The next gave me time for interior wanderings in the Bergen and Hasdang districts; and the last afforded opportunity for knowing the scenes and people round about Thordheim; while some considerable land journeys were made towards the Osterdal from the north, and into the Hallingdal from the west. When the coast tour was made, I had no intention of ever seeing Norway again, and every islet, crag, fiord, town and landing was an object of eager interest. I am not sure but this method of visiting Norway has superior advantages to the traveler whose time is limited, as his diversity of observation is extraordinary; while at the same time he is practically at ease within, or upon, his floating inn.

In the first place you are certain of most intelligent and interesting company. Nearly all the officers of these coast steamers speak English, and a more kind-hearted, loquacious and almost benevolent set of sea-faring men are not to be found. You are constantly agreeably surprised by the pleasant character of your fellow-passengers. English "outers" are predominant, and these are the very cream of the English people—hard worked editors on a brief vacation, sensible quiet fellows who dose and dream and beam as though the slight

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surcease from the bickerings of Grub Lane were all but an earthly heaven; beves of splendid, peachy English girls fresh from some seminary and accompanied by teachers not a bit ashamed to be gay and young again; grave naturalists broadening their vision from the gullies of Hampstead Heath and the hollows of Epping Forest; actors and their wives who are varying the usual run over to Paris to a lark among the dalen and fiords, and genuine London actors and actresses are among the finest-minded folk you will meet in any journeyings; wise old and young geologists, who, instead of forming the hard human strata you would imagine, are the simplest, sunniest and most sympathetic of men; substantial Americans who care to see something of the world outside of New York, London and Paris, to whom, bless them for their quick impressiveness! everything is "Wonderful!—wonderful!—wonderful!"

—English church curates, Highland free kirk ministers, rubicund-faced Catholic clerics, all the best of friends in these picturesque waters, and vieing with each other in those true and good human amenities which their walked in Christian pulpits forbid.

Then there are real and make believe artists, the genuine ones working earnestly at outlines which are put modestly away in their portfolios, the others telling you all about what wonderful work they will have when they get time to "fill them in," amateur photographers with wrinkled brows and faces of frozen importance and weariness: schoolmasters from America and England bound to work off musty epochs of history upon the polite if not enthralled listener; Lapp merchants from Vadsø, packing the deck as if choked in the to them sultry climate of the lower Norway coast; those most lonesome and woe-begone people you can ever meet in foreign lands, the cyclers in faded knickerbockers and drooping visors, and one always feels like privately asking into apartment or stateroom to accept a change of clothing; rural Norwegian deans, on visits to aling communicants in lonely coastwise parishes; and scores more from many lands and climes in astonishing variety of nationality, station and character; but all in the grandest good humor and cheerily alive to the mutual gains from commonality and good fellowship.

It is only the fringe of Norway that can be thus threaded bit by bit, but what a mighty fringe it is! Did the reader ever think for a moment what the actual coastline of Norway must be? The subject came up on shipboard, and some people capable of close calculation, and who think before they venture opinions, conceded it might be from 2,000 to 3,000 miles. My curiosity led me to speak to the captain about it when opportunity offered.

"Well," he replied, cautiously, "the same question has been repeatedly asked me ever since I have been in the coast service. The main coast line is upwards of 1,200 miles long. There are nearly a thousand islands in the 'Skjeggard' (outer coast protecting islands) with fully 4,000 miles of coast line, from Bukken Ford to the North Cape and around to Warange Fiord, in the Arctic Ocean. The fiords cutting into mainland, some from 80 to 100 miles in length, each with smaller fiords, some shorter, some longer, reaching in every direction from the larger fiords, must have as great a coast line as the 'Skjeggard.' We don't know as we are right, but we never have been able to figure Norway's actual coast line at below 9,000 miles."

That is nearly one-third the distance around the globe. In this summer-time trip along the Norway coast—for there is practically no night in June and July—the traveller's sight may fairly be said to rest upon coast scenery one-half of the length of this vast distance. The entire course is one of ever changing scenes of desolation and grandeur, quaintness and beauty. Nothing could be quainter in the Netherlands than the red-tiled city of Bergen which good King Olaf founded, reaching out to commerce and the sea its long, low rows of huge-roofed warehouses, its narrow streets, its odd-looking red homes, its peaked roofs and gable ends, all climbing the steep hills and forming a warm, almost Flemish picture against the hard old mountains behind.

In a moment almost it is shut from sight, and then the interminable maze of islands again. Now we are at the very edge of one whose verdureless top and ragged teeth could be leaped upon from shipboard. Then a little archipelago is threaded where folk live by fishing and farming; the nets and gear lining the rugged shores; tiny strips of grass or grain showing here and there between black angles of rock; and low, strongly built habitations, often with sod roofs, are clustered wherever place to set them can be found. Here men, women and children are barefooted, bare-legged, bare-breasted and bare-armed. They seem

content, and as we pass they wave their hands and smile.

More than once we pass through channels so narrow between upraised faces of island walls that it is shadowy and dark upon the steamer's deck. Myriads of sea-fowl dip and plunge at us, as if to descend upon the ship, and shriek deafeningly for the momentary intrusion. Some are gulls, with their hoarse, strangled gurgle; and men and women standing aft against the sail excitedly throw pieces of bread for the famished fowl to wrangle over in mid-air, laying wagers as to the greatest numbers of "throws" taken by the gulls before the bread touches the water; the sport often awakening almost bitter rivalries and becoming dangerous to purse and person. Again we sail close beneath a beetling shore-side cliff, whose leaden-colored walls rises sheer into the air for more than two thousand feet, and whose edge cuts the sky above apparently as level and sharp as the edge of a dressed block of black marble. Seaward, countless islands rimmed with foam form purple reliefs in settings of spotless white.

Countless fiords are passed. Some have wide low-lying mouths. Others show close, black walls reaching to the clouds. Through the latter a sheen of light carries the eye to the purple, almost shadowy haze above the soundless waters beneath; and so far as can be seen there are here but the waters beneath, the mighty encircling walls and then the clouds and the firmament above. But through many, most tantalizing glimpses are caught. Strange, pointed boats are plying across the silent waters of the fiord. A village seeming to rest upon the water itself shows beneath the face of a towering cliff. An upland dal entrance is indicated by the pinkish mist which, showing above the fiord edge, hints of deep, swift streams or slumberous, silent lakes beyond, with pleasant valley fields around, like a warm sea-fleece of wool, ten, twenty perhaps thirty, miles away, is where a river leaps from an indiscernible gorge. A thousand feet higher, but nearer on the fiord side, is a penciling of wavering white—a waterfall pounded by the air's resistance into hissing spray, and its crumbling old of white sea-tow cluster like wreaths and strings of pearls; past the far north Lofoden Islands around which buddle countless Norwegian fishing-smacks, and where more than twenty million of cod are annually taken; round the black, black, drear and dreadful North Cape, its many back strangely lighted by the yellow light of the northern sun; and finally sweeping past measureless heights of brown, bare stone, ever backed by glacier fiers untrod by foot of man, and the vast mouths of Porsanger and Tana Fiords, black and dun and awful as the entrance to Vathek's Eblis, you skirt the desolate peninsula of Wariak-Niag, and sailing from the east out of the Arctic Ocean float gently through the sombre Warange Fiord, dropping anchor before Vadsø, the northernmost inhabited place in Europe.

Here are perhaps 2,000 souls who subsist almost wholly upon the industries connected with the whale-fisheries. You will find Finns and Lapps in abundance, but all the commercial dealings of the place are carried on by Norwegians. The entire country roundabout differs little in appearance from the eastern group of Lofoden, as I recall it. Everlasting stone in every conceivable formation, stretches back in forbidding mountain reaches to the frozen silences of Nowhere. Humans squatly or thin are clad like animals, have faces like animals, and habits like beasts. Here and there are scads of sickly grass, brittle moss, and trees guarded, stunted, tempest-blowen and frozen into utter insignificance. Everywhere is the nauseating stench of fish in every stage of omnipresent offensiveness. But over all the often burning rays of the sun which here, in its brief days of adolescence, seems more voracious and deadly than I have ever felt its power in Cuba or Algiers. True, you have actually seen the Midnight Sun. To me the spectacle seemed a sorry show, and not

half the glory in it of a sensible, timely sun of the zone of homes sinking behind the landscape of a gentle English shire, or a sweet New England vale

EDGAR L. WAKEMAN.

## A FARMER'S HARD LUCK.

MEETS WITH AN ACCIDENT FOLLOWED BY PAINFUL RESULTS.

Mr. N. B. HUGHSON tells a Story of Years of Suffering and How he Found Release—The Circumstances Familiar to all his Neighbors.

(From the Chatham Banner.)

A Chatham Banner reporter while on news-gathering round a few days ago dropped into the well-known drug store of Messrs. Pilkey & Co., and overheard scraps of conversation between customers, in which the words "Pink Pills" and the name "Hughson" were frequently repeated. With a reporter's instinct for a good news article, he asked for some particulars, and was told that if he called upon Mr. Hughson he would probably get a story well worth giving publicity. Mr. Hughson does a snug feed and sale stable business on Harvey street and thither the reporter repaired, and was somewhat surprised to find the very antipodes of an invalid. Mr. Hughson is a man of medium height, about fifty years of age, born with a good constitution, and who until some three years ago only knew the meaning of the word sickness from the dictionary. Mr. Hughson is a stationery engineer by trade, and a good horseman, and for eight weeks he had been of that calling quitted it and rented a farm in Harwich. While returning from town one day on top of a load, one of his horses stumbled, and Mr. Hughson was pitched head foremost to the hard, frozen roadway. When he got home and the blood was wiped away his external injuries seemed trifling, but the grave trouble was inside, and took the form of a violent and almost constant headache. A week later he went into the bush to cut wood, and felt at every stroke as if his head would burst. He worked half an hour and then went home, and for eight weeks he had been of that calling quitted it and rented a farm in Harwich. While returning from town one day on top of a load, one of his horses stumbled, and Mr. Hughson was pitched head foremost to the hard, frozen roadway. When he got home and the blood was wiped away his external injuries seemed trifling, but the grave trouble was inside, and took the form of a violent and almost constant headache. A week later he went into the bush to cut wood, and felt at every stroke as if his head would burst. 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