

VILLAINOUS STATIONS.

SO WAKEMAN DESIGNATES HOTELS IN NORWAY.

Landscapes, Gray and Craggy as the Eagle's Nest—Novel Methods of Entertainment—Houses Three Hundred Years Old—People Have All Things in Common.

LONDON, Nov. 11. Among the characteristic roadside scenes of Norway the "stations," where carriages and ponies are changed, seem to have the keenest interest to the thousands of tourists who madly rush in the brief summer months through this grandly beautiful northern land. There is nothing quite like them in any other country. They serve the purpose of ready establishments, as did the roadside inns of old England and New England, half a century and more ago; you can find a bed and food behind their curious wooden walls, because the government compels their proprietors or masters to furnish the same; but their similarity ends.

Not a single feature of the bustle, cheerfulness and activity of the old coaching days is here. There is no ringing post-horn to pierce the gorges and valleys with its musical echoes. No "whip" sends his smoking four-in-hand alongside the welcoming inn at a mad gallop, or bandies eloquent phrases with ruddy barmoids. No rubicund landlord or sleek hostess beams upon you as you arrive, or sends cheery farewells after you as you depart. Seen from a distance they seem as gray, bleak and scraggy, as an eagle's nest among the crags. When you have reached them, the grave, gray, lonely and colorless tones still prevail on every hand. Specks of animate soddenness, threading ever-changing and sublime desolation, are the structures and inmates of the roadside travelers "stations" of Norway.

These stations are good and bad, luxurious and repulsive, hearty or hopeless, as is true of wayside inns in all countries; and range in prestige and comfort from the noted Tottemoen of Gudbrandsdal to those villainous station caves of gloom like Storsveen and Vetti Farm. Tottemoen is a huge, rambling gaard or farm house and station combined. It is one of the most ancient homes in Norway, and is even renowned in the sagas. Its proprietor is not only station master, providing travellers with entertainment in return for government exemption from taxes, but a wealthy landed proprietor, and, what is of more account in Norway, a lineal descendant of the first king of Norway, Harold Haarlager. Consequently he is of mythological descent; for did not good Harold claim his lineage from Odin, the true Hercules of Northland?

This quaint old place has many huge, paneled rooms, filled with ancient cabinets containing priceless Scandinavian relics; and there is more solid silver in Tottemoen station than in the home of any American money-king, or in richest English princely house. The late king of Norway and Sweden tarried here for entertainment when on his way to his coronation at Throndhjem. The testy little station master not only insisted on sitting at table with the king, as became his own royal descent, but when the king suggested that his silver be unpicked to provide proper table service, this royal station-keeper brusquely informed him that his own silver would serve not only for that occasion, but for a much larger party than any Norse king had ever traveled with. And so it did, to the amazement of the noble guests and to all Norway ever after. The members of the humble, yet royal house of Tofte, had never married outside of their own family; and are gradually becoming mental and physical freaks; but to remain a day or two at their half castle, half inn, and observe their antics as hostler and royalty combined, is to possess an experience hardly securable outside of Norway.

The stations at Storsveen and Vetti Farm are little more than rough, long rooms, upon which open kitchen hovels, their dirt floors usually strewn with small tufts of spruce or pine, possessing huge chimney-corners as large as the kitchens themselves. On one side of the long room is something better than a shed, where are narrow bunks. You will get sheep skins for coverlets, black bread, black-r coffee and goat's cheese for food at such stations as Storsveen, and at Vetti Farm. The latter station is really the starting point from which the wondrous Vetti fos or waterfall of Vetti is reached after a two hours' journey. It is little more than a hut. There are two or three cold storage boxes of sleeping rooms. You must perform your toilet in the common room; and the food is no better than you may secure at the lowliest peasant's home. For comfort these and the like are really surpassed at the shebeens of Donnegal and Connemara, in Ireland, or at the folkless stone huts along the way from Catania to the smoky rim of Etna's heights in Sicily.

But the average station is fairly comfortable. It must be borne in mind that it was never originally intended for an inn. As travel has increased in Norway, the government has said to Jan Jansen or Olaf Ole-son who was and still is a bonder or landed proprietor alongside the national highways, you shall entertain travelers and not impose upon them. Your gaard or farm shall henceforth be legally a station. You shall become its keeper or master. In consideration of this (if the conditions forbid profit) such a percent, of your taxes will be remitted; or (if it is a place which

of necessity will secure revenue) you are to pay so much annually to the government. You shall provide such a number of carriages or stoll-carts, or both, and so many horses, and the legal charge to travelers for the same to the stations, each way, shall be so much. You must be responsible for any harm coming to travelers either at your station, or in your charge, while posting from your station to the next. If you break the law you shall be fined and imprisoned."

So the roadside farm with its antiquated out-buildings has gradually developed into the station. The bonder or farmer, or his eldest son, has gone through the evolution from the simplest and most primitive condition of little more than lowly peasant life in Norwegian solitude to the vexatious life of still conducting his mountain and valley farm and maturing and housing his crops in the brief northern summer, and at the same time caring for the hosts who flit by him at break-neck speed in their efforts to see all Norway in the selfsame all too brief period. Not too much should be expected from such characters and conditions. You are fairly sure of some things; and absolutely certain of others.

Whatever these stations may have been in the days of foot-and-knapsack travel, when the traveler sat at meals with the bonder and his servants in the huge smoke-colored living-room, and slept in a common bed with the entire household upon the same floor, cleanliness is now nearly universal; hearts and ample food are not lacking; civility yields rude yet sufficient and kindly service; and by a little tact and deference the soddenness and gravity of these sturdy folk are transformed into the very sunshine of genial hospitality. You may be sure of the righting of every error; and certain of an integrity in all dealings, so exact, punctilious and unvarying, as to leave no doubt that universal honesty is deeply rooted a national characteristic of Norwegians, in Norway, as it is lacking in all other travel lands.

One may travel six, eight, ten, or even twelve miles through most majestic scenes of nature without sight of a single living thing. Perhaps the only suggestion of life in the entire distance will be the tinkle of the cow bells from the hidden vales among the mountain heights, where the living Huldres in utter loneliness care for their summer herds. Even this hint of life amid desolate grandeur reaches one burdened with an unutterable sense of dreary remoteness. Suddenly emerging from a shadowy gorge, or rounding the base of some precipice towering thousands of feet above your head, or again when beginning the descent from some frozen field, your always cheery skydsgut or post-boy will triumphantly—in a tone of rejoicing at good things to come—shout the name of a near station. It will stand huddled upon some dreary mass of rocks; jumbled against a batch of lichened birch; strewn along a bit of level winding way, or perching upon the edge of some mighty rock-cleft where a torrent thunders below, seem like a mass of gray rock broken from the heights above, poised before a final plunge into the roaring abyss beneath.

As you approach the place three or four or perhaps half a dozen substantial, low-built structures will be gradually disclosed. The larger one will perhaps be a comparatively large structure, set at odd angle against the highway. It has been built by the bonder station himself, and while of pine, has huge hewn timbers, a low solid roof, square windows, often protruding so as to give it a wide window seat as a provision for potted flowers; and almost invariably boasts a door-porch remarkable in appearance to the famous old south-porches of the more ancient parish churches of England. But if this structure is of recent origin, it is still as gray and antique in appearance as are all the rest. Behind this, or extending from its rear wall, is the original farm house, often 200 or 300 years old, though built of wood, altogether a mass of patchwork in pine and thatching, with a cavernous chimney-top towering at one corner; the whole reminding you of the stone-built structures of the English lake district, evincing generations of on-building and patching of additional house-room of all sizes and shapes, and at every conceivable angle.

Another structure may have simply one huge, long room, where lowly peasant or other travelers are lodged in bunks against the wall, or upon straw and fir branches upon the earthen floor. This is also provided with a long deal table, some rude pottery and cooking utensils, and fireplaces where such as are sheltered here may prepare their own food. Besides these there is always the storhaus or storehouse. It is an odd structure, strongly built, setting upon un cemented squares of hewn stone, several feet above the ground, to escape earth-damp, frequent freshets, and accumulations of snow. Its stories project each beyond the other to the roof which is still an unaccountable projection; the whole having at a distance the appearance of an unwieldy pagoda. In this huge-timbered stonghold is stored the grain and all the many supplies for man and beast against the severe needs of the dark and almost unending Northland winter.

One other structure to be often found at most of these stations is interesting from its uses. It is a bell-tower or belfry, in which is placed a bell, and occasionally two or three, though the latter never form a chime. The bells are in common use on nearly all Norwegian farms, where the bonder's lands may lie at a long distance from the gaard. The bell is used for calling the farmfolk from the fields or mountains, or to convey various orders and directions or intelligence to those absent from the farm house or station. Indeed it has all manner of uses.

If the station master is absent when travelers arrive and demand his attention, he is thus notified. The approach of the dreaded Lemsand or circuit-riding constable, who is also a sort of a magistrate, is thus heralded. People are brought by it from great distances in the mountains to merry-makings, weddings or funerals. And often at "slow" stations, where the supply of horses and stoll-carts is almost always a matter of accommodation on the part of neighbours, who may live miles away in unseen nooks and glens, the station-bell tolled in a certain jerky, peremptory manner by the master will bring pony and cart from invisible retreat far more speedily than fleetest lad or even less effective bullying and bribes.

You are not ushered into, but you enter, a large, common room at these stations. There is the bare floor; a round or a square deal table, perhaps possessing a cover, often strewn with guide-books in all languages, and quite a selection of books, pamphlets and magazines left behind by travellers; and upon which are invariably lies the open day-book, in which all complaints and praises are freely recorded; a few strong chairs; the horse-hair sofa which smiles a grim welcome to you in all lands, and a gaudily painted bureau or chest of drawers, which usually bears the name of the station masters wife and the date of her marriage. This is the entire furnishing; but everything is winsomely clean, and the window seats are aglow with plants and flowers. If you secure a single apartment in this more capacious portion of the station, there will still be room enough within it to dispose of your scant luggage beneath your bed, and to disrobe while sitting upon its sharp, bunk-like edge; for your wash-basin and soap will stand upon your single chair. If a party can occupy the same room, and all do not desire to retire at the same moment, a little more space for individual action may be secured. For myself, I soon learned that away next the roof of these old inns there were cosy, roomy places with huge old beds, though ascending and descending required the agility and precision of the hod-carrier's step.

Your meals are taken in a comfortable room containing only a long table, some stout chairs, and window ledges filled with flowers. Good tea, poor coffee, fair butter, oceans of cream and milk, half a dozen varieties of cheese, and excellent bread, with an abundance of fresh eggs, are always to be had. There are wild strawberries of wonderful sweetness and flavor, morning, noon and night. Fresh meat is a rarity at some stations, though haunches of mutton, hot or cold, are common while at nearly all stations trout and salmon are provided to repletion. The entire establishment is simple, humble, clean and good—without the element of good cheer. The station-master's wife is an overworked body who plods and courtesies apparently the day and night through. Her great blue eyes are grave, wondering and wearied to such degree that you fear she is about to burst into tears.

There are two or three flaxen-haired maidens who plod, and duck their heads and are eternally shaking hands with you if you are kindly disposed or bestow the slightest gratuity. If it is an important station there is a porter, a shock-headed tireless, smileless man of all work, with a face of that leathery whiteness which comes from loss of sleep. The skydsgut or post-boys, the only ever merry-faced folk of Norway, sleep with the cattle, eat in the undiscoverable dungeon regions of the kitchen, and are endlessly dancing about the stations upon petty missions, providing the only enlivening spirit or spectacles from one end of Norway to another.

But if meagre rest and entertainment are within these curious mountaineries, what wondrous outlooks are given from every flower-crowned window. Lofly peaks gleam above the clouds in the upper sunlight. Tremendous precipices loom above smiling or blackened valleys. Measureless forests of eternal green stretch away to purple distances. Ridges of frozen fields seem impassable thresholds to worlds of unspeakable desolation. Fissures and gorges streak with black the sides of misty mountains. Almost everywhere above all flame and pulse the ghostly glacier lights; and even beating entrance to your almost dreamless sleep comes the far, faint, yet omnipresent and solemn voices of marvelous, mighty waterfalls.

EDGAR L. WAKEMAN.

A NEW BRUNSWICK STORY.

THE REMARKABLE EXPERIENCE OF A HUSBAND AND WIFE.

The One Suffering From General Debility and the Other From the After Effects of Typhoid Fever were Gradually Growing Weaker When a Cure Came—Both Now Restored to Perfect Health.

[From the Newcastle, N. B., Union Advocate.]

Quite recently there came to the knowledge of the proprietors of the Union Advocate, two cases of residents of Newcastle having been greatly benefited by the use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, and these were thought to be of sufficient interest to warrant their being published in the interests of humanity, if the parties interested had no objection to the facts being published. Consequently a reporter of this paper called upon the parties and obtained from them cheerfully all the particulars. Mr. and Mrs. Hammill removed from Fort Fairfield, Maine, to Newcastle, N. B., about fourteen months ago. For two years previously Mr. Hammill had been in a very poor state of health and was steadily growing weaker and running down, until she was unable to do the necessary work about the house, and the little she did used her up completely. Pains in the back and limbs, weakness, dizziness and other disagreeable symptoms troubled her. For some time she was under treatment of several doctors at Fort Fairfield, and also since she moved here. But they effected no improvement to her run down system and she was gradually growing worse and had given up all hope of regaining her health. Having read accounts of the cures effected by the use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills she decided last July to try them and see if she could be benefited thereby. She purchased some from Mr. H. H. Johnston, druggist, and commenced to take them and has since continued to take them with, to her, wonderful results. She had only taken but a few boxes when a gradual improvement seemed to be taking place. The pains in her back and limbs left her as did the other unpleasant symptoms, and at the present time she is as well as ever she was and

without feeling the tiredness and exhaustion of her former state.

At her recommendation her husband also began the use of Pink Pills. About a year before coming to Newcastle he had suffered from an attack of typhoid fever, from the effects of which he did not recover his former health. His blood seemed to be thin and watery, and he was weak and easily worn out. Through all this he kept steadily at work, although he says that when night came he was thoroughly wearied and depressed, not knowing how to obtain relief. When his wife began to feel the beneficial effects of Pink Pills she urged him to try them and he did so. After taking three boxes he began to feel a wonderful change. The tired feeling left him and he had a better appetite and enjoyed his food with a relish he had not had before. He continued taking the Pills for some time and is to-day fully restored to his old-time health and strength. Mr. Hammill was very willing to tell of the benefits both he and his wife had derived from the use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, with the hope that their experience might lead others to test the benefits to be derived from this wonderful remedy.

The gratifying results following the use of Pink Pills in the case of Mrs. Hammill prove their unequalled powers as a blood builder and nerve tonic. There are many throughout the land suffering in silence as did Mrs. Hammill, who can readily find relief in a course of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. They are a specific for the troubles peculiar to women, such as irregularities and all forms of weakness. They build up the blood, restore the glow of health to pale and sallow cheeks driving out pains in the back and limbs, weakness and other disagreeable symptoms which make life a burden. They also cure such diseases as rheumatism, neuralgia, partial paralysis, locomotor ataxia, St. Vitus dance, nervous headache, nervous prostration, the after effects of la grippe influenza, and severe colds, diseases depending on humors of the blood, such as scrofula, chronic erysipelas, etc., and in all cases arising from mental worry, over-work or excesses of any nature.

Dr. Williams' Pink Pills are sold only in boxes bearing the firm's trade mark. They are never sold in bulk, or by the dozen or hundred, and any dealer who offers substitutes in this form is trying to defraud you and should be avoided. The public are also cautioned against all other so called blood builders and nerve tonics, put up in similar form intended to deceive. Ask your dealer for Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for pale people and refuse all imitations and substitutes.

These pills are manufactured by the Dr. Williams Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont., and Schenectady, N. Y., and may be had of all druggists or direct by mail from Dr. Williams Medicine Co. from either address, at 50 cents a box, or six boxes for \$2.50. The price at which these pills are sold makes a course of treatment comparatively inexpensive as compared with other remedies or medical treatment.

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