

MISCELLANEOUS.

WAKEMAN'S WANDERINGS.

LONDON, Oct. 12, 1893.—If one has sailed up and down the magnificent Norwegian coast, it is easy to believe the statement that one-tenth of the entire population of Norway are fishermen. Twenty million cod alone are annually taken. The value of fish each year exported from Norway is nearly \$12,000,000. From Bergen to Vadso one is scarcely ever out of sight of fishermen's huts, fisher fleets, fishing stations, and bleak and dreary towns where fish and fishing are the exclusive reason for the presence of man.

Agriculture along the entire coast and among the coast islands is carried on in patches so tiny as to astonish the traveler at their insignificance. Little strips a few rods in length and a few feet in breadth are regarded by those patient folk as prized possessions, and what they are made to produce is amazing. To such straits are the coast and islet fisher folk sometimes put for soil that it is often transferred from mainland in boats, bit by bit, to fill some crevice, or to be walled in and cultivated against the floods and tempests which often wash it ruthlessly into the sea. I have seen these little patches often cared for with vastly more expense and labor than the owner's rude habitation; it is not infrequent to discover them half way up the broken side of a beetling crag; I know of many that can only be reached by lowering the owner to his "farm" by means of a windlass; and it is no uncommon thing to see them walled in at the edges, forming a portion of a sloping roof of stone huts abutting plains of mighty jagged rocks behind. These bits of green seem to take on added intensity of contrast for their sterile and desolate surroundings, and emphasize the only market-gardening of the coast—the tremendous harvest of the sea.

In all the vast region where cod are taken the curious apparent scene is constantly presented at the fishing stations your steamer will call at or pass, of some vast clothes-washing industry. The absurd notion possesses you that the laundry for all Europe has been found; for at a little distance the white drying cod, hanging over poles or covering acres of flat rock, seem like countless and immeasurable collections of *lingerie* bleaching in the nightless days of the Arctic regions. This Norwegian codfish has the two names of "Stokfish," stockfish or stickfish, and "klipfisk" or fish. The former derives its name from being dried in pairs hanging from a long *stok* or pole; and the latter are "klipfish" from being cured where poles are not available, on the flat surfaces of the *klippe*, the everlasting rock. From these they are sent to the barn-like structures, around which cluster the dreary habitations of the coast and islets, which are to the fishing industry what the "stor-haus" is to the Norse farmer; and from these they are taken by coasting craft called "jagts" to the great waterside storehouses of Bergen, from which they find their way to their final market in various Mediterranean ports.

So you will never escape the sight, taste and smell of fish in Norway. Every animate object along the coast from human to sea-gull is seeking for

fish. Every coast city, town or huddle of houses is engaged in catching, curing, storing or selling fish, and would rot in ruin in a decade if fish disappeared from the sea-roads and fiords. The most picturesque sights in these waters are the fleets of fishermen's crafts going or coming between the home ports and outlying stations and the numberless jagts which their high peaked prows and immense sails creeping in and out of the blue bays and shadowy fiords or massing in bewildering confusion about the quays of Bergen and Throndhjem.

At your hotel every manner of fish is served in extraordinary variety and tremendous quantity. If you are entertained at the house of a friend, the never-failing dish is thrust before you. The bonder further countrywards assaults your satiety with pickled fish. If you take pot-luck with the peasant, there it is again ground into powder and mingling with his porridge. Up among the mountain saeters the women who care for the herds and flocks will force it upon you as a hospitable delicacy. At the tourist stations along the great stone roads of Norway it bobs up to haunt you, dried, pickled and in caviare. And penetrating the remotest country districts, among the highland lakes and streams, you will starve if you do not at once fall upon fresh fish, served while it is still almost quivering with its finny, bloodless life. I have known travelers who passionately protested against the universality of Great Britain's "ham and eggs" grow voiceless in despair from the omnipresence and immutability of fish in Norway.

A Turneresque picture indeed is that gradually unfolding from your steamer's deck when morning breaks through the mists and begins to light up the city of Bergen. A jumble of spars, of huge flapping sails, and then the dim outlines of all manner of shipping, but chiefly the odd-looking lines of the old dragon-ships of the Vikings, the latter of course laden with endless stores of fish, are first to come in view. Then ghostly rows of half defined outlines of what suggest Brobdignagian monks, squatting at the waterside with cowed and bowed heads as in meditation or prayer. These prove to be the vast white-fronted ancient store-houses of Bergen. What seemed a cowl at the peak of each is only a huge vippebom or rude crane, with its cumbersome hood-like cover, used when the Nord-far-Steevne, or northern seafarers' arrival, crowds the bay with fishing-craft, in unloading the unsavory freight. Here is the ancient Hanseatic quarter. Brave are the tales of trade these odd old store-house shells might tell. Strange scenes were once here in the olden council-rooms. Strange romances cling to the ways and days of these sturdy old League merchants. And strange and gresome were the lives of their slavish clerks who passed their days in these mighty caverns of dead fish, and by the jealousy of different nations might ever love but never wed.

Through the misty rose, like the tint of the ripened peach, the quaint old city seems at last to float out of its ghostliness into clearer view. Behind the masts and the hooded storehouses rises the grim cathedral roof and dome.

Then bits of green, where the open spaces are, wondrously green, in these brief and humid summer days, checker the uplands of roof, at first as brilliant in purple and red as a ragged heather-clad Scottish mountain side; for all these roofs are flaming as peonies in ruddy, red tiles. Angle, projection, quaint corner, here and there a pagoda-like house-end, everywhere peaked roof and sharp, pointed gable, in successive jagged ends and bits of color and contrast of color, rise not tier on tier, but most picturesque jumble upon mass, and mass upon jumble, defined at last by the loveliest of valley landscapes, delicate in whites of villas and greens of parks, gardens, farms and forests, as a Tuscan dreamland reach of vineyard vale; and then, all about, the dark mountain edges, serrated, dark and grim, which shut in every scene eyes may behold in Norway as if only nothingness and immensity lay forbidding and measureless beyond.

One is in love with old Bergen town before foot is set upon its huge, hard quays. The feeling instantly possesses you that you are in a city and among a folk that have not let all manner of modern notions run away with their comfortable olden possessions and ways. There is a sense of amplitude and almost benignity about these wide old structures of the sort one feels when coming unexpectedly into a house with capacious and cheery fireplaces still doing their hospitable duty; and the people themselves impress you, even before dealing with or knowing them, with a personal consciousness of simple integrity and measured-paced content that irresistibly puts sunshine and benignity into your own heart, and leads you on to each successive experience with a cheeriness and good nature mutually reciprocal with yourself and every soul you meet. In all other wanderings my own experience has been that I never came to strange people or city without indefinable anxiety, faint presages of unforeseen ills, and forebodings of unhappy discoveries, happenings and scenes. Not so with Norway. You may not know the language of her people; but every face that is turned to yours seems so frank and unruffled; every eye that meets your own is so steady and clear in its friendly candor; and every salutation, dealing and new experience seems so unaffected, honest and genial that you move forward in each day's doings as in an atmosphere of beneficent hearthside calm.

You will secure a still finer view of red-roofed Bergen and environs than from your steamer's deck by leisurely wandering up the magnificent mountain-road called the Crammens-Vei—the Dram's-Way because built from the profits derived from liquor-license revenues—rising along the grand slopes of the Floifjeld heights dominating the city on the east. It is a stone road making five great bends before reaching the brow of Floifjeld; but from this point the lights and shades playing upon the city roofs transform old Bergen into a curiously-wrought entaglio of coral, set round about with the lustrous emerald of foothill and valley verdure and the gleaming sapphire of the sea.

Gradually the chief objects of the town come into prominence. The most ancient portion of the city is beneath you. There is the Tydskebygge where are the Dutch looking houses and, all the