

masters of the danger of night-roaming or misstep, 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 Harald Haarfager. 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 wafarers; and another little indentation in the wall served as a sort of toll-box, where those who felt able or willing to do so deposited a few *ore*, nearly the smallest coin in the world, in tribute to the eagle-nest farmer, thousands of feet above, to whose possessions this strange place was a sort of lower and outer lodge. Having drawn our boat upon the rock we slept within it. It was a wakeful night for me. The souging of the wind through the narrow fissure was full of ghostly plaints and voices; while the falling of near yet unseen waters of different volumes from varying heights seemed almost articulate with wild speech and song; as if the mighty mythologic heroes of Norseland in concourse within this mysterious chasm were returned for a night to chant their sagas there of love, of the chase and of war.

It was late when we awoke. The calves had mysteriously disappeared. Petersen 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 in our hands we started, Peter in the van. The way led for a few hundred feet, past the cragsman's boat-house, along the edge of what was on three sides an almost vertical 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 from 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 black 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 detrius of sand; so I knew that some time, 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 windlasses, 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 the 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 travelers 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 ascent.

We met the head farmer and his son on their way back to the fiord-side paddock, near the upper edge of the chasm. I was much more of a curiosity to these good folk than they to me; for I was the first foreigner that had ever visited this, or, so far 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 forward to knowing in this experience the uttermost desolation in which human beings can sustain life. I was glad to find one of the cheeriest places I had come upon anywhere in Norway.

The eagle-nest farm comprised altogether 200 or 300 acres of partially tillable and grazing land. A mountain stream ran through it. The cliff-edge above the fiord was protected by low walls of timber and stone. The entire tract might be called a "swail," or little corrie or saucer shaped depression, such as you will find in the Scottish Highlands. In front was a misty line above the fiord; then a mighty panorama of mountain, valley and waterfall as far as the eye could reach. Behind, lay first a feld of shapeless rock. Then came a seemingly impenetrable forest of fir. Above this was another line of sacred gray masses of jagged stone, its upper edge serrated with streaks and gullies of snow; and then the glittering range of ice upon the Dyrdal Fjeld beyond. The light at this altitude, with white peaks everywhere along the circling horizon, line was painful and blinding, after a week passed in the shadowy depth of the fiord region below.

There were fine low, wide, stout timber-built 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, fishing gear, 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 fire-arms 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 of furniture—long, low tables, uncouth but comfortable chairs, cumbrous 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 house-wives' 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 construct social and material pictures of meagreness and desolation where no such condition existed. At middagsniad, or dinner, which consisted of a sort of vegetable soup seasoned with bits of dried fish, the universal fiad-brod, something like the Scottish bannock, black bread, inordinate quantities of cheese, butter, cream and milk, with great basins of tiny, but wondrously sweet jordbær or strawberries, these things were frankly spoken of, causing the greatest merriment among the family of my host.

What lacked they? Here were comfortable 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 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 furnishing grazing for the animals or 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 fiord.

All these folk could read, though none had ever attended school. Elementary education seems almost hereditary here, and books, from the mystic sagas to the prose poems of Anderson, were piled upon the rude shelves above the fire-places. Two or three times a year they went to church at Bakke. These were great occasions, and all went in boats together. In the long winter months the fires of the great chimneys roared as loud as the mountain tempests; with snow-shoes they visited other eagle-nest homes, and enjoyed much simple merry-making; and from year in until year out, indeed from one generation to another, they knew no inextricable exigency and experienced no need or longing beyond their own mutual provision and requirement.

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.

Written for this Paper.

CHIPS FROM CHESTER.

CHESTER, Sanpete Co., Utah, November 29, 1893.—Perhaps a few chips from Chester may not be uninteresting to your many readers.

The centrality of this agricultural village is unquestioned. Its unincorporated condition removes it from the jealousy of neighboring cities, lessens the probability of taxation, etc., which all combined, and being below culinary