#### FARMS. NEST EAGLES'

CAMPING ON A LEDGE FAR ABOVE THE WAVES OF THE FIORD.

At Home with the Norwegian Peasants Carrying Cattle Up the Hill Sides-How the Folk Pass their Time-No Artificial Surroundings.

LONDON, Nov. 16.—Travelers in Norway who have written of Norway and its people have invariably spoken of two characteristic subjects, but in so brief a manner as always to pique and never to satisfy the reader's natural interest. These are what have been termed for a better name the "eagle-nest farms," and the "saeters" or mountain summer dairies.

So far as I know no traveller writing our language has ever visited the former, and while a few have actually seen a saeter, its environment and the strange and lonely life at the same have never been adequately described.

In sailing along the Norwegian coast from Bergen to the Lofoden Islands one who is closely observant of the mainland scenery, and particularly it a powerful field-glass is used, will be surprised at the number of utterly lonely and isolated habitations, seemingly perched against the gray crags at great altitudes midway between sea and sky. The larger number of these are at least 2,000 feet above the sea. To the eye it seems inconceivable that place for even their foundations could be secured. The picture is always the same. A line of black wall thousands of feet high; a dent of purple or a depression of misty blue where the speck of a home is built; and then black and sombre crags behind and above; and above and beyond these the ghostly glacier-fields.

Because from a distance their eerie location, and the ragged huddled structures, which often surround the main habitation, recall the nest of the eagle at the edge of beetling crags, they have come to be called "eagle-nest farms". Sometimes the eye will follow a black line of fissure descending from these habitations to a cavernous, rock-gorged gap beside the water. In this the rocks; and somewhere near, a winding puce-like line will trail upwards and into the darkening depths. This tells that the eagle-nest farmer is a fisherman, too, or has this means of communication with the outer world; but how he reaches his home perch above; how he subsists in his desolate habitation; and what manner of folk these are, who find contentment in lives of such endless solitude, danger and naturegrudged sustenance, were conjectures which haunted me until I found means to

Four days passed at Bakke, four days of contemplation of scenery so sombre and awful that it continually suggested the internal, before I found any one either competent or willing to act as a guide. Then good tortune came to me in the person of a strapping young fellow, a native of Grindedal, who had been lured away from his own mountain home to Australia, and tired of a roving life in the antipodes was returning as best he could, with a look of eager homesickness in his eyes almost savage in its intensity. The little he was to receive as boatman, guide and interpreter, would on our return pay his passage on the fiord steamers around through Aurlands Fiord to Fijes, and still leave him as many dollars as a peasant's hard labor for a whole year will give for saving in Norway. So we were a happy pair as we rowed in our small boat, hired at Bakke, to the northeast towards Styve and Dyrdal's icefields above the clouds.

I could not have found in all Norway a more fitting companion for this particular adventure. Not so very long ago the old method of stages by row-boat along many of these fiords was still in vogue. Travellers were then taken from one station to another in cumberous sharp-pointed boats. The crew of each would return with other passengers to its home station; and, frequently these crews, from stress of travellers' haste, or when hired by the week or month, would make voyages the entire length of a fiord and its various lesser

This often brought the real Vikings of our generation, that is, the dwellers on viks, or creeks, along the fiords, into acquaintance with the peasant folk of another fiord; and the father of my guide, whose name was Peter Erickson, was the master of such a boat when Peter was a lad. Those who had dwelt at Fejos had come to not only the lowly of Bakke, but many had acquired the almost unconscious cunning of the Indians' wood-craft, or the coastsailors' unexplainable eighth sense of instinctive pre-consciousness of location in every hidden chasm, sequestered waterfall love, of the chase and of war. or unseen home-nest upon the crags: while the very cragsman whom we had set out to visit had been, in the days before the steamer's whistle awoke the sleeping echoes of the sombre Næro Fiord, one of the crew of Peter's father's boat.

It was well we had provided food and blankets. The enthrallment of the savagely majestic scenery of the fiord, the loiterings at chasms, gorges and narrow valley openings, where odd and fantastic hamlets toppled at the edges of precipices, or seemrents; and above all, the meetings and

partings with quaint peasant groups to whom the shadowy fiord was the only highway ever known, and who always shook hands with us as though we were old and dear friends they had not seen for a decade and never expected to see again, shouting and waving "Favels" to us as long as we were in sight-brought us only to the real beginning of our cliff journey when it was already fairly night down at the bottom of the narrow walls of the fiord.

The place into which Peter dexterously guided our boat was the most torbidding and gruesome I ever had the fortune to enter. From the middle of the stream the opening was wholly unobservable; but my guide informed me that hundreds more like it could be found among the tremendous walls of the Norwegian fiords. It was practically a vertical fissure 2,000 feet high, and perhaps as deep below the water's surface. One edge was almost as smooth and rounded as a hewn pillar for all its mighty height. The other correspondingly hollowed, would have closed against it, had the same inconceivable nature-force which separated it set it again in place, with perfect lamination and without an inch of variance or waste space. The two edges of these formations reaching above the clouds were not fifteen feet apart from the entrance; but away in there were weird and awful depths; for while sight could not penetrate them the whispers, murmurs, plantive songs and hoarser threnodies of talling waters, told the wondrous story of erosions, displacement, boat-battles, and all the elemental struggles which the dead centuries had known.

Not fitty feet from the entrance our boat grated against a shelving rock. It was almost as level as a floor, and but a few inches above the water. Beyond this the rock had perhaps centuries before been eaten away or had given away, forming a covered hollow like half of a truncated cone. This spot resembling a section of the pre-historic bee hive huts of Ireland, was to be our resting place for the nighta place that had probably sheltered more human beings before me than the greatest case a little boat-house may be seen upon and oldest hotel in Norway; and I thus Norwegian peasantry. As I have before pointed out, the fiords are their real highways. Journeys of hundreds of miles are still made by entire families or parties too poor or too thrifty to seek shelter and food at the fiord-side hamlets. They have for centuries used these nature-built stations. Their food, fuel and sheep-skins for covering are brought with them in their boats: and water, the sweetest, purest, coldest water in the world, is leaping or trickling from every rock.

Peter had no sooner built a cheery fire -for each halting party from immemorial custom contributes to the public supply, and there is always fuel at hand-than he explained, torch in hand, some of the curious characteristics of this quaintest hospice I had ever beheld. A genuine Norwegian inn without landlord, station without master, hotel without host. On the same rocky level, but just around a projection of the fissure-wall, was a tiny paddock with little walls, knee-high, built of loose stones. The source of certain unaccountable sounds I had already heard with dire forbodings were now made clear. Three tiny Norwegian cows were munching their green fodder, and two of the tiniest calves I had ever seen stood gravely beside them. These might belong to the cragsman we were about to visit, Peter told me. In any event, here the peasantry, who often changed the grazing places of their little herds, penned the animals at night; and the wise little things, conscious as their masters of the danger of night-roaming or mis-step, never budged from the few square yards of rock to which they were meekly led from the boats.

Where we built our fire, fires had been lighted since the time of Harold Haarfagre. In a hole or little chamber in the rock were a few rude iron utensils which had perhaps been used for centuries by these fiord wayfarers; and another little indention in the wall served as a sort of toll-box. where those who telt able or willing to do so deposited a few ore, nearly the smallest coin in the world, in tribute to the eaglenest farmer, thousands of feet above, towhose possessions this strange place was a sort of a lower and outer lodge. Having drawn our boat upon the rock we slept within it. It was a wakeful night for me. The soughing of the wind through the narrow fissure was full of ghostly plaints and voices; while the falling of near yet unseen waters of differing volumes from varying heights, seemed almost articulate with wild speech and song; as if the mighty mythologic heroes of Norseland in concourse fair weather or foul. This made clearer to within this mysterious chasm were returned these boatmen than an ordinance chart for a night to chant their sagas there of

It was late when we awoke. The calves had mysteriously disappeared. Peter was then sure they were Frederickson's on the cliff-top, above. Their owner had come with a companion, and without disturbing us had slung the little animals over their shoulders and were now scaling the heights with them. Peter said we must make haste, as the cows were to follow, and we should overtake the cragsmen at home before they began another descent. With a bit of food and half hanging clusters of farm buildings | in our hands we started, Peter in the van. The way led for a few hundred feet, past ed trembling from the furies of roaring tor- the cragsman's boat-house, along the edge of what was on three sides, an almost verti-

cal hollow cube cut by nature from solid stone. More than a score of waterfalls could be seen. Some seemed no larger than a white ribbon of lace waving down the black rock sides. Others poured fro m cups and hollows larger accumulated volumes. And still others issued like spouting tunnels from cavernous holes in the rocks. All fell in an immense pool of such great depth that the discharge of the waters from the back cauldron was without ripple where they mingled with those of the fiord.

The other side of the mighty hollow cube was broken into irregular masses of rock, some ploughed as smooth as though polished by a lapidary, and between these tremendous displacements were powdered stone and detritus of sand; so I knew that sometime, thousands of years ago, a parcel of glaciers had tilted into the chasm and thus provided a not altogether perilous way for our ascent. A zig-zag path, forming altogether a distance of perhaps two miles, led up the broken chasm side; and at three places huge timbers had been rigged for raising and lowering with rude windlesses, animals, with huge leather bands fastened around their bodies, and all things that could not climb or be carried on these sturdy cragsmen's backs. Here then was half the mystery of these famous eagle-nest Norwegian farms removed. Peter said they were all equally accessible both upon the coasts and the fiords. They have simply seemed inaccessible to those travellers who make books from steamers' decks, and have been put among the eagles, the clouds and the glaciers, in the pictures, without so much as a rope and swinging wicker basket to aid the reader's imagination in safe

We met the head farmer and his son on heir way back to the fiord-side paddock, near the upper end of the chasm. I was much more of a curiosity to these good folk than they to me; for I was the first toreigner that had ever visited this, or, so tar as I can learn, any other, eagle-nest farm in Norway. Peter made them know easily enough who he was, and the greetings at the farm-house, or houses, for several branches of one family were huddled in great roomy houses along the plateau, were rather an ovation than a welcome. I was altogether disappointed; for I had looked can sustain life. I was glad to find one of steel. the cheeriest places I had come upon anywhere in Norway.

There were fine low, wide, stout timberbuilt homes; perhaps a half score of outbuildings for flocks and herds, all arranged so as to protect as much as possible both humans and animals from the awful winter winds; a huge storehouse as big as a village church for common use; and a curious old mill for grinding grain, where the stream tumbled into the chasm in which we had passed the night. The larger farm-house, or sort of patriarch to them all, had a wide outer enclosed hall. In this were bestowed on shelves, hung from pegs or stood in corners, a strange collection of oars, fishinggear, rude farm implements, game-traps, tremendous fur coats and rawhide boots stags' heads and antlers, tusks of wild boars, powder horns and shot pouches and firearms of strange and antique pattern. The living rooms were four in number, huge and square, leading from one to another through square openings; and in a corner of each was an open fireplace as large as I have ever seen. Every article that the ghost idea was prevalent before of turniture-long, low tables, uncouth but Noah built the ark. Even Ovid has put comtortable chairs, cumberous chests, bunk beds built into and against the walls, heavy shelves upon great pegs driven into the house timbers, and even the gaily-painted bureaus with the housewives' names and dates of their marriage upon them-was of home manufacture.

With all these evidences of ample content, if within primitive environment, I felt abashed at my own constantly recurring preconceived tendencies to concoct social and material pictures of meagreness and desolation where no such conditions existed. At middagsman, or dinner, which consisted of a sort of vegetable soup seasoned with bits of dried fish, the universal fiadbrod, something like the Scottish bannock, black bread, inordinate quanties of cheese, butter, cream and milk, with great basins of tiny, but wondrously sweet jordbadret or strawberries, these things were frankly spoken of, causing the greatest merriment among the family of my host.

What lacked they? Here were comfor able homes, and their land which had remained unquestioned in the one family since Norway was Norway. The women spun the yarn, wove the cloth, made the clothing they all wore, and besides attended to the cattle, and worked much in the fields. The men felled timber in the winter, hunted reindeer, trapped and shot game, sometimes went on long fishing and whaling enterprises; and the land produced enough grain for food and grass for fodder, besides turnishing grazing for the animals of less fortunate peasants who often brought their cows here for the summer months, and which explained the presence of the three waiting in the gorge beside the

More surprising than all, after we had departed-the entire "eagle-nest" community accompanying us to the edge of the chasm and sending many a hearty "Favel!" after us even when the cliff had hidden them from sight-and while descending to the fiord with the head farmer and his son, we learned that these folk had never seen or known any officer of the law; and that there was not even a tradition in the numerous family above our heads of a title to their lands being essential, or of any attempt ever having been made for the collection of taxes upon any of these Norwegian eagle-nest farms.

EDGAR L. WAKEMAN. Not His Regiment.

A militia regiment in the north of Ireland usually drilled in a level field close to the side a of river. One day the drill sergeant, who was given to blustering, and was by no means choice in his remarks to the men, met a young recruit, coming late to drill. "You're late again," roared the sergeant.

'Go down to the river and fall in!" "Oh, no," said the recruit; "I wish you to understand that I did not enlist in the Coldstream Guards."

DISTINGUISHED DOUBLES. Love of Notoriety Impells People to Make

Pretences. Fame has its penalties. Many distinguished people are annoyed at times by the appearance of "doubles." Of these some are doubles by nature; others, impelled by the love of notoriety, pretend to be the person they especially envy or admire. Not long ago, a German-American made himself conspicuous in London by posing as the Duke of Teck. He played the role without interruption for some time, but finally his conduct became so erratic that he was arrested on the charge of swindling.

The Imperial house of Austria has also a "double." At Brunn, while a performance was being held in the City Theatre, a welldressed, handsome young man entered, and desired to be shown to the mayor's box. where he introduced himself as the Crown Prince of Austria. The mayor saw at a glance that he had to deal with a madman; as he could not remove him without a disturbance he entertained him until the end of the first act, when he succeeded in getting rid of the soi-distant prince, who subse-

quently proved to be a merchant's son. Nathalie, ex-Queen of Servia, may also claim a double. The person so designated carries on a small business, and except that her name is Nathalie, there seems to be no resemblance between her and the ex-Queen. Still, she is known far and wide as her double, and for this reason: A practical joker, learning that the little tradeswoman intended to visit a certain town, announced that "Nathalie" would honour it with her presence. Naturally thinking that he referred to the Queen. thousands gathered at the railway station on the day specified, only to find that they had been hoaxed.

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MINARD'S LINIMENT. Walsh, Ont. Mrs. W.W. Johnson. I was cured of facial neuralgia by MINARD'S LINIMENT.

J. H. BAILEY. Parkdale, Ont. Reason requires culture to expand it. It forward to knowing in this experience the resembles the fire concealed in the flint, uttermost desolation in which human beings | which only shows itself when struck with a

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Law books are bound in sheep as a tribute to the mental qualities of people who go to law.

She Did and She Did'nt.

Mr. Benedict-" I met Howard to-day. He was surprised to know we were married. Says you told him once you wouldn't marry the best man living, Mrs. Benedict—" Well, the fact is, I

Mr. Benedict-"Is that so? How did you come to change your mind?"

Mrs. Benedict-"Well, the fact is, I didn't." It has been the current opinion for centuries that places of burial are haunted, especially after nightfall, with spectres, ghosts and other apparitions. Persons who have investigated this matter declare

himself on record as believing that spirits

occasionally left their sepulchres and wan-

dered about seeking whom they might

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She wanted to buy one of those fashionable three collared capes, but times were hard, and Mr. Sensible told her he could not afford to buy her one. "But will don't you rip your old coat apart and have it made over?" "What, that old, dark colored thing? Why it's all worn and shabby." Never mind how old it is," replied Mr. S. "Take it to UNGAR'S when you have it ripped and he will make it look like new.'

And the end of it was, she did. And although counted a truthful woman, Mrs. S. tells her friends, without moving a muscle, that she bought her new cape on King Street for \$12.50.

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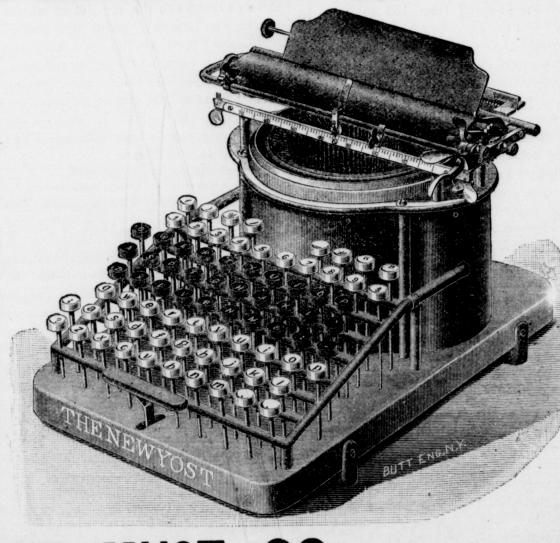
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