

G. S. Hale

**NORWAY: THE NORTHERN PLAYGROUND**

**Edinburgh: Printed by T. and A. CONSTABLE**

**FOR**

**DAVID DOUGLAS**

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*Loon Pond.*

*Frontispice.*

N O R W A Y  
THE NORTHERN PLAYGROUND

SKETCHES OF CLIMBING AND MOUNTAIN  
EXPLORATION IN NORWAY BETWEEN  
1872 AND 1903

BY

WM CECIL SLINGSBY

MEMBER OF THE ALPINE CLUB, ETC.

*ILLUSTRATED BY 32 FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS  
AND 70 VIGNETTES. WITH NINE MAPS*



EDINBURGH  
DAVID DOUGLAS, 10 CASTLE STREET  
1904

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**DEDICATED  
TO  
MY WIFE**





## P R E F A C E

FOR over twenty years I have received letters regularly every spring from persons desirous of obtaining information about the mountains in Norway, the answering of which has afforded me much pleasure. On their return, my friends invariably wrote to tell me of their doings, and thus I have had an almost unique opportunity of noting the growth of the sport of mountaineering in the country and of realising that it is now established on a firm and an enduring basis, and that Norway has become recognised amongst mountaineers all the world over as one of our great playgrounds.

Many have asked me to write a book on general climbing in the country; at last I yielded to the temptation, the result of which is embodied in this volume. Some friends wished me to keep well above the snow-line and to leave the fjords alone. This advice I have ignored, and have tried instead to interest the general tourist.

Copious notes, enlarged from pocket-book memoranda soon after my return from each campaign, formed the foundation of the book, and to these I have added some papers which have seen the light before, but which are all, more or less, dressed in a fresh garb. For leave to use these, I thank the Editors of *The Alpine Journal*, *The Yorkshire Ramblers' Journal*, *The Yorkshire Post*, *The Norwegian Club's Year-Book*, *The Craven Pioneer*, *The Proceedings of the Burnley Literary and Scientific Society*, and *Den Norske Turist Forening's Aarboger*. To the Editor of the last-named I am very grateful for the loan of some of the blocks of beautiful pictures which have illustrated the excellent *Aarboger*, one of which is from a sketch of the Chimney on Skagastölstind,

by Mr. R. Spence, to whom I tender my thanks. To Herr K. Randers I express my deep thanks for his kindness in lending me two of the blocks of the lovely views which illustrate his capital book on *Sjndmire*.

To me the great feature connected with this book is the exceptional kindness which has been literally showered down upon me by my friends. The photographers, one and all, offered me the choice of their views, and my only regret is that I could not use more of them than I have done to enrich the pages of the book. One friend gave me a private lantern show of the whole of his views of Norway, whilst others had views enlarged especially for my benefit. For these acts of kindness I express my indebtedness to Herr H. Bache, Mr. G. P. Baker, the Rev. D. G. Cowan, Mr. Frank Ellis, Herr Carl Hall, Mr. Geoffrey Hastings, Mr. T. C. Porter, Mr. Howard Priestman, Mr. C. H. Todd, and Mr. W. N. Tribe.

Many Norse friends have given me much assistance, for which I am very grateful; but most of all my thanks are due to the leading Norse lady mountaineer, Fröken Therese Bertheau, who has given me much valuable help and advice.

I feel that I cannot sufficiently thank those who have spent so many hours in making lovely drawings from my rough sketches and from other materials; but as they know that I do appreciate the work which they undertook on my behalf, I merely say here that I thank Miss Keroyd, Mr. Thomas Gray, Mr. Eric Greenwood, and Mr. Colin R. Phillip.

All but one of the excellent maps which so much enhance the value of this book have been drawn and corrected by Mr. Howard Priestman from the best existing maps. The one is the result of a remarkable photo-topographical survey of the Horungtinder made by the same gentleman during several summers. This arduous work demanded the carrying of a half-plate camera up to the summit of many a rugged mountain, and the taking of numerous photographs in bitter cold and with numbed fingers,

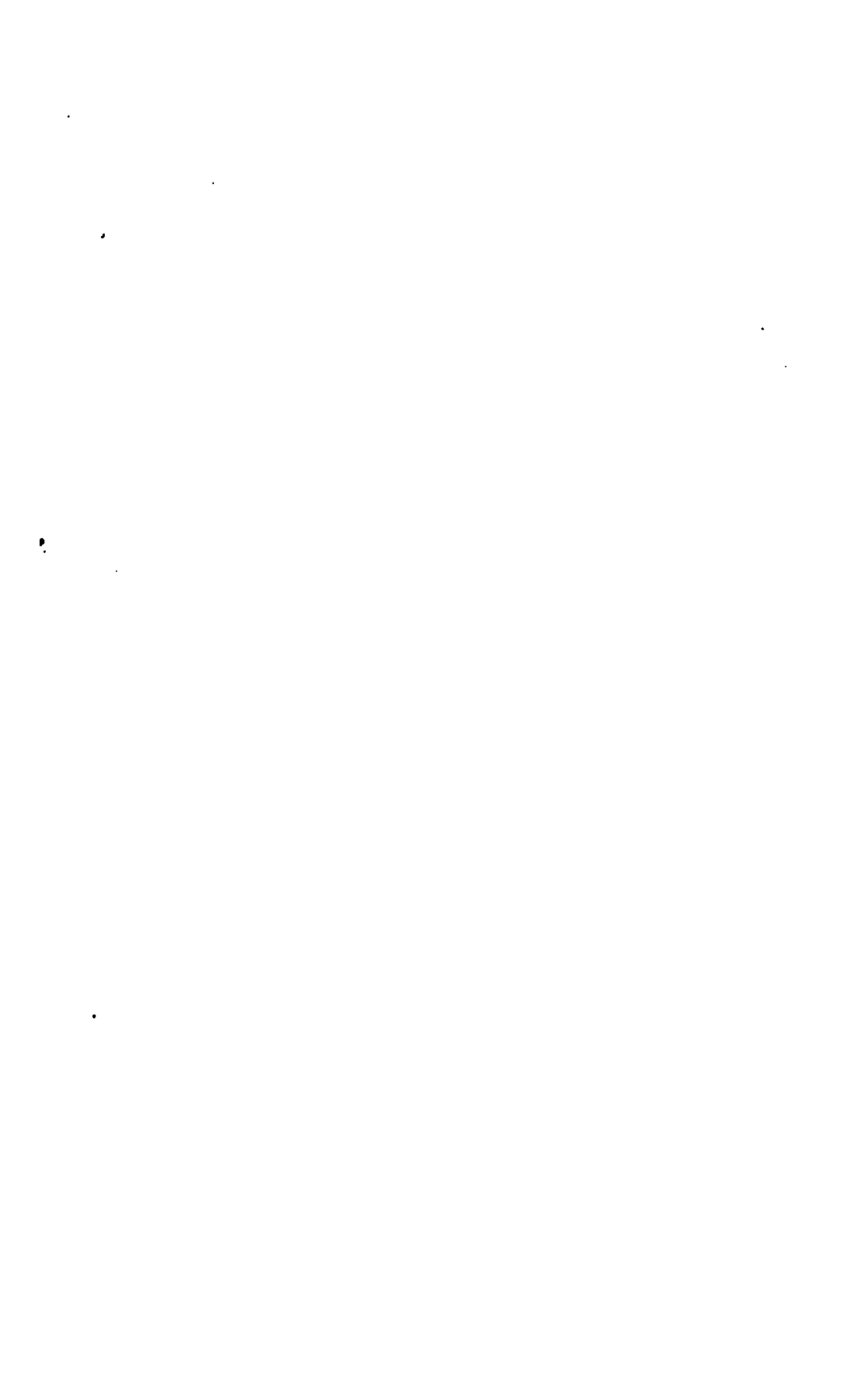
followed by much close work at home. By the courtesy of Mr. Priestman, I am privileged to use for the first time this, the best map yet existing, of the finest range of mountains in Scandinavia. I need hardly say that I thank Mr. Priestman. My thanks are also due to my publisher for the invariable courtesy and attention which he has shown to me at all times since the MSS. were placed in his hands.

I make no apology for any probable misspelling of Norse place or personal names for an obvious reason, viz., that the Norse folk themselves are constantly changing their mode of spelling. The words Norse and Norseman are used throughout the book, though personally I prefer Norsk and Norskman, as I think they are more in harmony with the rugged nature of the country. The word Norwegian is wholly unsuitable for an Englishman to use; and as for Norway used as an adjective, which one sees only too often, no expression of condemnation is here necessary. For the most part, I have tried to use English mountaineering words, but as we have in our language no equivalent of the French word *col*, for which we cannot always use *pass* or *gap*, I have brought into service the Norse word *skar*, which has the same meaning as *col*. Ridge, gully or ghyll, being English, are preferable to *arête* and *couloir*.

There are many friends who have given me much willing assistance in the preparation of the book, whom I have not named in this preface. To them, one and all, I tender my heartfelt thanks.

WM. CECIL SLINGSBY.

CARLETON, NEAR SKIPTON-IN-CRAVEN,  
November 5, 1903.



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‘For to myself, mountains are the beginning and the end of all natural scenery; in them, and in the forms of inferior landscape that lead to them, my affections are wholly bound up.’—*Modern Painters* : ‘The Mountain Glory.’

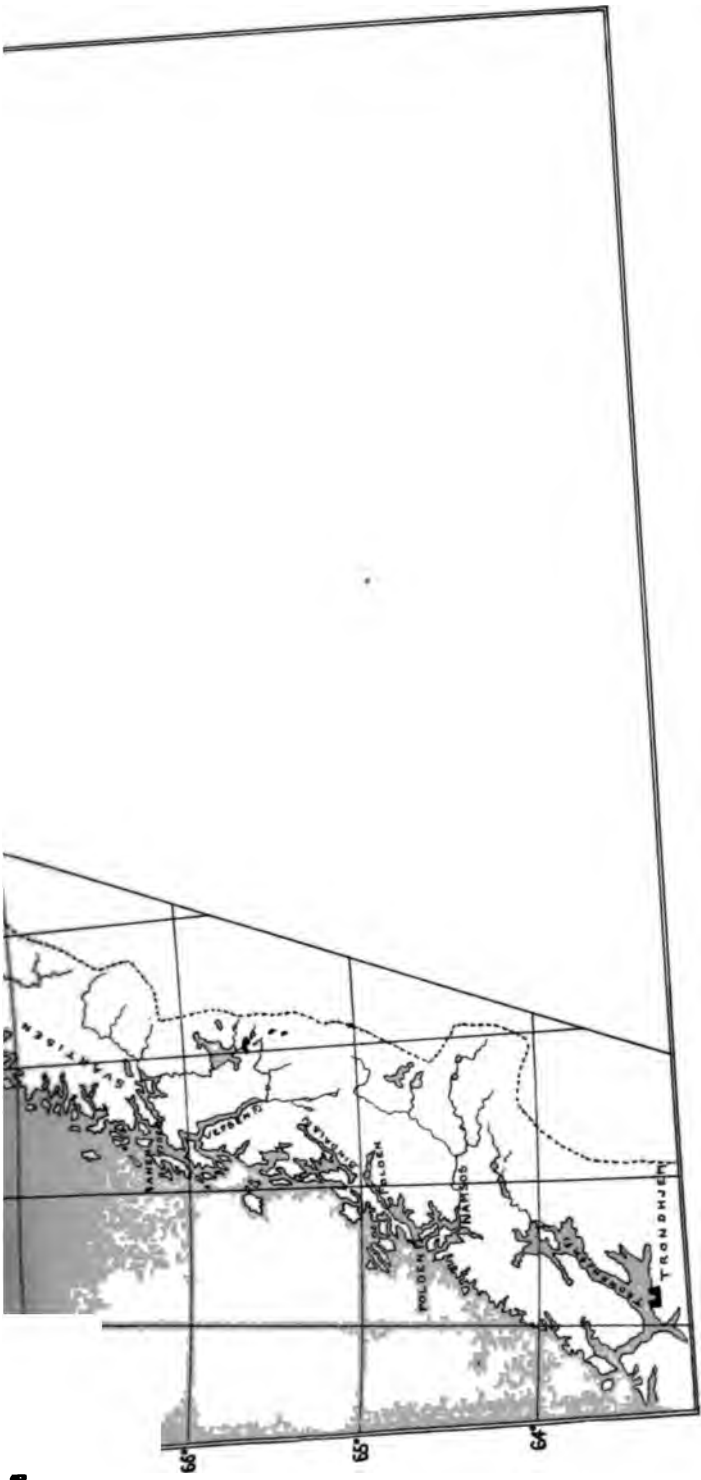
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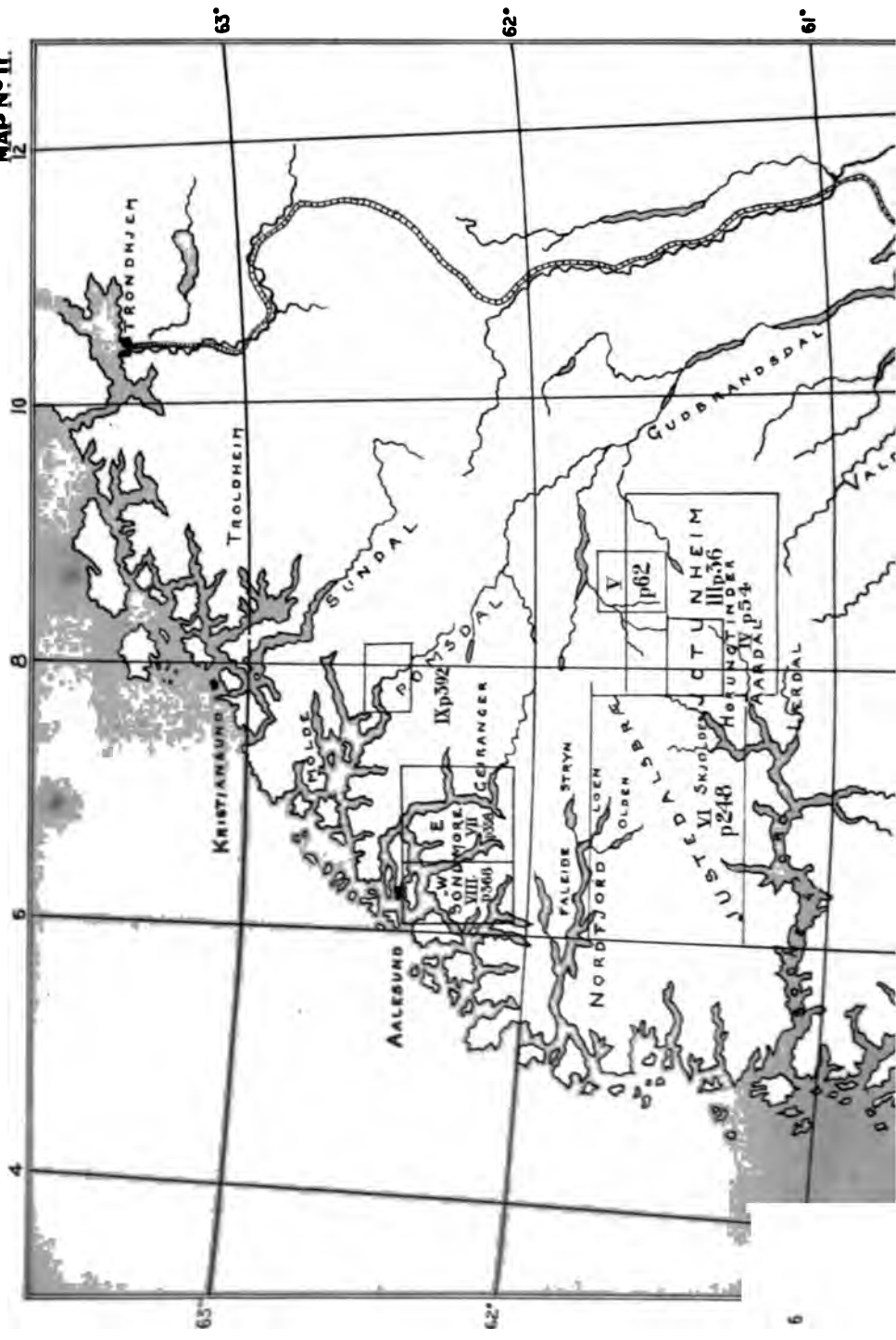


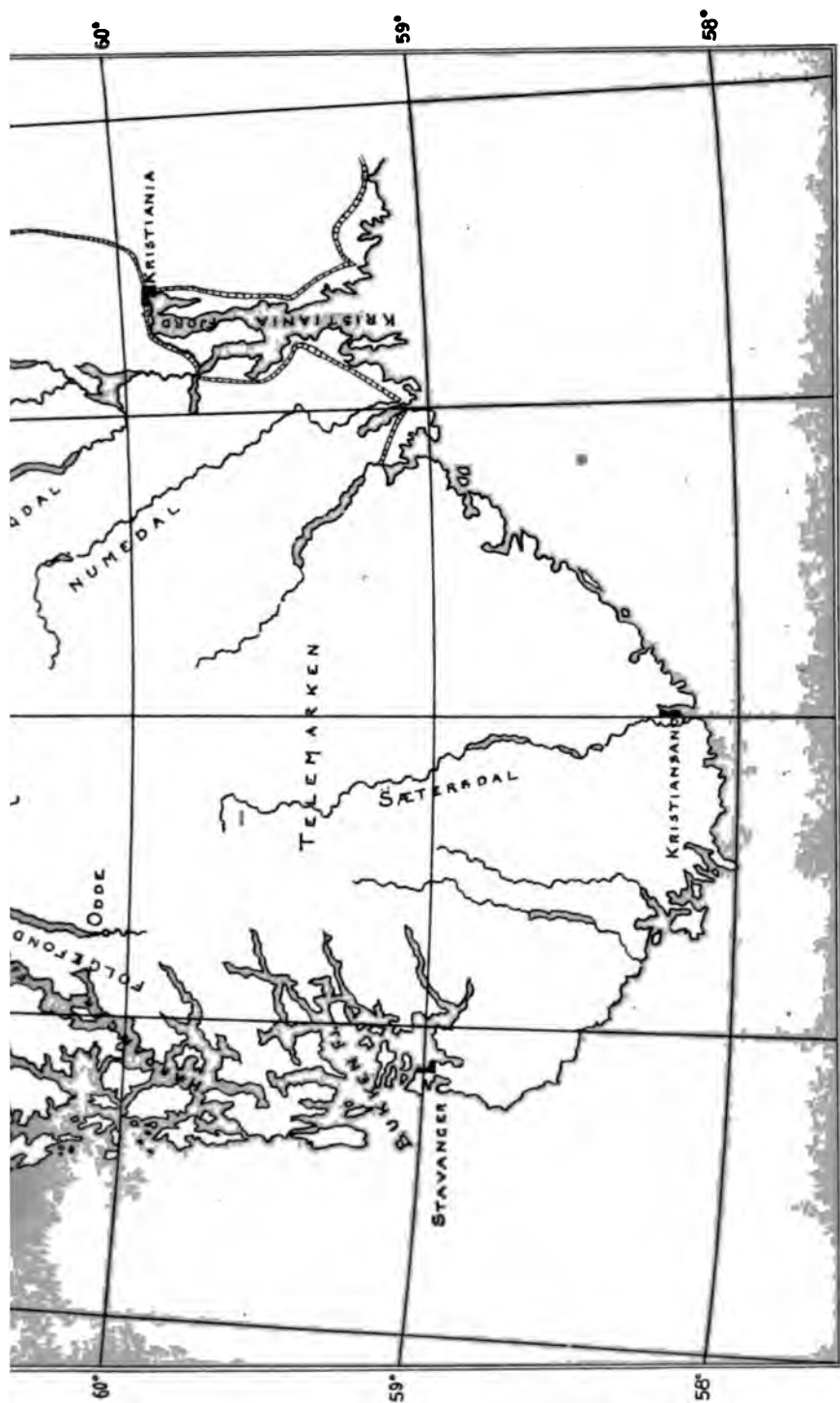


**NORTHERN NORWAY**

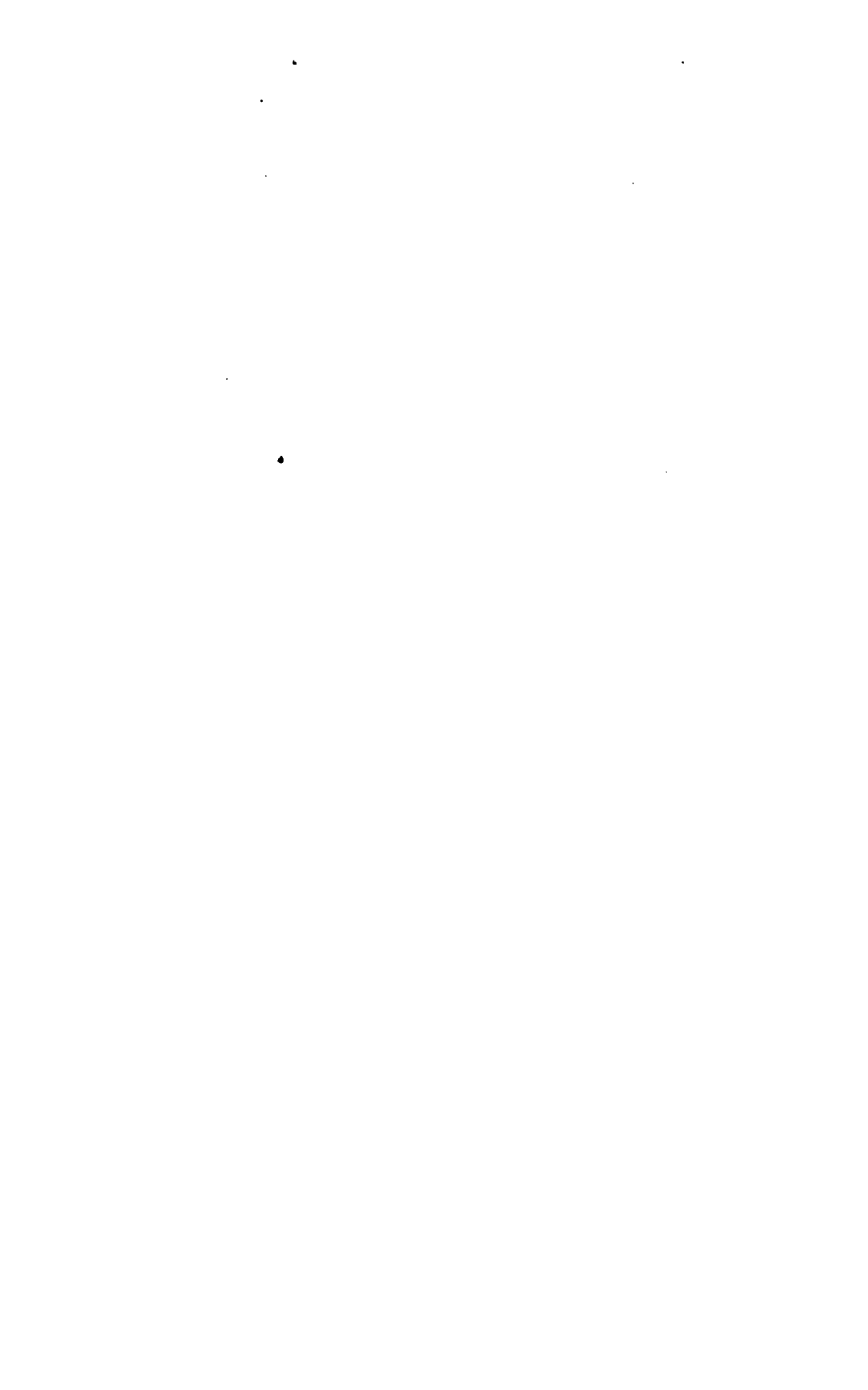








INDEX MAP—SOUTHERN NORWAY



## CHAPTER I

GENERAL REMARKS ON NORWAY; THE PHYSICAL FEATURES OF THE COUNTRY; THE ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF MOUNTAINEERING; AND A FEW WORDS ABOUT OUR NORTHERN COUSINS

'If thou wouldst read a lesson that will keep  
Thy heart from fainting, and thy soul from sleep,  
Go to the woods and hills.'

LONGFELLOW.

ONCE upon a time, a long, long while ago, soon after most of the world had been created, the Evil One wandered round and round, over land and sea, and when he saw that all was fair and beautiful he became very spiteful, and seizing an immense mass of rock, in his anger he threw it into the Northern Seas. It was so large that for many hundreds of miles it stood out of the waters—a terrible region of dark cliffs, sharp peaks, narrow ridges, and stony valleys, without one single blade of green grass or any sign of vegetation whatever.

Then the good God looked down with pity upon the waste, and threw here and there a little of the good soil which, fortunately, still remained. This caused fertile valleys, dark forests, and green uplands to appear. Moreover, He commanded huge shoals of fish to come yearly to the far north, where the sea cliffs and crags were the wildest and most forbidding. Thus has man been enabled to dwell in peace, happiness, and plenty in this land which is now called Norway.

Whether this origin, which is told in an old saga in picturesque and glowing language, be the true version or not matters but little nowadays, but the fact remains that Norway is one of the most mountainous countries in the world, and is to-day recognised as being one of the most delightful of our Alpine playgrounds. True it is that the height of no peak, when represented in feet, requires the use of five figures. What of that? Does it matter? Not a halfpenny, in a country where in some cases continuous ice-falls of nearly 6000 feet and rock ridges and faces of 5000 feet await the climbers who have the hardihood to tackle them.

Few Englishmen are aware of the size of Norway. Its total length along an axis which runs from N.N.E. to S.S.W. is 1100 miles, through 13 degrees of latitude. In breadth, at first sight the extent of over  $26\frac{1}{2}$  degrees would appear to be very great, and indeed, longitudinally, or in its time equivalent, it is similar to the difference between Marseilles and Odessa, but it must not be forgotten that at a latitude of 70 degrees a very few miles represent one degree of longitude. The country, therefore, is relatively narrow.

The old theory that Scandinavia possesses a backbone or a range of high mountains separating Norway from Sweden is a myth. I quote from *Norway—The Official Publication for the Paris Exhibition, 1900* :—

‘From a topographical point of view Norway does not seem to have any “natural boundaries,” in a general sense, on her land side. It has been proved to be utterly impossible to draw a reasonable boundary-line that really followed the watershed; no marked division exists, no chain of mountains, no separating “keel.” It has not in reality been a definite natural *line* that has divided Norway from her neighbours on the east; it has been a *band* of desert land, up to hundreds of miles in width. So utterly desolate and apart from the area of continuous habitation has this been, that the greater part of it, the district north of Trondhjem, was looked upon even as recently as the eighteenth century as a “common” district. Only nomadic, even then to some extent heathen, Laps wandered about in it, sometimes taxed by all three countries. A parcelling out of this desert, common district was not made towards Russia until 1826! Towards Sweden it was made in 1751, and it was principally an account of the geographical ideas prevailing at that time on the subject of mountain ranges as defined by watersheds, that the boundary was drawn as far west on the mountain plateau as it lies, without really being able to follow any watershed.

‘Altogether Lapland, which sends out a wedge far down between Norway and Sweden, is calculated to be 150,000 square miles, with only 15,000 inhabitants—a perfect arctic waste. Physically it is an offshoot from the Tundra belt of the shores of the Polar Sea.’

Only three railways connect Norway and Sweden.

‘Besides these, only about a dozen high-roads cross Norway’s far-extended land boundary, with several days’, often arduous, travelling between the larger centres of population.’

These quotations show the land isolation of Norway.



All geologists testify to the great geological age of the country. Primary rocks probably occupy as large an area, comparatively, as in any portion of the globe. Gneiss is a prevailing formation, and to its presence are due the square-cut walls of so many fjords and deep valleys of the west coast and the vast snow-clad uplands and mighty waterfalls. Fortunately for the poet, the artist, and for us mountaineers, there are large areas where volcanic rocks, in most cases capped by gabbro, have been upheaved through the adjoining strata, whether primary or silurian, and now appear in the form of horns, serrated ridges, and sharp sky-piercing peaks.

Ancient glaciers, as great as, if not greater than, those of the present day in Greenland, have left their imprint almost everywhere in Norway. The luxurious tripper of to-day can see from his deck-chair on the tourist steamer crags rounded and polished hundreds of feet above the water. Moraines, large and small, are numerous; but the 'raised beaches,' which tell us that the land has risen out of the waters, and which may be seen in so many places, must not be mistaken for the former. Striated rocks and the signs of glacier erosion are frequently visible, and strangely perched erratic blocks may often be noticed on the rounded sea crags near the coast. Nay, further, to-day we may find boulders in Yorkshire which have been transported from their parent beds in Norway by ice, but whether in the form of glaciers or icebergs I leave others to determine.

The whole of the Scandinavian *peninsula* has been covered by ice, as most of Greenland is to-day. Even now, the Justedalbræ consists of one connected ice-sheet of nearly 400 square miles, and there is an aggregation of neighbouring but disconnected snow-fields of an even larger extent. There are also other large ice-caps, such as the Folgefond and Svartisen, but these are mere baby glaciers when compared with those of the 'great ice age.'

There is no doubt that in Norway the glaciers have been mighty workers, but whether they have done all that is attributed to them, is open to doubt. The ice-plough of old is credited with the excavation of most of the fjords and the valleys which head them, and even many of the glaciers of to-day are said to be gouging out, as well as clearing out, 'botner' or 'cirques' in Jotunheim and elsewhere. The extreme case and noblest example worked by nature's graving tools is probably that of the Sognefjord, which has been sounded to a depth of 600 Norse fathoms, or over 4000 English feet, whilst the neighbouring mountains are nearly 4000 feet above sea-level, or 8000 feet above the bed of the fjord.

Many scientists of the present day wish us to believe that the principal portion of this 8000 feet has been dug and carved out by ancient glaciers. Why should they not also declare that the basin of the Mediterranean has been formed in a similar manner, as in many respects it resembles a huge fjord ?

The acceptance of this theory exacts so heavy a tax upon the reasoning powers of ordinary mortals that it is hardly surprising that there are sceptics who would like, if they had the power to do so, to establish counter theories of their own. They see that the folding and crumpling of the earth's crust have played many pranks upon the surface ; they notice, too, signs of upheaval and of subsidence, of expansion and of contraction. They would like to believe that rifts and cracks of an enormous size have been caused by this expansion or contraction or by both, that rocks have been loosened from their beds in these processes, and that the glaciers have cleaned away the débris. The tilting of the conglomerate strata of Gulen at the mouth of the Nordfjord, which has formed many little lakes, suggests to them strata-tilting and upheaval on an enormous scale. The sceptics would like to picture an imaginary period when the fjords were valleys whose beds, inclined steeply downwards from east to west, were being carved deep and ever deeper by the usual agencies of water, heat, and frost. They would like also to believe that at a later period the glaciers came down and swept before them the screes and multitudinous loose rocks which lay in their path, and that at the same time they rounded and polished the firm crags. These doubters are in fact ready to accept almost any theory but that of vigorous ice-ploughing.

Of course, they have seen the muddy waters issuing from the ice caverns at the snouts of many glaciers and recognise that the mud is disintegrated rock, but then they have also seen the mighty avalanche, they have heard stones thunder down a cataract for hours at a time, they have even seen rocks rolling in the rough bed of a glacier river striking fire under the water,<sup>1</sup> and, without being able to give figures to strengthen their argument, they venture still to assert their belief that their friends, the glaciers, are 'preservative rather than destructive agents.' True, some of these unbelievers have neither been to Greenland nor yet to Alaska, and possibly, also, they are not at all scientific. However, their unbelief is shared by Dr. Heim. This well-known glacialist says : ' Among the valley-forming agents glaciers necessarily play a very

<sup>1</sup> I have seen this on two occasions, once in the Olden valley in Norway, but more notably in the river Dranse in the Val de Bagnes in Switzerland when on the way late at night to Chanrion, after making the ascent of the Grand Combin.

subordinate part in comparison with flowing water; so that glaciation is equivalent to relative cessation of valley formation.' As to the excavation or formation of lake basins, Dr. Heim says: 'We are not in a position to cite a single proved instance of [the excavation of a lake basin by ice]'; also, 'The glacier is far less a chisel or a plough than a cargo loader and export agent of débris.'<sup>1</sup>

A typical Yorkshire dalesman would content himself by saying, 'There's ollas a hill anenst a slack,' and a Cumbrian would say, 'If there were nea fells there wad be nea deals.'

The greatest friend of Norway, as well as of Great Britain and Ireland, is the Gulf Stream, whose warm waters temper the severity of the Northern climate, with the result that, dotted here and there amongst the barren mountains on the whole wind-swept coast of Norway, may be seen green oases, where are comfortable homesteads, inhabited by thriving merchants, blue-eyed fishermen, and sturdy farmers; while on the sheltered shores of the fjords the population is numerous in harmony with the luxuriance of the vegetation.

Along the whole coast, including  $4\frac{1}{2}$  degrees of latitude within the Arctic Circle, there is never a block of drift-ice to be seen except perhaps the little bergs which are calved from the Jökulsbræ, the only glacier in Scandinavia which actually bathes its feet in the sea, the séracs which fall from an arm of Frostisen into the Ofotenfjord, and the small blocks which are washed down the rivers.

When one sees the fertility, the pretty gardens and fields of oats, at a place like Lyngseidet, very near the 70th parallel, one is apt to forget the conditions which prevail elsewhere at that latitude. In order to correct this forgetfulness it is well to follow that parallel in an atlas through the Kara Sea, North Siberia, a bit of Alaska, and the ice-bound islands north of Canada, where Sir John Franklin lost his life, then to Disco Bay and Greenland, and by doing so, one can faintly realise what would happen to Norway, if the threat of the facetious American to cut off the Gulf Stream from Europe could become an accomplished fact.

Christiania does not get the benefit of the Gulf Stream, and consequently the blue waters of its great fjord are frozen over every winter, though the harbours of Trondhjem, Tromsø, and Hammerfest, which latter is nearly 1000 miles farther north, are always open. As may naturally be expected, the heads of the longest fjords, which contain a large proportion of fresh water, are

<sup>1</sup> 'Dr. Heim on Glaciers and Glacier Theories, by F. F. Tuckett.'—*Alpine Journal*, vol. xii.

usually frozen in winter, I myself having seen the Lysterfjord—the innermost part of the Sognefjord—covered with a film of ice from Dösen to Skjolden. The Osefjord in Hardanger is usually ice-clad. The Nordfjord is often frozen as far down as Faleide, and sometimes even farther. Oddly enough the Lake Stryn above rarely freezes.

Purely for want of sufficiently good corroborative evidence, I will not ask my readers to believe in the legend that the Ark rested on Molden, a mountain near the head of the Sognefjord. Had this been the case, the annals of mountaineering, if only by water, in Norway, would have gone considerably further back than they do. It is, however, undoubtedly true that the sport of mountaineering was followed by the Vikings nine hundred years ago, as we can see by referring to 'King Olaf Tryggvesson's Saga' in the *Heimskringla*, where we read the following:—

'King Olaf was more expert in all exercises than any man in Norway whose memory is preserved to us in sagas; and he was stronger and more agile than most men, and many stories are written down about it. One is that he ascended the Smalsarhorn (Hornelen, or probably a spur of that grand sea-cliff) and fixed his shield on the very peak. Another is that one of his followers had climbed up the peak after him, until he came to where he could neither get up nor down, but the king came to his help, climbed up to him, took him under his arm, and bore him to the flat ground.'

Was there ever a more picturesque mountaineering scene than this? We can almost imagine that we see the great sea-king scrambling up those gaunt sea-cliffs, with his scarlet robe fluttering in the breeze; that we can hear the deafening cheers of the thousands of Vikings in their boats below, as their hero picks up his living burden, toys with it, and returns step by step down to the shore. Yes; cannot we also hear the answering echoes banded about from cliff to cliff, from Gulen to Bremanger Land?

Though the ancient Icelandic historian, Snorro Sturleson, did not mention it, I believe that in King Olaf's days an Alpine Club was founded, that the climbing qualification was a very stiff one, and that the doughty king himself was the first president. Perhaps, too, he was the last. Who knows? Whether there was an Alpine Club winter dinner or not I cannot tell, but I am certain that there were plenty of speeches, much skaal drinking and emptying of many flagons of mead.

When the Viking days were ended, the spirit of active enter-

prise in great measure died out in Norway, or possibly lay dormant. As a proof that this adventurous spirit has again entered in full measure into the breasts of the hardy Norsemen of to-day, I need only write the name of the hero—Fridtjof Nansen.

In the year 1820 there was a notable reawakening of the sport of mountaineering in the country. Two parties were afield, and Norse climbers have every reason to point to this year with especial pride. Professors Keilhau and Boeck discovered Jotunheim, where they ascended the beautiful mountain well named Falkenæbbe—falcon's beak—which name has of late years unwisely been changed to Falketind. They made plucky, though, unfortunately, unsuccessful attempts to ascend Skagastölstind, Galdhøpiggen, and the Lodals Kaupe. On the last named they were nearly killed by an avalanche; one of them was indeed only saved by carrying a large barometer which was broken by a falling stone, which would otherwise have crushed his spine. On this expedition ice-axes were used to good purpose. 'Hvert trin maatte med øxe hugges i den faste is!'<sup>1</sup> At this period ice-axes were barely known in the Alps, though hatchets were often used.

The second party consisted of Lektor Bohr, of Bergen, and three others. They made a plucky attempt to ascend Lodals Kaupe, and the question whether they reached the top or not still forms a favourite topic for an after-dinner argument amongst Norse mountaineers.

After this, one would naturally have expected that the Norsemen would have continued to practise and to develop the sport up to the present day. Such, however, was not the case, and during the space of at least half a century ice-axes were not used by the natives as implements of snow craft, and practically the sport died out entirely.

It is true that peasants made the first ascent of certain prominently situated mountains, such as Galdhøpiggen, the Gausta Fjeld, Kviteggen, Slogen, Lodals Kaupe, and the Romsdalshorn. Still, mountaineering, as a noble sport, was not recognised until it was reintroduced by our countrymen, upon whom the good fortune has fallen of ascending very many of the finest mountains in Norway, of making many grand new glacier passes, and of reopening others, which, though not new, were quite forgotten.

The British pioneers were Lieutenant Breton, R.N., whose book, *Scandinavian Sketches*, published in 1835, describes, with the

<sup>1</sup> *Nor. Tur. for Aarbog* for 1874, p. 104.

modesty nearly always associated with naval men, a remarkably adventurous journey made in 1834 through Jotunheim and other wild regions. Then came Mr. Thomas Forester and his companion, Lieutenant M. S. Biddulph, whose joint book, *Norway in 1848 and 1849*, introduced Englishmen to the Horungtinder, *i.e.* at a respectful distance. Next, and of most importance, was Professor J. D. Forbes, whose work, *Norway and its Glaciers visited in 1851*, is undoubtedly one of the greatest mountain classics, and is much the best book ever yet written on Norway. Mr. F. M. Wyndham in 1861 brought out an excellent sporting book about reindeer-stalking in East Jotunheim, which was followed by those of other sportsmen and travellers, good, bad, and indifferent. Next came my old friend Lieut.-Colonel J. R. Campbell, whose papers in the sixth volume of *The Alpine Journal* were subsequently published in book form under the name *How to see Norway*, a book which ought to be found in the library of every lover of that land.

These men were the real pioneers, who, though with the exception of the last named, who climbed Horningdalsrökken and St. Cecilia's Krone, they did not make any actual ascents, yet paved the way for us, who came later in the field, and, in some measure, benefited by their experience.

In the late sixties and early seventies the hardy Norsemen began mountain exploration in earnest. Foremost amongst them was Emanuel Mohn, with whom it was my privilege and pleasure to have a long and very successful campaign in 1876. There were also Dr. Yngvar Nielsen, Konsul T. J. Heftye, Prof. E. Sars, the poet Vinje, Herr Martens, and a few others. These men, in addition to English sportsmen, with laudable persistency unravelled the secrets of Jotunheim so far as the deep valleys, wild glens, and snowy uplands are concerned.

Five-and-twenty years ago, Alpine climbers in general did not believe that any first-rate climbing could be found in Norway. Indeed, this is not to be wondered at, as in most cases the real mountains themselves are hidden from the sight of the ordinary traveller, whose journey so often is confined to the bottom of a deeply-cut groove-like valley, whether he be on land or sea. The usual hog-backed fjelde, of the Helvellyn type, which represent most of the mountain forms of Norway, do not offer many attractions to the adventure-loving climber, and, though I have been on scores of them, and have had much enjoyment out of them, I had usually some ulterior object in view other than that of making the ascent of the highest point. I generally wanted to see how the land lay, and what there was at the other side.



*The Eastern Horungtinder across the Uila gorge.*

*To face page 8.*





The most notable district for mountaineers is that of the Jotun Fjelde, which includes the Horungtinder with their crowning glory, Skagastölstind, the finest mountain in Norway, which for many years was also considered to be the highest in Northern Europe.

Then there are the snow solitudes of the Justedalsbræ, whose many glaciers and ice-falls are the joy of those who, by dint of much practice, have gained *considerable* experience, and have become adepts in the science of snow and ice craft.

Farther west is the Gjegnalund glacier region, whose strangely tilted strata of rounded conglomerate form so many regular escarpments and little blue lakes.

A little to the north are the rugged spires, which are so beautifully reflected on the placid waters of the Hjørund and Sökkelv fjords. These 'Söndmöre Alps,' as the Norse folk now designate them, are bewitching, and are like glorified Coolins of Skye with glaciers in the corries. They have a similar geological formation.

The most beautiful mountains in Söndmöre are Slogen and the Gluggentind.

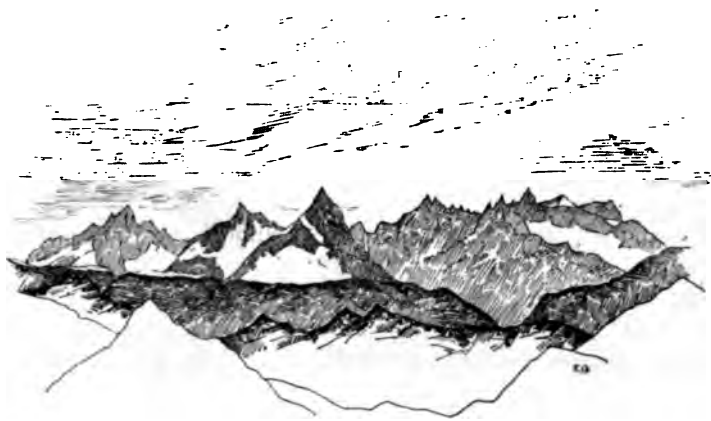
The strange beauty and weird grandeur of the Söndmöre Alps were to all intents and purposes unknown to the outer world, until the district was explored by Emanuel Mohn and myself in the year 1876, when the first ascent of the Gluggentind or Kjölaastind was made. In connection with this, the grandest mountain in Söndmöre, published records show two additional first ascents, both since our visit. A fourth is awaited with interest. Apparently the Söndmöre mountains permit of this form of sport, as the Vellesæterhorn has on two occasions been subjected to a first ascent, both of which have been duly recorded in the English language.

In Romsdal, some of the gneiss and metamorphic ranges afford good sport to the mountaineer. Notably, Mjöltnir, the Vængentinder, the Romsdalshorn, and Troldtinder.

In the north, there are the Oxtinder, which, however, have disappointed those who have visited them. The ice-cap of Svartisen, the rugged ranges about Sulitelma, some in Norway and others in Sweden, already have their devotees. The aiguilles of Lofoten have an uncanny element about them in addition to their great beauty, and some stiff climbing problems still await solution here.

Last, but by no means of least importance, are the sharp peaked ranges and mysterious haunts of the frost giants about

Lyngenfjord, where Nature has, apparently, developed her wildest and most eerie forms. These are lighted up with a brilliance and beauty of colouring which I have never seen quite equalled anywhere else. Jæggerarre, the Mont Blanc of the north, is the snow-crowned monarch of the peaks of Lyngen, and is a very fine aggregation of rolling mountain snow-fields. Fornøstind is the Romsdalshorn of the north; whilst the Jægervandtinder and their neighbours form a group of fine peaks the grandeur of which is only second to the Horungtinder, whilst they excel the latter range in beauty. One peak of the Jægervandtinder, the Stortind,



Vengetinder and Troldtinder  
from Skjorta

is almost as beautiful as Slogen in Söndmöre. What can I say more in its praise?

I crossed Jotunheim first in 1872, but though I climbed several hills, I made no ascent of note. However, I got my first view of Skagastölstind, and made up my mind to ascend it sometime, if possible. I had then no opportunity of trying my mettle upon it, and if I had done so, the mountain would probably have got the better of me, so I merely reconnoitred it from hills north, west, and south, and kept at a very respectful distance.

I have now had fifteen mountain campaigns in Norway, which have irregularly alternated with visits to the Alps. As my principal object was mountain climbing and exploration, a large number of maiden ascents and new glacier passes have fallen to my lot in the company both of Norse and English climbers. Though I have made above fifty good new expeditions, I could

easily have doubled the number if I had adopted the principle of making headquarters, and of making ascents from and returning to these places. However, this method never much commended itself to my taste, at least when I could carry well, and I always fitted about where fancy led. Other reasons which prevented concentration arose from the discomforts of sæter life, and the pangs of hunger, which have driven us scores of times away from the high fjelde to seek the soft luxury and the flesh-pots of the valleys.

For some years I had the field, so far as the sport of mountaineering was concerned, almost to myself, as English climbers had not yet recognised the value of this northern playground, and consequently much of my early mountaineering was



Distant view of the Horungfjender

done in company with Norsemen. As at first I knew little of the technicalities of the sport from actual experience, and found that my companions as a rule knew still less, we went warily, and treated the glaciers with a respect which I regret is not shown by all young climbers of the present day. Our successes were not numerous, neither were our failures. We walked before we ran, and gained experience step by step. For the most part, the leading was left to me and I fear that I was very often autocratic.

The ascent of Skagastölstind in the year 1876 reawakened the dormant interest in mountaineering, and, after an unsuccessful attempt on this mountain in 1877, the artist, Herr Harald Petersen, succeeded in making the second ascent the following year, and, as on the first occasion, he had to climb the last 500 feet entirely alone.

Then came Herr Carl Hall, a Dane, who had climbed a little in the Alps, and great success crowned his efforts on the Romdals-

horn, amongst the Horungtinder, the Smörstabtinder and elsewhere. A little army of Englishmen and one English lady, Miss Green, then came on the scene, and it followed as a matter of course that victory greeted them all along the line. Then Mr. Patchell began, and his record of grand and new expeditions is now very large. Later, a gallant French scientist, M. Charles Rabot, explored many wild mountain regions, hitherto almost, if not quite, unknown.

During the eighties and nineties, friends and I practically completed the mountain exploration of the Söndmøre Alps, which Mohn and I had begun in 1876. We also climbed the peaks of the Voengtinder, which had fascinated Lieutenant Breton sixty-seven years ago so much, that his sketch of this rugged range was introduced as a frontispiece into his book. The Justedalsbræ, which even now provides a field for detailed exploration, and affords unrivalled scope for the attainment of proficiency in snow-craft, occupied us for many seasons. Neither were the Aalfotenbræ and the Gjegalund glaciers overlooked.

For many years it has been known that in the far north in general, and about Lyngenfjord in particular, there were grand mountain ranges which invited exploration. The great distance and the impossibility of getting suitable companions saved these mountains from desecration by the hobnailed boot until quite recently.

The first ascent in the Lofoten Islands, that of the Troldtind, a fine rock peak, was made in the year 1890 by an English lady, Miss May Jeffrey. Mr. Priestman's party climbed amongst these wild aiguilles in 1897, after which his two companions, Messrs. Hastings and Woolley, journeyed up to Lyngen and realised very quickly that the grandeur of this arctic mountain playground had not been overrated. Hastings then ascended Jæggevarre, the Mont Blanc of the north, and thus opened for mountaineering what is in many respects the most delightful region in Norway. In 1898, Hastings, Haskett-Smith and I had a most successful campaign in Lyngen, a brief account of which I read before the Alpine Club. The following year Hastings again returned to this fascinating region, and is, I believe, now planning a fourth visit. Mrs. Main, accompanied by Joseph Imboden and his son, was also climbing in Lyngen when we were there, and went again in 1899, and has made many good ascents.

Though there are guides now available, it is strange that there are so few native amateur mountaineers in Norway who have taken up the grandest sport of the world in earnest, and

apparently, too, there are not many 'coming on.' The few are enthusiasts, and they are ready to run a tilt at anything and everything really good.

However, there never was a time when mountains were more loved and revered by the natives in whose country they are found, than is the case in Norway to-day, and I feel certain that no land is happier in the possession of mountain enthusiasts than Norway. No one can possibly love the mountains more than Herr Edvard Grieg, who, fortunately for music lovers all over the world, derives such happy inspirations when wandering over his native mountains, nor can there be found any one the world over who enjoys wild nature more than his friend Franz Beyer.

To prove the popularity of mountaineering in Norway at the present day, it is only necessary to pay a visit to Turtegrö, the Riffelberg of Norway, to Fjærland, or Øie, and to read in the climbers' books of the many ascents which are annually made from these centres by mountaineers of various nationalities. As a rule, however, I must say that most of those who frequent these resorts do not show, by the feats which they accomplish, much originality. There are, however, notable exceptions, whom it would be invidious for me to name, who are admirable mountaineers, who have done much first-rate new work, and who do not keep slavishly to old tracks.

Though the scenery of the skerries is occasionally monotonous, a voyage up the coast is very enjoyable in fine weather; and if not pressed for time, there is more fun to be got out of the slower boats, which make many stoppages, than on the express steamers. The interchange of passengers and cargo is always interesting, especially, perhaps, to the snap-shot photographer; and when the traveller knows sufficient Norse to be able to converse freely with the sturdy farmers who come on board, the interest of the voyage is much increased. To have to lie to for hours in a fog off Hornelen, or near the promontory of Stadt, as I have done on several occasions, is not pleasant, but even then there is some fun. Perhaps a fishing-boat comes alongside, and its occupants, who have entirely lost their bearings, are told in which direction their home lies, only half a mile away, or a sportive whale or a school of porpoises may pop up close to.

After one tour has been made in Norway, the desire to revisit this romantic Northland in most cases is irresistible; and this is not surprising, as when we go to Norway we ought to feel that we are visiting the land of our remote ancestors, the country from whence the Vikings of the ninth and tenth centuries set sail

to harry the coasts, not only of Great Britain, but also of France and the Mediterranean as well. These Vikings pushed their skiffs up our navigable rivers, and, struck by the fertility of the country, in many cases settled on the land, intermarried with the Saxon maidens, and became the progenitors of the finest race in the world.

Most of the qualities which are especially cherished in the north of England to-day, the sturdy independence, dogged endurance, and self-reliance, to name no others, and the best blood which we possess, we have derived from our 'forelders,' the Vikings of Scandinavia. We must remember, too, that the Normans themselves were, in the main, of Norse race, and that Ganger Rolf, or Rollo the Sea-King, as we call him, who sailed from Aalesund to conquer Normandy, was the great-great-great-grandfather of William the Conqueror.

From our Viking ancestry we have also derived the most interesting portion of the rich dialect of our Northern Counties. Especially is this the case in Cumberland, which has probably more Norse blood and general Norse characteristics than any other portion of the British Isles with the exception of Orkney and Shetland.

The study of place-names is always interesting, and to a lover of Norway it is delightful to recognise the Norse name of an English farm such as Braida Garth, broad enclosure; or of a river, as the Rothay, the Red River; a lake, as Wasdale, or lake valley; a hill, as Kirkby Fell, or Church town mountain. It is equally interesting to recognise Norse in our rich dialects. In my own village, the bairns still laike, the joiner rears his stee, the blacksmith hammers on his stiddy, the cowman rives his hay from the baulk steed in the laithe, takes it along the fodder gang and ligs it in the boos, and then gets meal frae the kist; and the sensible man still eats havver bread.

The statesmen or yeomen of our north country dales, whose holdings one after another unfortunately so often become absorbed by the neighbouring squire, or worse still by some rich townsman, very closely resemble the Norse bonder of the present day, and none who know the types of both can doubt for one moment that they have a common ancestry. They possess a similar sturdiness of character, the same virtues, and, if you will, the same weaknesses too. They are bluntly hospitable, and are as honest and truthful as the day. At the bottom they are essentially religious and are invariably patriotic. A vein of picturesque superstition still lingers in their minds, and long may it do so! They are

simple in their habits; they get up early, and go early to bed. They take their porridge and eat their havver bread, and, until a wicked licensing bill became law in England, both enjoyed their wholesome home-brewed ale. They have constitutions like cast-iron. The one has his farm 'Garth' in the dale, and his sheep on the 'fell'; the other has his 'gaard' in the 'dal,' and his cattle, sheep, or goats on the 'fjeld.' It is true that the bonde, on account of his greater isolation, is now more of a Jack-of-all-trades than his English cousin, but improved communication is depriving the former of his individuality, and every year sees him buy more of the commodities which were formerly made better at home.

Physically, the statesman and the bonde bear a close resemblance. They are fairly tall, broad shouldered, ruddy complexioned, with light brown hair and grey eyes. The women folk and children are also much alike and are often good-looking. In fine, the statesmen of the English dales and the bonder of Norway are as fine a body of men as can be found in the world.

By travelling alone, as I have often done in Norway, one has much better opportunities of getting to know the home-life of the people than when travelling with English friends, and one receives kindness and gentle attentions to which the ordinary tourist is a complete stranger. I have travelled hundreds of miles too in the company of peasants, and at other times with ladies and gentlemen, and have invariably met with courtesy and consideration on the part of the Norse folk, be they gentle or simple.

Many a day have I spent weather-bound in some lonely farmhouse in an out-of-the-way valley, where the folk still live in the simple manner in which I imagine that their remote 'forelders' and ours in England were wont to pass their lives. Many an old-fashioned house has sheltered me, where, in lieu of a chimney, the smoke from the fire on the 'peis' had to escape through the trap-door in the roof, to which is attached a long pole, by which it is raised, and though the smoke from a log fire is trying to the eyes, I firmly believe that these lofty old rooms are more healthy than the modern form, and smoke is an excellent disinfectant. I have often sat down at the long table and shared in the simple family meal where we all ate out of one bowl of porridge, which we scooped out with wooden spoons, which we then dipped into the general bowl of milk. Then we had 'speget kjöd'—smoked and salted mutton or kid, nearly a year old—and very good it is when one is hungry. Fladbröd, butter and cheese, completed the repast. Could we not have seen the same in England had we lived a few centuries ago?

At other farms I have drunk with many a hearty skaal out of beautiful silver tankards or quaintly carved wooden bowls. Once, in a remote farm-house where no foreigner had ever been seen before, my hostess honoured me by giving me an ancient bed to sleep in where the coverlet was a remarkable and aged piece of tapestry. The subject was 'The Adoration of the Magi.' There were six kings, three of whom were riding horses, blue, pink, and red. All had golden crowns. One king was gaping with open mouth, throwing up his arms and evidently much astonished. The Virgin and Child were pink. There were many grotesque animals, strangely coloured, and altogether the quilt was a curiosity. When I spoke of it to our hostess, she offered to exchange it for my Scotch plaid. However, each was better in its own place.

Very often at farms or merchants' houses, I have been ushered into the pretty white-painted parlour, where the piano, pictures, and numerous pots of beautiful flowering-plants testified to the presence of refined women, and the embroidered pipe-rack on the wall told its own tale of contentment at home. Then, with great solemnity, I have been invited to sit in the place of honour at the right-hand end of the sofa, and when sherry and delicious red currant wine and sweet biscuits have been brought in, and placed on the white mat in the centre of the round table, I have been invited to drink 'et glas viin' and have clinked glasses with all present. Englishmen rarely quite overcome a little feeling of embarrassment when they are being waited upon by Norse ladies according to the custom of the country. They invariably do it gracefully, and much better than we men could, however well we tried, but it still seems strange to me even now, and I can hardly resist the inclination to get up and volunteer to help.

As I have stayed at all sorts of farm-houses and with many of the Norse gentry and merchants, I have got to know and I hope to appreciate fully the characteristics and sterling good qualities of a race to which I am proud to believe that we are nearer akin than to any other in Europe.



## CHAPTER II

MY FIRST VISIT TO NORWAY IN 1872; BEAUTY OF NARROW FJORDS;  
 A STORY OF THE BLACK DEATH; THE WATERFALLS OF HARDANGER;  
 MY FIRST GLACIER; UP THE COAST; TRONDHJEM AND OVER THE  
 DOVRE FJELD; RÖDSHEIM AND JOTUNHEIM; FIRST VIEW OF SKAGA-  
 STÖLSTIND; MISTAKEN FOR CARRION

'To travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive.'

R. L. STEVENSON.

'A plague on your languages, German and Norse!  
 Let me have the song of the kettle.'

WORDSWORTH.

FROM earliest childhood when, under the guidance of a governess, I acquired some inaccurate information about the Dovre Fjeld, to the advanced period of existence when Miss Martineau's charming little book, *Feats on the Fjord*, lay open before me, I longed to go to Norway more than to any other country. In the year 1872 this wish was first realised. Before starting, I went to a book-seller's shop in our neighbouring town. Behind the counter stood a jolly old Yorkshire woman whom I asked for a guide-book to Norway. She looked at me, and said quite innocently, 'Norway! Well, I think not; but 'ere's Black's *Guide to t' English Lakes*. It'll 'appen do as weel.'

Eventually, my companion, Mr. Chris. Sidgwick, and I provided ourselves with a little suitable literature, including a magazine article about a visit to the Vöring and Skjæggedal fosses and a journey to the 'neighbourhood of the midnight sun.' The difficulties and dangers attending a visit to the Vöringfos were enormously exaggerated, and the picturesque beauty of the whole expedition to the Skjæggedalsfos was so grandly described, that we determined to see the two waterfalls, and to make a journey up to the North Cape, in order, I suppose, principally to burn holes in our hats with burning-glasses at midnight. Then we were to try the fishing and to follow the dictates of fancy as far as we liked, and to return home—sometime. But that was not all. I knew something about rock-climbing, and had already

made a few climbs on the Yorkshire and Cumberland fells. With my brothers and sisters I had tried standing, sitting, and, shall I say, rolling, glissades? But I had never seen a glacier. There were glaciers in plenty in Norway. Yes. We would climb too.

On June 20th, on the *Argo*, we first became acquainted with the discomforts of a clammy fog-bank, a slow speed, and the abominable steam-whistle, and in due course, with all the pleasures too, of a passage over a rippleless sea. This was followed by a stiff gale, which upset the equilibrium of most of the passengers, which, however, was completely restored by the entrance into still water near Stavanger. We all ate the next meal with the voracity of tigers, and what was stranger still, we all seemed to think it quite natural to do so.

Since this time the steamboat service from Hull to Norway has been much improved, and a very successful Norse line has for some years plied between Newcastle and Norway, and the number of tourists has increased at least a hundredfold. Still, the North Sea is as wayward, as fickle, and as treacherous as ever, and I for one long for the time when the voyage between Newcastle or Hull on this side, and Bergen on the other, can be accomplished under twenty-four hours.

As this first tour introduced us to some of the most charming districts in Norway, I will give a general outline of it.

The clearness of the water and the number of jellyfish—'manæt' or sea-nettles in Norse—perhaps are noticed by most people in the harbour at Stavanger. Along the coast, on bleak headlands on the various skerries, the gaily painted wooden light-houses and the numerous little white targets with black centres, which are painted on the rocks to indicate safe mooring-places for boats, testify to the fact that even between the islands which guard nearly the whole of the coast of Norway and the mainland, there can be foul as well as fair weather.

Bergen, Björgvin—the mountain pastures—of old, overlooked by its seven fjelde, is, even yet, in spite of the ruthless substitution of prosaic stucco buildings for picturesque wooden houses each with its gable end towards the front, one of the most beautiful cities in the world. Let him who doubts this statement walk up Löfstaken on a fine day, and see indescribable beauties close at hand, and far away, on one side the snows of the Folgefond, and to the north the mountain Alden, north of the entrance to the Sognefjord.

The day after our arrival proved to be St. John's Eve, a great

festival in Norway, more, however, a relic of paganism than a Christian feast. The burning of the god Balder on his funeral pyre on his boat *Hringhorn* is in fact yearly commemorated on St. John's Eve by 'Balder's bale fires' being lighted on the hill-sides all over the country. Old boats are often requisitioned for this purpose. I am glad to say that in out-of-the-way valleys, where the almost ubiquitous telephone has not yet appeared, much superstition still remains, and will, I hope, long continue to do so.

From Bergen we steamed for six enjoyable hours on the little boat *Vos* to Bolstadören. The last ten or eleven miles are absorbingly interesting; everything is weird, suggestive of elves, fairies, water-nymphs, mermaids, and I know not what besides. The fjord is everywhere narrow, and it is well to bear in mind this fact, that in Norway generally, the narrower the fjord, and the further it pierces into the heart of the country, the finer is the scenery. In some places the Bolstadjord is little over fifty yards wide. The cliffs, though never very high, rise like walls out of the water. Dark Scotch firs, apparently glorying in their power of growing out of mere chinks in the rocks, raise their proud crests in many an inaccessible position, boldly defying time, the elements, unfavourable situations, and, worst of all, the dread woodman's axe. Here and there graceful birches or clumps of immense white saxifrages and the greenest of mosses add beauty to the scene. Little oases of cultivated land at the foot of lateral glens appear where we stop and have an interchange of merchandise with the boats.

At one place, an Amazonian red-haired girl in a green bodice with red sleeves and the usual blue wadmél skirt is the rower. At another, three boats manned by white-haired old veterans come alongside; their boats are quickly laden with full and empty casks and coils of rope, and then, after many struggles, a cow is craned up and slung over the side, and soon lowered into one of the boats. The discharging and taking in cargo up-country is always an amusing scene. On one occasion, on the Hjørundfjord, I saw a pony lowered into the sea, as there was no suitable boat for it alongside. It puffed and snorted for a few seconds, and then swam merrily ashore.

Gorges and arms of fjords keep appearing as we pass, where perhaps they are least expected, and disappear again as quickly as they come into sight. In one place, the fjord appears to be terminated by a high cliff, towards which we seem to be steering. When within a few yards of it another reach discovers itself on

the right, and we turn sharp round, and pull up close to a collection of little houses, whose grass-covered roofs appear to be the most fertile meadows of the place. Then the fjord partakes of the nature of a river, and as it is low tide we see some rapids ahead where the navigation is difficult. We stop to get up steam, and then make a charge. The course is shown by posts on shore and by floating buoys on the water. As the latter have to be steered over, the idea of 'kicking the bucket' is suggested. Sharp-toothed rocks not very far below the surface show plainly that it is not a place to be trifled with.

This Bolstadfjord is certainly very pretty. It reminds one of Scotland, alas! without the heather, and it has many a counterpart in Norway. It is not by any means famous, but it is a most fitting preparation for grander scenes in store.

The river at the head is well known to salmon-fishers, and a few years ago one of the English lessees had the good luck to land a fifty-two pound fish after a three hours' fight in the river. Once my sister and I rowed down the rapids in this river, some two miles in length, and much enjoyed the fun.

At Evanger we were fortunate enough to see two bridal parties, a most picturesque sight, as most of those concerned arrived, donned in their brightly-coloured costumes, in gaily decorated boats. A few days later we saw three weddings at Odde. June, and early in July, are favourite times for weddings, as it is rather a slack time before the hay and corn harvest. The Norse peasantry are by nature gregarious, as far as they well can be. They are christened in batches, married in batches, and, what is stranger still, they are occasionally buried together, when, after a hard winter, the frozen corpses of a remote district are brought, on the melting of the snows, to their last resting-place, and are buried at the same time. I knew a lad who was killed in a sledge accident in the winter in the north of Norway, and whose body was not buried until the following June, as, until that time, the ground was all covered with snow and frozen as hard as iron.

We pushed on the same day to Eide, and drove our first carioles. The distance from Evanger is about thirty-two miles, and the country is very varied and pretty. We saw many strange things on the road: a hatless ruffian in a cariole dashing madly downhill, and using his new whip unmercifully. We passed dozens of pretty little wooden corn-mills driven by water. The roofs are invariably covered with turf, and very often birch-trees be seen growing on the top. At that time each farmer had

his own mill, and each grew his own corn. Nowadays, dairy-farming and grazing are displacing husbandry in most parts of Norway, and, in consequence, these most picturesque mills are disappearing slowly but surely, and the importation of grain from Russia and other countries is yearly increasing.

Near the beautiful lake, Gravens Vand, we first saw the 'jern streng,' or iron wire, a capital invention. One end is attached to a rock or a tree in the valley, the other far up on the mountain above. It is merely a novel kind of hay-cart. As grass is scarce and valuable in Norway, the most has to be made of what there is, as horses and cattle do not thrive well either on fishes' heads or dried foliage. Grass is therefore cut on the little ledges and steep slopes in almost inaccessible places. Cutting is one thing, carrying is another, a difficult and dangerous matter on tree-clad crags; hence some inventive genius, a public benefactor too, hit upon the wire method. The grass is bound into a bundle with birch or hemp ropes, a hook is fixed to it, then it is put on the wire. A shove at starting, and in a few seconds the cargo is at the farm, perhaps 1500 feet below, and then made into hay. Wood and birch bark, or 'nøever,' which is used in roofing buildings and as kindling for the fires, and which burns when dry almost like paper, are also sent down. In some places grass is sent down fully 3000 feet in this manner.

At Hansen's cosy little inn at Eide we first saw ivy trained round the inner walls of the rooms.

At this time there were very few steamboats on what is now the most tourist-ridden fjord—the Hardanger—in Norway, and long boating expeditions were inevitable. In order to avoid a very long one to Vik, we determined to cross the mountain to Ulvik. As my companion wished to ride and try the merits of a Norse pony, we engaged a couple, an experiment I have never repeated. Norse saddles are usually horrible instruments of torture, high pommelled, and with the stirrups too far back, so that the rider is forced forward. Ladies' saddles are often like round smoking-chairs without legs. Sometimes properly-shaped, but ill-constructed, ladies' saddles are to be seen, but they are rarely comfortable. A bridle is often a mere rope to which is attached a straight piece of round rusty iron with a ring at each end, which does duty for a bit. I have seen metal entirely dispensed with, and in its place either a rope bit, or a rope nose-band and head-piece. Of course there is not much power in such bits, but the inevitable pur-r-r-r-r will almost always stop a horse even down the steepest hill.

Three hours' ride brought the two lazy fellows to Ulvik, the bonniest place in Hardanger. The wolves which give the Vik or bay its name are, happily, not existing now. A pretty, though tragic, story is somewhere told relating to Ulvik.

In the fourteenth century, Hardanger, like so many other districts in Norway, was well-nigh depopulated by the 'Black Death.' In Ulvik all died save one young man, who woke up from his sick-bed and found himself the sole survivor, all his relatives and neighbours being dead. After a time his thoughts wandered across the mountains to Graven, the home of his sweetheart. 'Was she too dead, or had she been spared?' His feelings during the days when he was regaining strength, preparatory to making a journey over the mountains, may be more easily imagined than described.

After a week or two he put a little food in his pockets, and with weary steps and many a rest he plodded up the rugged path through the forest. When at length he reached the edge of the hill overlooking Graven, for some minutes he dared not look towards the house of his loved one. At last he mustered courage and gazed down at the farm. To his intense joy he saw smoke curling through the trees which overshadowed the house. He hastened onwards as fast as his wearied limbs would allow him, and tottered to the door, where he fell fainting into the arms of her whom he loved better than life itself. She, too, was the only survivor in her own valley.

There are many pretty, as well as gruesome, stories told in connection with the 'Black Death,' but I will not now relate any more of them.

For us, Ulvik was merely a resting-place on the way to the Vöringfos, a grand waterfall now very well known, but formerly surrounded by an air of mystery, as the early visitors could only see it from above by leaning over the edge of a precipice. On our visit there was a party of ladies who had three horses. These were embarked in a rickety and leaky boat on the lake above Vik. In the gorge above, several frail bridges had to be crossed. When a horse came to one it first sniffed at it and put its nose close to the ground, then it moved on a few paces, and where any plank more rotten than usual appeared, the horse put out one foot slowly and deliberately and gently pressed the wood, and, in fact, felt whether it was safe or not before trusting its weight on it, and when reassured, he walked ahead. Each horse did exactly the same. We were almost the first to see the fall from the bottom, and, indeed, I was actually the first tourist to cross the

river below the fos by a bridge which had only been slung across the river within an hour of our arrival.

Two years later I met with a little adventure here, which led me to see a most beautiful and wholly unexpected phenomenon which I will briefly describe.

Our party consisted of four. We had left Vossevangen in the morning, had driven to Graven, and had walked to Ulvik, where we had a slight meal.

Then we were rowed to Vik, and intended to stop the night at Hoel farm and to cross over the mountains—how, we did not know—to the Skjægedalsfos, and to descend to Odde. Foolishly,



INTERIOR OF HOEL GAARD, VÖRINGFOS

we set off at 7 P.M. from Vik without having another meal. On the way I stopped to help a delicate man who had joined us. The others went on, and after a time we hurried after them. This, and the want of food, made us both ill.

Eventually we dropped behind, the delicate man stopped at Maabö and I went on, but ultimately had to lie down on the plateau above the fall, completely exhausted, and went to sleep for two or three hours. The others, meanwhile, had mistaken the position of Hoel, which is on the plateau, and had imagined it was in the gorge below.

We met again at Maabö next morning, and abandoned the wild scheme of crossing the mountains to Odde. As an alternative, it was arranged that all should ascend by the old path up to

Hoel, and then see the waterfall from both the north and south cliffs; that the three strong members should perhaps climb the ice-crowned Hardanger Jökul,<sup>1</sup> or at any rate cross over to Simodal and return by boat to Vik, and that the two weaker men should return to Vik by the valley.

About 6 P.M. we two—the weaklings—found ourselves on the Turistforening's bridge below the fall, and in the dust-like spray which was being blown by the wind down the gorge. To our intense delight there was a huge rainbow, or rather a rain ring, an ovoid band of colours—in fact, a complete annular iris, the colours of which were perfectly distinct down to our feet. Not only was there this rain ring, but there was a secondary iris with a reversed order of colours which were quite visible on our right hand down to our feet, where they mingled with those of the primary rain ring. On the left hand, the secondary bow was only prevented from being a complete annular iris by an intercepting crag, which cut off the sun's rays from about a quarter of the circle.

The sublimity of this scene was unique. It suggested the idea that fairy hands had woven the oval frame of the picture whose subject was the mighty Vöringfos and its wondrous surroundings. In the year 1828 the Rev. R. Everest visited the Vöringfos in winter, and found the fall 'enclosed in a case of ice and surrounded with a framework of icicles reaching from the top to the bottom.'

Our next visit was to Odde, now the Brighton of Norway. Here my friend and I tried a little bottom fishing, which I soon tired of, and resolved to walk up to a patch of snow above the fjord. I said I would reach it in an hour's time. My friend said it would take two. I raced up an ancient avalanche track, and made my first snowball in Norway, in one-and-a-quarter hour's rush from the fjord. It was my first scramble in Norway, and showed me once and for all on what a grand scale the Hardanger mountains are built.

A visit to the Skjæggedalsfos was next undertaken. This is one of the most interesting tourist expeditions in Europe, and the old path on the north side of the Tyssedal is the most enjoyable mountain path that I have ever traversed. In 1899 I made my third visit to this waterfall accompanied by my wife, three

<sup>1</sup> This fine ice-capped mountain was only thoroughly explored a few years ago. On the western side is the Dæmme Vand, a lake formed in a similar manner to the Märjelen See in Switzerland. In both cases tunnels have been made to prevent the floods which formerly did great damage.



children, a niece, and two nephews, and was quite as much impressed with the grandeur of the Tyssedal or fairies' valley, the Ringedalsvand, the grand double fall called the Tyssestreng or fairies' ringlets, and the Skjæggedalsfos itself, as I was when I first saw them in 1872. It is not generally known that this expedition can be made in the time ordinarily allowed by yachting steamboats which turn out their hundreds of passengers to see a second-rate fall above Odde. In the year 1899, Captain Eckhoff of s.s. *Vega* was good enough to put us down at Tyssedal, and picked us up in the evening again.

For several hundred yards the path goes over smoothly polished glaciated rocks, steeply inclined towards the river. Here trees have been felled, stripped of their branches, and fastened together at the ends where a traverse had been made. Where an ascent is to be undertaken notches are cut in the wood, and occasionally two trees are laid down parallel, and rough rungs have been fastened on to form ladders.

Steep stony staircases appear in many places and a great height is attained, in one place 1850 feet above the fjord. Grand Scotch firs and birches grow out of little crannies in the rocks, and the scene is a combination of grandeur and rich beauty. A new and more prosaic path on the left bank of the river will soon, I fear, entirely supplant the old one.

I will not attempt to describe the great waterfall, but merely say that, in my opinion, in grandeur it has no rival in Norway, and hence none in Europe.

On a second visit with my sister in 1875, I climbed up the face of the rock, about 700 feet above the bottom of the fall, to a place where the rocks become a veritable wall. A large triangular piece of rock, visible from below, projects out from the rocky face and is partly under the great fall. I climbed up and behind this, and was able to walk actually behind a portion of the fall itself. In fact, there was a low rock parapet which made this perfectly safe, and I had a grand view down into the awful basin below. I doubt if any one else has ever been there before or since, nor do I recommend it, as the upper rocks are very bad. In 1899 four of us got very near this place, but were pressed for time, and, moreover, were more prudent than I had been when alone.

My sister and I had the misfortune to be rowed over the clear fishless waters of the Ringedalsvand in company with three men who had made up their minds not to enjoy themselves. One had, unfortunately for him, seen Niagara. Clearly then it would not do for him to admire a Norse waterfall. Another, if he had not

seen Niagara, had seen Milan Cathedral. Surely it would be bad form for him to enjoy the Ringedalsvand? The third was traveling for the first time, and it was evidently essential for him to imitate his companion and to affect to be blasé.

From Odde we made our first glacier pass over the Folgefond and back again. Like the greater portion of the Justedalsbræ, the Folgefond has no peaks. The top, seen in the distance, forms an horizon of wavy, graceful lines; when on the snow-field itself, it is seen to consist of a series of huge, white, and sparkling domes of great beauty. No crevasses are usually seen on the route across, but, for all that, they are there, and to my mind it is quite within the limits of probability that in some year of great snow denudation one of the sledges which carry merry parties of tourists across may disappear with all its occupants into some hitherto unsuspected crevasse.

A few years ago arrangements had been made for the inauguration of reindeer sledging, and many notables came from Bergen and elsewhere to see the start. However, the solitary reindeer, supplied for the purpose, disliking publicity, spoiled the fun by running away. Let us hope that ultimately it joined some of its wilder brethren on Hardanger Vidden across the fjord.

There are two grand glaciers which descend to lower regions from the Folgefond, and two only, and very beautiful they are. The Bondhusbræ falls to the west and the Buerbræ to the east.

When my sister and I saw the latter in 1875 the snout was advancing rapidly, and this relentless ice-plough could be seen slowly, surely, but steadily at work. Evidently it had advanced considerably for some days previously. Trees were uprooted before it; their branches and fresh green leaves, rocked by the wind, gently kissed their cold destroyer, and sods of emerald green grass, interspersed with pretty flowers, were being shoved into heaps. Buttercups leant against the icy wall, and even the dainty oak fern was innocently thriving within a yard of the creeping ice serpent. We gathered some fronds, and still preserve them. Large angular blocks of rock were being shoved quietly and steadily along. One was partly tilted over and threatened to destroy a well-grown alder. The place which the glacier had then reached was a very contracted part of the gorge, only some twenty-five yards in width, and it was an excellent place for the profitable study of glacial action. There were beautiful ice grottos at the snout, and a wall of ice about twenty-five feet high. The Buerbræ advanced two or three miles during the nineteenth century, and I noticed a considerable difference between 1872

and 1874; in fact it had destroyed much valuable pasture land, and in Norway the loss of grass means the loss not only of luxuries but of home comforts as well. I believe that now this really beautiful glacier is retreating. There are many corners of the Folgefond where ice-laden tarns, weird glens, and fine waterfalls may be seen which are, so far, wholly unknown to the tourist world.

In the early seventies, even in Odde, huge hotels were unknown, but two cosy inns existed where good and wholesome Norse fare could be had in plenty, and where the linen was spotless, and the beds rough but clean.

In places where there is no hotel proper, the 'landhandler,' or country shopkeeper, if there be one, in virtue of his calling is obliged to entertain travellers, as if he were an innkeeper. Speaking generally, he likes this, as it adds variety to the life of his wife and himself, and brings a little more grist to the mill, but at the same time the considerate traveller will do well to remember that he is in some measure receiving a favour. I have stayed at several merchants' houses where I could see that the entertainment of strangers was a burden not at all relished by the owners, and in such cases I have always endeavoured to make as short a stay as I could, and to give as little trouble as possible. As a rule, however, a well-behaved Englishman receives a hearty welcome at the house of any 'landhandler' whose house he may visit, and usually he feels, on taking his departure, that he is leaving real friends behind him.

After exploring the Hardanger pretty thoroughly we returned to Bergen and set off for the North Cape in earnest on s.s. *Michael Krohn*, and were told that the boat would start at 'Klokken Eet,' i.e. one o'clock. This was a veritable trap and nearly caught us, as the word 'eet' is pronounced like our English 'eight.' As the steward's English was, if possible, even worse than our Norse, we aired the latter, and at breakfast I distinguished myself by using the word 'strax' which meant immediately, instead of 'lax' or salmon, and asked for 'fiske strax,' or for fish immediately.

Nothing in its way can be much easier or more pleasant than a journey up the island-guarded coast of Norway on a good clean and comfortable ship in fine weather. A halo of romance seems to cling to every bold headland, sheltered bay, or deep fjord, and solid historical facts of great interest are identified with hundreds of picturesque corners on this most weird western coast.

See how many places are associated with Harold Haarfager. Hagesund, where he died, and where, in 1872, a large obelisk was

erected to commemorate the thousandth anniversary of his victory over other kings, which made him sole ruler over the whole of Norway, allowed him, on the fulfilment of his vow, made ten years earlier, to have his hair cut, which had not to be done until he had conquered the whole kingdom.

See Hornelen, that grandest of all grand sea-cliffs, rising 3000 feet into the clouds out of the blue sea waves, and think of King Olaf Tryggvesson.

As I have much to say about Söndmöre, I merely state that the coast between Stadt and Aalesund is as weirdly beautiful as it is historically interesting.

At Molde we got our first view of the Romsdal peaks, and even then I felt attracted by the Vængetinder, whose grisly summits I was to scale some years later.

Long before reaching Trondhjem we resolved to abandon our intention of going to the North Cape and to go inland instead. Even when cruising through the very grandest scenery, I always find the confinement of a steamboat to be oppressive after a couple of days, in fact much more so than when far out of sight of land. I always find this kind of sentiment to prevail in my system. The scenery is no doubt very fine, the mountains are weird, the colouring is exquisite, but—it lacks something. You cannot get hold of it with your hands, or put your feet upon it, and that means a great deal.

Shortly after rounding the tempestuous Cape of Stadt, the ancient kingdom of Söndmöre is entered, and, unless a south-west wind be blowing, in all probability the deck-tied passenger will have some lovely though distant peeps of the sharply serrated Söndmöre peaks which beckon him in a most tantalising manner and make him long for freedom.

Still, for people who need rest, nothing is much easier or more pleasant in its way than a journey up to the North Cape, along the romantic west coast of Norway, on the well-ordered, clean, and comfortable mail steamboats of to-day. Early last century, it was far different, and the few travellers who visited Hammerfest and Tromsö usually went in winter by way of the Gulf of Bothnia to Torneå, and from thence over to Alten by sleighs. Sir A. de Capell Brooke, in 1820, was probably the first Englishman who travelled from Trondhjem to the North Cape by the western coast. This part of his journey occupied forty days. In the middle of the seventeenth century, mariners even considered it to be desirable to buy from the Lapps on the shore, who called themselves 'wind merchants,' the winds which were necessary to carry

their ships in the proper direction. These Lapps had the power to 'stop ships in their full course, so that they cannot stir from the place, let the wind blow never so strong'! On a voyage taken in 1653, a suitable wind was bought from a Lapp necromancer 'for ten crowns and a pound of tobacco.'<sup>1</sup>

Trondhjem, the Nidaros of old, is well known, and I will pass it by quickly. It has figured prominently on scores of thrilling occasions. Here it was that Thor's immense jewel-bedecked image was destroyed by Kolbein the Strong, at the order of King Olaf, in the presence of thousands of heathens who had brought out the great idol to enable them the better to outweigh the king's arguments in favour of Christianity. Here it was also that St. Olaf's silver shrine for many a long age attracted hundreds of pilgrims from all over Europe, and here also at the present day the kings of Norway and Sweden are crowned.

The cathedral, by far the most interesting building in Scandinavia, is well worth a visit, and is, under very able supervision, undergoing a complete restoration. The city is clean-looking, and possesses many interesting wooden buildings. The scenery around is pretty but not grand. Some of the neighbouring hills, as is the case about Bergen, have within recent years been wisely planted with Scotch firs and deciduous trees, which are a great improvement.

We made our way by the usual pass over the Dovre Fjelde to Gudbrandsdal, travelling very slowly by cariole, and stopping at many places for trout-fishing. In one river the fish were absurdly innocent. Sidgwick was using a cast of four flies and once hooked four fish at a time, which I landed for him, and on thirteen separate times he landed two trout together. The unhooking soon became a nuisance, and even I, who was almost a novice in the gentle art, wished that the fish were less greedy but rather bigger.

At Kongsvold we found an invasion of the impudent and most pugnacious little creatures, the lemmings. A visitation of these pretty guinea-pig-like pests is a great scourge, and they eat up the herbage almost like a flight of locusts. A lemming will not allow a man to pass within a couple of yards of the hummock of grass under which he is lurking, without giving a shrill challenge and showing his teeth.

Some of the popular myths concerning the migration of the

<sup>1</sup> In *The Pirate*, chap. vii., Sir Walter Scott has introduced into a conversation a defence of the right of 'Norna of the Fitful-head' to sell 'favourable winds to those who are port-bound.'

lemming are now discredited ; still, many extraordinary statements concerning their wonderful gregarious marching habits are told which are undoubtedly true. I have myself found hundreds of dead and a few living lemmings on the snowy domes of the Justedalsbræ, miles away from any sort of herbage. I once saw a poor little creature running up and down on the surface of a large rectangular mass of névé on an icefall of a glacier in the Horungtinder, and apparently without any chance of escape, as deep crevasses surrounded the mass. On the same day some of our party found a living lemming on the top of a mountain over 7000 feet in height. Undoubtedly, thousands of them get drowned in attempting to swim across swift-flowing rivers. On rare occasions, the screws of steamboats have been stopped by the bodies of countless lemmings which have attempted to swim across a fjord.

To some extent it is probably true that they journey westwards, but we need hardly now believe that when they get to the western sea they swim out and commit suicide.

At Dombaas we met with mosquitoes for the first time. In south and central Norway as a rule they are not very troublesome, though I was once nearly devoured by them during two days of elk-stalking in a boggy pine forest in Hallingdal. In arctic Norway they are in some places terrible pests, though not a tenth part so bad as on the uplands in Lapland. With a little judicious management they may be kept out of the bedrooms by closing the windows shortly before sunset, at which time they commonly fly in. The windows may be reopened some time later, and if the window panes and walls be examined and cleared of intruders, one's sleep will be seldom disturbed. It has often struck me in connection with mosquitoes, midges, and other flies that, in the places where they most abound, Providence has fortunately provided an antidote in the form of innumerable insectivorous plants, the *Drosera rotundifolia* and *longifolia*, and the *Pinguicula*, thousands of which voracious vegetable fly-eaters may be seen growing side by side on the boggy ground alongside most roads in Norway.

Down the grand Rusten gorge we drove to Laurgaard, where we fished and caught many grayling. Then 'Westward Ho' to Vaage along the tree-bereft shores of the Vaage Vand. Here and at Skiaker, and on the wild uplands, towards Raudal in one direction and Grotlid in another, may be seen the evil effects of the ruthless disforestation of the country in the sixties and seventies, where farms, such as Mörk, once fertile clearings in the forest, have gone back to sterility, as there is now nothing to break the strong and

icy winds which blow furiously over the western glaciers. When a forest of Scotch pines is cut down, young pines do not take the place of their sires, but, instead, the ground soon becomes covered with useless juniper bushes. Wise forestry laws now prevent such wholesale devastation as that which I merely hint at here.

At Lom we turned south and followed the course of the river *Bøever*, named after the beavers which, in times not so long past, frequented the river, and made our way to Rødsheim, the northern gate of Jotunheim.



RØDSHEIM

Rødsheim is a *gaard* (hence our north country word 'garth') or a group of picturesquely situated farm-buildings at the base of the mountain *Galdhø*, which separates two fine Alpine valleys, *Bøeverdal* and *Visdal*. It is a capital instance of a large mountain farm-house, and its owner, *Ole Rødsheim*, at the time of my first visit in 1872, and for many a long year afterwards, was a capital type of a bold mountaineer and an experienced guide through the wilds of *Jotunheim*. Rødsheim is, and always will be, the favourite starting-place for the ascent of *Galdhøpiggen*, which is now universally recognised as the highest mountain in

northern Europe. I have spent many happy and lazy days there, so know it well. The house and its many outbuildings are perched on the rocks just above a wild, narrow, water-worn gorge, through which the Bøever rushes furiously along. There are dozens of large, round, water-worn holes in the rocks, technically termed 'jette gryder,' or witches' cauldrons.<sup>1</sup> An old wooden bridge adds a picturesque element to the scene, and on one of its handrails is a spout which conveys water to a large wooden trough, where the family washing is done.

Across the river, several acres are sown with potatoes, which are nearly always being watered. Wooden spouts bring the water to channels which radiate in every direction downhill. At intervals there are pools, and here stand the waterers, each armed with a wooden shovel, with which, even during a thunderstorm, they shovel out the water over the crops.

'The wary ploughman, on the mountain's brow,  
Undams his watery stores, huge torrents flow ;  
And, rattling down the rocks, large moisture yield,  
Tempering the thirsty fever of the field.'

Every evening a herd of sixty or seventy goats come to the farm. From whence they come seems to be a mystery. The milkmaids give them salt, and then there is always a little tournament amongst them on the rocks in the farmyard. It is probably only friendly banter, but they butt each other with rare good-will and on scientific principles too. After a time, the Nanny goats are cooped up for milking, and the rest disperse.

Like many other persons, our first journey in Jotunheim was from Rødsheim to Skjolden, about fifty-two miles, and our first sæter was Bøeverthun, which is beautifully situated at the head of a large lake.

A few miles above the sæter we came near a large broad glacier, out of which arise six fine peaks—the Smørstabb-bræ and -tinder—which prepare the traveller for the glories of the Horungtinder, which suddenly and quite unexpectedly burst upon the view when near the top of the pass.

The Horunger, or Horungtinder, is undoubtedly the finest mountain range in Norway. We had heard practically nothing about the range, so our delight was probably the greater in con-

<sup>1</sup> These are supposed to have been formed by sub-glacial rivers. Some, no doubt were, notably the large cauldron above Meraak. We have excellent examples at the Strid, near Bolton Abbey; some are ancient, others are being formed to-day. Two little ones are being formed in a beck about one hundred yards distant from my garden.



sequence, and I shall never forget as long as I live my first view of Skagastölstind, the grandest European mountain north of the Alps. Our guide told us that it was the highest mountain in Norway, that it had not yet been ascended, and that no doubt it was impracticable. Can it be wondered at that, when I saw the weird form of this mighty mountain in bright summer sunlight towering, like King Saul, head and shoulders above his fellows—a score of sharp aiguilles of fantastic shape—I determined, if possible, on some future occasion, to make the first ascent?

Up to a dozen years ago, in spite of the fact that the height of most Jotunheim peaks had been accurately measured trigonometrically, and the fact established that the Galdhøpig and the Glittertind were the two highest mountains in Norway, many farmers of Fortun and Aardal persisted that Skagastölstind was the highest mountain in Norway. In old geography books and atlases the mountain is spoken of as being 'the culminating point of the Scandinavian mountains.' In the Aarbog of the *Turist Forening* for 1870 Herr T. Dahl says that 'Skagastölstind, about 8000 feet high, comes between Galdhøpiggen and Glittertind,' whilst in the Aarbog for 1874 the mountain is called only the eighth highest mountain in the country. In former years, like so many 'highest mountains,' Skagastölstind had great rivals. The earliest was perhaps Snehattan, then Sulitelma. Then came its successful rival, the Galdhøpig, 8399 feet, and later appeared the ambitious but beautiful Knutshultind, whose pretensions were never very formidable. Now it is pretty well known that Store or—the Great—Skagastölstind is 7874 feet above sea-level, and is only the eighth mountain in height in Norway.

From a height near where we first saw the Horungtinder, which is now called Oscarshaug, or the hill of King Oscar, who crossed the Sognefjeld in 1860, the gentler beauties of nature, represented by the green Helgedal, blend most harmoniously with the sterner works around.

Though this view is very grand, it is not comparable to the views of the same range from the plateau, or from mountains rising out of the plateau, of Vettismarken on the other side. From Oscarshaug the Horungtinder are seen to consist of three clusters or groups of more or less detached peaks, each cluster being separated from the others by a much crevassed glacier. The central group, opposite, contains the Dyrhougstinder, the Midt Maradals, and eastern Riings-tinder. The western consists of the Riings—Stöls Maradal-, Solei-, and Austabot-tinder. The eastern, and by far the finest group, contains the

Gjertvas-, Styggedals-, Maradals-, and the three Skagastöls-tinder.

When we first saw these score of fine aiguilles I believe I am right in saying that not one of them had yet been ascended, and that no glacier pass in the range had been crossed, though in the year 1821 Professor C. F. Naumann climbed the northern buttress of Skagastölstind. Three fine glacier passes of prime importance evidently invited an exploration, and when I pointed them out to our guide, his face, long and thin to start with, lengthened visibly, and the word 'umueligt' was all that we could hear.

A lovely descent brought us down to the cosy inn at Fortun. Here there was still standing, though wretchedly out of repair, one of the most interesting old wooden churches in Norway. Like those at Borgund, Hitterdal, and Urnæs, it dates from the twelfth century, and is as interesting in every minute detail as the whole building is curious and fantastic in appearance. Crockets, gables, and little turrets abound, and a small arcade runs round the church. A spire rises from the centre. The roofs are covered with shingles, and the whole is periodically tarred over, which gives it a rich brown colour.

A few years ago the parishioners of Fortun, who certainly had outgrown the meagre accommodation afforded by this ancient relic of bygone days, built a new church, and wished to dispose of the old building for firewood. Herr Thorgeir Sulheim named this to Herr Gade of Bergen, to whose public spirit and enterprise it is due that this most interesting building can now be seen re-erected and completely restored in excellent taste on a woody knoll a few miles out of Bergen.

Above the old site of the church at Fortun, on a mere shelf on the mountain-side, may be seen a little farm called Fuglesteg. The path leading up to it is of such a romantic and precipitous character that it is called the Fuglesti, or the Bird Path, implying that the heights above are more suitably reached by birds than by wingless creatures. It much resembles some of the paths to farms overlooking the Geirangerfjord. Some years ago, a man was leading a mare and foal up the Fuglesti; the mare made a false step and fell a good thousand feet into the river below. The man then tried to keep hold of the foal, but filial though misguided affection proved too strong for the little creature, and, leaping clear over the man's head, it followed its mother and was dashed to pieces.

That the natives are much impressed with the dangers of this path was proved to me when two friends and I were once being

led down by Sulheim, as he watched me like a cat watching a mouse. The head of Fortunsdal is so narrow and its mountain walls are so high and steep that there is an old saying existing to the effect that 'If a man of Fortun wishes to see the sun, he must lie on his back on the ground.'

As fishing and general touring were our principal objects, we left the Horungtinder, but, for my part, with regret. However, I made four little ascents, three of them alone, in order to find out how the land lay generally, and to add to my slender stock of orographical knowledge.

First, I climbed a hill a little north of Skjolden. Then I ascended a fine little peak called Okken from Husum, whilst my friend caught a creel of grand trout below. Then together we climbed Stugunöset from Nystuen on the Fillefjeld, where we had a fine distant view of Jotunheim.

Lastly, whilst staying for some days at a charming little inn on the shores of Vangsmjösen, I was attracted by a steep mountain whose crags tower above the farm of Berge and the lovely lake below. I soon found myself walking quickly through fields, then a birch-clad slope led me to high pasturage where, amongst the stones, holly and parsley ferns and the long-stalked white *Ranunculus luxuriatus*. After this came bare micaceous rocks and snow, a short steep gully, and a broad ridge, where I found under a rock an ancient moss-covered skeleton of a reindeer. Who can tell how many years it is since this noble animal lay down there to die alone and quite hidden from his companions?

In three hours of very quick walking from the inn I reached the point I had intended to gain, a corner of Skjoldfjeld, where a tiny cairn showed traces of an earlier visitor.

The view was doubtless the most varied that I had as yet seen in Norway, and for some hours I enjoyed myself to the full. Nearly thirty miles off, the Horungtinder stood, towering above the nearer mountains of Koldedal. Uranaastind, seen as it were end on, was grand and sharp. The ice-bound summits beyond Lake Byglin, gilded by the setting sun, were most lovely, and many peaks whose rugged crests afforded friends and myself grand sport in later years, had, when the afterglow was followed by the cold greens and faint purples, a 'noli me tangere' look about them, which, however, fascinated me.

Range beyond range appeared, and fleecy clouds added much beauty to the scene, but the beauteous maiden Skagastölstind was the great attraction, and I found myself still deeper in love with her.

Immediately below me, 3000 feet or more, lay one of the loveliest lakes in Norway, and to the south were the fair lands of Valders. I will not describe their beauties.

As on many Norse fells, I found a bed of deep and elastic reindeer moss,<sup>1</sup> of which I gladly availed myself. Whilst comfortably lying at full length and only half-awake, I thought I heard a little noise up aloft. Looking up, I saw one of those wretched drab and black crows hovering forty or fifty feet above me and evidently meditating an onslaught. Impudent rascal to mistake a Briton for carrion! My signs of life showed the disappointed bird his mistake and away he flew.

As was the case on the road from Trondhjem over the Dovre Fjeld, we stopped at every inviting station between Lærdal and Christiania, so got to know Valders pretty well. At one place we gathered a lot of bilberries and were determined to have bilberry tart, as my friend said he knew how to make pastry and would give the necessary directions. Our host was summoned. 'Flour, water, eggs, etc.' 'Are you certain about the eggs?' 'Yes, of course.' After the foundation was laid, the affair was brought for us to inspect. 'Yes, it is all right so far, but it wants a roof on it.' Our host replied: 'If it has a roof you cannot eat it.' In due course our 'middag' was ready. The meat was eaten; now for the tart. In came a luke-warmed paste with the uncooked berries laid on the top. A batter pudding with bilberries, a variety to the ordinary fare, but hardly pastry. Did not the wild strawberries and cream which appeared next taste delicious?

Of the three routes connecting Valders with Christiania I can recommend that by Lake Spirillen as being the prettiest, but towards the middle of August the river Bæga becomes too low to be navigated even by the little toy steamer which, earlier in the summer, after steam-pressure is raised to 125 lbs., charges the rapids so pluckily and so successfully.

Our first tour in Norway naturally ended at Christiania. It had been a very lazy and a very pleasant one. We had seen a great deal of the country and had our first introduction to Jotunheim, or rather to the borderland of that wild terrain, and it was not to be wondered at that one of the two of us made up his mind to explore, at the earliest opportunity, its glens, gorges, and glaciers, and to attempt the ascents of the finest peaks which rise so abruptly from the glaciers at their bases.

<sup>1</sup> The *Cenomyce rangiferina*, the genuine lichen; the *Cetraria nivalis*, or 'gold-beard'; the olive-green *Cetraria Islandica*, and two or three other varieties all go by the general name of 'Renmos,' or Reindeer Moss.











## CHAPTER III

THE DISCOVERY OF THE JOTUN FJELDE IN THE YEAR 1820; THE MOUNTAINS AND LAKES; KIRKEN, THE CENTRE OF JOTUNHEIM; LIFE AT THE SÆTERS; CREAM SEPARATORS AND CO-OPERATION; CHALETS IN THE ALPS; HUNTERS' TALES; ALPINE FLOWERS; ANIMAL LIFE ON THE HIGH FJELD.

' Full oft enough to Jotunheim sped mighty Thor ;  
Yet spite of magic belt, and spite of gloves of steel,  
Utgårda-Loke sitteth ever on his throne.'

' Many a fair smooth lake held a mirror of light to the mountains.'

*Frithiof's Saga.*

Translated by REV. W. L. BLACKLEY.

' This is the fairy land ; . . .  
We talk with goblins, owls, and elvish sprites.'

*Comedy of Errors.*

## JOTUNHEIM

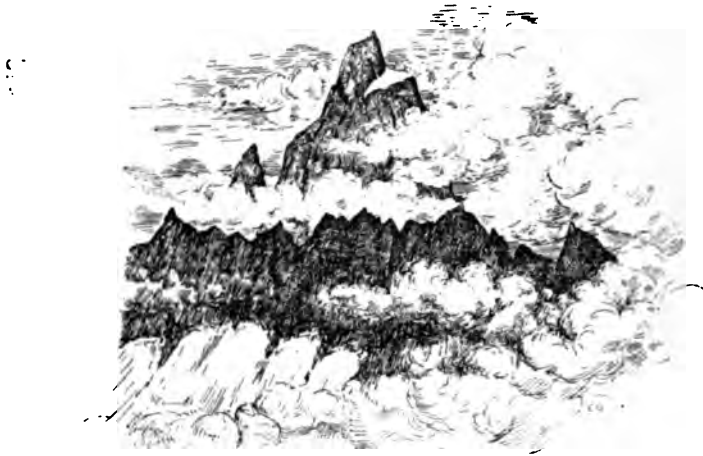
RÖDSHEIM is, as I have before said, the northern gate of the Jotun Fjelde, now picturesquely called Jotunheim, the home of the Jotuns, mountain demons, or frost giants; the other gates being Besse Sæter, Gjendesheim, Raufjord, Lake Tyin, Aardal, and Skjolden.

In ancient days, according to Norse mythology, the Æsir created mankind and took them under their special protection, while the Jotuns, full of malice and envy, did all they could to harass them in their work and to torment mankind, and, in consequence, the Æsir built great castle walls round the middle of the earth to protect the human race from their enemies. The castle and all inside the walls were called Midgaard, and outside was Jotunheim, a wild mountain tract, cold and hideous. It is well for us that the Thunder God, Thor, with the aid of his hammer, Mjöltnir, which always returned to his hand after it had been thrown, destroyed, or so effectually cowed, the race of Jotuns that they need no longer be feared.

The Jotunheim of to-day is in turn itself surrounded by castles

gaunt and grim, is the wildest and most typical Alpine district in Norway, and possesses peaks, horns, beaks, aiguilles, and pyramids as good as any that can be imagined in a mountaineer's nightmare. The highest peaks in Norway, and indeed in North Europe, lie within the enchanted circle. It is easy of access, but when I first knew it, was very scanty in accommodation, and it is in fact snowed up and almost impassable until the end of June.

It was quite unknown to, and unheard of by, civilisation until the year 1820, when it was accidentally discovered by the two intrepid mountaineers, Professor Keilhau and his friend K. Boeck,



A wild view in Jotunheim

who, to their great credit, under extreme difficulties and with many adventures, made several mountain ascents, notably that of Falkenæbbe, or Falcon's Beak, and were the pioneers of all who now seek the mysterious recesses of this wild region. The following year the plucky German geologist, C. F. Naumann, visited Jotunheim and attempted to climb Skagastólstind quite alone. He reached the northern buttress, where a few years ago Herr Hall found traces of his ascent.

In the year 1834 Lieutenant Breton, an energetic Englishman, crossed a portion of Jotunheim; but after this, though doubtless the Sognefjeld was now and then crossed between Rødsheim and Fortun, Jotunheim was almost forgotten until the sixties, when men fond of exploration and adventure, hardy pedestrians such as Professor E. Sars, Konsul T. J. Heftye, J. Dahl, Herr Martens, and

other kindred spirits took to the wild fjeld, and English sportsmen went there for reindeer-stalking.

Then came Emanuel Mohn, whose love and enthusiasm for the wild mountain scenery of his native land has never been surpassed. The vividly written and poetical descriptions of his tours which appeared in the early numbers of the *Norske Turist Forening's Aarboger* most certainly led hundreds of young students, and grey-haired fathers of families as well, to forsake the flesh-pots of the valleys and to breathe for a while the pure breath of heaven in Jotunheim.

Ah! Little does the modern mountaineer who lives in comparative luxury at Turtegrö—the Riffelhaus of Norway—or at Skogadalsböen—the Watch-Tower of Utladal—know of the wild free life on the fjeld which we enjoyed to the full in the seventies. Little does he know of the difficulties and even of the dangers of wading across a glacier river, perhaps only knee-deep. No; he has bridges now, and formerly a tour round Jotunheim was impracticable before the middle of June because the rivers could not be forded and no folk had yet come to the sæters. Little does he know of the fun of crossing a river like the Utle, on a horse, bare-back, and holding on like grim death to the man in front of him, when at one time the horse's knees, nay, probably his fetlocks, may be clear of the water, while his tail is floating behind, and at the next moment his nose has to be held up high to prevent the water from getting into his nostrils, while his hocks are clear behind. Ah! that is real sport, especially when you know all the time that your Norse leader, who cannot swim a yard, has taken you purposely to the worst of the two fords merely for the fun of the thing. Little can the fair maidens and gallant swains who now frequent the comfortable mountain-huts of to-day imagine how we explorers of five-and-twenty years ago often longed for a good square meal and a clean bed, but longed in vain. Nor can they imagine what hearty welcomes were given us by the kind Norse folk. Ah! now is the time of prose and plenty. We had the poetry and hunger. Fortunately each condition represents much thorough enjoyment, and probably the balance is well adjusted.

' . . . The shepherd's homely curds,  
His cold thin drink out of a leather bottle,  
His wonted sleep under a fresh tree's shade,  
All which secure and sweetly he enjoys,  
Is far beyond a prince's delicates,  
His viands sparkling in a golden cup,  
His body couched in a curious bed,  
When care, mistrust, and treason wait on him.'

Jotunheim is best reached from England by way of Bergen and the Sognefjord, through Aardal or Skjolden, and the excellent guide-books of to-day give all the information which is required. It is a wild and romantic country, nearly 2000 square miles in extent, consisting of rolling uplands and deep glens 3500 feet and more above sea-level, which in summer are covered with scant but rich herbage and bright Alpine flowers, where large herds of wild reindeer are still to be found. It is the home of the bear, the lynx, and the glutton, and the golden eagle still reigns supreme over all.



Falke Næbbe · Stølenastind, and Gjerstvasind.

from Lake Tyin —

Groups of fantastically shaped mountains rise, in many cases, with abrupt precipices, from the glens which intersect the country, and their rugged crests attain here and there to a height of over 8000 feet. The corries, and the higher rolling uplands too, hold glaciers, in some cases of large extent. Ice-paved 'cirques,' 'culs-de-sac,' or 'botner,' as they are called in Norway, are common features. Glaciers in some cases terminate in mountain tarns, into which they topple blocks of ice, large and small, which float away on the blue waters in the bright sunshine as flotillas of little icebergs.

The presence of three large and many smaller mountain lakes

adds an especial charm to Jotunheim. Gjendin, with its emerald-green waters, is well known to all readers of the delightful book *Three in Norway, by Two of them*, as the scene of most of their adventures. Bygdin and Tyin have each a peculiar fascination of their own, and many a fine peak, with its jagged ridge of weathered rocks, or let us say Trolds, who were turned to stone for remaining out of their caves after sunrise, is reflected on their clear waters.

Jotunheim, however, unfortunately lacks the real distinctive Norse feature, that of the blue sea waves of the fjords washing the feet of the mountains themselves. Indeed, there are only two of its peaks whose summits are visible from the fjord, Austabottind and Fanaraaken.

For many generations cattle-drovers have, in the early summer, driven large herds of cattle from the lowlands to graze on the luxuriant herbage which grows in many places on the shores of these Alpine lakes, and when they are fat in September, they are driven to the Christiania market for winter consumption. These men are called Fækarle, or cattle carles, and their miserable huts, into many of which I have crawled for shelter in wild weather, are called Fælæger. By force of circumstances many of these men became reindeer hunters, and naturally they unravelled, bit by bit, the secrets of the wild glens, Leirungsdal, Svartdal, and many other sanctuaries of the lordly buck and timid doe long before their very existence was known to the educated traveller.

Seeing that this region possesses the highest and finest mountains, the highest and perhaps the most beautiful waterfall—the Vettisfos—the most sublime gorge in Norway—Utladal—large glaciers, untrodden up to a few years ago, and a complete absence of farm-houses, it is not surprising that its early admirers called it Jotunheim.

The pivot or centre of Jotunheim, oddly enough, is a lovely twin-peaked and isolated mountain called Kirken, or The Church—a strange coincidence that the kingdom of the Jotuns should have a church in the most commanding position.

Four valleys radiate from Kirken, or more properly from the little tarn Leirvand just below. It is a remarkable fact that the height of this tarn, the centre of the highest ranges of mountains in Norway, is only 4930 N. feet above the sea-level. The principal of the four valleys is Utladal, or the Gravdal, as the upper portion is called. Many wild valleys in Norway bear the name Gravdal, which points to the fact that in early days there were reindeer pitfalls, or graves, into which the sportsmen of the time, if sportsmen they could be called, drove the reindeer and

then killed them with spears. In this Gravdal many ancient pits can be seen. There are also some between Skagastøl and the Styggeldalsbræ in Helgedal. The Utladal has many lateral valleys, each with its glacier stream, and the river Utle runs a wild course of some thirty-five miles from its fountain-head near Kirken to the fjord at Aardal, draining on its way the wild glaciers on the south sides of the Horungtinder.

The two rivers, the Visa and Leirelv, which rise within a few yards of each other, together run completely round the Ymesfjeld, out of whose snow-fields Galdhøpiggen rises to a height of 8408



Beaverthun Sæter

Sogne Fjeld

feet above sea-level, with precipitous crags which are crowned, as all high mountains ought to be, by a lovely cone of snow. These rivers drain the whole of the glaciers of this noble range, and reunite at Rødsheim.

The fourth river, which has its birthplace near Kirken, runs through the Langevand and Storaadal and awaits its glorification in Lake Gjendin.

The three last-named rivers, after many a wild run, join the river Laagen and ultimately the Christiania fjord.

We who had the fun of making many first ascents of fine mountains in Jotunheim were obliged to make much use of the sæters which exist mainly at the outskirts of this wild region.

Most young English travellers, both male and female, like to

include a visit to a sæter in their experience. A sæter, or støl as it is called in the west part of the country, is a hut ('sæl'), or usually a collection of huts and the equivalent of the Swiss chalet, is built where some verdant patch appears when the summer's sun has stolen away the winter's snow and has tempted man from below to turn it into a summer farm. The sæters are occupied, according to their position, from seven or eight weeks in some cases, to three months in others, during the summer. Some are placed on such high plateaus that the snow does not allow them to be occupied before the second week in July. Each farm sends its cattle, goats, and occasionally pigs, to the sæter, which is usually the property of the commune. Each farm has its separate hut and generally its own dairymaids, or 'sæter jenter,' though now and then two or three girls look after the cattle of several farms, as the men do in the chalets in the Alps. There is plenty of work, as one girl often has to milk thirty or forty cows, and as many goats, and then has to make nearly the whole of the milk into cheese for winter consumption and for sale. They must pursue their calling however wet, wild, or cold the weather may be. The rich lowlands are meanwhile used for arable purposes and for hay, and hence it is that, at the prosperous-looking farms below, no fresh milk can be obtained, as all the cows are on the mountains, perhaps seven or eight hours away.

However, the sad history of our English arable farmers is being slowly reproduced in Norway, as cheap foreign grain is, unfortunately so I think, being introduced into Norway, and arable farming is by slow but insidious degrees becoming unprofitable, and is being replaced by grazing or dairy-farming. This tempts me to moralise, but I will almost resist the temptation, and merely state as follows:—

The increase of grazing has already led to a large export trade of live-stock to our free ports in England, and this trade will, it is true, increase. This is undoubtedly bad for our already poverty-stricken grazing farmers in England. Is it good for Norway? No! The decay of agriculture means the depopulation of the country, already a great evil. The patriarchal completeness and ideal simplicity of the home-life at a typical Norse farm, which hitherto has relied on the strength of the muscles, the energy, and the brains of its inhabitants to make and provide from its own resources almost everything that is required, except a few luxuries, will insensibly vanish. The picturesque collection of corn-mills, one for each farm, which can be seen on the banks of every lowland river, and which afford such delightful subjects for the artist

and photographer, will in time disappear. The spinning-wheel and hand-loom, which are found in every large farm-house, will also in turn be banished, and serviceable blue wadmel will be replaced by flimsy cloth from the factory. Even now, on the west coast, while old men keep faithfully to their picturesque red or blue 'toplue,' young and middle-aged men are already wearing horrible black 'bowlers.'

'Farms on the shores of the fjords will change sooner than those further inland, but depopulation is certain to follow agricultural decay, unless the Storthing, which is composed principally of hard-headed farmers, can arrest this great change which is slowly, though so surely, taking place. Of course I know that corn in some years does not ripen, but was not that the case five hundred years ago?'

Since I wrote the last paragraph some years ago in *Beyer's Weekly News*, dairy-farming has been established in some places on a large scale near the western fjords. In one case I know of a dairy where sixty farmers combine, and in another over a hundred. Their milk is collected daily, and taken to the respective dairies, which are well fitted up with cream separators and churns, turned by water-power, where trained and skilful dairy-maids, working on scientific principles, make excellent butter, which is now exported weekly to England. The milk from each farm is locally tested every week, and once a month samples are sent to the central authority in Bergen. As is the case here in England, the richest milk comes from the highest farms, where the herbage is the sweetest. Consequently, the owners of these high farms are paid a higher price for their milk than those by the fjords. The mean price, too, is regulated by the market-price of butter in Newcastle, where most of the butter is now sent. Dairies are now established in the far north, even within the Arctic Circle.

It is strange that the Norse farmers, some of the most conservative people in the world, should have recognised the advantages of co-operation, have adopted its principles, and have profited largely in consequence, whilst here in England to suggest the idea of co-operation amongst grazing and dairy-farmers is like holding a red rag before a bull.

To return to the sæters. The first near view of a sæter is not as a rule very inviting, as in most cases it is necessary to wade through a very mire to get to the door. It is as well to know that in asking for food or a night's lodging at a sæter, one is asking for a favour. The girls will, without hesitation, almost



always give up their bed, and sleep uncomfortably crowded together in another hut. They will give you the best fare that they can, and this, supplemented with 'Liebig,' tinned meats, soups, and chocolate, at least staves off hunger. It may not suit every one, but, for a time, it suits me well. Indeed, in 1877, I spent a whole month reindeer-stalking in Jotunheim without ever seeing a farm-house, and many a good 'römmekolle'—a bowl of thick curds—and plate of 'römmegröd'—cream porridge—did I enjoy during that period. I must here correct an oft-quoted misstatement regarding the merits of 'fladbröd,' which compares it to 'the inside of a hat-box minus the paper.' One writer calls it 'fladbrod,' and has been justly criticised for doing so, and for speaking of its indigestibility. How could a 'fladbröd' be otherwise, as it means, so far as I can translate the word, a flat spike—say an Alpine nail at once? Fladbröd, or flat bread, well made is excellent, but one has to eat a considerable acreage in order to satisfy the pangs of hunger. That made from barley or rye, with perhaps a pinch of potato meal to give it solidity, the sort generally obtainable in Gudbrandsdal and Valdres, is first-rate. That which is met with in Hardanger, Sogn, Søndmøre, and on the western coast generally, is 'havre bröd,' or oat-cake, and is not so good as what we have in the north of England, and which is still there termed 'Havver breod,' but it improves by toasting.

On arrival at a sæter, one should take off one's hat and bow to the 'sæter jente' as to a princess. She may keep you waiting for an hour until she has finished milking, before she can attend to your wants, but that is as it should be, and lessons on patience are very wholesome. When at last she provides a meal for you, the least you can do for her is to ask her to share some small portion of the luxuries which you are sure to have with you, and it is desirable to let her know that you are aware that she is conferring a favour upon you. If you can give her some little trinket, in addition to the small payment which goes to the farmer in the valley below, it will be much treasured. I have found coloured pictures, pins, and needles to be well appreciated.

At the sæter, as also at the farm-house or inn, it is always well to remember that 'civility costs nothing.' So far, fortunately, the credit of Englishmen stands high in Jotunheim. May this always be the case here! I am sorry to say, however, that on the western coast I have often had cause to feel ashamed of my countrymen, and have seen cases where men, who at home are probably decent, law-abiding citizens, behaved rudely towards gentle and refined Norse ladies. This has often annoyed me, and I have frequently

spoken very strongly about it. The fair name of England should never be sullied by any act of meanness or discourtesy on the part of any of her sons or daughters. It is perhaps only fair to say I have seen still greater acts of rudeness shown by other foreigners travelling in Norway. But why should 'Arry' and 'Arriet' make bigger fools of themselves abroad than they do at home? It is as well to bear in mind the fact that, class for class, the Norse people are better educated than we are in Great Britain, and that the best blood which courses in our own veins was derived from our Norse ancestors.

A few years ago a man boasted, when he regained the deck of the tourist boat which he had dishonoured with his presence, after spending a day on shore at one of the fairest places in Sogn, that he had got off without paying his hotel bill. That man ought to have been lynched and thrown overboard. He richly deserved it.

A sæter sæl usually has two rooms, an outer and an inner one, as well as a half-open porch, where is the corner fireplace where large pans of milk and cream are boiled over a slow log-fire. The first room has one or two small glass windows, usually with several broken panes stopped up with rags or paper; two or three wooden stools; a table, which probably lets down against the wall; perhaps two or three shelves where are cups, spoons and salt; and lastly, a rustic bed. The latter is formed as follows. An upright post is let into the ground and the other end is nailed to the roof at a distance of about four feet from one wall and six feet from another. To this post two horizontal poles are lashed with birch withes and are also let into the walls. A long pole is then lashed to the wall-end of the shorter pole and also let into the wall parallel with the larger of the two first named. Then rough cross-pieces are laid over the framework, and juniper twigs, heather, or dwarf willow or birch are laid on, and possibly also some hay or reindeer moss. Then come the bed-clothes, the variety of which is certainly surprising. Rugs, sacks, sheets, and sheep or goat skins are commonly found. The pillow is stuffed with hay or occasionally feathers. The inner room usually is very small and full of shelves on which are placed innumerable bowls of milk, cream, and thick curds and cheeses in various stages of manufacture. In the poorer seters the porch is absent and the fireplace is in the same room as the bed.

At the first sæter in which I slept in 1872, I learnt for the first time the real value of a good Scotch plaid and that it was a most useful adjunct to a sæter bed. Without a plaid one must keep all one's clothes on, excepting boots and coat. With a plaid one can

take most of them off, can wrap up one's feet well, and leave a good length for the head, then roll up almost like a chrysalis and fasten the folds securely with safety pins, and after drawing over oneself the skins and saying to one's companions, 'God nat, dröm behagelig,' can boldly defy the attacks of the evil creatures whose saltatory attainments are proverbial, and which show such a decided preference for a well-washed Englishman. In the north of England we still call this foe to midnight slumbers a 'lop.' As it is 'loppe' in Norway, are we to assume that both the creature and its name were introduced to our country by the Vikings?

On the mountains many tawny-complexioned old hunters, cattle drovers, and guides are met with. Their skin is covered with a brown layer, like a first coat of paint. Is this a plan adopted to avoid trouble from insects or not? I have never tried it myself, but I venture to suggest the experiment to others as a bite preventer. Amongst carnivorous insects, the klægg, or horse-fly—the clegg of the north of England—does bite horribly. A green member of this genus has a provoking knack of attacking a fisherman, usually when there is a good rise and when the music of the reel resounds with such welcome strains on his ears. He bites through one's stocking (so too does the mosquito), and is fond of the back of one's hands and neck. There is, however, one grim satisfaction about him. It is that of revenge, which is easily attained, as he is slow in taking himself off and can be soon caught and squashed. The case of the mosquito is otherwise: he is subtle. He certainly hums most musically. Would it not be soothing and awake the poetic muse were it not for the sting? The klægg attacks in the daytime in the sunshine, the mosquito principally at night, the 'lop,' whenever he gets the chance. I have never seen a 'B flat' in Norway.

A sæter bed never pulls very hard, even if it be occupied by three reindeer hunters as well as oneself, and early rising resolves itself into simplicity itself; but at the same time, all the diplomatic powers of which the traveller may be possessed must be brought into play if he wishes to get a cup of coffee or a little hot soup before his hostess has called and milked her kine.

There is a great difference in the degrees of comfort or of discomfort to be obtained in a sæter. A log-built sæter is always better than one built of stones, mud, and sods, which is never wind or water-tight. A boarded floor, not always found in a log-hut, indicates a certain degree of comfort. A mud floor, besprinkled with spilt milk and grease, does not add to one's appetite. Sæters built within the zone of pines and birch have a great pull over

those on the wild uplands, where the small and knotty stems of juniper afford the only available firewood. On the north and east side of Jotunheim, that is, in the Gudbrandsdal portion, the sæters are usually relatively clean, comfortable, and almost luxurious, and boarded floors are general.

In the west, the reverse is the case, but then there are reasons why this is so. The former are easily reached and are not more than four or five hours at most from their farms. Some of the Utladal sæters, such as Vormelid, Muradn, and Guridal, on the other hand, are ten or a dozen hours distant. The sæters in Hardanger, Sogn, the Justedal region, Søndmøre, and Romsdal are not abodes of luxury. A Norse sæter, however, is infinitely better than a Swiss chalet. Years ago, before crossing the Moming Pass, some friends and I attempted to sleep at the chalet on the Arpitetta Alp, but in the night some playful pigs invaded our sanctum. Since then I have generally avoided chalets, and have bivouacked instead in the open, and many a delightful night have I passed in my sleeping-bag on the high Alps.

A few years ago, in company with the president and two other members of 'The Alpine Club,' I stopped a night at a large and apparently most thriving chalet at the Tortin Alp, at the base of Mont Fort, in the Val de Nendaz, and though there were fifty cows, eighty goats, many sheep and pigs in the charge of seven or eight strong men, there was no cooking utensil to be found there less than three feet six inches in diameter. We wanted soup, we longed for tea. We got both. One of our party remembered that we had a tinned tongue. That was sufficient. Out came the tongue and our kettle appeared. In a Norse sæter, a kettle and coffee-pot, with one or two cups at least, can always be found. As may be easily imagined, in spite of the very hard rough life which the 'sæter jenter' necessarily have to lead, their huts are cleaner and more inviting than their equivalents, presided over by the men in the Alps.

Many a jolly hour have friends and I passed in the sæters of Jotunheim seated on a log in a corner watching the glowing birch logs piled perhaps three feet up the corner chimney in order to dry our dripping clothes, and many a strange yarn have we been told by the hardy hunter, who, like us, had sought for a night's lodging in preference to lying under a wet rock.

'Till, warming with the tales he told,  
Forgotten was the outside cold,  
The bitter wind unheeded blew.'

Yes! but must we believe old Jens who says that he once killed three reindeer and wounded a fourth with one bullet? Must we believe the story of the great fight in Utladal between a horse and a bear? (Ah! now I remember, we must speak respectfully of the latter and call him 'Herr Bamsen,' otherwise we shall have bad luck.) The fight lasted two whole days and the horse had the best of it most of the time. Then, his wily opponent winked one eye, tucked what little he possessed in the way of a tail between his legs, and ran away. Not far though; he saw a bog and made for it. The horse pluckily followed, and his finely drawn legs soon sank, he became bog-fast, and was then despatched by his crafty foe. What tales of hardship on the mountain and of pastoral life in the valleys we have been told! What sagas of old we have heard thrillingly recited by heroes of to-day! What astonishment we have created when, in answer to a question, we have said that, though we were Englishmen, we did not live in London, Hull, Liverpool, or Newcastle! What unsolicited acts of kindness have been shown to us times without end! What roundabout methods we have adopted to persuade the men who come periodically to take down sæter produce to the farms that tobacco-chewing and its accompanying expectoration do not add to the pleasures of life at a sæter! What curious plans we have adopted in order to get a morning tub and an early breakfast before milking time, and lastly, what excellent health, strength, and muscular tissue we have acquired on the wild fjeld, and what a rich store of happy memories of successful and of unsuccessful adventures too, where only the pleasant portion remains, we have brought back to England with us!

In bad weather, not uncommon in Jotunheim, we have been initiated into the mysteries of cheese-making—the well-known 'gammel ost' or old cheese—and I still have the recipe.

The highest pasturage affords the sweetest herbage, and the cattle which graze on the Least willow (*Salix herbacea*) give the richest milk in Norway. As may naturally be understood, there are no sæters in the centre of Jotunheim. They are usually situated just above the tree limit, where sweet pasturage takes the place of forest.

In sheltered and sunny aspects, such as on the northern shores of Lake Gjendin, lovely birch groves enrich the scene, especially at the end of September, when their golden colouring is a dream of loveliness. There is still a large pine forest above Vetti, though it is disappearing all too quickly under the ruthless woodman's axe. Formerly, there was more or less of forest land in Guridal,

Helgedal, the upper Visdal, Stor Aadal, and many another high Alpine valley where ancient stumps of trees can still be seen as well as the remains of buildings whose early inhabitants most probably burned away the firs and birches one by one until none now remain, and were the cause of barren lands taking the place of rich pasturage.

The flora, though thoroughly Alpine and very beautiful, is not so rich as in Switzerland. *Gentiana verna* is not found, but its equally lovely twin-sister, *Gentiana nivalis*, in many high glens covers the ground with a beautiful, deep blue carpet. The *Anemone sulphurea* is common in some places, but I have rarely seen it in flower. The bright colours of Alpine flowers are absolutely necessary to ensure their very existence in high situations, as, by force of circumstances, they are dotted about comparatively sparsely in nooks and corners on the rocks, and if they were not bright-coloured they would fail to attract the insects which are essential to their fertilisation.

The geological formation of the whole of Jotunheim is that of crystalline rocks, consisting mainly of gabbro and granite which have been upheaved through the strata of gneiss and mica, which bound the district on the north, west, and east, and the silurian formation on the south. All the highest summits are believed to be topped by, or composed of, gabbro.

Writing about the mountains of Lyngen in Arctic Norway in *The Alpine Journal*, vol. xix. p. 422, I said:—

‘Stony valleys are the rule rather than the exception in Lyngen, and indeed this is generally the case where the geological formation is mainly of gabbro, provided that the valleys or glens are narrow and the mountain-walls steep. It is so in many a place in Jotunheim and to a smaller degree in Söndmöre. At Arolla some of the mountains are gabbro, some of the valleys are stony. It is also notably the case in the wilder corries of the Coolins in Skye. Just think of that terrible Corrie Labain. As a rule, the rocks on the ordinary faces of gabbro peaks are very loose, especially in the gullies, but the ridges and buttresses afford magnificent climbing. The faces of crags where the angle is greater than 45°, however, are generally firm and good. In steepness therefore is safety. Very many of the finest mountains in Norway are now proved to be topped by gabbro—even some of the Lofoten Hills and the saw-toothed peaks of Söndmöre which, only a few years ago, were considered to be granite. This is a corroboration of Professor Forbes’ theory, who, in 1851, saw the mountains of Lyngen from the deck of a steamer, and thought

that from their shape and general characteristics they had a similar geological formation to the mountains in Skye.'

In the *Nor. Tur. For. Aarbog* for 1877 I wrote as follows:—

'A perfect view in Jotunheim, in my opinion, requires two great things, viz. a front south-east view of the Horungtinder, such as from Friken, and a peep into a portion of that grandest of defiles, Utladal.' Many of my friends have corroborated this statement, and agree with me in saying that the path from Vetti to Skogadalsbøen over Friken affords some of the most beautiful mountain views imaginable.

Jotunheim is rich in animal life. The Bear undoubtedly is king, but, though traces of him may be found almost everywhere, he does not often allow himself to be seen. He has a formidable rival in the Glutton, which, unlike the Bear, is entirely carnivorous, and many a full-grown, as well as a young, Reindeer falls a prey to this ferocious beast. The farmer, as a rule, detests the Glutton, while he often has a sneaking affection for the Bear. The Lynx kills many a kid, and the Fox, which is larger and handsomer than his English brother, whose cunning he shares, roams over the whole land. The Wolf, common enough forty years ago, is now extinct. Reindeer are still seen on the fjeld, but, until they were scared away by tourists, large and numerous herds were frequently met with. Red deer occasionally pay northern Jotunheim a visit, as do Elk the southern portion.

The Otter frequents the lakes and rivers, but the Beaver, which gave its name to the Bøeverdal, has, long ago, been exterminated. Squirrels disport themselves in the pine-trees, and in the winter time turn grey—the colour so well known to ladies who encourage the slaughter of these beautiful creatures by wearing fur cloaks made of Squirrel skins.

The Ermine, or Røse-rat, is pretty common—I once saw about a dozen of them in Helgedal in winter. It is said that occasionally this plucky and persistent little animal is able to kill a Bear by a clever ruse.

The peripatetic and pugnacious little Lemming appears and disappears in Jotunheim as it does elsewhere in Norway, and is followed on foot by his enemies the Glutton, the Lynx, and the Fox, and in the air above him by the Snowy Owl, Eagles, various kinds of hawks, and the Raven.

In addition to the birds of prey, many feathered friends greet us in Jotunheim. Several sorts of Tomtits, as perky as they are here, Larks, Finches, Buntings, Redpolls, Snipe, Waterfowl in great variety, Sandpipers, Wagtails, Warblers, Redwings, Fieldfares.

As I am not an auctioneer I will not make anything like a complete catalogue. There must, however, be added to the list the Dipper, or Water-Ouzel, which remains in the north through fair weather and foul, through the heat of summer and the snows of winter, and which bears in Norway the poetical name of Fosse Konge, or king of the waterfall. The sight of this beautiful bird is more welcome to me than that of any other which I see in Norway, as it always recalls to my mind some of the fairest scenes of England, the dales and becks of Craven.



The Smøstakinder



## CHAPTER IV

AARDAL; A STONE AVALANCHE FALLS INTO THE LAKE; THE GHYLL AND FOS OF VETTI; THE RIINGSSKAR — THE FIRST GLACIER PASS CROSSED IN THE HORUNGTINDER: WE ARE TAKEN FOR HULDRE FOLK OR ELVES, AND ARE FEASTED WITH SÆTER PRODUCE.

'Thou, Nature, art my goddess . . .

To northern climes my happier course I steer,  
Climes where the goddess reigns throughout the year.'

CHURCHILL.

WHO remembers the frost in the winter of 1872-73? I do; because I sprained my ankle badly when trying to skate the outside edge backwards, and was not able to go to Norway the following summer as I had intended to do.

In 1874 my friend Dewhurst and I set out well equipped with mountaineering necessaries, including a Whymper tent, cooking-utensils, soup squares, tinned meats, etc., as well as a considerable amount of the needless articles with which young climbers so often hamper their movements and increase their cares.

On the steamer *Argo* we met the Rev. A. G. Girdlestone and the Rev. E. Worsley, each armed with an ice axe. They were intending to hurry through the country, but to climb Galdhöpigen on the way. It was soon arranged that we should travel together part of the time. We scampered through Hardanger, then by Vos and Nærödal. Here we met a Norseman engaged on the Government survey in the Sognefjord. He asked me to guess the height of the top of the Keelfos. I said 'fully 3500 feet.' His sextant showed it to be 4200 N. feet above the fjord, and the first leap of the fall to be over 800 feet. The white wall of cliffs further up the valley is considerably higher; in fact it is nearly a mile high. There are still higher cliffs at the head of Fortunsdal, some miles beyond the little inn at Fortun, but few tourists have seen them.

Aardal was the gate by which we were to enter Jotunheim, and here we left a portion of our luggage. As I had been here

and to the Vettisfos before, I was for the nonce made chief guide.

I cannot mention Aardal without naming my old friend Jens Klingenberg, who kept the little shop and inn, rowed tourists over the Aardalsvand, and occasionally acted as guide over the mountains. Store Jens, or Big Jens, as he was called, and Thorgeir Sulheim were the only two natives living near the Horungtinder who would allow, for a moment, that there was the slightest chance of ascending Skagastölstind, though it is true that the way by which Jens suggested it should be approached, by Gravdal, was about as suitable as the Val de Bagnes would be for the Aiguille de la Za. Still, he believed that mountains were made to be climbed, which is a very wholesome faith to hold. I saw the dear old man for the last time in 1894, and introduced my wife to him. What 'skaal'-drinking we had, what compliments he paid, and what a store of happy memories did the sight of him awaken! His house was exactly the same as it was twenty-two years previously; indeed, beyond a new pier and warehouse, there had been no building changes at Aardal since my first visit in 1872.

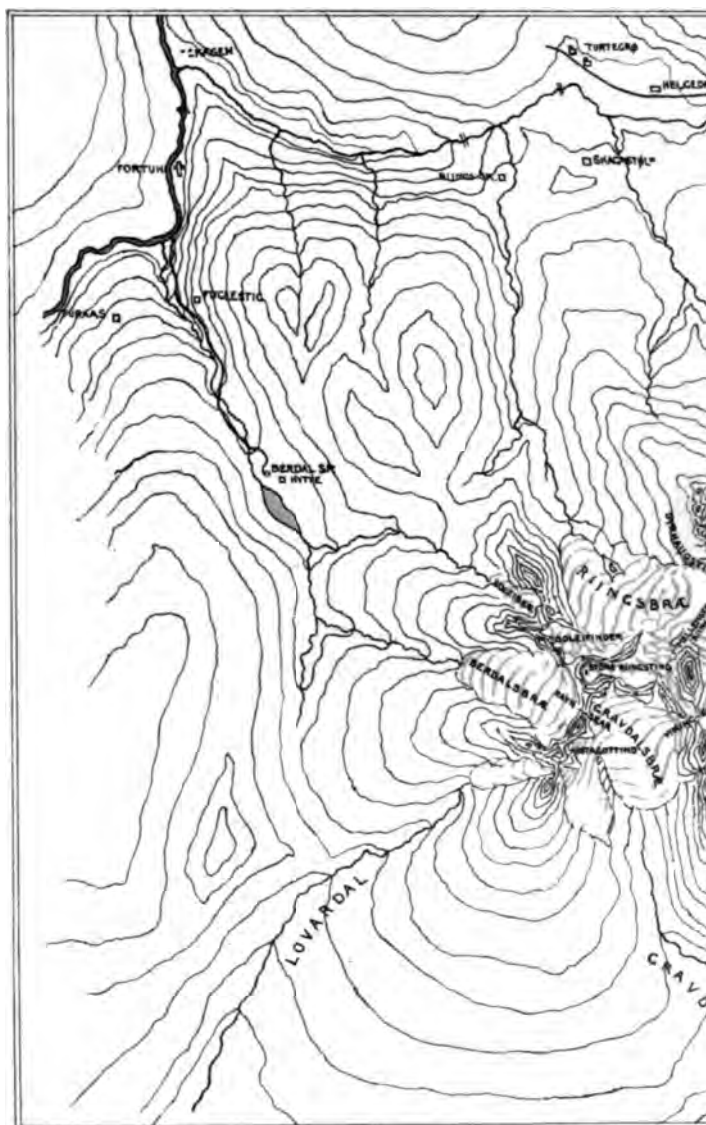
Once I told Jens that I thought the view of the fjord and mountains from his house was very fine. He shook his head, and said philosophically, 'Ikke saa frugtbar'—not so fertile. He was right; the mountain I was admiring in the evening light had hardly a particle of vegetation to be seen on it.

Aardal, or Aurdal, means the valley of 'ur,' or 'aar,' that is, of rocks and stones, or more correctly of screes or avalanche débris. Uradal and Aurland have a similar meaning.

The Aardal, Vettisgjæl—or Ghyll of Vetti—and Store Utladal, different lengths of the same valley, show probably the grandest gorge scenery in Norway, and the portion of the Utladal from Vormelid upwards is so completely cut off from the Aardal, into which the river Uvla flows, that all the sæters in it belong to the valley of Fortun on the north side of the Horungtinder, and, in consequence, the cattle have to be driven over the high Keiser pass to get to their summer pasturage. The Aardalsvand is one of the grandest lakes in Norway, and is worthy to rank with the grand quartette at the head of the Nordfjord. It is about six miles long, and consists of three reaches nearly equal in length. A fine massive mountain—the Stigeberg—rises with a huge black precipice straight out of the water to a height of about eight hundred feet.

Three ladies and a gentleman joined our party in a boat over





T  
FROM A PHOTOT





the lake. A young and pretty American girl had sung for us several delightful German and Italian songs, and had just finished one when we came opposite the Stigeberg. We proposed to awaken its echoes, and loud were our yells and jodels. Immediately after one of our most vigorous efforts, we saw what appeared to be small masses of rock roll down a gully, and then leap over the colossal black cliff. We were surprised at their apparent deliberation, as they seemed to fall slowly, then at the great splash, and lastly at the terrific noise which ensued, loud as artillery. A few minutes later, a second and still larger stone avalanche fell. I do not pretend to say that our shouting caused the avalanche to fall, but it was a strange coincidence that it should have happened immediately afterwards, and it was a strange mode which the mountain adopted to reply to our greeting. Unfortunately, none of us timed the fall of the rocks from the brink of the cliff to their impact on the surface of the water far away from the base of the cliff.

From the head of the Aardalsvand several interesting mountain-passes may be made. One over the Krokaband to Kroken in Lyster I crossed in 1876 with Herr Mohn. Another, better still, leads to the Feigumfos; but though it attains the height of 4200 feet, the Horungtinder cannot be seen. From Farnæs a gentle path leads up the Langedal, from which the western group of the Horungtinder may easily be reached.

Let not my readers imagine that any one of the neighbouring snow mountains can be seen from the Aardalsvand. Neither can they be seen from the gorge above until the Horungtinder range is passed by. No, the valley is too deep and narrow, and its mountain-walls are too steep to allow for a view of the glories above. It rather resembles the Val de Bagnes above Mauvoisin in Switzerland.

Nowadays one can drive to Gjælde, that is if no bridge on the new road be washed away, as was the case when I went to Vetti with my wife. Here the wild Vettisgjæl begins, and for some two miles there is a chaos of rocks which have tumbled down the inaccessible cliffs on each side, and trees only grow under cover of projecting crags. Then there is a bend in the river, a deep pool and a fos which stops the salmon from going further, so it is said, but 'I hae ma doots' if they gang intul the ghyll at all.

The path up to Vetti is now suitable for horses, but for several years after I first knew it, it was only a very rough and more or less dangerous footpath.

Above the pool, the gorge opens gradually, until at Vetti there

is room for perhaps twenty acres of meadow land. The lonely farm-house of Vetti itself stands about two hundred and thirty feet above the Utlea on the top of a green hill. Above this, the true crags reappear in their old grandeur.



*View of Utladal.*

A good path, made by the Norske Turist Forening, as are so many other excellent and useful paths, leads in twenty minutes to the base of the Vettisfos, the highest and probably the most beautiful waterfall in Norway. This fall, under the name of the



Mörkfos, was practically discovered by Colonel J. R. Campbell, who visited it in the year 1868, and wrote a paper about it in *The Alpine Journal*, vol. v. p. 57, which is accompanied by an excellent illustration from a sketch which he made. The fall is in the stream of a lateral valley, and the height is variously estimated between 1000 and 1100 feet, and it is quite perpendicular till close to the bottom. I have seen this fall dozens of times, and from all points of view, once in winter, and each time I see it I am more and more impressed with its loveliness. Nature has gouged a huge semicircular slice out of the towering crags which form the south-east side of the Vettisgjæl, which at one corner has a vertical height of nearly 1200 feet. The waters of the Morka-Koldedöla leap out into the air near the centre of the semicircle, and fall down—down—down into a dark chasm nearly 1100 feet below. On two occasions I have entered this chasm, but it is not advisable to do so, as stones fall down now and then. The rock is very dark coloured, and is splashed here and there with ink-black splashes, but near the bottom several irregular veins of light granite contrast well with the darker rock elsewhere.

Immense white saxifrages abound on the spray-watered rocks at the bottom, and revelling in the thick moss which clothes the rocks by the Utlea, may be found that most lovely of all northern plants, the *Linnæa borealis*. Many pine-trees, stripped of their branches, will be seen below the fall, and a close examination of the cliff above will reveal a timber-shoot made of trees projecting twelve or fourteen feet over the cliff. Down this the big pines are precipitated in the winter into the awful gulf, a good eight seconds elapsing before they touch the snow below. Many are splintered and broken, but still it pays, and Norsemen are very careless about the disappearance of their forests.

On the plateau above the fall is a large forest of Scotch firs, called Vettismork, the word 'mork' in old Norse and in existing dialect meaning forest. Hence, the real name of the lovely water-fall below is Vettis-morka-fos, which, being far too long, has been shortened to Vettisfos, or Morkafos.

Even now comparatively few tourists visit Vetti, and some idea of its former isolation may be formed when it is told that little more than thirty years ago a party of five or six English reindeer hunters surprised Anfind Vetti and some of his family up in the forest, and that the latter ran away and hid amongst the rocks, supposing the sportsmen to be robbers. Anfind told me this himself. In a whole lifetime, only one visitor, a Bergen

man, had been known to arrive at Vetti. Whether Anfind Vetti and his predecessors had been able to evade the payment of taxes by virtue of the apparent inaccessibility of his domain or not, I do not know.

Two other fine waterfalls may be reached above Vetti. Beyond these the ghyll is inaccessible; but I still adhere to the belief that some time a bridle-track, if not a driving-road, will be made up this superb glen to Vormelid and to Skogadalsböen itself. At present a person going from Vetti to Vormelid—only seven miles up the valley—must cross a mountain spur nearly 4000 feet above the river.

In addition to the Vettisfos, there are no fewer than seven grand waterfalls in a distance of eight miles, each in a glacier river.

At Vetti we held a grand council of war whilst quaffing mugs of black beer. One of our party had to take duty the following Sunday at the Consular Chapel in Christiania, and now it was Monday evening, and we all wished to attempt the ascent of Skagastölstind and also to climb Galdhöpiggen. We had no map, but luckily we found at Vetti the *Turist Forening's Aarbog* for 1871, in which was that most useful map of the Horungtinder by Lieutenant Lund. As it was loose, we 'requisitioned' or 'commandeered' it, and returned it a few weeks later. By this map we made out that we could cross the chain by a glacier pass, get at least a near view of Skagastölstind, and at any rate strike the path from Skjolden to Rödshheim.

We then told our scheme to Anfind, and he and three Norse tourists gave us much valuable information, but said decidedly that our projected route was impracticable, that there was a large glacier, full of crevasses, and that it never could be crossed by man. What greater encouragement could be given to Englishmen fond of adventure, 'sound in wind and limb and warranted not to jib'?

As some local knowledge was necessary to enable us to tackle the rock wall which faces Vetti across the Uvla, we engaged a stalwart young fellow named Thomas, now unfortunately gone to America, to guide us as far as the glacier, and to carry two knapsacks. We left our tent and heavy baggage behind.

Next morning we set off at 7.40 and soon crossed the river by a picturesque but most rickety bridge. Then, beyond the wild-strawberry beds, where a handful of delicious fruit could be plucked at once, the real tug-of-war began. The cliff is called Brænd-stigen, and it had been climbed before. I have now been

three times up it. The 2200 and odd feet are mounted by loose stony gullies amongst decayed branches and living birches which grow out horizontally instead of vertically, having been beaten



*Uranaastind  
from Stöls Maradal*

down by winter snows. Truly this route does not form the choicest staircase in the world.

From a moss-covered rock, 1700 feet above the river, where we had a well-earned rest, we had a grand view of the Vettisfos just opposite, and of Uranaastind and other fine mountains.

At the top we entered a level valley crowned by grand peaks, the Stöls-Maradal. Four main valleys drain the Horungtinder on the south-east side. Three of them bear the name Maradal (the valley of mares), which seems to indicate a strange want of the inventive faculty on the part of those responsible for the nomenclature of this region. In order to distinguish them, the most eastern valley, which contains the largest glacier, is termed the Maradal; the middle one is called the Midt or middle Maradal; the third is termed Stöls-Maradal, or the Maradal with a 'stöl' or 'sæter.' The fourth main valley is the Afdal.

When looking at the Horungtinder and neighbouring ranges on each side of Utladal it will be noticed that each little range has one great feature in common, and that is in its 'Naasi.' As a rule this 'naasi' or buttress or bastion of the Gothic castles, or the thrones of the gods beyond, is a flattish-topped, round-ended, square-sided, snow-sprinkled mountain mass which runs almost to the verge of the mural precipices which rise out of the Uta.

Every 'naasi' can be ascended near its blunt end from a lateral valley, but few can be reached by their sides, and avalanches may often be seen falling over their crags.

In some few cases the peaks rise directly out of these buttresses, but very frequently they are severed from them by deep gaps or glacier belts. In some cases these buttresses and the glaciers at the heads of the secondary valleys offer rival routes to the peaks. Almost invariably the native will choose the buttress, whilst an Englishman will follow up the valley to the glacier. This is quite natural when it is known that the one dislikes snow and ice, and will struggle for hours over loose rocks, if by doing so he can avoid a glacier, whilst the British mountaineer looks upon a glacier as the natural highway to lead him to the summit.

We reached the sæter in two hours from Verril, and stopped a quarter of an hour there brewing Liebig. Three miles' flat walk brought us to the foot of the ice-fall which terminates the Stöls-Maradalbraz. We began our climb by some steep snow at the side of the ice-fall, and a shower of stones fell on our track a few minutes after we had passed the place. Thomas kept with us for two or three hundred feet, until, in fact, he smelt crevasses, when he glissaded madly down the snow and watched us from below.

We soon put the rope on and were at work with our ice axes. The crevasses, in no place difficult to cross, were numerous, the slope was steep, and the way was intricate enough to afford interest



*The Ringbræ and tinder.*

*To face page 60.*



without being one of danger. In due course the ice gave place to snow and the slope eased off.

Rain came on, and the highest peaks were invisible. By the map, two routes were open to us, one on each side of the eastern Riingstind. That to the west seemed to promise best, so we turned to it, and in three and a half hours from the foot of the glacier we reached the top of the first glacier pass that—so far as is known—had ever been crossed in the Horungtinder—the Riingskar.

By my aneroid I made the height to be 5757 feet.

Two pretty peaks guard the pass, and had we been sure about our future route we should no doubt have climbed that to the east; as it was, we built a cairn at the foot of it instead of on its head. We had fleeting glimpses of the highest peaks, and left them with reluctance, and I did not visit the pass again until almost exactly twenty years later.

After a well-earned rest and a meal we set off *prestissimo*, and soon managed to get a good glissade down the snow in the centre of an ice-fall, which brought us to a flat portion of the glacier.

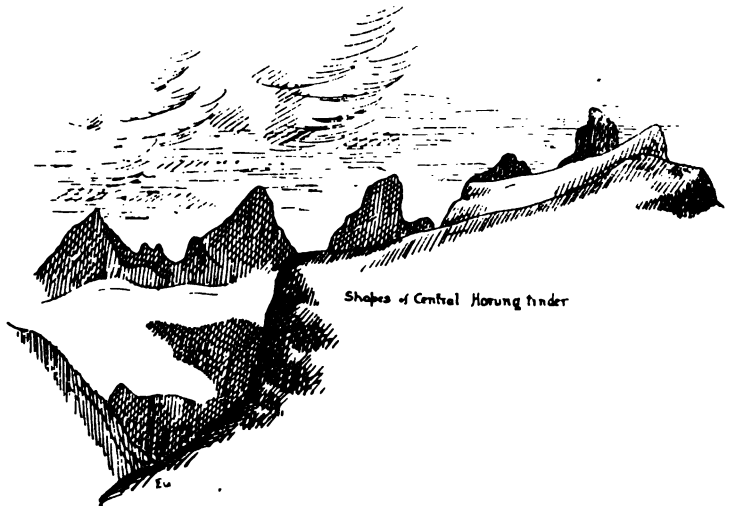
The Riingsbræ lies in a wild amphitheatre of jet-black crags, capped with pure white snow or frost-riven rock, which, in the case of the highest Riingstind, rise many hundred feet in vertical precipices, contrasting and yet harmonising with the rugged faces and jagged skyline of the beautiful Soleitinder. There is more moraine on this glacier than is generally the case in Norway.

In two and three-quarter hours from the top we sat down on the sun-dried grass above the Riings sæter and talked over our plans. At 6.15 we entered the sæter and were most hospitably regaled with sæter produce by the girls and men whom we found there, and noticed at the time that the good folk were exceptionally kind and polite. Some few years later I was told that when we were seen emerging from the dark portals of the Riingsbræ, where no human being had ever been known to enter or emerge from before, we were supposed to be 'Huldre folk' or elves, who live in the heart of the mountains, are enormously rich, and amongst other possessions are blessed with tails; but these, as a rule, are carefully hidden under their clothes, which usually are blue. Huldre folk are supposed now and then to intermarry with ordinary human beings. On this occasion I suppose that the inducements to enter into matrimonial alliances must have been too slight, though at that time each of the four strangers was a bachelor. Certain it is that we all passed on quite heart-whole. Ah! these delightful days of picturesque superstition have vanished, and the people

have become prosaic and prosperous. Ice axes and ropes, which formerly created such an amount of curiosity and interest, are now at this same sæter looked upon as necessary articles of travel, and the English tourist in Jotunheim can indulge in any eccentricities which he likes without exciting much remark.

An hour and a half's walking found us at Optun, where ended the adventures of a very enjoyable day.

This pass makes an interesting day's march between Vetti and the north. It involves a severe climb of two hours' quick going to the Støls-Maradal sæter, where milk can be had; then an hour's walk up the valley; a climb of 2787 feet up the glacier to the pass, or four and a half hours from the sæter; then 1890 feet of glacier to descend. The Riings sæter can be reached in seven and a half hours from Støls-Maradal sæter, or in nine and a half hours from Vetti; or from Vetti to Optun in eleven hours, or from Vetti to Turtegrö in ten hours. A still shorter route from Vetti to Turtegrö is by way of Midt Maradal.

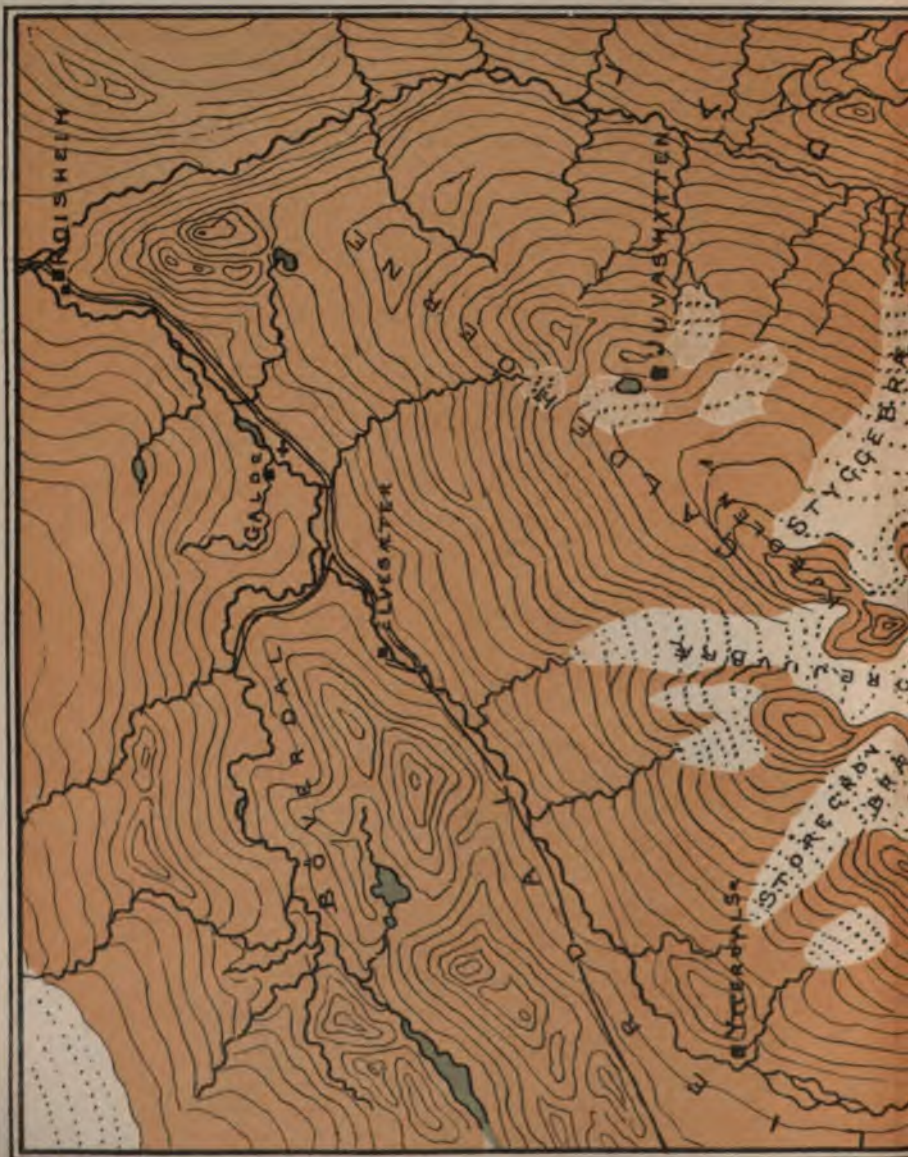


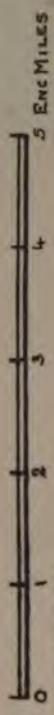
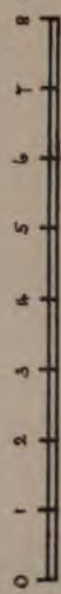
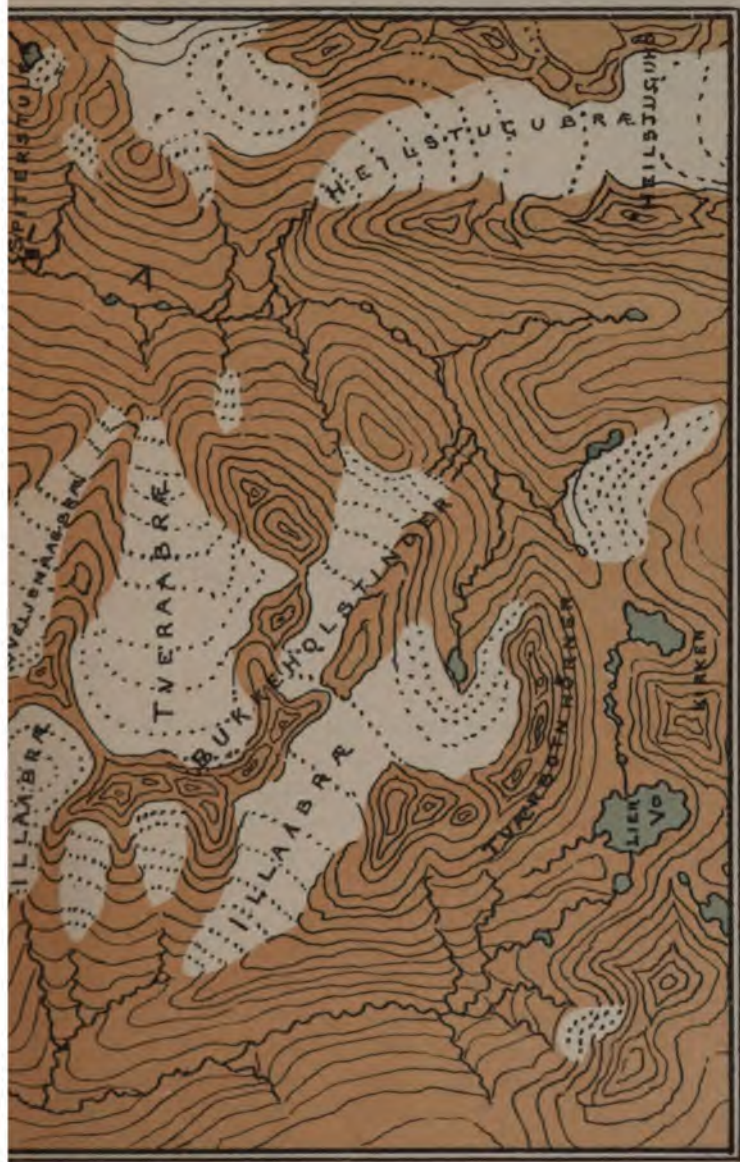
Shapes of Central Horung Fjender



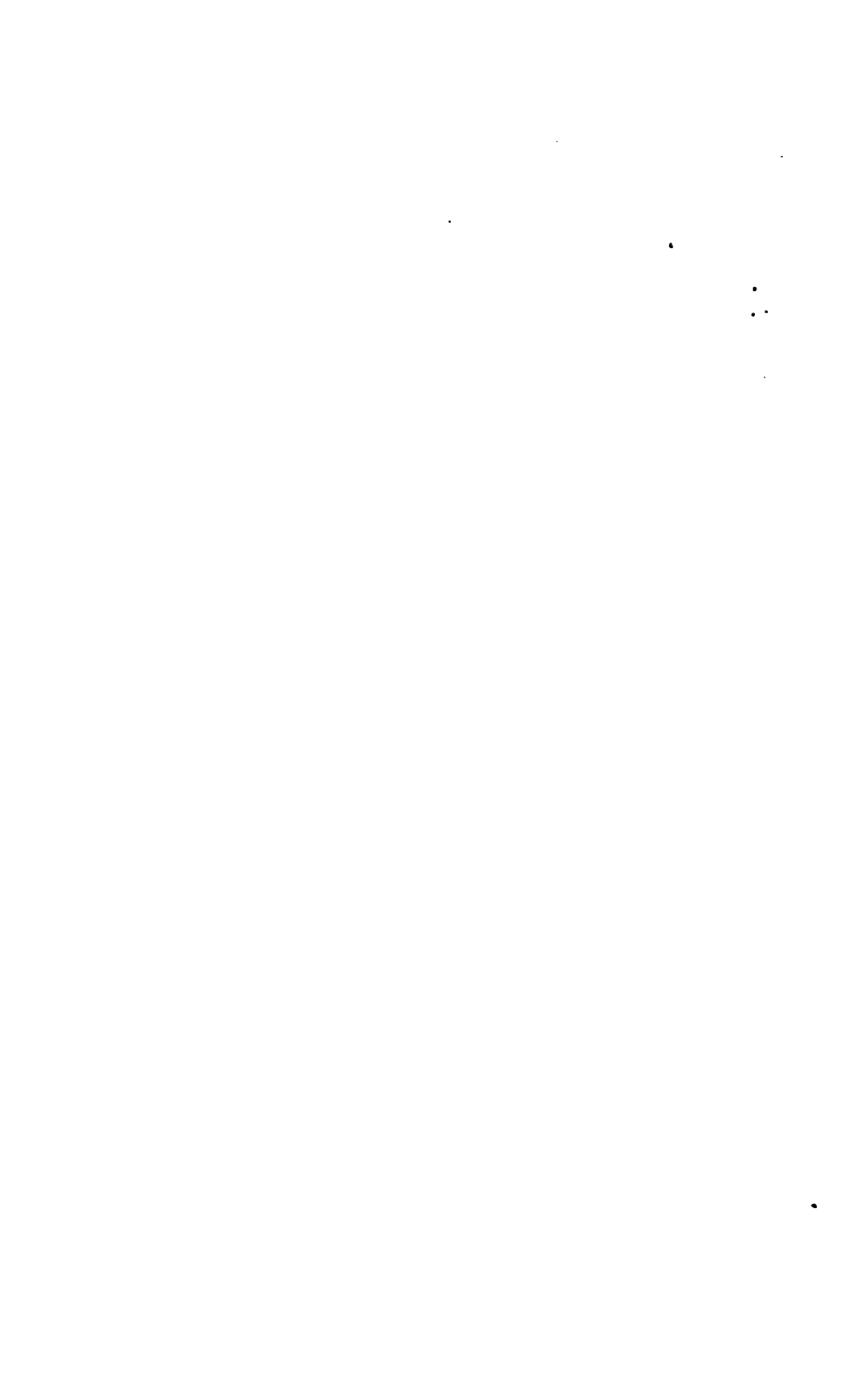


MAP No. V.





GALDHÖPIGGEN.



## CHAPTER V

AN ASCENT OF GALDHÖPIGGEN; THE FIRST ASCENTS OF ONE OF THE MEMÜRUTINDER, AND OF TWO OF THE ULÉDALSTINDER; WALK TO LAKES GJENDIN AND BYGDIN.

‘ Ueber allen Gipfeln  
Ist Ruh;  
In allen Wipfeln  
Spürest du  
Kaum einen Hauch;  
Die Vögelein schweigen im Walde.  
Warte nur, balde  
Ruhest du auch.’

GOETHE.

THE day following our passage of the Riingsskar, we crossed the Sognefjeld to Rødsheim. When on the top of the pass, the clouds blew away and revealed the Smörstabbæ and the fantastic peaks at the head of this fine glacier. Had we known what I learned a few years later, we would have made a glacier pass between two of the peaks and have descended to the semi-luxurious Yttredal sæter, and then have climbed Galdhøpiggen from thence the following day. Instead of doing this we went to Rusten sæter and stopped the night there, huddled together like sheep in a pen. When we asked for milk and used the proper word ‘melk,’ we were not at first understood. Then light dawned upon a man who was present, and he said: ‘Oh! murak, ja.’

At Rødsheim we met an English lady with a Norse lady friend who had come with the intention of crossing the mountains to Skjolden. The latter lady was great of stature and by no means light in weight, and, alas, the way was long and the path rough. After a few equestrian experiments of short distance had been made, it became apparent that Ole had no horse in his stud sufficiently strong to convey the tall lady across the snowy mountain uplands, whilst it was equally certain that she could not walk so far. Hence the project was abandoned and they resolved to go round, a journey at that time, of some 300 miles.

A few years ago, Gudbrandsdal on the east, and Nordfjord and the Geirangerfjord on the west, were connected by most

excellent driving-roads which branch off at Grotlid, a bleak mountain station built and supported by the State.

The road may be considered a triumph of engineering. I quote from Bäderer's *Norway and Sweden*, the following: 'The road descends rapidly, in sharp zigzags, and over bold bridges spanning the wild torrent, to the Geirangerfjord. Between the brink of the descent and Merök, the distance is about sixteen kilometres, but in a straight line scarcely six kilometres, and the difference in height is over 3000 feet. The road is unique of its kind, the sudden and tremendous plunge it takes being unrivalled even among the Alps.'

I drove down this road in 1899, and entirely corroborate the last sentence, and although we had an excellent coachman, and I have been used to horses all my life, I must confess that a feeling of relief passed through my mind when the last turn was made. In two places the road is carried on the edge of crags which overhang, and below it goes partly underneath the portions above. One corkscrew turn is indulged in, but is there not a good example of this at Charterhouse School at Godalming?

The State is very diligent with its road-making, and, in some cases, outsiders like myself cannot see what good is to be gained, especially if the road be built along the rocky shores of some grand fjord which itself is the best and cheapest highway, at least so far as the carrying of merchandise is concerned. The district X really needs a road, so one is made. Y has some little need of one too, and in due time the State agrees to find the necessary means. Then comes Z, who says X has its road, so has Y, let us have one too. The appeal may not at first be heeded, but in time it is, and the 'white elephant' is provided.

Rödsheim and Fortun will, before the lapse of many years, have their connecting driving-road. Possibly also Skiaker, the Ottadal, and Justedal.

#### AN ASCENT OF GALDHÖPIGGEN

Our parson friends left us at Rödsheim, so Dewhurst and I asked the veteran Ole Rödsheim to accompany us for a week or two amongst the mountains, and he soon agreed. He admired our ice axes, both home made and most lovely weapons to look at; indeed, the handle of one of them was French polished, and the adze end was nearly sharp enough to shave with. Ole tried to climb up the walls of his house with a pair of Tyrolean crampons which formed part of our outfit, but did not get very far.

It was agreed that we should first climb Galdhøpiggen and

descend to Spiterstul, the highest sæter in Visdal, sleep there, attack some unascended peak next day, and descend to the Tourist Club's comfortable hut at Gjendin. Then we were to attack one of the Gjendin giants and soon after this we were to return to Vetti, pick up our tent and stores and go to the Horungtinder.

Doubtful weather kept us idle for a day, but during a short walk Ole showed us the place where a spring avalanche had carried away a house some distance up the snow-covered river, and had caused the death of eight people.

Ole got together some provisions for us, rye bread, bacon, and cheese, and as the weather looked better we decided to start next morning. As Ole had some business at home, and was not feeling well, it was arranged that he should join us at the sæter in the evening, with the provisions, whilst the old guide Eilif should take us up Galdhøpiggen.

Next morning in perfect weather we were up at 5, but did not



GALDHÖPIGGEN AND THE STYGGEBRÆ

get off until 6.15. Tempted by the bright weather, a lanky native who had not yet made the ascent asked if he might join us, which we allowed him to do, as we heard that it was easy. He had a swallow-tailed coat, and wore a red woollen cap.

At eleven o'clock, and about 2000 feet from the top, we set foot on the Styggebræ, *i.e.* the ugly glacier, and put on the rope. We had here a fine view of the summit, a beautiful cone of snow which crowns a black triangular precipice of considerable height. A snow ridge of lovely outline leads from the east to the very summit. The usual route is along this ridge, which is reached by a rocky buttress from the Styggebræ. Our guide wished to take off the rope when we gained the ridge, but as there was a snow cornice and as it was still glacier, we insisted on retaining the rope. A few years later a Norse friend of mine fell into a crevasse on this very ridge, and though he was roped he had a very narrow escape from death.

At 1 P.M. we reached the top in perfect but not absolutely cloudless weather. As to the view, which was magnificent, all I will say is that every one who sees it is struck with the vastness of the Norse snow-fields, the utter absence of vegetation and of all traces of mankind. My friend, Lieut.-Col. J. R. Campbell, who climbed the mountain in the year 1866, wrote as follows in *The Alpine Journal*, vol. iv. p. 34.: 'The top commands a view, the wildest I ever saw. In nearly all directions, but especially towards the south, ridges and pinnacles rise one behind another, each mantled with snow, like foamy waves of a colossal sea. Barring one with its lakes and rivers, the valleys appeared as dusky grooves, scarcely distinguishable; not one house was to be seen even with a glass. Nothing was visible but forms of crag and snow; several mountains (the Glittertind, in Visdal, for one), being spire-like. The panorama was almost a chaos, hundreds of square miles in extent. Still there were some signs of life—a hare had left her track across the top.'

On the summit, and dotted over the snow-fields below, we saw the dead bodies of thousands of the red-spotted Burnet moths, those with five red spots on each black upper wing. How or why they had come up there to be frozen to death, as they were, we could not say. A few days previously we had seen a great number in Leirdal. Four years after this I found a very sprightly spider on the top of Aletschhorn. He was apparently well and enjoying himself, and, as no recent human ascent had been made, we must assume that he made it without guides. Had he been blown across from the Æggischhorn, and retained his silken connecting link all the time? Who can say?

The first ascent of Galdhøpiggen was made from Spiterstul, in July 1854, by Herr Steinar Sulheim and two schoolmasters. Two years later this heroic descendant of ancient Norse kings, led his son Thorgeir and several undergraduates to the summit by the same route. Ole Rødsheim was probably the first man who climbed the peak from Rødsheim.

Galdhøpiggen is the highest mountain in Europe north of the Alps. The height is now called 2560 metres, or 8399 English feet above sea-level, and as Rødsheim is 1870 English feet, the height to be ascended is 6529 feet.

Whilst admiring the view we did not neglect to pick out a suitable mountain for our next adventure, which we found later to be one of the Memurutinder, though our guide gave it another name.

There is now a hut on the top of the Galdhøpig, and the ascent is made by scores of patriotic Norsemen and their lady



friends every year. In the summer of 1899, fortunately in this case an exceptionally snowy year, an enthusiast from Christiania



GALDHÖPIGGEN FROM THE WEST MEMURUTIND

took a horse up to the top, and, I suppose, gained notoriety and 'established a record' by doing so; but, though a Norse pony can and does go willingly over very rough and stony ground, I cannot

think that it is fair thus to take such an advantage of his willingness to oblige his master.

Dewhurst and I suggested a descent by the Svelnaasbræ, which we could have easily gained either down a rib of rock or by means of a snow gully, but the faces of our two companions expressed such horror at the bare notion of such a course that we meekly abandoned the project and followed the ordinary route to Spiterstul.

Near the bed of the valley—the Visdal—the flowers were very numerous, varied, and beautiful, and butterflies in great number and variety were flitting about from flower to flower, principally Small Tortoise-shells, Red Admirals, and Peacocks. In Norway they are called 'Sommer fugle'—summer birds—also 'fri vil,' which in this case may be interpreted as—liberty.

There are still some new expeditions to be done on the Chain of the Ymesfjeld, of which Galdhøpiggen is the central peak, but of late years most of the weird corners of this interesting range have been explored. The origin of the name Galdhøpiggen is as follows. In the Bøverdalen, just below, is a farm named Galde. Above it is a massive hog-backed hill, a 'hö'—Galdhö. This Galdhö is the northern buttress or 'naasi' of the peak or 'pig' above, hence Galdhøpiggen is merely the peak of, or above, the hill of Galde.

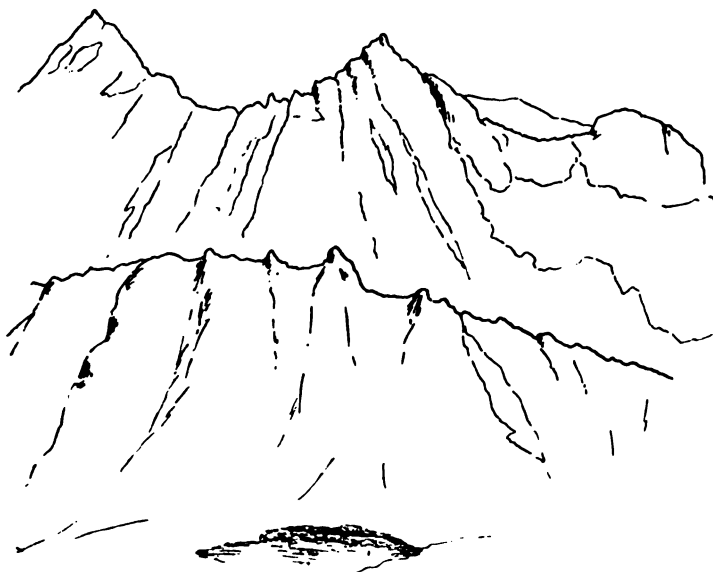
Spiterstul at that time consisted of a two-roomed hut, where were a man and his wife and little girl. This poor little child would have to stop there for some two months from their first coming, without either playmates or toys. The only things that I could see for her amusement were two catechisms, and in them a few carefully preserved advertisement pictures which had been cut out of the Bergen papers. We much regretted that we had nothing to give to amuse her, and I mentally resolved that in future I would never travel in Norway without having some little pictures, story-books, or small trinkets to leave at sæters and out-of-the-way farms, and, in consequence, I have made many adult friends by merely recognising in some trivial manner their children, and have in consequence received numberless and wholly unexpected favours where I little expected them.

There is now a small tourist hut at Spiterstul which is a great boon to mountaineers, as there is a group of interesting mountains within easy reach, which will give the modern climbing centrist some rare good sport. A very casual glance at the excellent new Amtskart will corroborate this statement.

Unfortunately, owing to the superior attractions of the Horungtinder, and to the fact that bad weather has often followed me to North Jotunheim, I have woefully neglected this fine district; still, I have had some success.

In 1881 Vigdal and I started early on August 30th from Yttredal sæter with the intention of climbing Heilstuguhö, which is very near Spiterstul. However, it was peppered with new snow, and looked so formidable in the distance, that we abandoned that enterprise in favour of a glacier pass.

All who have walked up the head of Visdal in fine weather have noticed on the south side the Uladalstinder, a group of four



THE EASTERN ULADALSTIND AND HEILSTUGUHÖ FROM THE CENTRAL ULADALSTIND

or five pretty aiguilles rising out of small glaciers with steep ice-falls. Towards the centre of these—the pretty Visbræ—we bent our steps. We easily found our way through the ice-fall, and in process of time reached the skar at the top. A pretty peak on the east gave us half an hour's excellent rock-climbing up a steep face and along a narrow crest until the top was reached. Here the usual cairn was built, and then the view was enjoyed.

This peak may be safely styled the central Uladalstind. In a deep cirque just below us was a blue tarn in which a small glacier bathed its icy foot. This cirque is to my mind now wrongly called Semmelholet. The real Simlehullet, as it was formerly called and spelt, is, undoubtedly, the grand glacier—

filled hollow under the eastern wall of the Simletind. The Semmelholstind is a pretty but minor peak of the Uladalstinder, and had probably led to the misnaming of the little cirque. As in the case of many another fine mountain, when seen in full face across a narrow valley, Heilstuguhö appeared to us then to be utterly inaccessible. We then climbed the highest Uladalstind, where I think there was a cairn already in possession. Good glissades took us to the Langevand, and thence our walk to Gjendin was straightforward.

The eastern peak of the range was climbed in 1870 by Mr. T. L. Murray Browne, his brother, and a friend (*Alpine Journal*, vol. v. p. 162), and probably has never since been ascended. The Simletind, 'presenting from this point of view one of the finest peaks I have ever seen—sharp as a needle and scarped on its eastern face into one unbroken precipice, rivalling that of the Finsteraarhorn—has been ascended by an English gentleman.' The northern arête of this peak is not at all difficult. A snow gully on the steep eastern face would, however, afford an excellent climb. Kirken, the pivot of Jotunheim, as I have called it, has also been ascended from the west. Other routes are also practicable, and will afford good sport. I do not apologise for this digression, which is merely to draw attention in a practical way to the fact that Spiterstul is a good, though a neglected mountaineering centre.

#### THE WESTERN MEMURUTIND AND THE PASSAGE OF THE RENSDYR SKAR

Late in the evening came the gallant Ole, and great was our disappointment when he told us that he was unwell, had hurt his knee, and was quite incapable of undertaking hard mountaineering work. He regretted his inability very keenly, as he was, and I believe is still, very fond of adventure. He had, however, done his best by bringing as a substitute, Rolf Alfsen, 'who knew all the mountain-paths, and was more or less used to glaciers.' He would either act as guide or porter, and we were to pay him about two-and-sevenpence a day. Under the circumstances, we engaged him.

Next morning there was a little rain, so, whilst we waited for weather, Rolf finished cutting a young tree which he had brought with him, to his entire satisfaction. It was his alpenstock, and had a fork at the top. Forked sticks are often very useful when fording rivers.

Ole gave Rolf and us many directions, and we parted from him with great regret with the intention of climbing the peak we had selected the day before, and which is one of the Memurutinder.

For two or three miles we walked up Visdal over a carpet of gentians (*Gentiana nivalis*), and had lovely views of the fine aiguilles which head this somewhat dreary valley.

In an hour from the sæter we reached the foot of the great glacier, the Heilstuguhöbræ. A convenient snow-stripe on one side gave us a path on to the ice. Dewhurst led, as it was his turn, and I went last. Being a year of much snow, we soon left the ice for its tender sister—snow—and had to go with great care.

Contrary to what was shown on the old maps, the glacier is divided into two distinct portions by a line of precipices. The greater portion, that on the west, is invisible from the Galdhøpig, but the eastern branch, a lateral or tributary glacier, is plainly seen from there, and has, I imagine, been mistaken for the main one. Our route lay up the eastern arm, and very steep we found it, and for our leader at least it was hard work, as he had to kick out steps in the snow for several hundred feet. Above us, on our left, were some frowning crags, which sent us some warning messengers in the form of rocks and stones, so we discreetly kept out of their way.

Near the top of this Steilebræ we came to a savage-looking bergschrund, where we were fortunate enough to find a convenient snow-bridge; otherwise we should have had much trouble, as at that time we were only novices in snow-craft. After crossing a few easy crevasses we reached a gentle slope of *névé*, and at 2 P.M. we gained the top of a gap from which an arm of ice, corresponding to that up which we had come, led directly down to the immense eastern portion of the Memurubræ.

I am told that this glacier is locally called the Hesteskobræ, or Horseshoe glacier, and we therefore named the col the Hesteskoskar. It forms an interesting connecting link between Visdal and the little-visited peaks in eastern Jotunheim. It is 3354 feet above Spiterstul.

After lunch we turned up a steep rock ridge, and half an hour's excellent climbing brought us to the top of our peak, where we found a clump of the lovely 'rensblostm,' or reindeer flower—the *Ranunculus glacialis*—in full flower.

Our peak was at the south-western end of a narrow and precipitous ridge shaped like a horseshoe, which bounds the Hesteskobræ. We were not above an English mile from the north-west

corner, where there was another peak about the same height. Another point further on the ridge and across the glacier seemed then to us to be a little higher than ours, but as it looked lower when we saw it from Galdhöpiggen, we thought then, and for several years afterwards, that we had climbed the highest Memurutind, and the third highest mountain in Norway. However, in 1881 the ridge was traversed by Herr Johannes Hefstye, with Knut Vole as guide, and our pretty peak was deposed from its assumed superiority, as the eastern peak was found to be a few feet higher.

This was our first maiden peak, and, to say the least, we felt mightily proud of our success.

After considerable experience, I have come to the conclusion that there are two weak points connected with the making of new ascents. First, one considers it to be one's bounden duty to turn oneself for the time being into a stone-mason, and to build a cairn. What funny builders and flabby cairns I have seen! Some men will pile up a dozen stones, and never notice that on one side they are covered with a cake of ice which will melt and let down the cairn; or they will place two or three, end up, on some reindeer moss or lichen, and then with great labour they place a heavy flat stone across the top, when down they all fall over the precipice. Others will devote the whole of their attention to leaving a hole where the empty jam-tin which is to contain their cards can be placed. Some will build on a foundation of snow. But others, like Hogrenning, will carefully prepare the ground, and build in a most workmanlike manner a cairn seven or eight feet high, and with a mean diameter of 3 feet 6 inches. These latter are terrible companions on a mountain-top, because one cannot see a man work like a galley-slave without wanting to give him substantial help.

The second weak point, surely the weaker of the two, is this. One conceives it to be necessary to write a note recording the ascent in the pages of *The Alpine Journal*, and goodness knows in how many more climbing journals nowadays. This must be done, for have we not the authority of Sir Martin Conway that 'an unrecorded ascent does not count'? [At least a dozen maiden ascents which I have made are not recorded in *The Alpine Journal*.]

I may say in passing, that in writing these notes, many men seem to imagine that the use of pronouns is almost, if not entirely, unnecessary, and that terseness, combined oddly enough with a needless use of French words and an absolute fidelity to the 'times,' are the only desirable features.

The following is not a quotation, but will serve as a sample :  
... Same party left gite 5.30 . . . crossed bergschrund 8.7, difficult, first-rate climb up rocks to arête . . . top 12.24 . . . foot of glacier 2.49, arrived hut 4.28.

Our view was wonderfully grand, wilder, and more picturesque than that from Galdhøpiggen. On all sides the mountains formed a sky-line of rugged and weather-worn peaks with serrated ridges, the finest being Heilstuguhö, the Uladalstinder, and the Simletind just across the glacier. From no standpoint does the regal Galdhøpig look better than from here, towering as he does above his mighty ice-fields. In every direction the view was grand, and everywhere too it was beautiful. In the far distance the Horungtinder and the Koldedalstinder, partly wreathed in shrouds of mist, seemed to beckon us to visit their wild ridges and icy glens, and we felt that we must obey the call.

We had a great wish to explore the whole ridge of the Memurutinder, but could not afford the time. A walk of five or six English miles on a narrow ridge of firm rocks covered with reindeer moss, with a perpendicular precipice of several hundreds of feet and bird's-eye views of blue gaping crevasses on one hand, and, as I expect, pretty nearly a repetition on the other side, would be to a mountaineer fond of adventure a great treat.

A small black cloud in the north warned us to be off, and at four o'clock we faced for Gjendin. When we regained our bags at the Hestekoskar, Dewhurst and I wished to descend by the eastern glacier, but Rolf, who, we subsequently found out, knew nothing about it, said it was not possible, so we made the mistake of following his advice, which was a great pity, and crossed the little Steilebræ to a line of crags which separates it from the upper portion of the western Memurubræ. I was now the leader, and, as the storm seemed to be brewing, we hurried along at a quick pace.

After some hunting about on the top of the crags we found a wet gully and had a steep and unpleasant descent of 300 or 400 feet. The rope was both a nuisance and a necessary safeguard, and we had a good deal of holding fast and removing of loose rocks until near the bottom, when a tongue of snow afforded us a good glissade. When too late to be of service to us, we discovered some capital snow gullies further south. We struck the Memurubræ at about its highest point. It is, however, very nearly flat, and slopes very gently towards the rolling uplands of Memurudal, for which we were making. There were very few crevasses, but for all that, the dead body of an excellent glacier wanderer—to

wit, a reindeer—was once found in a crevasse on this portion of the glacier. As this fine glacier pass, connecting Visdal and Memurudal, has, apparently, no recognised name, I venture to call it the Rensdyrskar, or reindeer's pass.

At 6.10 we left the ice, and soon after, when rounding a crag, we came suddenly within a stone's-throw of a herd of forty to fifty reindeer, most of them on the ice of a frozen tarn, the rest browsing on the scanty herbage on the shore. It certainly was a grand sight. Rolf set up a great screech, and for some moments the whole herd gazed at us in mute astonishment, as if petrified. At last, a grand old buck, the monarch of the mountain, gave the alarm by a sonorous bellowing, and some of the herd collected on the ice; two young disobedients going the wrong way he bullied quite savagely and used his antlers pretty freely upon them. When his little army was marshalled, they galloped madly away over the ice, which to our astonishment did not break through, and they soon disappeared. The storm meanwhile had veered round from north to south, and after a time vanished entirely without ever breaking upon our heads. Rolf managed to take us to the top of the cliffs of Memurutungen overlooking Gjendin, whose clear green waters, 1400 feet below us, and yet almost within a stone's-throw, we then saw for the first time. As I now know, we were in turn close to the top of each of those giddy paths, Bukkelægeret and Ramstigen, but we could not find them, so instead we went miles round and descended into the Store Aadal as best we could, through foot-tripping junipers, rain-wetted ferns, and mosses or loose screes, and arrived at the cosy Tourist Club's hut in the silent midnight hour.

Gjendin is a fascinating place and a capital centre for mountaineers. The lake is eleven miles long in two reaches of nearly equal length, the breadth is a little over half a mile. It runs from west to east, and is 3247 feet above sea-level. The trout are the most beautiful I have ever seen, and are exactly the colour of the blue-green water. The group of mountains on the south side contains some very grand and rugged peaks, which are perhaps best seen from Memurutungen. The finest is Knutshultind, which has a most jagged and narrow northern ridge. A deep glen, a dark chasm cut by time through the range between the lakes of Gjendin and Bygdin, is well named Svartdal—the Black Valley—and it is overlooked on both sides by fine rocky peaks.

In some respects the most interesting features about Gjendin are the great cirques, culs-de-sac, or botner, Knutshullet, Skarflyen, and Kjærnhullet. The glaciers in these grim sanctuaries of



the lordly buck are of a size and grandeur not believed in but by the few, who, like myself, have made their close acquaintance. Each of these amphitheatres is difficult to get into, but a visit well repays those whose love of adventure leads them to forsake the usual mountain-paths and to strike new ground. Nor must I omit the Leirungdal, a wild glen which runs at the back of the mountain-walls of the three botner I have named, and into which, most interesting glacier passes may be made by those who possess the necessary snow-craft.

These and other wild mountain recesses were indeed entered, and explored, from the reindeer-stalkers' point of view, nearly forty years ago by English sportsmen, and I need only refer my readers to *Wild Life on the Fjelds of Norway*, by Mr. Francis M. Wyndham, published in 1861. This book deals with the mountain solitudes north-east of Gjendin, such as Rusvand, as well as the region on the south of the lake.

*Three in Norway by Two of them* has, in later years, dealt in a delightful and an amusing manner with the scenery of Lake Gjendin.

But for thoughts of the Horungtinder we should have attempted to climb Knutshultind, which Ole Rødsheim had mentioned to us, and which at that time was unascended, and we regretted afterwards that we had not given a day for this fine mountain. Another fine mountain, Sletmarkhö, we left for the same reason.

Just below the latter mountain, a few years later, after a long and interesting but most fatiguing stalk, I shot my last reindeer, a lovely doe, whose horns were covered with the softest brown velvet. When old Knut, the native hunter who acted as my gillie, and I came up to the poor creature, it raised its head and looked at me so wistfully, so beseechingly, and so tenderly with its beautiful soft eyes, that I felt almost like a murderer. Knut offered me his knife and told me to give the *coup de grâce*. How could I, after that look? No, I turned away whilst Knut did the deed.

The weak part of reindeer-stalking, otherwise a grand sport, is undoubtedly the killing, which, I know not why, seems so much more objectionable in the case of a large animal than in that of a small one, such as a hare, for example, the killing of which would give me no qualms whatever.

From Gjendin a pretty five hours' walk brought us to Eidsbod, on Lake Bygdin.

## CHAPTER VI

DEFEATED ON THE GJELDEDALSTIND; THE PASSAGE OF MORKA-KOLDERAL, A WELL-NAMED COLD VALLEY; WE CROSS A FROZEN LAKE; A GLORIOUS VIEW

'Our doubts are traitors,  
And make us lose the good we oft might win,  
By fearing to attempt.'

SHAKESPEARE.

It was a lovely day in the last week of July when Dewhurst, Rolf, and I arrived at Eidsbod. In the evening, with three Norse gentlemen, I walked up Skineggen, 1400 feet above the lake, to admire the view generally, and particularly to study the Horungtinder in the distance.<sup>1</sup>

A few minutes after we reached the top the sun began to set. But where! Behind the grandest of Norway's icy mountains, the Horungtinder. Never did they look more bewitching, more inaccessible, and more proudly defiant. Only fourteen miles away, their dark forms stood out with the clearest lines in the golden evening light, and cast dark and lengthy shadows on the cold glaciers which guarded their bases. The group of the Koldedals-tinder, though nearer, seemed almost a continuation to the west. Across the Koldedal, my eyes were attracted towards a pretty glacier-girded range at the head of Lake Tyin, the Gjeldedals-tinder. As the highest peak seemed to offer an interesting and easy climb, I made a sketch of it, dotted out the route, and resolved that we would try to climb it the next day on our way to Vetti.

Though I have seen many finer and more beautiful views than that from Skineggen, I shall never forget the beauty of that sunset. The day's breezes were lulled to rest, there was not a single jarring note, nor a sound to disturb the breathless silence; no peak was obscured by clouds, not a ripple could be seen on either Lake

<sup>1</sup> In the *Nor. Tur. For. Aarbog* for 1870 there is a good coloured illustration of the most interesting portions of this view by Herr R. Boll.

Bygdin or Lake Tyin, and upon the glassy surface of the latter quite a large fleet of little icebergs was floating. Such an evening as this often preceded stormy weather, and, unfortunately, this was no exception.

At this time only one of the proud peaks north of Tyin had been climbed. The black-winged, white-crested Falkenæbbe was ascended in 1820 by the intrepid Norse mountaineers, Professor Keilhau, the De Saussure of Norway, and his friend C. Boeck. How strange it is that, with the excellent example set by these heroes of the past, so few of their countrymen have, even yet, become enamoured of the finest sport in the world, mountain-climbing and mountain exploration!

At Eidsbod several old reindeer-hunters were passing the night. I asked them about the route to Vetti through Morka-Koldedal, which, by the map, was undoubtedly the shortest. All of them said that this route was impracticable. When asked where the impracticability lay, they could not tell; they only said that no one had tried it. Early in the season cattle-drovers now occasionally make use of this short-cut.

Under these circumstances, Dewhurst and I of course resolved to climb Gjeldedalstind, to descend to Morka-Koldedal, and to force our way through the gorge, if it were at all possible. We did not know whether the difficulties would be caused by a glacier or by water.

Next morning, after a cold bath in the lake and some warm coffee in the hut, we set off soon after four o'clock. The ground was crisp and hard, the weather all that could be desired, and we soon got into Koldedal. Keilhau wrote of the valley as follows:— 'Koldedal is about 4000 feet above the sea, and has hardly any vegetation; only moss and the hardiest Alpine plants can brave the severe climate. One is encircled by five or six tottering glaciers. Two indescribably sharp peaks stand boldly at the head of the valley, and look down on a lake still covered with blueish-green ice-masses' (*N. T. F.'s Aarbog*, 1872, p. 62).

The only thing we feared in connection with the ascent of Gjeldedalstind was the crossing of the Koldedöla, which in the summer time is very large and rapid, and which we could neither wade nor swim, and the peak rose precipitously from its further side. We soon reached the river, walked along its banks for a mile or two, and saw ahead immense masses of snow apparently over the river, and our hopes of finding a natural bridge grew bright. Above some rapids where the river was split up into several streams, we found a splendid bridge thirteen or fourteen

feet thick and about the same width. This was capital, and it was the only way over the river. Without this kind provision of nature we should thus early have suffered defeat.

Well is this valley named Koldedal. A snow-bridged river, an ice-bound lake, weird peaks with blue and white glaciers descending from them, here and there a dark precipice, which make the ice and snow look whiter by contrast, all combine to make it a most weird Arctic scene, a real cold valley.

The bridge was exactly at the proper place, and after having put on the rope we set foot on the glacier which we had selected for our highway. The glacier was steep and covered with hard snow, which gave us a good deal of work for our ice axes, but there were very few open crevasses. We crossed it obliquely to a rib of rock which separates this glacier from another which descends almost from the top of the mountain, and finally tumbles its avalanches over a perpendicular cliff on to the shores of the lake below. By this time the peak, with the coyness of maidenhood, had drawn a thin gauze veil over her lovely face, but we felt sure that if we wooed her boldly she would withdraw it again.

Before gaining the rib of rock we had a wide bergschrund to cross. At the place to which we first came it was impracticable, and we had some difficulty in finding a suitable crossing. The blue depths and the icicles hanging from the lips of the schrund did not quite please Rolf; indeed it was rather an uncanny place. After an interesting rock-scramble of 150 to 200 feet we reached the upper glacier. The rocky cone-shaped summit was still in clouds, but with my sketch and observations made with the compass, our way could be easily found. We intended to reach a rock ridge a few hundred feet below the summit, to lunch there, and to wait for the clouds to blow away, which we felt certain would be the case before very long.

The second glacier was much more crevassed than the first, but there was neither difficulty nor danger. The crevasses, as a rule, were very deep, but not more than five or six feet wide, and there were good and substantial snow-bridges wherever they were required. We plodded along, and success seemed almost within our grasp, when, much to our surprise, Rolf solemnly unroped, said he would go no further, and asked us to pay him on the spot. After a little gentle persuasion we convinced him that there was no danger, and we went on again. Soon the clouds obscured the rock ridge, and after making many dramatic gesticulations our friend untied himself again, and said that he would descend

to the valley alone, which indeed would have been madness, as we were at that time in a somewhat intricate maze of crevasses. We all sat down on the snow, and though Dewhurst and I argued in bad Norse for half an hour, our friend was inexorable. He had a wife and family at home, and would not further endanger his life with two crazy Englishmen, but would return and leave them to their miserable fate. We then had a meal of fladbröd, cheese, and cold tea, and tried to admire the view.

Though there was not the least danger for us, we could not conscientiously leave Rolf alone on the snow whilst we went forward to make a quick ascent of the peak, because we were afraid that he would set off alone, descend by our track, and thus incur, through gross ignorance of snow-craft, a real danger unsuspected by him. After our frugal meal we inscribed indelibly in our memories the word defeat, and astonished our friend by going at a tremendous pace down the steep snow-slopes. Near the base of the lower glacier we made a short-cut, which, like many short-cuts, lost time, as we had to cut a staircase down a steep slope of ice about one hundred feet high.

Three years later I gained pretty nearly the same height on the Gjeldedalstind as on this occasion, but on the very opposite side of the mountain, when reindeer-stalking. Though undoubtedly it is, like its neighbours, a very easy mountain to climb, there must be a most glorious view from the summit.

The first ascent of this fine mountain was made by Herr Carl Hall, with Matias Soggemoen and a local guide named Guttorm, in the year 1884.

On the whole I am glad that our porter refused to go on, as, if he had not done this, we should undoubtedly have reached the summit, and by dint of a little perseverance would have discovered a more direct line of descent towards Vetti, and so have missed one of the most varied and interesting walks that I have ever had.

We reached the shore of the icy Koldedalsvand at 9.35. It is perhaps one and a half or two English miles long and half a mile broad, and was then almost covered with ice and snow. The view was indescribably grand. The shore was thickly strewn with the ruins of some of the icy turrets which guarded the base of the second glacier, up which we had climbed, and which had toppled down over the crags. Across the lake were the gloomy portals of Uradal—the valley of 'ur' or débris—and that of the Morka-Koldedal, which are separated by the Falke-næbbe (Falcon's beak), which rises with terrible precipices to a

height of nearly 3000 feet above, and almost out of, the icy surface itself. The height of these cliffs was much enhanced by a mantle of thin gauzy clouds which enshrouded the lower portions. To the right of Uradal we could see an arm of the great Melkedalsbræ, the snout of which projects into a little tarn which few men have seen. Above this glacier the knife-edged ridge of Uranaastind appeared and disappeared from time to time through the clouds, and its ghastly precipices frowned down upon the valley and a tarn below. The portal of Morka-Koldedal is still grander, more forbidding, deeper, and narrower than that of Uradal.

In order to avoid the possibility of an avalanche from the ice-towers of the 'Tilbagegangsbræ,' as we may be allowed to call this glacier, I walked over the ice on the lake, whilst the others ran the gauntlet on the shore. The ice was crevassed just like a glacier, and the colour of the water was the most beautiful sky-blue imaginable. The crevasses were generally parallel with the shore, as the ice had followed, at the time of fracture, the line of least resistance towards some open water near the opposite shore, and had thus left great and little gaps.

In due course we arrived at the portal of Koldedal. Here we had a quarter of an hour's rough walking, and then came to a second lake or tarn only a trifle smaller than the first, and, like it, still frozen. I believe, but am not quite sure, that two streams drain this tarn, the one to the east, the other to the west. The principal outlet is certainly that to the west; but still, at the eastern end there is a depression nearly, if not quite, low enough to drain the cold waters. The great amount of snow then present prevented us from ascertaining the real truth, but undoubtedly water was running down the lower part of the neck of land between the two lakes.

As we considered the northern shore to be impassable, and the southern to be dangerous on account of avalanches and smooth ice-glazed rocks, we took to the ice at once. The stream which falls over the Vettisfos has its birthplace here. The ice was all covered with snow, and had a wavy surface, but was quite safe. We kept near the southern shore. Near the western outlet the ice was crevassed, and was formed into large cubes. Here we had to be most careful not to overbalance any block of ice by standing too near an edge.

After regaining the shore we had another short scramble over rocks, and soon, to our great astonishment, a third frozen tarn appeared. It was an oval-shaped, glacier-surrounded, cliff-locked tarn, awe-inspiring to look at, and about the size of the second

lake. Stern inaccessibility seemed to us to be the ruling feature of all the surrounding peaks.

It was then 11.30, and the day was rapidly improving. We glissaded down a steep snow-slope straight to the ice on the lake, to which we now took as a matter of course. Indeed, the



The Gjeldedalstind.  
and frozen lake in Koldedal.

shores appeared to be anything but inviting. We passed some high rocky islets, where we found the ice rather thin and of very varied thickness. I suggested putting on the rope, but as the others thought it to be unnecessary, we made our way without it down the middle of the lake. The lower end was much crevassed, and, for safety, I prodded about a good deal with my ice-axe. In one place it suddenly went through the thin covering, and I barely

escaped accompanying it. Then we brought the rope into use, and had to alter our course. A black towering rock prevented our landing where the ice was the best, and we were forced to jump from one disconnected iceberg to another over apparently fathomless blue water.

At 12.10 we were again on *terra firma* and had a most charming retrospective view over the arctic region we had just traversed. Beyond the lake, a beautiful sugar-loaf mountain rose out of a dark precipitous mass to which three or four small steep glaciers clung with a death-like embrace, and liberally subscribed to the collection of débris below with a large fund of ice and rocks. Falling stones and ice must, at all times, make the passage along the southern shore to be one of danger. A fine cataract on the same side and an eagle soaring above us added interest to the scene. The sugar-loaf, apparently inaccessible from this side, was the victorious Gjeldedalstind, and she looked triumphant, being quite free from mists and clouds, and though we had made a most delightful pass, we could not help regretting that we had been so easily defeated. The mountains on the north and south were very grand, though their mural precipices hid the peaks above them.

Having unroped, we followed the course of the river, which, however, was rarely visible, being generally roofed over by deep snow. As we advanced, the rocky walls diminished in height, and the gorge widened. On rounding a corner, the Horungtinder, unfettered by clouds, came one by one into view. The striking individuality of this, the grandest chain of mountains in Norway, is best seen from this, the south side. The extreme weirdness and sharpness of the peaks coupled with terrific precipices bounding deep and dark defiles, the wild glaciers, cataracts, rivers, forest land, green clearings, and picturesque sæters combine to form a view of exceptional beauty and grandeur.

When we reached the forest our progress became slower, as we had left the snow, and in its place encountered decaying tree trunks and juniper bushes. As we descended, the trees became bigger and bigger, and many immense giants appeared. They are, unfortunately, quickly disappearing under the woodman's axe. Every tree that is felled has to be thrown over a vertical precipice close to the Vettisfos, 1100 feet high, and many, though thrown in winter on the snow, are broken with the fall.

We reached Vettismark sæter at 2.15, where Rolf charmed the ears of a few eager listeners with an account of his week's adventures. Here the Koldedal river takes



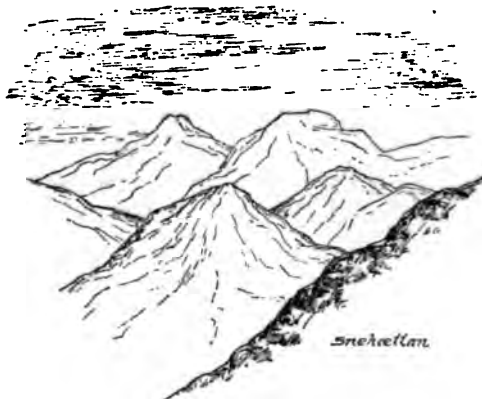
its wonderful leap at the Vettisfos, fair Flora smiles most benignly, and lovely Andromedas, Ericas, Comarum, Pyrola, and many other floral gems abound.

Half an hour sufficed for us to descend the zig-zag mountain-path to the farm Vetti far below, and here, welcomed by old friends, we ended one of the wildest and most interesting scrambles we ever had in Norway or elsewhere, in spite of the fact that it was a day of defeat.

Though some years later we learned that Dr. Yngvar Nielsen had traversed the icy Morka-Koldedal the previous year, we had all the fun of believing at the time that it was entirely new. So, for that matter, it was new to us, as it will be new to any of my readers who will take my advice and visit the most fascinating high mountain gorge in Norway south of the Arctic Circle.



THE FOREST OF KOLDEDAL



## CHAPTER VII

BERGEN TO THE NORDFJORD; HOW THE CHURCH IN THE ISLAND KINN WAS BUILT; BEARS IN HORNINGDAL; FROM ROMSDAL TO RÖDSHEIM OVER THE MOUNTAINS; THE ASCENT OF GLITRETIND; THE SÆTER OF SPITERSTUL; GRAVDAL; MURADN SÆTER; FORDING THE UTLA ON A HORSE BAREBACK; NO ROAD OVER FRIKEN; WELCOME AT VETTI.

‘Ye are bound for the mountains!  
 Ah! with you let me go  
 Where your cold, distant barrier,  
 The vast range of snow,  
 Through the loose clouds lifts dimly  
 Its white peaks in air—  
 How deep in their stillness!  
 Ah, would I were there!’

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

‘In a well-found vessel, with a good pilot, we have none of that mixture of danger which gives dignity to the traveller.’

SCOTT.

### AN ENGLISH LADY IN JOTUNHEIM

ANOTHER year had rolled by, and in lovely weather early in July 1875, my sister and I found ourselves in Bergen. On the Sunday morning we went to the Lutheran service at the Nykirke. The singing at that time, and I suppose also now, was purely congregational, where all sing the air. The hymns were sung very slowly, at not more than a third of the pace we sing them in England, and eight verses of Luther’s hymn left one quite breathless. The organ, which had a Posaune on the pedals, was always one or two seconds before the voices.

In the afternoon we went to the Domkirke, or cathedral,

where we saw several infants being christened. A large golden-winged angel was suspended in front of the altar holding in her outstretched hands a basin of water. It was a pretty sight to see the mothers carrying their wee treasures to the angel. The priests dipped their heads three times and blessed them. During the service the organ was played now and then, and we admired the tone of it. I mentioned it to the apparitor, who took us upstairs and introduced us to the organist. He very politely pointed to his seat saying, 'vær saa god,' and almost before I knew where I was I found myself playing the instrument. The organ had three manuals of short compass and about forty stops, of which ten belonged to the pedals. The choir organ, with its stop knobs too, was in front of the rest of the organ or behind the organist's back. The diapasons had a beautiful full and mellow tone, and the organ was evidently very old.

In large churches up country where they have a precentor, 'kirke sanger,' or 'klokker' as he is also called, as well as an organ, three distinct times are followed. The organist gives 'tum,' then the 'klokker' takes it up and gives his 'tum,' after which come the congregation, each of whom sings what he conceives to be the tune. Even if the latter be all on the right note, they are pretty certain not to be in harmony with the organ, which is one good note ahead of them. I have often been to church in Norway, and it is excellent discipline, but I have always felt that I should like to train the choir for a few weeks.

A visit to the fish-market in Bergen, especially on a Wednesday or a Saturday morning, is always very interesting, and the variety and beauty of the fish, which are living in little tanks, or in floating boxes called 'fiske eske,' is astonishing. All the tints of the rainbow seem to be represented in one or other of the tanks. The bargaining carried on by the maidservants and the fishermen rivals that of a Yorkshire cattle-farmer at a fair, but the transactions at the fish-market have more method in them than those at the fair. When a girl has selected her fish, she asks the price, and the fisherman names the sum. If she thinks the fish are not dear at the price which she clearly understands the fisherman means to accept, she offers half the amount which he named. Then they split the difference and the bargain is made. For instance, if a man means to sell a fish at thirty öre, he asks forty, and is offered twenty, and then they arrive at the thirty öre by the process I have named. This was the general rule of the trade, or the professional etiquette, if that term be more suitable,

a few years ago, and I suppose is so still, but I have not recently tested it.

The Nordfjord with its glorious lakes and grand glaciers was to be our first stopping place. On board the *Fjalir* we met a charming whale-fisher who was going to be married, and was enjoying the first summer which he had spent in habitable latitudes for sixteen years, as during that time he had always been on board his thirty-ton schooner. He told me many adventures. Once in Spitsbergen a polar bear attacked his iron-sheathed boat, and after a long struggle he harpooned it. He once shot seven reindeer out of a herd of eight. However, so far as I can judge, in some parts of Spitsbergen shooting reindeer is more like shooting cows in a pasture than anything else. A Tromsö—sportsman, shall I say?—once asked me to go with him to Spitsbergen, telling me that he had himself shot forty-two reindeer in one day; and, on my questioning him, he told me that as his party could not possibly make use of them, he had left the carcasses on the ground for the bears and foxes. Our whale-fishing friend, however, was a true sportsman. He said that, with ordinary care, whale-fishing was not at all dangerous, but was very exciting. This was before the days of harpoon guns.

As this was my third coasting voyage I began to feel at home, and took an increased interest in the history of the various places which we passed, as well as in the rich legendary lore with which they are interwoven.

A little north of the mouth of the Sognefjord, not very far from Florö, may be seen a weird rock islet whose one mountain seems to have been cut almost in two by some giant's sword. On this island is a church, which was built in the tenth century during the reign of King Olaf Tryggvesson, and is the oldest but one in the country. My friend, Miss Vonon, has supplied me with the following account of the building of the church:—

‘Once three sister princesses were in great danger at sea; one of them made a vow that if she were saved she would build a church. The princesses were driven ashore, each on a different island, and the one who had made the vow came to Kiun. She at once began to think of the church. As no wood was to be found she felt at a great loss what to do, and was almost in despair. Presently a powerfully built trolld came to her and said, “If you will promise to become my wife, I will build the church for you.” As she had no other means of fulfilling her vow she very reluctantly consented.

‘The trolld worked very hard at the building, and soon began

to build the tower: then he said to the princess, "Yes, to-morrow you will be mine." "Alas! it is indeed true," replied she. She went away and pondered how she might escape from the dreaded trolld. She prayed to God to help her, and then wandered away over the hills. As she was going along she heard a scream, apparently in the ground just beneath her feet. Yes! now she heard clearly the cries of a child, and then heard another voice say, "Hush, be still, child; to-morrow Dagny will come with his new wife." They were the good "huldre folk" who lived there.

'The princess was now overjoyed, because she was sure that Dagny was the name of the trolld; and if a human being calls a trolld by his name, the latter perishes at once. She hurried back to the church, where the trolld was putting on the very last roof tile, and cried out: "Take care, Dagny, that you do not fall down." The trolld was so frightened at hearing his name that he fell down and was dashed to pieces.'

We spent a delightful week at Olden, and then went to Hellesylt. Near Indre Haugen we met at different places children carrying a 'lure'—a long wooden horn or trumpet, seven to nine feet in length, formed by two split and hollowed pieces of wood put together and bound firmly by birch bark, out of which material a bell mouth of five or six inches diameter is also formed. The boys blew these 'lurer' most vigorously in order to frighten away the bears which had just killed two cows at Haugen. I heard afterwards that about the time we passed through this bear-infested region, in the immediate neighbourhood of Haugen sixteen cows had been killed in eight days by bears. This I can readily believe. I have often seen bear 'skræmmer,' or horns of other form, with which to 'skræmme' or scare away the troublesome beasts.

After seeing the Geirangerfjord, we went to Romsdal and stayed some little time at Aak, which at that time was an inn.

We carioled to Holset, then crossed the mountains with a stolkjærre—how, I hardly know—to Svee, and were welcomed at Rødsheim by the gallant Ole on July 29th.

At this time I think I am right in saying that no English lady had ever crossed the heart of the Jotun Fjelde, and that very few members of the fair sex of any nationality had been much beyond the mere gates of Jotunheim. When I told Ole that we wished to make our way across the mountains to the Vettisfos and Aardal he was much astonished, but did everything in his power to help us. We had a small portmanteau. Could Ole accompany us with a horse, or send a man with one, to carry all

the impedimenta? The former he was unable to do, the latter he could only accomplish as far as Eidsbod by one route, or Muradn sæter by another; further than those two places he did not like to send a horse, nor would it have been reasonable to have expected it. He suggested that my old friend of the previous year, Rolf Alfsen, if fairly paid, would gladly go with us and would carry the portmanteau. A bargain was soon made with him, and it was decided that we should take the direct route through the very heart of Jotunheim by way of Visdal, Gravdal, and Utladal to Vetti, and that we were to sleep at Spiterstul, Skogadalsbøen sæter, and at Vetti.

He provided us with an ample stock of provisions, which made my knapsack very heavy.

#### GALDHÖPIGGEN OR GLITRETIND?

The walk to Spiterstul alone would have made a very short day's work, so as the weather was perfect, we decided to ascend Galdhøpiggen or Glitretind on the way.

As I had ascended the former, and as it had already been climbed by ladies, we decided that it would be much the best fun to storm the snow-crowned Glitretind, as no lady had yet attempted it, and indeed very few men.

For many reasons, perfectly obvious in Norway, but not so in the Alps, we could not get off early, do as we would, and we only got under weigh at 8.20. Ole Rudsheim and a party of four charming Danes accompanied us until ten o'clock through lovely forest and river scenes on the walk up Visdal.

At midday we reached the junction of the Glitra and the river Visa. Here we lunched, hung up our luggage on a pine-tree, and started to ascend the steep hillside. We were much interested with the climatic series of the trees and plant life. At first the noble *Pinus sylvestris*, that most characteristic of all European trees, was our companion, but it disappeared entirely at a height of 3720 feet above sea-level. Next came the turn of the graceful spruce (*Abies communis*), which forsook us at 3800 feet. The mountain gem, the birch (*Betula pendula*), only obtained a foothold 400 feet higher than the spruce, or 4280 feet above sea level. Beyond that, the dwarf *salix* and *betula* were to be found for a considerable height. This was on the west slopes of the mountain.

After crossing a moorland track, carpeted with bright Alpine flowers, we entered a shallow gully north of the Glitterhö, and at 2.45 reached the top of the 'hö' itself. Here a beautiful white

cone came suddenly into view. Upon seeing this I called out, 'Der ligger toppen,' and thought our climb nearly at an end. However, I remembered that when I had seen the mountain from the Galdhøpig, the cone-shaped apex crowned a precipice of dark rock, and now we could see no precipice. 'Well! there is the top, and the sooner we are on it the better.' The snow was very soft and steep too, and we went very slowly. When close to the top of the cone, the real summit appeared for the first time, and consisted of two lovely domes of snow, which, like that we were on, stood on the top of a ridge of rock forming the segment of a large imaginary circle. Below us, on the north and to the west of the real summit, was one of the most notable 'botner,' or 'cirques,' in Jotunheim, in which, many hundreds of feet below us, was a well-crevassed glacier and a yawning bergschrund at the base of the mighty perpendicular cliff.

The snow on the two highest domes appeared to be about ninety feet deep, and great threatening cornices overhung the precipice almost everywhere. Rolf was quite satisfied with the point we had reached, but my sister and I were determined to reach the actual top.

We put on the rope and kept well round to the east, where we crossed the top of a large glacier—the Glitterbræ—the surface of which was hard frozen, and, as it was steep, great care was needed. In order to make quite sure of the top we climbed both cones. When on the first we satisfied ourselves that the further one was the higher, so we struck off boldly for it. A good many steps had to be cut in the icy shroud, which lent additional interest to the climb. When close to the top, I stopped, as I had done at the other cone, and Rolf and I, each holding an end of the rope, allowed my sister to reach the actual top the first. As we were firmly anchored, there was little or no danger; otherwise, without a rope, it would have been anything but safe, as between us and the very highest point there was a well-marked crack in the snow, a warning sufficient to make us careful.

It was just 5 P.M. when my sister stepped on the top of this peerless white dome, and completed the first ascent by a lady of the second highest mountain in Scandinavia, 8376 feet above sea level.<sup>1</sup>

Though thoroughly Alpine in character, the view from Glitre-

<sup>1</sup> In years when there is an exceptionally heavy snowfall, it is the belief of many persons that Glitretind is higher than Galdhøpiggen. This I can readily believe, as the snow domes of the former must vary in depth, whilst on the relatively narrow ridge which forms the top of the latter the wind never allows much snow to accumulate.

tind is not so fine as that from its loftier neighbour Galdhöpiggen, whose snow-white crest rose proudly out of the large glaciers of the Ymes Fjeld, just across the narrow vale; still, it was very grand, and well worth the slight toil necessary for its attainment.

On the way down, we got some enjoyable glissades, and reached Spiterstul in four hours and twenty minutes. Here we found that an extra room had been added to the sæter since my previous visit. A little boy named Alphæus made himself most useful, and lighted us, during our cooking operations and preparations for a night's sojourn, with a pine torch. I slept in a 'pocket Ashantee hammock' for the first time, and found it to be a capital substitute for a bed.



— Summit of Glitretind —

The day after our ascent of Glitretind we got off at 9.15, again a late hour, intending to reach Skogadalsbøen that evening. Our pace was slow as our packs were heavy, but mine grew lighter with every meal, and, as I carried the food, my motto was, Good meals early. Shortly before reaching Kirken, we had to cross the river Visa, and were obliged to throw in masses of rock to make it at all feasible. In the seventies and earlier, the fording of rivers in Jotunheim was the principal danger to be encountered, and though with much practice I became more or less of an adept, I was on three occasions nearly carried away. In one case, I was quite alone on the south side of Lake Gjendin and tried to cross



a glacier stream, barely knee deep, on my way home from an unsuccessful reindeer stalk, my hunter having returned in a boat. The stream was not above twenty yards wide, yet I was over an hour in crossing it, and now and then had to use my rifle as a fourth leg, a long stick which I had cut being the third. Few fatal accidents have so far happened to tourists in Jotunheim, but in the year 1873 a young student lost his footing when attempting to cross the Breidlaupa (broad leap)—usually a little beck, which flows into Lake Bygdin—and was carried away over a little fos and drowned.

A little river which drains some of the western snow-fields on Galdhöpiggen has had from time immemorial so bad a reputation that it early acquired the name of the Illaa, or bad river. A writer in the *Nor. Tur. For. Aarbog* for 1869, page 115, relates, that once when a friend and he wished to cross this river in a state of flood, they were unable to do so; consequently, they followed the bank of the river to the base of a high crag over which it fell as a noble waterfall. Here they were able to walk behind the fall, and so got to the other side quite dry shod. However, a dog which accompanied the party dared not follow its master under the fos, and eventually had to be carried.

My sister and I much wished to climb the noble Kirke, but that inexorable slave-driver—time—would not allow us, and we plodded gaily along past the Leirvand and thence into Gravdal, the valley of graves, a peculiarly suitable name on account of its proximity to the church. Rolf showed us many of the ancient 'grave' or reindeer pitfalls.

The most interesting feature about the fine walk down the valley is the sight of a singular square-topped mountain which suddenly bursts into view in a short side glen above a fine ice-fall. Mr. Hubert Smith, who travelled with his gipsies by this route, thought in the dim twilight that it was an ice-cliff of huge size. It is, however, one of the many quaintly formed Smörstabtinder, and is now called Store Björn. It was first ascended by Herr Hall in 1885, though Mohn and I were only just beaten upon it by a snowstorm in 1876.

At 8.40 we arrived at Muradn sæter, which only possesses one hut or 'sæl.' From its high position, its great distance from the lowlands, and the absence of wood, Muradn is necessarily the reverse of a luxurious abode, so we were anxious to get on. The following conversation was held between the girl whom we found there and myself:

'How far is it to Skogadalsböen?'

'I do not know; perhaps half a mile (Norse), perhaps more.'

'Which is the way?'

'Across the river, but you cannot get there to-night.'

'Why?'

'Because the bridge was washed away last winter, and has not been restored.'

Seeing horses grazing across the river: 'Cannot we cross the river on a horse?'

'Not now, because the water is too high for any one to wade over and fetch one.'

'How is that?'

'The sun has been very hot all day, and has melted the ice and snow so very much.'



Sæter at Skogedalsbœn

'Well, we must go on to Vetti to-morrow, somehow.'

Here Rolf chimed in. 'The best way will be to go to Skjolden, and then to take the steamer to Aardal. I know most of the road.'

'So do I. We will go as we said we would, down Utladal to Vetti and Aardal.'

The girl: 'Well! The river will be lower in the morning, and the boy can wade over for a horse to take you across; but you will have to stop the night here.'

Though the accommodation was, of course, very meagre, the milk, fladbrød, and butter were excellent, and our hostess did all in her power to make us comfortable. She told us that a bear had killed one of her cows near the sæter only a fortnight earlier.

The scene outside the sæter in the early morning had a

peculiar charm of its own. A few cows and a large flock of goats, summoned by the shrill call of the 'budeier,' had come to be milked and were very curious to know who we were and what business we had to come into the wilds. The goats, as is so often the case, were really very cheeky. Down the valley, right in front of us, were the Horungtinder, and some of them, tipped with golden sunlight, projected their weird forms through the encircling clouds of the early morning and contrasted grandly with the snow-flecked hillsides, the rapid river, and the green sæter pastures. A biting wind came down the valley from the many glaciers, and we were glad to get some steaming coffee.

In due time the horse came; the poor boy had, however, been obliged to go some distance up the valley, and to wade up to his middle in the icy waters in order to get to the horse. After taking leave of the good-natured girl, we left the sæter at 7.20, and soon reached the river. Rolf first crossed over with our luggage, and whilst he did so, we had time to look about us.

The Uvla here was a good deal widened by an island in the middle, just below where the ford was made. The total width was about sixty yards, but in order to land easily, a course had to be taken a good way down the stream between the island and the further bank. Rolf soon came back. Then my sister and I were to have a try. The horse had neither saddle nor bridle, but simply a halter. I rode in front, and my sister clung fast to me behind. About half-way across we had to make a turn, and there got amongst some horrible-looking boulders. The horse bumped up and down, and from side to side, and a look into the icy water was sufficient to make one shiver. At last we got over, and climbed up the opposite bank. Then I took the horse and brought the boy across, and he in turn returned for Rolf. The horse had thus to cross the river eight times. The boy proposed to accompany us to Skogadalsbøen, so as to help us across the river there. We were only too glad of this; indeed, without the horse we should have had great difficulty in fording so rapid a stream as the Skogadöla.

There is now a fairly well-defined track between Skogadal and Fleskedal over the heights of Friken; but in 1875 this was not the case, and we made the great mistake of keeping too low down, and so became entangled amongst dwarf birch and willow and ferns growing with rank luxuriance amongst the remains of ancient stone avalanches, now moss-covered. For several hours we toiled along the brink of the southern wall of Utladal, the wildest cañon in Norway. Recent traces of a bear added to the interest.

The view of the Horungtinder just across the gorge, once seen in fine weather, can never be forgotten. On this occasion, clouds robbed us of much of its charm, but still allowed us to see bit by bit the whole of the range. In fact, I was able for the first time to study Skagastölstind, and then chose the route which the following year led to the summit. At 5 P.M. we reached the top of the Vettisfos, having been seven hours on the way from Skogadal when we ought only to have been about three. We stopped a long time looking down the awful cliffs into the foaming Utle, 1300 feet below us, then walked down the almost interminable zig-zags of the path to Vetti, where a feast of eggs, strawberries and cream, and good coffee, with a promise of nice clean beds, and the luxuries of washing-basins and a wooden floor, naturally put us in a happy frame of mind.

After supper, by twilight, we went to see the Vettisfos from below. By this light the roaring river, close to the path in some cases, the almost perpendicular cliffs on each side, the white foam in the gloomy darkness, the fos, the top of which was 1100 feet almost overhead, combined to give us a still deeper realisation of the enormous scale in which Nature here presents her beauties in this profound defile than can be obtained in the bright sunshine of a midsummer's day.

Next day we went to Aardal, and here our Jotunheim expedition practically ended. Thanks to the good weather it had been most enjoyable throughout. Had we had heavy rain on the third day it would have been a difficult matter to find pleasure in the adventure on the slopes of Friken. All however went well, and we felt sorry to part from our trusty friend Rolf, who had done everything in his power to make our journey one of real enjoyment.

The story of this successful adventure led many ladies of various nationalities to don walking costumes and hob-nailed boots, and to seek pleasure and to gain health and strength in Nature's rich storehouse, the high fjeld of Jotunheim.

## CHAPTER VIII

## CAMPING IN STÖLS MARADAL; SKAGASTÖLSTIND, OR NOT?

'To seek is better than to gain,  
 The fond hope dies as we attain;  
 Life's fairest things are those which seem,  
 The best is that of which we dream.'

WHITTIER.

**AFTER** failing on Gjeldedalstind in 1874, Dewhurst and I were agreeably surprised by Rolf, who consented to accompany us on our projected attempt to ascend Skagastölstind, provided that we could engage another man to assist in carrying our tent and provisions, which we had left at Vetti a fortnight earlier, up the precipice Brændstigen to Midt-Maradal. This we soon arranged, and the following morning at 5.30 A.M. we bid adieu to Anfind and his wife. At the best, Brændstigen is a barbarous ascent, and our heavy burdens made it appear worse than ever. We saw, as is usually the case on the wooded heights above Utladal, plenty of fresh traces of a bear. At 8.5 we reached the sæter in Stöls-Maradal, and then the weather began to look very bad.

We had intended to cross over a high mountain spur by a little gap and so to get into the parallel valley, Midt-Maradal, and there to pitch our tent, as we thought, but were by no means sure, that the great ascent would have to be made from that valley. At this period there was a strange ignorance of the position of Skagastölstind, which cannot easily be appreciated by the tourists of to-day who find a comfortable hut wherever one is needed, guides who can at least lead them to the foot of any mountain which they may wish to climb, and last, but not least, improved maps and most excellent guide-books. Some faint idea of the difficulty of getting into Midt-Maradal, and of the imperfect knowledge of the relative positions of the small lateral valleys of the Horungtinder, may be gained when I say that, though a great portion of Midt-Maradal abounds in rich grass—a mine of wealth to the farmer—and as the crow flies it is only half a Norse

mile from Vetti, only half that distance from the sæter in Støls-Maradal, and is perfectly visible from the pastures above Fleskenaaedal, yet the owner of the valley, Anfind Vetti, who is a good climber, had at that time never been in the valley, indeed, a few years later, he asked me to guide him into it. Thorgeir Sulheim who owns Vormelid, not half a Norse mile distant, had never been into it until he went with me some years after this time when bear-hunting. Old Jens Klingenberg of Aardal, who was one of the few men who believed that Skagastölstind could be ascended, thought that the route to the mountain lay up Gravdal; and even so late as in 1876, Emanuel Mohn thought that the way might probably be through Maradal rather than through Midt-Maradal.

Pelting rain and heavy clouds prevented us from attempting to cross the mountain spur, and it was fortunate for us that this was the case, as I subsequently discovered that the route we intended to have taken would have landed us upon the top of an impracticable wall of rock about 1500 feet high, and in order to descend we should have been forced to make a long détour, and have wearied ourselves out in vain on account of the storms which soon broke upon the mountains.

As we had no intention of running away just yet, we got a supply of butter and fuel, marched off up Støls-Maradal, and, a short distance below the glacier which we had ascended when we crossed the Riingsskar, we chose a suitable place for our tent, and with twigs of dwarf willow and birch and plenty of reindeer moss, covered by a waterproof sheet, we made a most luxurious couch. By exercising a little engineering skill we made capital shelter and most excellent drainage. When our tent was quite ready our porter Thomas bade us farewell, and left us to enjoy our camp life among the Horungtinder. Rolf now appeared to the best advantage. He proved to be an excellent cook, and as he had a fisherman's oilskin coat and leggings and was perfectly weather-proof, we had no hesitation in allowing him to do the cooking outside, whilst we sheltered inside the tent, read books, and watched the avalanches falling from a dark cliff just opposite. As night came on, the wind and rain increased; occasionally, but very rarely, a silvery drop came through our canvas, but this did not prevent us from sleeping most soundly.

But I must not forget that I am writing about mountaineering, though, truth to tell, I have little to relate. When the rain did at last stop, we set off on a tour of exploration on the glacier, intending, if possible, to climb one of the Dyrhougtinder, and from

thence to study the route to Skagastölstind, and to discover some feasible pass over the first-named range by which we could gain the foot of the great peak.

The fine warm weather of the eight days which had intervened between our first and second visit to this glacier had materially altered its character. Where we had before gone with great ease over the snow, we now found the intricacies of most interesting crevasses. On our first visit there was a broad belt of snow up the ice-fall at the foot of the glacier. Now, it was completely bare, and we had plenty of work for our ice-axes. We had one delightful snow-bridge to cross, very narrow, and not too strong; and as numerous icicles hung from its under side, it seemed like a portcullis guarding the gateway of a palace of the Trolds. We had to creep very carefully over the bridge one by one, whilst the others were fast anchored. Both here and in many other places we had some really capital ice-work, and, to our delight, Rolf went most pluckily, and seemed for the nonce to have forgotten the existence of the wife and children who had given him, and us too for that matter, so much trouble on Gjeldedalstind. At any rate he expressed no fear, though the dangers were much more apparent than those on the Koldedal mountain.

When we had ascended about 2000 feet, the rain came on most pitilessly; the clouds obscured everything; and though we persevered for a short time, as we knew that there would be no great difficulty in climbing one of the Dyrhougstinder, or at least in reaching some portion of their narrow crest, we were obliged to beat a retreat.

We did nothing more with the peaks so near to us. The vilest weather succeeded; there were storms, avalanches, and everlasting wet. To make a long story short, we were thoroughly beaten. We did not remain the fourteen days in camp which were ascribed to us by a well-known writer in the *Nor. Tur. For. Aarboeg*, but, yearning for civilisation, dry clothes, and other scenes, we struck camp at a much earlier date.

We had a very enjoyable walk to Aardal by way of Afdal, in spite of the rain. The path follows the tops of the cliffs which bound the northern side of Utladal, and from it we got most wonderful bird's-eye views of the gorge below.

No one merely traversing the bottom of the Vettisgjæl can form any idea of the immense scale of its towering cliffs which is presented by the view from their tops. In one place, where for a few minutes we had lost the imaginary path, we found ourselves on the very verge of an almost perpendicular cliff about a

mile below Vetti. As there is a little bend in the gorge here, we faced up Utladal and had a panoramic view of Vetti and its cornfields, more than 2500 feet below us, through a break in the clouds. As we trudged along, the lower sea of clouds ascended, and after a time completely enveloped us. Here Rolf's path-finding instinct became extremely useful, as, although he was in new ground, his life experience showed him much better where to look for the little heaps of stones, foot-worn rocks, and old foot-prints which determined the path, than novices like ourselves.

Just above the most contracted part of the gorge we had a sharp rise over a mountain-spur to a height of 3200 feet above the river, and from this a steep descent brought us to Afdal, a high sæter valley. When we reached its swollen glacier river we found it quite impassable, so we followed its course through a tangle of rain-wetted birch and juniper to the Afdal gaard.

Here the sun beamed forth most graciously, and revealed to us in all its grandeur the weird site of this farm, the beauties of the Gjeldefos, and the peaceful grassy valley far below us. We had been three hours on the way from Støls-Maradal sæter; but in fine weather, and without heavy burdens, the walk along these most romantic cliffs could be done easily in two hours, and is an expedition which I can recommend to all good walkers.

At the farm, a talkative cripple evinced great astonishment at the sight of foreigners, never having seen such animals before. The site of this farm is more weird than even those of the Fuglesti and Furaas above the Fortunsdal, and that is saying a great deal.

The path down into Utladal from Afdal is well described by Colonel Campbell in his capital little book *How to see Norway*. But still I think I may be allowed to add a few words which I wrote in my diary before I had seen his book. 'This path is the very acme of perfection of a romantic mountain path, and a model of rustic engineering. The bare notion of constructing a path in such a place shows wonderful pluck, though it forms the one solitary connection between Afdal and the rest of the world. The house stands on the brink of a grand cataract, the Afdalsfos, and close to the top of this fall is a wild "devil's bridge" over the glacier stream. In some places the path is excavated in the face of an overhanging rock; in others, instead of excavation, wooden bridges span dizzy precipices and connect different spurs of rock. Where feasible, the track is built up from terraces below. Except at the top, the waterfall is not visible from the path, but its spray is carried over it by the wind, and keeps fresh the many plants of



*Saxifraga cotyledon* whose lovely white sprays gladden the eyes of all who behold them.<sup>1</sup>

We hastened on, as we were anxious to catch the one weekly steamer which was to call at Aardal that day. At the lake we lost much time in finding rowers. At last we got one man and two little boys. Dewhurst and I helped at the oars, but Rolf, though he tried manfully, failed utterly, and is the only Norseman I have yet met who could not handle an oar.

'Ah! What is that?' 'Dampen piber.' 'Ja ja.' We reached the little pier at Aardal just five minutes too late. The steamer was gracefully turning round. We halloed and signalled vigorously, but all in vain, as the boat very sensibly kept on her course and gently glided out of sight, whilst we, half-drowned by the rain, made our way to Jens Klingenberg's hospitable inn amidst the smiles and titters of the bystanders.

It was with genuine feelings of regret that, soon after this, we parted from Rolf who had acted as our guide, porter, cook, valet, and friend for some ten days. He was most obliging, and was always ready to put up with discomfort provided that we benefited by it. He recited many old sagas which, unfortunately, we could not understand; he was quick at expedients, and, like most sons of the mountains, could improvise much that was useful in emergencies.

Our next move was to Amble, where a land-locked bay of gentlest beauty, well-tilled meadows, fruitful orchards, a picturesque church, and prosperous-looking homesteads formed a most welcome change from the sterile scenes which we had just left behind us.

<sup>1</sup> A few years ago a new, useful, but much more prosaic path was constructed up to this farm.

## CHAPTER IX

VETTI AND THE PEAK OF THE SÆTER; KNUT DOES NOT TURN UP;  
WHERE ARE WE? ANFIND'S DELIGHT ON REACHING THE SUMMIT.

'See, from afar, yon rock that mates the sky,  
About whose feet such heaps of rubbish lie;  
Such indigested ruin.'

DRYDEN'S *Virgil*.

'He that knows not whither to go, is in no haste to move.'

DR. JOHNSON.

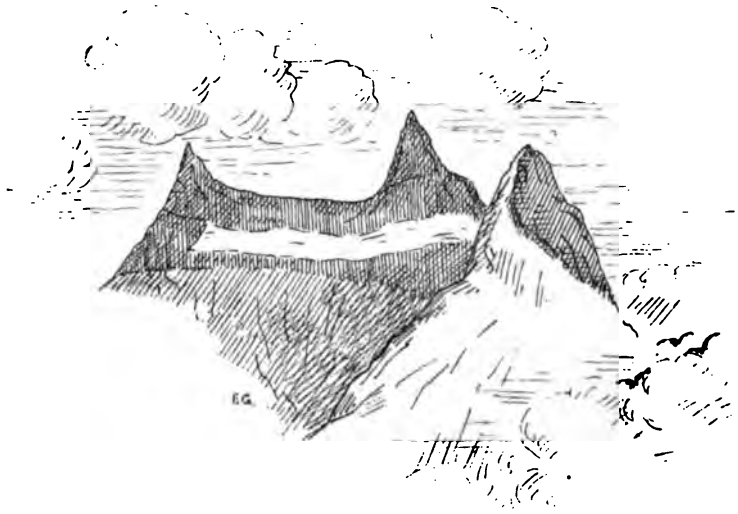
A FEW years ago, in company with two trusty friends, I ascended the Glärnisch, the most northerly snow mountain in Switzerland, and though the mountain had been ascended scores if not hundreds of times before, comparatively little was known of it by most members of the Alpine Club; hence, at the request of the editor, I wrote a short paper about it in the *Alpine Journal*.

'What on earth has this to do with the mountain whose name appears at the head of this chapter?' I can imagine some one saying. The answer is, that I want to borrow the two first paragraphs.

'In each group of mountains in the Alps, Nature has provided one or more peaks, apparently for a most excellent purpose, namely, that of affording for her lovers remarkable views from their summits. These peaks are the watch-towers of the Alps, and the views comprise peeps of the vales, the plains, the rivers, also of villages and peaceful homesteads, as well as of the sterner scenes above the snow-line. It does not follow that these views are the finest that can be obtained; indeed, they may not be half as glorious as the view of Mont Blanc from Le Jardin or from Le Grand Plateau, nor half as beautiful as dozens of views of the Faulhorn, Gorner Grat, and Monte Generoso type, but they certainly appeal to us mountaineers with a force not to be equalled by any which can be seen by merely walking on a footpath up to the top of a hill which is probably desecrated by a drinking-booth.

'These peaks must of necessity have rock crests or snow crowns. They are placed, as the Aiguille de Trélatête and the

Eiger, at the corners or ends of the main ranges, or of those lateral ranges which, fortunately, are so numerous in the Alps; or, like the Dent d'Hérens and the Todi, they form centres from which several valleys radiate; or, as the Galenstock, they head some great valley; or, like Monte Leone, they stand as sentinels guarding some great gap in the main chain; or they tower, as Monte Viso does, head and shoulders above their neighbours. But in every case they invite, nay, they command, mountaineers to touch their proud crests.'



Galdedalstind and Stölsnaastind

from Summit of Thorfinstind.

It is just the same in Norway. As to Stölsnaastind, its position is unrivalled. This beautiful mountain—the monarch of the Koldedal peaks—rises out of the forest plateau of Vettismark, it overshadows the Arctic tarns of Koldedal, and stands face to face with the Horungtinder on their grandest side across the deep, dark ghyll of Utladal.

Think but for a moment from how many places the Stölsnaastind is visible, and forms a principal feature in the view, and doubt, if you can, at the glorious view from its summit, but marvel greatly why such an extremely tempting peak was not climbed ages ago.

From the top of the Keiser Pass, what looks finer than that obelisk of black rock, with the one white snowy belt running obliquely from the wavy glacier below almost to its summit? From the three Maradale, how sharp the peak! From Tvindehougen, what additional grandeur the towering peak gives to Keilhau's triumph—the Falkenæbbe! From the mountains of Bygdin, Thorfinstind and others, or from the skar above Oxdalshullet, see that sharp-pointed crescent, each end upturned inquiringly to the heavens; that to the left hand is the Falcon's Beak, the other is—our friend. See the peak again, from the east, from any commanding height you like, and still admire. Go into the recesses of Morka-Koldedal, and shudder at its precipices. But look not at the mountain from either Sulutind or Stugunöset, for from there alone it is robbed of its grandeur by the intervening Gjelde-dalstinder.

I had often cast longing glances at Stölsnaastind, and had partially studied its ascent, and eventually fixed on July 28th, 1877, as the day on which the ascent should be attempted if the weather were favourable.

With this end in view I wrote from home to ask Knut Lykken to join me at Vetti on July 27th, and kept the appointment myself.

'Is Knut Lykken here?'

'No; I expect he is getting ready for reindeer-stalking.'

'I asked him to meet me here and to climb Stölsnaastind with me. Anfind, you are a strong, active man; will you climb with me?'

'I don't know. I should like to; but I'll ask my wife.'

After a good deal of confabulation, the wife gave an unwilling consent. The fact was, that the ascent of Skagastölstind the previous year had endowed me with a wholly undeserved reputation for recklessness amongst the natives, who did not then appreciate, as they do now, the fact that mountain-climbing is a great and a most legitimate sport. Anfind, who knew me well, was ready enough to go, and in fact he had a great desire to climb the peak which he had so often admired. Herr Reusch, the well-known geologist, was at Vetti, and though he said he was not a mountaineer, he consented to go part of the way with us.

Adieu to friends who set off early to walk to Aardal, and at 6 A.M. we faced the lung-proving zig-zags above Vetti, and at 6.55 we gazed down into the black abyss where the silvery water-thread from the stream above forms the peerless Vettisfos. A glittering spray of kaleidoscopic beauty was blown by the morning breeze,



Solimaastind,

To face page 102.



and watered the bright Alpine plants which carpeted the ground.

We pass the sæter or *stöl*, and make our way through the forest to the mountain buttress or *naasi* beyond, as the direct route to the peak, or *tind*, above—the Stöls-naasi-tind. Recent footprints of a bear we take as a matter of course. The Horungtinder are cloud-wreathed, but the day is early. 'Gloomy now, but bright later on.' So we say.

The walk was easy. Soon we forsook vegetation, and trod the herbless gabbro. Mist and rain came on, and we sheltered under Reusch's umbrella and the lee of a rock. Then snow came, but it soon blew away.

We crossed a portion of the Fleskenaasbræ, then heeled over to our right to a very steep, unpromising glacier, which ended, so far as we could see, on the brink of a high Koldedal precipice, which I knew from below.

My two comrades, each of whom said he was not used to glaciers, stepped fearlessly on the steep snow, and I saw, almost at a glance, that I had two men with me who, however little they professed, had plenty of pluck.

Thinking we were too low down, we took to the rocks above. My hat blew away on the snow, and gave me an exciting chase. Still involved in a thick clammy mist, we followed the rocks north-east, and soon reached a high glacier, flat at the top, but sloping off, apparently sharply, at the edge on each side. Here we used the rope for the first time, and at Anfind's wish I led. We could not see above thirty or forty yards in front of us, so of course saw no peak. The maps at that time were very faulty, and I steered solely from memory. On our right, towards Koldedal, there was a snow cornice, to which we gave a wide berth, and in doing so altered our course a little. In the gloom we saw rocks ahead, which we thought we recognised as some crags above Fleskenaasdal. We turned again, and steered as we thought in the mist to be in the same direction as that we had pursued when we first stepped on the glacier. All at once I saw footsteps close to us, parallel to our course. They were ours, and though the snowy plateau was narrow we had performed a circuit, and were returning. Out came our compasses, and our course was reversed. Anfind and I could hardly believe it at first, as steering there seemed to be such an easy matter. However, there we were, blindly making rings on the snow.

No one, whose experience on the mountains is limited to fine weather, can imagine how very easy it is within a very circum-

scribed limit to get completely heeled round as we were on this occasion. The fault, if fault there were, was mine, and I frankly acknowledge that it is not the only time when I have led a party wrong in a fog. Some years ago I guided a large party of eight or nine friends, including three ladies, from Borrowdale to the Pillar Rock. After climbing the rock it was agreed that we should ascend the Pillar Mountain, and then cross Kirk Fell and Great Gable to the Sty Head Pass on our way back to Rosthwaite. We easily followed a rock-rib to the summit of the mountain in a heavy snowstorm, and set off immediately for Black Sail, east, not being able to see above half a dozen yards in front of us. In due time we came down to a pass, and a rift in the clouds revealed the fact that we were in Windy Gap, west from the Pillar. A few months later I told old Will Ritson of this mistake, very shamefacedly, I must own. All the old veteran said was: 'Why! that's nowt. Ah can bang that mesell. Ah mind yance we'd been hunting ower t' Ennerdale fells, and hed kilt a geart dog fox on t' Pillar Fell; he was running for t' biield under Esh Crag, and Rattler just gripped him afoor he gat intil t' whoal. Weel, ah mind t' mist com doon, and we could see nowt, and wander't rownd and rownd, and laal Tom Nicholson of Branthwaite says, "It's nea use graping aboot like this, let's mak doon teua Black Seal," and afoor we could see owt to ken t' road by, we fund ourselfs in Windy Gap. Yan can easy git wrang on t' fells.' However, if care be taken, a party of three roped together, and about twenty-five feet apart, ought not to get very far astray on the level, as the last man can notice if the leader makes any deviation from a straight course, and can at once correct the mistake. I believe that every man walking in the dark on the flat goes unconsciously and persistently to one particular side. In my own case I believe that my tendency is to go to the right hand, and I know one man who invariably turns to the left under similar circumstances.

Then we steered due east, and came to a row of lofty turrets of rock, perpendicular to the northern glacier. We soon reached the highest point, and found a mighty precipice in front of us. 'Where are we? Who knows?' None of us. 'We are on a tind, but will swear it is not the one we wish for. Where is it?'

Autind points eastwards, saying, 'Somewhere there.' So do I. We look eagerly for any break in the clouds, and take our second breakfast.

A breath of wind touches our faces, the cloud-curtain begins to agitate; it is torn in two, and we see below us a wavy-lined,



ice-clad skar, a sea of phantasy, and in it the hull of a storm-struck wreck whose masts are cloud-hidden. A moment only and it is gone. Then, a few seconds later, far, far above the wreck, a small black cross of rock appears, and seems to be looking down upon us. There is no doubt now, there is our goal. Twice, and twice only, we saw this beacon, and only for a few seconds each time during an hour's watching. During this time, however, we saw bit by bit perhaps the whole peak.

I looked eagerly for the snow-belt, which, when seen from the Keiser Pass, is such a striking characteristic of Stölsnaastind, and which I had imagined would give the solution of the ascent; but though I still believe that this peak can be ascended from the north, and by means of the snow-belt, I then found it to be much steeper than the distant view had led me to suppose; and when, after asking Anfind's opinion as to the mode of ascent, he proposed to try it from the Koldedal glacier, I fully concurred with him.

At 12.45, after a slight snow-shower, we all agreed to attack the mountain, and, if possible, to take it by storm. No thought of turning back was now entertained by Reusch. No, indeed. He had tasted the joys of mountain-climbing in spite of unfavourable weather, and had we needed urging forward, he was ready to use the spur.

We soon reached the Koldedal glacier, and, after crossing a few narrow but deep crevasses, we stepped on the rocks on the south side, 892 feet below the summit. Here I asked Anfind to lead, as he would probably have to act as guide in the future, and after a little demur he did so.

We followed ledges, to all appearances systematically arranged to aid in the ascent, on which we placed many *varder* to guide us on our return. We could see far up the mountain, but not to the top. Anfind led us capitally, and brought us on to the narrow eastern arête. Here we turned west, and our climb began to be more arduous, but at the same time more interesting. All who have climbed in Jotunheim know what good rock gabbro is for the purpose, and how well it holds the nails of an Alpine boot. Here it was grand. The strong south-west wind added a little spice of danger, the precipice on our right was quite in unison with our undertaking, and a heavy snowstorm when near the top gave variety to our adventure.

Up and still up we went, wilder and wilder grew the storm, denser and yet more dense the clouds, but eager and ever more eager became our zeal for the work.

'Ah! here is the top in front of us. We shall soon see if human foot has ever trod the ground before us. Let us step together, hand in hand, on the top; it is big enough.' We do so, and at two o'clock three snow-whitened mortals tread the summit of Stølsnaastind.

Anfind is almost wild with delight, and talks of the number of ladies who he is sure will make the ascent with him when it is known to be so interesting and free from danger. 'Wait a bit, old boy, till we get to your sæter. We have still to return by the glacier.'

For a moment, the great Gjertvastind with its terrific overhanging precipice stood out clearly from the clouds; so did the long, straight, and narrow ridge of Uranaastind, as well as the top of the neighbouring Falke Næbbe; but, beyond these, though we felt we were on an almost unrivalled standpoint, we saw no other peak.

A stone man was soon erected, and we fixed on it Anfind's red pocket handkerchief, as a rival of mine of white which was still flying on the top of Skagastølstind, away across Utladal.

We waited patiently a long cold hour for the views which did not appear, and our geologist had ample opportunity to indulge in the innocent pastime of stone-breaking. We had plenty of fun too in heaving great rocks over the giant precipice. This is a sport the fascination of which few members of the Alpine Club can resist, and I for one must in my time have rolled hundreds of tons from the tops of mountains.

At three o'clock we began to retrace our steps, and but for our *varder* should have had some difficulty in finding the way. As it was, we had none. In thirty-two minutes we reached the glacier, and I assumed the command. We were soon on the icy skar, and then turned down north towards Fleskedal. The crevasses were wide, deep, and gloriously blue. We had one snow-bridge to cross, none of the strongest, then a short, steep ice-slope to descend, where I had to make good steps with my ice-axe. Just beyond this we had a jump over a deep schrund, and a view into a fairy blue ice-grotto over which spanned a wild snow-arch with many a pendent ice-jewel, one of the most interesting crevasses I have ever seen. Reusch was charmed with it, and so were we all.

Near the bottom of the glacier, Anfind advised us to cross the right lateral moraine so as to avoid an ice-fall. This we did, and it brought us to a long snow-slope of some 35°, where we had an excellent glissade which saved much time. In spite of the fact of the long days in Norway, the snow rarely gets in the soft con-



*The Horungtinder  
from the gates of Kaldedal.*

dition which one finds in the Alps in the afternoon, as, in the former case, the rays lose much of their power by shining obliquely on the snowfields; consequently, good glissades, which are not so often obtainable in Switzerland as we should like them to be, are very common in our northern playground.

In two and a half hours of pretty hard going from the summit we entered the Fleskedals sæter, where Anfind's daughters regaled us with wholesome sæter produce, but would hardly credit our tale.

Though a good many men, and a few ladies too, have since climbed Stölsnaastind, the ascent has not yet become a fashionable one, as I expected it would; and for some reason or other, comparatively few tourists visit Aardal and the Vettisfos, in fact, very few more than was the case twenty-five years ago. This is strange, and to me as unaccountable as the fact that there is little if any increase in the number of English tourists during the same period who visit Courmayeur, on the Italian side of Mont Blanc.

It is perhaps not fair to judge of a view which I have not properly seen, but at the same time I feel I am right in saying that I know of no other peak in Jotunheim whose ascent can afford such general interest, lack actual danger, and give such a glorious view.

I have often suggested to mountaineers, who have applied to me for suggestions about new climbs, that a most interesting ascent of Stölsnaastind could be made from out of the wintry Morka-Koldedal; but, so far, I believe that no one has taken my advice.

Happy thought! Go and do it myself.



## CHAPTER X

MARIE MAKES THE SECOND ASCENT OF KNUTSHULTIND; AN EASY VICTORY ON HEILSTUGUHÖ; REINDEER-STALKING; A LOVELY EVENING; THE SOLVORN WARRIOR POINTS TO THE MELKEDALSTIND; A STIFF CLIMB; THE GJERTRASBRÆ; WE HAVE THE STYGGEDALSTIND WITHIN OUR REACH, BUT WE LEAVE IT, AS WE HAVE PROMISED TO CLIMB IT WITH SULHEIM; ARRIVAL AT EIDE; SULHEIM CANNOT RETURN WITH US TO STYGGEDALSTIND; DISAPPOINTMENT.

'Mean thralls alone will to their mother-soil be chained unwilling; I will wander free, free as the mountain winds.'

*Friithof's Saga*, translated by Rev. W. L. BLACKLEY.

### MOUNTAINEERING FROM GJENDEBOD

ON our descent from the Memurutind in 1874 Dewhurst and I were much attracted by the beauty of Knutshulstind, and after a long reconnoissance through a telescope we discovered two routes which apparently led to the summit. One, by the west face from out of Svartdal, was obviously a very straightforward climb, which offered but little difficulty. The other, on the contrary, by a narrow and steep tongue of glacier from the weird ice-paved cirque, Knutshullet, on the east, undoubtedly offered what may be termed a sporting route, which might lead to success or end in failure. At that distance it was not possible to speak more definitely.

Through our ignorance of the language, we understood from

Rolf that the mountain had already been ascended, otherwise it is pretty certain that we should have climbed it by the easy route. The first ascent was made the following year by Herr Th. J. Hefteye, with Knut Lykken as guide.

In 1877, during a month's reindeer-stalking, I had many opportunities of making a close study of the peak, though I had no intention of making any ascent that year, with the solitary exception of a fine mountain above Vetti, which I climbed before the reindeer-stalking began. On one occasion I was in Knutshullet itself, and on another was on its western wall, when, by admiring the grand scenery, I lost a near shot at a fine buck, which my gillie badly missed at about ten yards' distance.

On the 30th of August 1881, a charming time of the year to be on the high fjeld, Johannes Vigdal and I arrived at Gjendebod with the intention of attempting the ascent from Knutshullet, and, if successful, of descending into Svartdal. Ragnhild and a bright, rosy-cheeked lassie, Olie Marie Sölfesdatter, gave us a warm welcome, and took great interest in our mountaineering. When we told them that we wished to cross the Knutshultind the following day, Marie expressed a wish to join us. As we could see that she had plenty of pluck, and was strong and active, we agreed at once to take her with us, and were very glad of the opportunity afforded us of introducing one of the fair sex to so fine a mountain.

This new arrangement naturally put the route from Knutshullet out of the question. It would not be fair to Marie to risk defeat on an expedition which I felt sure would, to say the least, require the use of a considerable amount of snowcraft. No; it was clear that in this case the line of least resistance should be the line we ought to take on a mountain which had then only once been ascended, and had on previous attempts beaten back several parties, which probably, however, contained no expert climbers in their ranks. Ragnhild was very pleased at the arrangement, and prepared a most tempting 'niste' for our meals on the morrow.

At 4.30 A.M. we saw a heavy bank of clouds clinging coldly to the mountain-sides, which was rather discouraging. At eight o'clock bright sunshine had dissolved most of the mists, the barometer had risen, so also rose our spirits. We tried to induce two English ladies to share in the fun, but though they nearly consented to do so, a misjudged prudence prevailed, and they set off for a less adventurous valley walk.

We toiled up the steep precipice which leads into the level

Svartdal, and walked nearly to the little tarn which is formed by an old terminal moraine of the Svartdalsbræ, where we turned to the face of our peak.

A recent fall of snow made the mountain offer a tougher resistance than if it had been bare, as on all the steep places the white sheet had to be cleared away. It was an interesting climb of about 3000 feet from the Svartdal, perfectly straightforward,



North ridge of Knutshullind

and the rope was not used. Naturally enough, I often assisted our fair young friend of one-and-twenty summers, but there was never any hesitation about the route. In fact, the Svartdal face can be 'climbed all over.'

At 1.28 we reached the summit, raised a loud cheer, and put Marie on the top of the little cairn, and very bonny she looked in her picturesque costume. This consisted of a green home-spun

skirt, a red Zouave bodice edged with green and open in front to allow of an embroidered red stomacher with a binding of coloured beads, white sleeves, and an embroidered belt. A coloured handkerchief bound her long flaxen hair, her rosy cheeks glowed with pleasure, and her bright eyes beamed with the consciousness of well-earned victory as she looked at the finest mountains of her native land, and gazed down the grim precipices to the chaotic glaciers, and at the lovely lake of Gjendin. Marie had never been on a mountain-top before, and she was favoured by perfect weather and an almost cloudless sky.

We added to the cairn erected by our predecessors, and left a little flag at the top. After a good hour's rest we thought it time to descend. Vigdal, with his usual pluck, wished us to try to descend by the tiny glacier arm which connects the top directly with the cirque, Knutshullet; but as Marie had neither an ice-axe nor nailed boots, prudence prevailed. Still, as we were determined to make a pass of the mountain, we turned our heads directly facing the Store Aadal, and quickly descended by the snow just under the northern ridge and the jagged tooth of rock which we termed the Lensmand. We put the rope on for safety's sake, but found the descent to be an exceptionally easy and pleasant one.

Ragnhild welcomed us back at five o'clock, well satisfied with our day's work.

The ascent of Knutshultind, situated as it is midway between Lakes Gjendin and Bygdin, and the highest mountain of a very interesting group, is one which I can most conscientiously recommend to all active tourists who are used to the fells, and are possessed of ordinary prudence. They can attack the rocks anywhere on the Svartdal face, or by the southern ridge and west face near the top, the route which was followed on the first ascent, but they must not touch the northern arête or east face unless they have had considerable mountaineering experience.

As we had left the eastern face alone, I recommended this route a few years later to my friend Dr. Claude Wilson, who, with his brother and Mr. R. L. Harrison and Vigdal, made the ascent on August 21st, 1885.

'The ascent from the glacier in Knutshullet took four and a half hours. If the snow had not been in unusually good condition, much more time would have been required.'<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Wilson described this ascent more in detail in a graphic paper which he read before the Alpine Club.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Alpine Journal*, vol. xii. p. 470.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. xiii. p. 156.



## THE ASCENT OF HEILSTUGUHÖ

On our return from Knutshultind we pointed the pyramid of Heilstuguhö to our fair companion, and invited her to join in an attempt to ascend it. Unfortunately, Marie was required to wait on some tourists who were expected to stay a few days at Gjendebod, and could not be spared. This was probably as great a disappointment to Vigdal and myself as it was to Marie, who longed to make a real first ascent. We would have attacked this northern pyramid before its southern rival, but for the fact that we had reconnoitred the former a few days earlier from the top of the neighbouring Uladalstind, and had fallen into the common error of mountaineers when standing face to face with a mountain wall, in believing the angle to be half as steep again as it was in reality. In fact, as we were prepared to find the ascent of Heilstuguhö a tough nut to crack, we had deferred our attack for a few days in order to allow the bright sunshine to remove the snow and ice, and to warm the rocks, which, when we made our close study, were all peppered over with new snow. Oddly enough, though I had been round the mountain, and had seen it from all points of view, I always expected that its ascent would be difficult, though I knew it to be feasible.

We set off at 5.45 in the faint dawning light of day. This first day of September bursts upon Gjendin with a keen frost and a bright blue sky. At 8.40, having passed over a little glacier, we reach the skar which forms a delightful portal at the head of that most interesting cirque, Simlehullet, overshadowed by a lovely pyramid, the Simletind. Down the glacier, not far fortunately, and into the gloomy Uladal, then we turn sharp to the right over some horrible avalanche débris by the side of a noisy stream, and at 9.20 we reach a little glacier lying in the lap of the mountain we wish to ascend. A sharp ascent at a quick rate, for we are bitterly cold, brings us to a plateau of névé, when we know that victory awaits us. The apparently awful precipices, which had rather frightened us a few days earlier, have vanished, and the mountain reveals itself under its true colours for the first time. Steep it certainly is, but is it not also surely a staircase? The western face can, in fact, be climbed almost anywhere, as in the case of the corresponding side of Knutshultind.

After forty minutes on the glacier, steep snow- and ice-clad rocks lead us to a gap on the southern ridge of our mountain, from which, to my great surprise, we find an easy snow-slope

which connects the gap with the great Memurubræ, a slope which in 1874 seemed to me, in the distance, to be extremely steep.

Up, up, and up we go, with never a halt, nor any wish to take one. The broad ridge narrows, but never becomes sensational. The interest as usual increases as we near the top, the air becomes more invigorating and the view more extended. One more point and we gain the summit of Heilstuguhö, 7690 Norse feet above sea-level, and the fourth highest mountain in Scandinavia.

We are wild with excitement though the victory has been so easily won. The day is perfect, and we remain for three-quarters of an hour enjoying to the full our measure of happiness, whilst the sunbeams pour upon us without stint their invigorating warmth, and but for cold feet we should linger much longer. The one drawback is the need to build the inevitable cairn, but how dreadfully disappointed we should feel had we found one already erected! The view is of course grand, but not so fine as from many other neighbouring peaks. The glaciers of the Ymes Fjeld, the Leirvand, and the eerie forms of the Smörstabtinder, are the most interesting features, and we can see portions of both Lakes Gjendin and Bygdin. The northern ridge which connects the lesser Heilstuguhö with our peak much resembles the narrow and notched ridges so common in Söndmöre, and any party who cares to traverse it will much enjoy the sport which it will afford.

We had two plans for our return: the one to descend by the way we had come, then to climb the Simletind, and to descend from it to Simlehullet by the beautiful little couloir which almost bisects its eastern face—a sporting route, it is true; the other was to descend to the western Memurubræ, then to round the southern peak of the Heilstuguhö range, and to descend into Simlehullet by an old route of mine which I had once discovered when reindeer-stalking. Time, that inexorable master, sternly forbade the first route, so we took the second.

We were soon in the gap again, and quickly ran down to the big glacier, there as flat as a 'pandekage.' After a short but toilsome trudge in snow softened by the blazing sun, we looked again into that weird cirque which we had traversed in the early morning, and, as we had no rifle with us, we almost stumbled upon five reindeer, which for a few moments stared helplessly at us, as is their wont, and then galloped away over the glacier.

Four years earlier I was reindeer-stalking on this very ground, and tracked a small herd on the snow leading to the wild little tarn, Hinaakjern. On the steep scree slopes above this tarn

my gillie and I came to a frozen waterfall, or water-slide, only some fifteen yards wide, but at an angle of something like 45°. The ice continued down to the tarn itself where there was practically no shore, and if we wished to find the reindeer we must cross somewhere. Sometimes I have carried and used an ice-axe when stalking. On this occasion I had none, but I had a 'tolle kniv,' or sheath knife, and with this I proceeded to cut steps across the frozen cataract. It was hard work with a rifle in one hand and a knife in the other, and progress was slow, as great care was necessary, but we got over in time, and were very glad to be on dry rock again.

The spoor led us over a ridge and into Simlehullet, in which is a very pretty little glacier. After advancing over some moraine we saw the herd, which, with the exception of their sentinel, were sleeping on the snow at the end of the cirque and just below a huge black precipice.

The wind favoured me, but nothing else, and well do I remember that interesting but most difficult and futile stalk; how I crawled along the steep mountain-side, inch by inch, hour after hour, up and down, over dry rocks or along wet shallow gullies, with my rifle sometimes in front of me, sometimes behind; and how, when I had all but arrived within shot, I knocked down a tiny flat stone, about the size of a five-shilling piece, which only rolled ten or a dozen feet, and the alarm was given at once. The herd raced over the little skar under Simletind and they were gone. It was a beautiful sight, well worth the hours of toil, and well worth the final disappointment too.

Vigdal and I felt our spirits to be in harmony with the weather, and, joy of joys, we had no horrid packs on our backs. We had time in hand, we felt the bliss of true freedom, and ran and glissaded down to Store Aadal for very joy of heart. Once there, we were both enchanted with the beauty of brightest blue gentians embedded in emerald green grass, where every plant seemed to be in bloom, and each individual flower, too, was wide open to catch the sunbeams.

'Like stars about our pathway  
They shine so pure and fair,  
Blooming in rich profusion,  
Greeting us everywhere.'

We had never been in Jotunheim in September before, and had no notion of the beauty of the flowers at this time. I was so overjoyed that, whilst Vigdal went on, I sat down on a rock for

three-quarters of an hour; to have sat on the grass would have been almost a profanity, and to walk, which meant to step on the flowers, was really painful to me. The little darlings all seemed to be singing in chorus, 'Welcome! welcome! This is the time to come here; the snows have all gone, and we are come to brighten the earth.'

Flowers are very companionable, and have often exerted a mysterious power over me. They have comforted and cheered me when tired, they have breathed hope and encouragement, and I love them dearly. I was once wandering alone upon Gjendetungen, which is, as many know, rather bleak and dreary. I was carrying a cruel load, and was rather down-hearted with having had poor sport for several days on the mountains. I saw a little dandelion—a plain old English dandelion. I put down my rifle and sack, sat down beside this homely little flower, and felt that I had found a friend which recalled a host of bright memories. Soon afterwards I found some lovely anemones, but they were no rivals of my dandelion.

We reached Gjendebod early, only too sorry that Marie had not shared in our success. In the evening the lake looked most bewitching, and tempted me to fish. However, the beauty of the scene was so absorbing that I thought little of my rod and line, and only caught two trout. Long after the sun had left us the whole heavens were flooded with a transparent crimson light, which also overshadowed the mountains. It faded slowly, very slowly away, through purple, orange, and greenish blue, to the deep, cold grey-blue of a frosty night.

I have seldom seen so beautiful an evening as this. The only ones which linger in my memory, as rivalling in beauty this sunset on Lake Gjendin, are two on the chain of Mont Blanc when bivouacking high up amongst the eternal snows, and one especially glorious night in Arctic Norway, where the colouring is even more beautiful than on the shores of Gjendin.

#### THE FIRST ASCENT OF MELKEDALSTIND

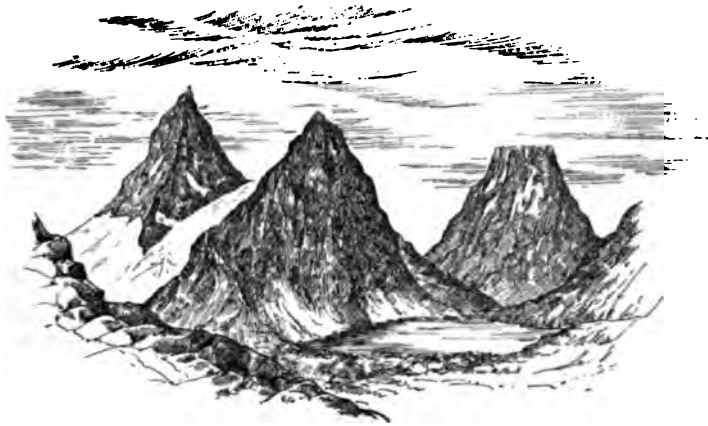
The morning after our ascent of Heilstuguhö, to our great surprise and bitter disappointment, was ushered in by light showers of rain, and veils of gauzy clouds lay folded round the Gjendin peaks. As the barometer was steady we still looked for fine weather. We were also due at Vormelid or Skjolden to join Herr Sulheim, and had engaged to climb the highest Styggedalstind

as well as some other peaks with him, so we determined to move on at least as far as the Guridal sæter to glean tidings of him.

For some years I had resolved to ascend the Melkedalstind, a lovely horn-shaped peak as seen from Skogadalsbøen, which often stood out clearly above the sea of clouds rising up from the humid Skogadal; and at such times, and they often occurred, an especial and distinctive grandeur was lent to this mountain which had impressed me very much. Clearly, the Melkedalstind was the next mountain for us to tackle, as it could be taken on our way to Guridal.

‘Farvel Ragnhild. Farvel Marie. Mange tak for en behagelig ophold, og tusind tak for selskabet paa Knutshultinden.’

‘Farvel. Farvel. Lykke til reise.’



*Melkedalstind and Raudalstind*

A map and compass did us good service on Gjendetungen, as, though the rain had ceased, we were enveloped in a thick mist, and steering on those wastes was difficult. There are many little streams which meander in and out and round about in a most perplexing manner. At first, each seems to lead towards Raudal, until one finds after following it a few yards that its course is probably completely reversed. However, by good luck, and by utterly ignoring the streams, we reached in good time the round tarn which lies between Raudalstind and Snehö, which I recognised, as I had made a sketch from its shores four years before.

I called a halt and told Vigdal that here was an ideal place to have lunch. He shivered; I shivered too. There was a cutting wind and no shelter. We were not particularly hungry. Neither

was there a view. Vigdal thought it strange that I ate my food so deliberately; and he kept looking down the Raudal, or rather into the mists which hovered over the tarn. I had once been over a low skar into Snehullet—the snow cirque—and that skar was close to us now. The Melkedalstind was up there too. Now Vigdal knew nothing of this. He thought we were merely crossing the fjeld to Guridal, and, as for other schemes, the idea was preposterous.

If only those wretched but happily uneasy clouds would take wings and fly away! I am certain that the patience which 'raises hope and smiles away despair' is a virtue that mountaineering does much to foster and ripen. Indeed, an impatient man will never make a good mountaineer until he gets rid of his impatience. Bide your time, and you'll get your peak six times out of seven. True, it may not be to-day nor yet to-morrow, perhaps not even this year or next; but, if it is worth anything, it is worth waiting for. We now stood in some need of replenishing our stock of patience, but at last we were partially rewarded. The coy milk-maiden up beyond the skar just pulled her veil aside to have a peep at us—only for an instant though, as she drew it still more closely about her lovely face. But beauty is not intended to be hidden, and she peeped at us again and again.

'Now Vigdal, what do you say? Down the Raudal or up there?' The Solvorn warrior pointed upwards, as I knew he would. No persuasion was needed. No. He too had seen the milkmaid, and he was keen to woo her, and to win her too.

At 12.20 we left the tarn, turned west, and were soon in the clouds. We had some good climbing over ice-polished rocks, and quickly reached the little glacier under the peak itself (that on the right hand in the sketch). From previous observations I knew the south arête (to the left in the sketch) to be the most promising, but as we had our knapsacks with us, and might wish to cut off a corner when coming down, we agreed to ascend to the top of the glacier on the eastern face, and to try to ascend from there. After a short steep ascent on perfect snow, where there were no visible crevasses, we reached the top of this little glacier at 1.25. We could only see about 200 feet up the mountain, as thin filmy clouds were chasing one another round and round the peak, but we had a reasonable hope that they would go away altogether by and by. For about 150 feet the way seemed clear, above that it looked bad. To go straight up we knew was impossible, as there was a perpendicular face of rock which we could see was an unsurmountable barrier. We however thought we

could climb a spur of rock some 200 feet and then turn the barrier by making a traverse along a broad ledge to the left. This would bring us to what I looked upon as being the only really doubtful part of the mountain, a black rock on which the snow never rests. If we were to fail I felt that it would be there. It is at the head of a steep gully not far from the top of the mountain. (In the sketch it is about the centre, above the little ridge which is seen dividing the glacier into two arms).

The mountain was covered with recent hard-frozen snow, and as the face which we had before us had a north-east aspect and was out of reach of the sun's quickening rays, it was bristling with ice as well.

Leaving our knapsacks we armed for the fray, and were soon hard at work hand and foot. It was bitterly cold, and as our gloves were full of holes we had to beware of frostbites. At first it was easy, then difficulties seemed to cluster around us and we put on the rope. Snow and ice had to be scraped or hacked off each rock upon which we had to tread, and the mountain grew steeper and steeper. Our choice of possible routes became limited, and we thought seriously of relinquishing our attempt. We were tempted into a gully or chimney, half filled with ice, and for twenty or thirty feet we got on well. Then it became very bad indeed. I was leading, and often required a shove from Vigdal, and now and then a shoulder too, and gave him a hoist up in return. How we hated that gully! How I hate the memory of it still! Icicles, like the spears of some mountain fiend, seemed all to be pointing threateningly towards us, and we felt it to be an uncanny place and one to be left as soon as possible.

Easier said than done, as mountaineers well know that of all places in the mountains a chimney is the worst to get out of when once committed to it. We only needed to ascend about fifty feet more in order to reach the broad ledge which we had seen from below, but how were those fifty feet to be passed? To get down by the way we had come we knew would be extremely difficult, perhaps even dangerous. It was surely worth a little struggle, especially as we knew that there was an easier route to descend by the south arête?

By a series of gymnastic wriggles, twists, and turns, much holding on by the knees and elbows, by sometimes ascending and at others descending, by work that seemed to call forth the whole of our muscles into play, during most exciting moments, when if we spoke at all it was only in monosyllables, we emerged from this horrible prison on to a broad ridge of rock again. This was

not *terra firma* yet, but those icy spears no longer pointed at us, and we could move both to right and to left. It was delightful to have a choice of routes even if only for a few feet.

We had now about forty feet of very difficult rocks to climb. One place was peculiarly uninviting—a place which would have just suited my old friend Halvar Halvarsen. As he was not present, it behoved me to do the work, and fortunately, with a month's training, I felt conscious of the power of doing it, and this knowledge was a great help in itself; whilst the presence of a brave man below, firmly anchored, and ever watchful of the rope, increased my power. The 'mauvais pas' was a rock face about fifteen feet high where there were only two little ledges. With Vigdal's help I reached the first, which was only large enough to hold part of one foot. He gave me the head of his axe to stand upon, then I straightened myself and reached a narrow rounded ledge about five feet above the first hold. I slowly drew myself up to the second platform, a narrow rounded ledge about five feet above the lower one. Then a short traverse round a corner without handhold brought me into good ground on a broad firm ledge just within a rope's length of Vigdal. I was not more than a couple of minutes in climbing the bad place, but even Vigdal with a rope above him found that it was not easy. Fast-scudding clouds below us hid the precipice from our view, and enhanced the wildness of the scene.

We soon gained the broad ledge which we had seen from the glacier, and though not very easy to follow, it led us into better ground to the left hand, and we got on rapidly. Then came the black rock which I have already mentioned. We saw that we could climb it, and that it would be an interesting feature of the ascent if it were made direct from out of Snehullet. By standing on Vigdal's shoulders I reached a ledge which led round to the south-west and so on to the top, which we reached at 2.50, or in one hour and twenty-five minutes from the top of the glacier, during most of which time we had been engaged on extremely difficult work though we had climbed very quickly.

To our great joy, the clouds all blew away as we approached the summit, and disclosed a view the beauty and variety of which cannot be surpassed even in Jotunheim. Old friends, one and all, seemed to bid us welcome. Uranaastind looked like a monarch, and his glaciers immense. I longed for the presence of one who had made with me the first ascent of that mountain five years earlier. His enthusiasm would have known no bounds had he been with us. Heilstuguhö looked as inaccess-



ible as ever, though we had proved its ascent to be so easy the day before. The Smörstabtinder and their icy surroundings glittered in the sunlight. The——, but I must name no more mountains.

We fully appreciated our good fortune in having really perfect weather. The clouds had been dispelled as if by magic, and every peak was visible, though some of the higher valleys were flooded with a sea of mist. There was a gauzy haze too, which overspread the mountains and was just sufficient to soften and blend together into one grand harmony the varied



*Møthedalstind*

tints, for which Norway is so justly famous, without obscuring a single peak.

There was plenty of room to run about and get warm on the top, and as much loose gabbro was lying about, we soon built our usual cairn. My aneroid showed 22·6 inches on the top, whilst at the head of the glacier it was 23·5 inches.

After a stay of half an hour we turned our backs regretfully upon this enchanted scene. We soon passed the awkward place near the summit by aid of rope and shoulders, and then we directed our course for some time towards Snehullet, but when the rocks became less steep we turned to the left, and so reached the

glacier, and soon afterwards our baggage, without encountering any especial mountaineering difficulty but what was easily overcome by caution, patience, and rough scrambling, where hand came to the relief of foot at every turn, and where one man now and then helped the other.

We had a gentle descent down the northern glacier, and reached the trough of the Raudal (red valley) at 4.10. The Utlå river, which is sometimes impassable, we waded over with ease, and reached Muradsæter at 7.10, and Guridal at 8.15. Here we stopped the night, and, if the truth be told, we wished ourselves back at Gjendin. Vigdal gave our hostess a taste of our soup. Apparently she possessed a dainty palate. Certain it is that she said it was horrible, and spat it out.

My boots, which I had used constantly during a month's mountain-climbing, were now, in two senses, 'on their last legs'; each had lost its outer sole and each had holes in the uppers, and though I could easily go on snow, walking on stones gave me much trouble. In spite of this, the following day we went nearly to the top of the Gjertvasbræ, within half an hour of the summit of Styggedalstind, then unclimbed, and would most certainly have completed the ascent but for the fact that I had promised Sulheim to climb it with him in a few days' time—a great mistake, as it proved to be. We descended by the Styggedalsbræ, thus making a new glacier pass parallel to the Keiser, and I limped down to Fortun and drove to Sulheim's house at Eide where another pair of boots awaited me. To my chagrin, Sulheim could not return with me to gain the victory which had all but been within our grasp, and as Vigdal's time was up I was obliged to leave Styggedalstind alone and go elsewhere.

This grand mountain was first ascended by Herr Carl Hall and two guides a couple of years later, but though I have attempted its ascent twice since, once up the Maradalsbræ, bad luck has on both occasions attended me, and I have not yet been upon its summit.

To come back to the peak of the milky valley. I expressed the opinion years ago that this mountain is one of the most graceful in Norway. I have five sketches of it, taken from different standpoints, and each one shows that the milkmaid is beautiful. As the mountain stands close to the route between Skogadalsbøen and Gjendin or Bygdin, it ought often to be ascended. So far, this has not been the case, and I am surprised that this is so; but the time will come when the ascent of the Melkedalstind will be a very favourite expedition. It can be climbed either by the skar

on the north, or by that on the south, from Melkedal or from Raudal.

Some of the Sogn reindeer-hunters misname the peak Raudalstind, but undoubtedly Melkedals-tind, or -næb, is the correct appellation, as the mountain belongs more to the two Melke-dale, over both of which it so proudly raises its lofty crest, than to the Raudal, from which valley the peak itself is more remote.

The ascents which I have described are only a very small portion of the grand mountain expeditions which can be made from Gjendebod, and even at this late hour there is good new work awaiting the mountaineer who is possessed of the happy knack of discovering and picking up the unconsidered trifles which often turn out to be real prizes well worth winning.

## CHAPTER XI

EMANUEL MOHN AND I JOURNEY TO RAUFJORD; DANCING IN NORWAY; EAGLES ON THORFINSTIND; NYBOD; GALDEBERGSTIND IN MIST; EIDSBOD; BURSTING OF A GLACIER TARN; ASCENT OF URANAASTIND; SKOGADAL—THE WOODY VALLEY.

‘*Montagnes de qui l'audace  
Va porter jusques aux cieux  
Un front d'éternelle glace,  
Soutien du séjour des Dieux :  
Dessous vos têtes chenuës  
Je cueille au dessus des nuës  
Toutes les fleurs du Printems,  
A mes pieds, contre la terre,  
J'entens gronder le tonnerre,  
Et tomber mille torrens.*'

DUC DE CAMBRAY.

'A certain degree of reverence for fair scenery is found in all our great writers without exception.'

RUSKIN.

DURING the long winter months of 1875 and 1876 my friend Emanuel Mohn and I had a voluminous correspondence, in which we laid the framework of a summer campaign in the wilds of Norway, which we were to undertake together. Our programme was certainly ambitious, and included the ascent of many a fine untrodden peak and the crossing of several unknown glacier passes.

As an outcome of this, I was heartily welcomed at the quay at Christiania on July 8th by my future 'fjeld kammerat.' Never have I had a pleasanter crossing over the uneasy and irritating North Sea, and never did I hear more astonishing yarns than were told in the smoke-room of the Wilson Liner which had just brought us over. M. Du Chaillu had a wonderful fund of anecdote, and was usually able to cap those told by other adventurers. The smoke-room on board ship, when the weather allows of it, certainly encourages story-telling, perhaps in two senses, and many a jolly hour have I passed hearing of adventures which have happened to men in all quarters of the world.

Mohn and I approached the Jotunfjelde by way of Valdres and Östre Slidre, a pretty route little known to English tourists. It was by this that the two actual discoverers of Jotunheim, Professor Keilhau and his friend, K. Boeck, entered the magic circle in 1820.

As we left the sun-warmed valley, the higher we got the fresher was the air, and one by one the bright Alpine plants welcomed us home to the mountains. Four days after leaving



RAUFJORD, ON LAKE BYGDIN, THORFINSTIND AND KALVAAHÖGDA

Christiania we reached the south-eastern gate of Jotunheim, Raufjord, a sheltered creek at the eastern end of Lake Bygdin. The name Raufjord, or red fjord, after the redness of the iron-stone on the shore, shows that, as is the case with the Scotch 'loch,' the word 'fjord' does not necessarily imply that the sheet of water to which it refers is an arm of the sea. In this case it is a portion of a large Alpine lake, 3430 feet above sea-level. However, I know no other sheet of water designated a fjord so far removed from, or so high above, the sea.

Here is the so-called Raufjord Hotel—a cosy log hut, 24 feet

by 20, with two rooms and four or five beds—a place I am very fond of. It belonged, when I first knew it, and I believe does still, to Knut Lykken, a well-known reindeer hunter and mountain guide, whose services we had engaged for two or three weeks.

As Knut had gone down to his farm to mend his boots, and would not be back for a couple of days, we agreed to do a little climbing without him. We selected Kalvaahögda, a fine massive mountain, for our first walk. With two lusty rowers our boat sped quickly across the creek and entered the stormy Bygdin. In two hours we reached Hestvolden, a wretched 'fælæger,'<sup>1</sup> where we found its two occupants hard at work smoking on a bed of hay. After a pleasant chat, we hied to the fells and soon reached a little glacier. A storm came on, but as we could almost see blue sky through it, we hurried upwards, and twenty-five minutes later we shook ourselves dry in sparkling sunshine on warm rocks, whilst a sea of mist obliterated all sight of the world below, save when through a rift we could see the deep-blue Bygdin. We had a capital view of the Thorfinstinder, and saw that none of the three peaks were to be trifled with. We planned one route up the little hanging glacier on the east side, from which a steep gully leads up to a gap between two of these pretty aiguilles—a tempting route which, strange to say, has not yet been taken, though I have often suggested it to climbing friends.

From the ridge of Kalvaahögda we had what Mohn rightly called a wonderful 'overraskelse,' or surprise—a view through thick clouds of the wild séracs of the Leirungsbræ. A stone dropped from the edge of this cliff took close upon ten seconds before it struck the ice 1500 feet below us. Perpendicular precipices of so great a height as this do not exist in the Alps. In Norway they are not uncommon, and are very impressive. We were denied a view of the crags of Knutshultind just across the grim Leirungsdal; but I saw them the following year from near the same place when reindeer-stalking. Kalvaahögda, which had several times been ascended, is 7160 feet in height, or 3730 feet above the lake, and though its ascent from Lake Bygdin is very easy, it is quite certain that on the other side some first-rate climbing, including glacier, couloir, and rock work, may be indulged in. Mohn's sketch of a portion of this mountain, which he called 'Leirungsapen,' in *Nor. Tur. For. Aarbog* for 1872, p. 32, shows this.

On our return to the lake we had great difficulty in launching boat, and finally we had to leave one of our rowers, who

<sup>1</sup> A fælæger is a cattle-drover's hut; and a fækar, or fækarl, is the cattle-

followed along the shore and was taken in later on after many a vain attempt.

We had a ball in the evening. True, the orchestra consisted solely of a Jew's harp and a boy whistling; but there was energy in it, there was life, fire, and enthusiasm, and the boys in turn danced with the one belle in the 'spring-dands' with a vigour which did them infinite credit. I was not personally initiated into the mysteries of this dance until a year later, when I joined in this and other dances one Sunday evening at Nystuen. 'Shocking!' I hear somebody saying. To which I reply, 'When in Rome,



Thorsteinind from Kalvaahögda

do as the Romans do.' 'When in Turkey, do as the Turkeys do.' In Norway, Sunday begins at 6 o'clock on Saturday evening and ends at 6 on the Sunday evening. In the 'spring-dands,' the couples walk round the room hand in hand until, at the dictation of the music, the girls whirl quickly round and round several times under one of their own and their partner's arms; first they turn to the right, then to the left, then they take a trot or two round the room; the whirling comes on again as before, and lastly a polka brings it to a conclusion. When a good many are dancing it looks very pretty. The 'Halling,' an acrobatic dance only performed by males, in some places is very popular. Amongst other eccentricities in the dance is that of kicking down a hat suspended some distance above the dancer's head, followed by a

back somersault. Not many years ago this dance was known in our own village in Yorkshire.

Knut came in during our festivities, a wiry little man with merry twinkling eyes, and a great look of the sportsman about him. He had a venerable pair of leather breeches which I fancy he had inherited from a remote ancestor, a thick homespun wadmél coat and waistcoat with many buttons, a woollen scarf, thick warm stockings and shirt, a long oilskin macintosh, and a soft hat and warm woollen gloves. He had never seen an ice-axe before, and was much struck with the neatness and handiness of those we had brought, as well as with the Alpine rope.

#### THE ASCENT OF THORFINSTIND

During several days we had bad weather and high winds at Raufjord, which made boating on Bygdin too dangerous to attempt, though the surface of the neighbouring Strömvand was barely ruffled. One day I climbed Bitihorn, a deservedly famous 'belvidere'; but, for the most part, time hung rather heavily on our hands. It was a lemming year, and we saw thousands of these pugnacious little rodents, also scores of the hawks, snowy owls, and eagles, which always follow in their train.

All fishing in Bygdin and the neighbouring lakes is done by netting, and the takings are very large. I have tried fly-fishing, but without success; still, I am not much of a fisherman. The natives say that fish never take a fly there. This I doubt, as I have seen more than one 'otter' with its manifold flies in Bygdin huts. In fact, I have used an 'otter' myself several times on Gjendin, when 'fishing for the pot' was more desirable than fishing for sport.

One evening the clouds rolled away from the Thorfinstinder, and we determined to be off early the next morning. Soon after we went to bed, to our consternation three batches of tourists came trooping in, and sleep for the next two or three hours was out of the question. Food had to be cooked and eaten, clothes to be dried, pipes to be smoked, and confusion reigned supreme. However, they were right jolly fellows, and it was a pleasure to meet them.

Next morning, though the wind was high, I pointed to our wished-for goal then cloud free, and said that the weather was perfect, and after a time I persuaded Mohn that it was so too. With half a dozen Norse tourists we were rowed across the Raufjord and on to the big lake, where however, as it was much too



rough for a boat to live, we were forced to land. We walked along the treeless north shore at a great pace as far as Nybod, where at the actual base of the Thorfinstinder are a 'fælæger' and a sportsman's private log hut.

From here the mountain looks very grand, and menacing as well. No other mountain range from the shores of Bygdin can compare with it. The poet, O. Vinje, once stayed eight days at Nybod merely to admire its crags and pinnacles. Above the lake, for some 1700 feet, are steep grass slopes, with a few crags to break the monotony. Then come 200 feet of scree, and, above that, wild time-furrowed crags of the Sgurr-nan-Gillean type much exaggerated, which are crowned by dark pinnacles connected with each other by narrow curtains of rock. Three main gullies or ghylls have been chiselled by Nature in the face. In some places they are too steep for snow to lie in them, but where there was snow, it showed traces of many a cannonade from the fantastic peaks above. The real top is invisible from Nybod, and but for Knut we should not have known which high crag possessed it. It is, however, that in the centre which the Fækarer term 'Bruden' (the bride), whilst the rival peaks on each side are called the 'Brudefølge,' or the Wedding Procession. (Many a jagged ridge in Norway rejoices in the latter name.) In the case of the Thorfinstinder, the wedding presents appear to be very numerous, as each of the many attendants bears some precious gift, such as a pendant or jewelled casket, in the shape of the countless little snow-spangled minarets and spurs which form the crest of this beautiful mountain.

The Fækarer naturally enough said that the mountain was inaccessible. Knut thought there was a remote chance of success, and said that the only way would be to storm the actual face of the mountain by one of the gullies. By two of these we could trace a probable route to within a couple of hundred feet of the top ridge. Beyond this, there were most unpromising smooth walls with a *cheval de frise* at the top. With the help of Mohn's excellent little telescope, and after a long study, we concluded that the middle gully offered the best chances of success.

We went quickly up and over the green slopes and lower crags, where a pair of noble eagles soared round and round over our heads, just like lapwings at home, until we had passed their eyrie.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On two occasions I have been within a few feet of an eagle. Once, when I was stalking a herd of reindeer, an eagle rose up barely three or four yards away. Though it was a remarkably easy shot I did not pull the trigger, and consequently succeeded shortly afterwards in securing a reindeer. The other occasion

Then came the screes, and we had another short study of the problem in front of us. Knut declared that the right hand ghyll was the best, and he was probably right. I prospected the centre gully some little way and found no stoppage, but as the danger from falling stones was very likely greater than in the other case, I soon rejoined the others.

Below the gully, large and smooth slabs of rock rose out of the screes without a foothold for many feet, but under Knut's careful guidance we managed to make a traverse over a slab just below the mouth of the gully, 1890 feet above the lake. The view of the many minarets, small and great, literally over our heads, was very wild, but little stones which came pattering down the gully dictated caution, as the day was hot, and we were under the direct influence of the sun which would unlock many small stones which had been frozen fast during the previous night.

The ghyll throughout was very steep, and at first offered us no choice of routes. We were in a trough, and must keep there. Now and then snow came as a relief to the rotten rocks at the bottom, but here and there it was so thin that each of us occasionally broke through and almost disappeared. We used the rope very early; Knut led, I came next, and then Mohn. After issuing from a very narrow portion of the ghyll we came to an irregular basin with horrid rocks on every side. Above smooth, rounded slabs of rock were some large snow patches; over these rose a fearful jagged-topped wall several hundred feet in height, and beyond, we knew, must be the summit, not far away.

Knut, who was a capital cragsman, was much puzzled, and well he might be, as there was little encouragement to be gained. On the right there was certainly a pretence at a gully, but the looseness of the rocks and probability of an avalanche made me object very much to it; besides which, it might after all probably only lead to a minor peak, from which it might be impossible to gain the 'brud' herself.

As an alternative, I proposed a route to the left over a snow patch on some smooth and slippery but firm rocks to a little chimney, apparently leading behind a buttress and on to the wall itself.

We untied the rope, and Knut and I went to prospect—he to

was in a pine forest near the Grand Paradis in the Graian Alps, when our party surprised an eagle which was looking down a precipice. It hardly deigned to turn round to look at the intruders, but quietly soared away amongst the crags below. I have often seen these noble birds comparatively near, but only on these two occasions have I surprised them close at hand.

the right, I to the left. After a time, Knut shouted out that his way would go, but that it was unsafe. Meanwhile, I had crossed the snow patch, and, with the aid of my axe, had climbed a smooth boss of rock and had crept along a broad safe ledge where overhanging rocks prevented me from walking, and had discovered that the wee chimney was most hopeful. I shouted out my discovery and descended to the top of the boss of rock, and, when firmly anchored, I lowered my spare rope to Mohn, who soon came up. Then I sent it down to Knut, but the reindeer-hunter's pride would not permit him to use a rope on a place where a foreigner had preceded him without one, and he nimbly scrambled up 'disdainful of danger,' if any existed.

Mohn told me afterwards that when Knut saw me climbing up the boss he said, 'Han er gal, Engelsmanden,' and 'Han dræper sig, Engelsmanden,' which I will not here translate.

After crossing the crawling ledge, we reached the little chimney or 'kamin,' where we had some interesting zigzagging, and no danger, and all at once we found ourselves on the narrow frost-riven arête. Then we turned a little to the east, made our way over an easy snow-slope several acres in extent, but which from Kalvaahögda appeared as a mere white dot, to some lichen-crowned rocks, on which we could walk without using our hands—then a novelty to us—and we all three stepped together upon the highest slab where never man before had trod, and the bride was won.

'Thus fortune on our first endeavour smiled.'

This was Mohn's first maiden peak, and his enthusiasm was unbounded. Never before or since have I seen any man in such raptures with the beauty of Nature. It was delightful to hear the eloquence of a man who in the valleys was rather reserved than otherwise. The words 'glimmren udsigt' were probably the most commonplace which he made use of.

Only those who knew Mohn amongst his native mountains can realise even in a small degree what these mighty works of God meant to him. Never was their grandeur, never was their exquisite beauty on a still summer's evening more appreciated, and never will they be more appreciated by any son of Norway, than they were by Emanuel Mohn, whose friendship, now that he has gone to his long rest, I look back upon as one of the great privileges of my life, and shall always cherish the memory of his companionship as a most treasured possession.

We had been exactly three hours from Nybod. The height of

Thorfinstind is 7046 English feet above sea-level, and 3616 feet above Bygdin. The view comprises the grandest peaks of wild Jotunheim from almost their very grandest point of view. In addition to rock, ice, and snow, blue lakes and green pastures form a peaceful variety.

Knutshultind, which Knut had ascended the previous year with Herr Heftye, rose as a mighty pyramid above an ice-clad tarn in Svartdal, just north of us. Amongst numberless interesting sections of the view, the Smörstabtinder claimed our attention, and four of them seen end-on looked like the sharp spikes of some colossal railing whose posts were hidden from view by an intervening ridge. Stölsnaastind and the Falke-næbbe together formed an exquisite and well-defined crescent, with the concave side uppermost, which was strangely beautiful. For half an hour the Horungtinder were obscured. Then slowly the clouds crept down the mountain-sides, and the peaks themselves stood like dark islets out of a stormy sea, a beautiful sight twenty-five miles away.

Galdebergstind, then unascended, so plainly beckoned us to climb its ice-bound ridge that we determined to take it on our way to Eidsbod the following day.

We went some way on the north-western arête to see what other routes were practicable, but saw little to encourage us to attempt to descend either by way of the hanging glacier on the Thorfinsdal side or towards Langedal. Still, I believe both of these ways are feasible. After the usual cairn was erected, we started down and found that great care was necessary, and that the little cairns which we had erected on the ascent in order to mark the route were most useful. In an hour and three quarters we reached the screes below the gully, and were greeted by the pair of eagles at exactly the same place where they had left us on the ascent. A long glissade helped us merrily along to Nybod, which we reached in two and a half hours from the summit. A bathe in the lake increased our appetite, which was barely satisfied with a meal of fladbröd and butter and chocolate boiled in milk.

#### THE ASCENT OF GALDEBERGSTIND

Knut slept with the fækarer in their mud hut. Mohn and I shivered in that of wood, as I have done once since then.

We turned out early the next morning. The beautiful bride above us was enfolded in her bridal veil; my aneroid had fallen two-tenths during the night, and our prospects were not very

bright. Still, Nybod without blankets and bedding did not tempt us to prolong our stay, though it is an admirable centre for many grand expeditions, so we trudged off over a bleak moorland where we crossed a river by a snow-bridge, and saw reindeer spoor in all directions.

Knut seemed to be able to read, at a glance at the footprints, how many deer there were, their age, the number of does and calves, and other details. In the soft ground from which the snow had recently melted he pricked the footprints of foxes, and here and there of a glutton, the reindeer's foe. Later in the day, we found the mangled remains of a reindeer which had most probably been run down by a glutton, whose spoor Knut pointed out to us. These gluttons are really horrible vermin of a large size which do not scruple to kill sheep and goats. I was told of one case where a flock of twenty-five sheep jumped over a cliff and were killed, in order to escape from the dreadful fangs of one of these beasts which was chasing them.

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For a bye-day we walked to the tourist hut of Tvindehougen on Lake Tyin, only three miles away, from which there is a lovely view of the Koldedal peaks. Gudbrand, the 'opsynmand,' or man in charge—a tall, well-built man—was in high glee because he had recently sold to an Englishman an old powder-horn on which a horse and other figures were carved. The horn originally had

by 20, with two rooms and four or five beds—a place I am very fond of. It belonged, when I first knew it, and I believe does still, to Knut Lykken, a well-known reindeer hunter and mountain guide, whose services we had engaged for two or three weeks.

As Knut had gone down to his farm to mend his boots, and would not be back for a couple of days, we agreed to do a little climbing without him. We selected Kalvaahögda, a fine massive mountain, for our first walk. With two lusty rowers our boat sped quickly across the creek and entered the stormy Bygdin. In two hours we reached Hestvolden, a wretched 'fælæger,'<sup>1</sup> where we found its two occupants hard at work smoking on a bed of hay. After a pleasant chat, we hied to the fells and soon reached a little glacier. A storm came on, but as we could almost see blue sky through it, we hurried upwards, and twenty-five minutes later we shook ourselves dry in sparkling sunshine on warm rocks, whilst a sea of mist obliterated all sight of the world below, save when through a rift we could see the deep-blue Bygdin. We had a capital view of the Thorfinstinder, and saw that none of the three peaks were to be trifled with. We planned one route up the little hanging glacier on the east side, from which a steep gully leads up to a gap between two of these pretty aiguilles—a tempting route which, strange to say, has not yet been taken, though I have often suggested it to climbing friends.

From the ridge of Kalvaahögda we had what Mohn rightly called a wonderful 'overraskelse,' or surprise—a view through thick clouds of the wild séracs of the Leirungsbræ. A stone dropped from the edge of this cliff took close upon ten seconds before it struck the ice 1500 feet below us. Perpendicular precipices of so great a height as this do not exist in the Alps. In Norway they are not uncommon, and are very impressive. We were denied a view of the crags of Knutshultind just across the grim Leirungsdal; but I saw them the following year from near the same place when reindeer-stalking. Kalvaahögda, which had several times been ascended, is 7160 feet in height, or 3730 feet above the lake, and though its ascent from Lake Bygdin is very easy, it is quite certain that on the other side some first-rate climbing, including glacier, couloir, and rock work, may be indulged in. Mohn's sketch of a portion of this mountain, which he called 'Leirungskampen,' in *Nor. Tur. For. Aarbog* for 1872, p. 32, shows this.

On our return to the lake we had great difficulty in launching our boat, and finally we had to leave one of our rowers, who

<sup>1</sup> A fælæger is a cattle-drover's hut; and a fækar, or fækarl, is the cattle-drover.



followed along the shore and was taken in later on after many a vain attempt.

We had a ball in the evening. True, the orchestra consisted solely of a Jew's harp and a boy whistling; but there was energy in it, there was life, fire, and enthusiasm, and the boys in turn danced with the one belle in the 'spring-dands' with a vigour which did them infinite credit. I was not personally initiated into the mysteries of this dance until a year later, when I joined in this and other dances one Sunday evening at Nystuen. 'Shocking!' I hear somebody saying. To which I reply, 'When in Rome,



*Thorfinstind from Kalvaahögda*

do as the Romans do.' 'When in Turkey, do as the Turkeys do.' In Norway, Sunday begins at 6 o'clock on Saturday evening and ends at 6 on the Sunday evening. In the 'spring-dands,' the couples walk round the room hand in hand until, at the dictation of the music, the girls whirl quickly round and round several times under one of their own and their partner's arms; first they turn to the right, then to the left, then they take a trot or two round the room; the whirling comes on again as before, and lastly a polka brings it to a conclusion. When a good many are dancing it looks very pretty. The 'Halling,' an acrobatic dance only performed by males, in some places is very popular. Amongst other eccentricities in the dance is that of kicking down a hat suspended some distance above the dancer's head, followed by a

back somersault. Not many years ago this dance was known in our own village in Yorkshire.

Knut came in during our festivities, a wiry little man with merry twinkling eyes, and a great look of the sportsman about him. He had a venerable pair of leather breeches which I fancy he had inherited from a remote ancestor, a thick homespun wadmel coat and waistcoat with many buttons, a woollen scarf, thick warm stockings and shirt, a long oilskin macintosh, and a soft hat and warm woollen gloves. He had never seen an ice-axe before, and was much struck with the neatness and handiness of those we had brought, as well as with the Alpine rope.

#### THE ASCENT OF THORFINSTIND

During several days we had bad weather and high winds at Raufjord, which made boating on Bygdin too dangerous to attempt, though the surface of the neighbouring Strömvand was barely ruffled. One day I climbed Bitihorn, a deservedly famous 'belvedere'; but, for the most part, time hung rather heavily on our hands. It was a lemming year, and we saw thousands of these pugnacious little rodents, also scores of the hawks, snowy owls, and eagles, which always follow in their train.

All fishing in Bygdin and the neighbouring lakes is done by netting, and the takings are very large. I have tried fly-fishing, but without success; still, I am not much of a fisherman. The natives say that fish never take a fly there. This I doubt, as I have seen more than one 'otter' with its manifold flies in Bygdin huts. In fact, I have used an 'otter' myself several times on Gjendin, when 'fishing for the pot' was more desirable than fishing for sport.

One evening the clouds rolled away from the Thorfinstinder, and we determined to be off early the next morning. Soon after we went to bed, to our consternation three batches of tourists came trooping in, and sleep for the next two or three hours was out of the question. Food had to be cooked and eaten, clothes to be dried, pipes to be smoked, and confusion reigned supreme. However, they were right jolly fellows, and it was a pleasure to meet them.

Next morning, though the wind was high, I pointed to our wished-for goal then cloud free, and said that the weather was perfect, and after a time I persuaded Mohn that it was so too. With half a dozen Norse tourists we were rowed across the Raufjord and on to the big lake, where however, as it was much too

rough for a boat to live, we were forced to land. We walked along the treeless north shore at a great pace as far as Nybod, where at the actual base of the Thorfinstinder are a 'fælæger' and a sportsman's private log hut.

From here the mountain looks very grand, and menacing as well. No other mountain range from the shores of Bygdin can compare with it. The poet, O. Vinje, once stayed eight days at Nybod merely to admire its crags and pinnacles. Above the lake, for some 1700 feet, are steep grass slopes, with a few crags to break the monotony. Then come 200 feet of screes, and, above that, wild time-furrowed crags of the Sgurr-nan-Gillean type much exaggerated, which are crowned by dark pinnacles connected with each other by narrow curtains of rock. Three main gullies or ghylls have been chiselled by Nature in the face. In some places they are too steep for snow to lie in them, but where there was snow, it showed traces of many a cannonade from the fantastic peaks above. The real top is invisible from Nybod, and but for Knut we should not have known which high crag possessed it. It is, however, that in the centre which the Fækarer term 'Bruden' (the bride), whilst the rival peaks on each side are called the 'Brudefølge,' or the Wedding Procession. (Many a jagged ridge in Norway rejoices in the latter name.) In the case of the Thorfinstinder, the wedding presents appear to be very numerous, as each of the many attendants bears some precious gift, such as a pendant or jewelled casket, in the shape of the countless little snow-spangled minarets and spurs which form the crest of this beautiful mountain.

The Fækarer naturally enough said that the mountain was inaccessible. Knut thought there was a remote chance of success, and said that the only way would be to storm the actual face of the mountain by one of the gullies. By two of these we could trace a probable route to within a couple of hundred feet of the top ridge. Beyond this, there were most unpromising smooth walls with a *cheval de frise* at the top. With the help of Mohn's excellent little telescope, and after a long study, we concluded that the middle gully offered the best chances of success.

We went quickly up and over the green slopes and lower crags, where a pair of noble eagles soared round and round over our heads, just like lapwings at home, until we had passed their eyrie.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On two occasions I have been within a few feet of an eagle. Once, when I was stalking a herd of reindeer, an eagle rose up barely three or four yards away. Though it was a remarkably easy shot I did not pull the trigger, and consequently succeeded shortly afterwards in securing a reindeer. The other occasion

Then came the screes, and we had another short study of the problem in front of us. Knut declared that the right hand ghyll was the best, and he was probably right. I prospected the centre gully some little way and found no stoppage, but as the danger from falling stones was very likely greater than in the other case, I soon rejoined the others.

Below the gully, large and smooth slabs of rock rose out of the screes without a foothold for many feet, but under Knut's careful guidance we managed to make a traverse over a slab just below the mouth of the gully, 1890 feet above the lake. The view of the many minarets, small and great, literally over our heads, was very wild, but little stones which came pattering down the gully dictated caution, as the day was hot, and we were under the direct influence of the sun which would unlock many small stones which had been frozen fast during the previous night.

The ghyll throughout was very steep, and at first offered us no choice of routes. We were in a trough, and must keep there. Now and then snow came as a relief to the rotten rocks at the bottom, but here and there it was so thin that each of us occasionally broke through and almost disappeared. We used the rope very early; Knut led, I came next, and then Mohn. After issuing from a very narrow portion of the ghyll we came to an irregular basin with horrid rocks on every side. Above smooth, rounded slabs of rock were some large snow patches; over these rose a fearful jagged-topped wall several hundred feet in height, and beyond, we knew, must be the summit, not far away.

Knut, who was a capital cragsman, was much puzzled, and well he might be, as there was little encouragement to be gained. On the right there was certainly a pretence at a gully, but the looseness of the rocks and probability of an avalanche made me object very much to it; besides which, it might after all probably only lead to a minor peak, from which it might be impossible to gain the 'brud' herself.

As an alternative, I proposed a route to the left over a snow patch on some smooth and slippery but firm rocks to a little chimney, apparently leading behind a buttress and on to the wall itself.

We untied the rope, and Knut and I went to prospect—he to

was in a pine forest near the Grand Paradis in the Graian Alps, when our party surprised an eagle which was looking down a precipice. It hardly deigned to turn round to look at the intruders, but quietly soared away amongst the crags below. I have often seen these noble birds comparatively near, but only on these two occasions have I surprised them close at hand.

the right, I to the left. After a time, Knut shouted out that his way would go, but that it was unsafe. Meanwhile, I had crossed the snow patch, and, with the aid of my axe, had climbed a smooth boss of rock and had crept along a broad safe ledge where overhanging rocks prevented me from walking, and had discovered that the wee chimney was most hopeful. I shouted out my discovery and descended to the top of the boss of rock, and, when firmly anchored, I lowered my spare rope to Mohn, who soon came up. Then I sent it down to Knut, but the reindeer-hunter's pride would not permit him to use a rope on a place where a foreigner had preceded him without one, and he nimbly scrambled up 'disdainful of danger,' if any existed.

Mohn told me afterwards that when Knut saw me climbing up the boss he said, 'Han er gal, Engelsmanden,' and 'Han dræper sig, Engelsmanden,' which I will not here translate.

After crossing the crawling ledge, we reached the little chimney or 'kamin,' where we had some interesting zigzagging, and no danger, and all at once we found ourselves on the narrow frost-riven arête. Then we turned a little to the east, made our way over an easy snow-slope several acres in extent, but which from Kalvaahögda appeared as a mere white dot, to some lichen-crowned rocks, on which we could walk without using our hands—then a novelty to us—and we all three stepped together upon the highest slab where never man before had trod, and the bride was won.

'Thus fortune on our first endeavour smiled.'

This was Mohn's first maiden peak, and his enthusiasm was unbounded. Never before or since have I seen any man in such raptures with the beauty of Nature. It was delightful to hear the eloquence of a man who in the valleys was rather reserved than otherwise. The words 'glimmren udsigt' were probably the most commonplace which he made use of.

Only those who knew Mohn amongst his native mountains can realise even in a small degree what these mighty works of God meant to him. Never was their grandeur, never was their exquisite beauty on a still summer's evening more appreciated, and never will they be more appreciated by any son of Norway, than they were by Emanuel Mohn, whose friendship, now that he has gone to his long rest, I look back upon as one of the great privileges of my life, and shall always cherish the memory of his companionship as a most treasured possession.

We had been exactly three hours from Nybod. The height of

Thorfinstind is 7046 English feet above sea-level, and 3616 feet above Bygdin. The view comprises the grandest peaks of wild Jotunheim from almost their very grandest point of view. In addition to rock, ice, and snow, blue lakes and green pastures form a peaceful variety.

Knutshultind, which Knut had ascended the previous year with Herr Hefty, rose as a mighty pyramid above an ice-clad tarn in Svartdal, just north of us. Amongst numberless interesting sections of the view, the Smørstabtinder claimed our attention, and four of them seen end-on looked like the sharp spikes of some colossal railing whose posts were hidden from view by an intervening ridge. Stölsnaastind and the Falke-næbbe together formed an exquisite and well-defined crescent, with the concave side uppermost, which was strangely beautiful. For half an hour the Horungtinder were obscured. Then slowly the clouds crept down the mountain-sides, and the peaks themselves stood like dark islets out of a stormy sea, a beautiful sight twenty-five miles away.

Galdebergstind, then unascended, so plainly beckoned us to climb its ice-bound ridge that we determined to take it on our way to Eidsbod the following day.

We went some way on the north-western arête to see what other routes were practicable, but saw little to encourage us to attempt to descend either by way of the hanging glacier on the Thorfinsdal side or towards Langedal. Still, I believe both of these ways are feasible. After the usual cairn was erected, we started down and found that great care was necessary, and that the little cairns which we had erected on the ascent in order to mark the route were most useful. In an hour and three quarters we reached the screes below the gully, and were greeted by the pair of eagles at exactly the same place where they had left us on the ascent. A long glissade helped us merrily along to Nybod, which we reached in two and a half hours from the summit. A bathe in the lake increased our appetite, which was barely satisfied with a meal of fladbröd and butter and chocolate boiled in milk.

#### THE ASCENT OF GALDEBERGSTIND

Knut slept with the fækarer in their mud hut. Mohn and I shivered in that of wood, as I have done once since then.

We turned out early the next morning. The beautiful bride above us was enfolded in her bridal veil; my aneroid had fallen two-tenths during the night, and our prospects were not very

bright. Still, Nybod without blankets and bedding did not tempt us to prolong our stay, though it is an admirable centre for many grand expeditions, so we trudged off over a bleak moorland where we crossed a river by a snow-bridge, and saw reindeer spoor in all directions.

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Ah! Little can the climbers of to-day who revel in the flesh-pots and sleep in the luxurious beds at the inns at Turtegrö or in the tourist huts at Skogadalsböen or Berdal, and who cross the furious glacier rivers on substantial bridges, realise how formidable were the sub-Alpine difficulties with which we, in the early seventies, had to contend, and without which, though we should have had less fun and fewer adventures, we should have probably doubled the number of the maiden ascents which fell to our lot.

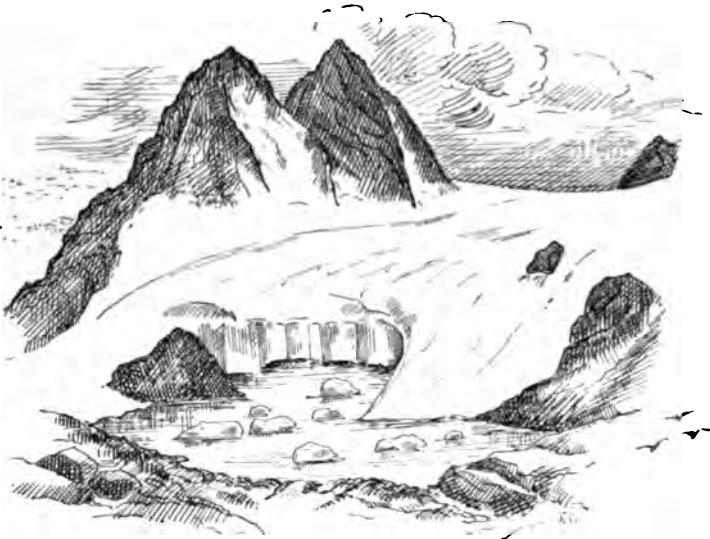
For a bye-day we walked to the tourist hut of Tvindehougen on Lake Tyin, only three miles away, from which there is a lovely view of the Koldedal peaks. Gudbrand, the 'opsynmand,' or man in charge—a tall, well-built man—was in high glee because he had recently sold to an Englishman an old powder-horn on which a horse and other figures were carved. The horn originally had

Anno 1669' well marked upon it. Gudbrand, sly dog, got a burning-glass, burned out the figure 9, and then put the figure 1 at the left hand, which made the date of the horn to be 1166. We take it for granted that the powder used in the reign of King Henry II. was smokeless.

We bought a large and heavy tin of preserved meat from Gudbrand, which I engaged to carry over Uranaastind, our next mountain.

#### THE ASCENT OF URANAASTIND

We left Eidsbod in the early frosty morning at the same time as Herr Dietrichson, the editor of the *Nor. Tur. For. Aarbog*. His



Uranaastind and Tarn

last words were, 'Take care not to break your . . .' The final word was suggested by holding his neck with both hands. When we saw him step into the leaky boat which was to convey him over the deep waters of Bygdin, we felt surer than before that the mountain paths were the best, and probably the safest.

Our route took us over Langeskavlen—the long snow-heaps—a hummocky hill containing too many ups and downs, which after a time developed into a broad ridge between the Uranaasbræ to the left, and the Melkedalsbræ on the right. The latter terminates in a weird tarn, the renowned Melkedalsvand, on which little icebergs may usually be seen floating. One arm of

the Uranaasbræ does the same, but I question whether any other tourist besides myself has seen it. I only popped on it quite suddenly when stalking.

The Uranaastind rises precipitously from the snows of the large Uranaasbræ, and when we first saw it it was wreathed with light cloud drapery. At noon we put on the rope. Knut led, Mohn came next, and I, heavily laden mortal, came last, bearing the meat-tin from which we expected so much. As usual, we had seen plenty of fresh reindeer tracks, and after going a short way on the snow we saw a small herd just under the opposite crags. They looked like mere specks, but with Mohn's glass Knut made them out to be one doe, six young bucks, and one doe calf. Knut longed for his rifle and August 1st, the opening day, and said he could easily have stalked them—a statement which we did not believe. They soon detected us, and cantered off to the ridge which we had left.

We steered for a gap north of the peak, and had an hour's snow trudge, during which a slight snowstorm passed over us. The crevasses were not very troublesome, though they afforded us some interest. A bergschrund, very wide and glittering with icicles, had, as is so often the case, one weak place in its armour, and we got over by making a big jump, and soon reached the skar, 2918 feet above Bygdin. Here we left our knapsacks and turned south. The last 500 or 600 feet were steep, and consisted of loose blocks of gabbro, which were covered on the windward side with little hard-frozen snowy plumes like countless sprigs of *Deutzia*. Snow plumes can often be seen in the Alps in changeable weather; but to see them in perfection one must go where there is a damper climate, such as in Cumberland, the Western Highlands of Scotland, Norway, or I suppose the west coast of New Zealand, or probably better still, on the mountains of *Tierra Del Fuego*. The most beautiful which I ever saw were one day in April years ago on Sca Fell Pike, where the north or windward side of every rock and stone was fringed with horizontal feathers of ice, many of which were fully eighteen inches long, and all were gilded by bright sunshine. They are doubtless formed by a sharp frost freezing a wild driving mist.

The ridge, broad at first, narrowed to a mere knife-edge of loose stones which demanded steady going. If a stone were loosened, it was a question whether it would fall on to the glacier, or down the dark western cliffs. The top is a flat ridge about one hundred feet long. The highest point was then probably about the centre. Professor E. Sars had a great wish to make the

first ascent of this peak, but was unable to accompany us, as he had intended doing, owing to rheumatism and professional duties, so I proposed to Mohn that we should leave the actual top still untrodden, so that Sars might still make it his own. As Mohn thought it unnecessary to do so, we stepped on the top together.

On this narrow and crumbling ridge Mohn proved himself to be a fearless and sure-footed mountaineer, and was quite as much at his ease on the top of this treacherous mountain-wall as he would have been behind the battlements of a Norman tower.

Uranaastind is 7035 feet above sea-level, and it affords one of the best views in Jotunheim. To the west, just beyond the grim cañon of Utladal, may be seen the grandest side of the Horungtinder, and far beyond them the wavy and subtle lines of the Justedalsbræ. North and east are a grand array of storm-battered peaks and weird aiguilles. South and south-east are Lakes Tyin and Bygdin, which look their very best from this vantage-point.

This view, however, was then denied to us, though we sat shivering in a cold wind waiting for the clouds to blow away for a good hour. Then we hurried down, and I climbed alone a little peak beyond the col whilst the others waited there for me. I never went so fast in my life, and I had a rich reward, as, when close to the top, the clouds lifted, and I had probably the finest view I had seen up to that time. The peak, which Mohn named after his English companion, is only 390 feet lower than Uranaastind. The latter looked grand from here, rising proudly on the one side out of a pure white snowfield, and on the other, with horrid black cliffs, from a tarn still blacker, save where a tiny iceberg floated on its surface. Tyin, sunlit, blue, and beautiful, could be seen for many miles. But no more now. A hastily built cairn, and off I went, and soon glissaded close to the top of the broad pass connecting the Uranaasbræ and the Skogadalsbræ, which may safely be termed the Uranaasbræ skar.

The view from this pass was magnificent, and to any one who cares to know its details I refer him to the *Nor. Tur. For. Aarbog* for 1876, p. 90, also to the *Aarbog* for 1872, in which is the reproduction of a sketch by Mohn of the Horungtinder from Langeskavlen, which is much the same view of one portion.

The top of the Skogadalsbræ was pretty steep, and there were some wide and deep crevasses. The snow too was soft, and when we came to the flatter portion below, it was horribly slushy. My meat-tin was very heavy, and I often thought of letting it roll quietly out of sight, until I remembered that sæters were to afford us board and lodging for some days to come, and that for hard

mountain-work we required muscular tissue, which surely ought to issue from the tin.

The glacier terminates much as the Mer de Glace now does, on the top of some high and smoothly polished crags. Before we reached these we had to cut many steps down the glacier snout. Knut then cleverly picked out a feasible but irritating way down on the right bank. A flat walk of three miles, and a very difficult crossing of the Skogadöla, and at 6.30 we reached the stone-built sæter huts of Skogadalsböen. Mohn bathed in the river. I was much too tired, and sat down admiring the birch-trees, which give the name Skogadal—the woody valley—to this place, having seen no trees near at hand since entering Jotunheim.

After the inevitable milking was ended my meat-tin was opened, and it gave us an excellent meal. The sæter sæl—one of two—was the reverse of luxurious. It had three rooms, the first for milking and cooking, the second for living and sleeping in, and the third for embryo and completed cheeses. It was built of stone and had mud floors, and as it had no chimney the smoke oozed out through a dry wall, the doorway, and a small hole in the roof. In addition to the usual girls, who were most hospitable, three men were there. As Mohn, Knut, and I had to occupy a bed which was small for two, sleep was out of the question. Nowadays, as I have often proved, tourists can spend many days in great comfort at the tourist hut at Skogadalsböen, a hut which is to all intents and purposes practically an inn, admirably kept by two girls and a man or two, under the direction of Herr Sulheim.

Our expedition had been a great success, and all who see the lovely pyramid of Uranaastind for the first time from a boat on Tyin will agree that we did well not to leave it for others. The pass had probably been crossed by reindeer hunters before us.

On August 21st, fourteen years later, Hastings and I attempted to make the ascent from the tourist hut with the two girls who were in charge of it, Ronnaug Garmo and Anne Aukrust. As bad luck would have it, a heavy fog came on when we were climbing the Skogadalsbræ; still, on and ever on we went. We climbed two new peaks, the Smuke Jentetind and the southern Melkedalspig, the latter only a few feet lower than Uranaastind, but to tell the truth we missed the latter entirely, and only saw it through a rift in the clouds. We, however, had a narrow snow ridge to traverse and some capital rocks to climb, and when we got back to the hut we all agreed that we had had a glorious day, and had done well to lose our way.

Four days later Hastings and I set off again, accompanied by Miss Dickinson, Miss Wickham, Mr. Hartley, and Herr Sulheim. We surprised a herd of reindeer on the glacier in the fog, cut down into, and up out of, a very sensational bergschrund, which charmed the ladies, and did, this time, actually reach the top, but still in the clouds, through which, however, we had now and then most sensational views. My compass and the map would not agree at all. Another compass was tried a few feet away. It told a different tale. A third was requisitioned, and a third different reading was the result. When the compasses were changed, each showed in its new position the reading of its predecessor. The presence of iron on many mountain-tops in Norway renders a reference to the compass of no avail. This ascent was also most enjoyable.

Uranaastind is now often climbed; and the admirable photograph of the Horungtinder, taken on the summit by Mr. T. C. Porter, shows what a wonderful place it is for a view.

In August 1896, Dr. and Mrs. T. K. Rose and Mr. C. C. B. Moss ascended the mountain by its steep southern ridge,<sup>1</sup> a very fine expedition, and a good rock climb. The final 400 feet occupied exactly an hour, and must have severely taxed the powers of the party. They descended by the same route.

In July 1889 Herr Sulheim, in company with a plucky Frenchman, made the first ascent of the northern Melkedalspigger, which have a much serrated ridge, which suggested to Sulheim the name of Sagen—the saw. This fine range bounds the north-eastern side of the Skogadalsbræ, and as I saw it once in its winter garb, is a most impressive-looking mountain of the Rymfischhorn character.

Skogadal was formerly a favourite hunting-ground with reindeer hunters, and many a time have I seen fresh spoor, and now and then the reindeer too. Many years ago a man named Johannes, who at that time lived at Vormelid, was reindeer-stalking in this valley in spring, and suddenly came upon a large bear, which stared at, and then made a spring at him, which he avoided, and then fired. Bruin fell into the river, each side of which was still frozen. Johannes shot him three times in the neck when struggling in the water, but without effect, as the bullets glanced off the bone. At last he fired under the ear, and poor Bruin died. Without head and skin he weighed 240 Norse pounds.

One day Johannes killed four reindeer with three bullets.

<sup>1</sup> *Alpine Journal*, vol. xviii. p. 333.

However, a wiry old hunter with whom I have been on the chase, swears that one winter he ran upon ski right into the middle of a herd on the Veobræ, and killed four reindeer with one shot. I have been told of another similar case. At any rate, it may be truthfully asserted that the above are 'hunters' tales. Two deer are, however, not infrequently killed with one bullet.'

## CHAPTER XII

THE FIRST PEAK ASCENDED IN THE HORUNGTINGER RANGE; THE  
WELCOME TO VORMELID; A WELL-EARNED PIPE

'And long the way appears, which seem'd so short  
To the less practised eye of sanguine youth;  
And high the mountain-tops, in cloudy air,  
The mountain-tops where is the throne of Truth.'

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

## THE GJERTVASTIND AND VORMELID

THE day after our ascent of Uranaastind was to be Mohn's benefit; we were to climb, if possible, the Gjertvastind, the ascent of which Mohn had set his heart upon more than that of any other peak in Jotunheim, and it was agreed that, in case success met our efforts, Mohn should have the honour of first stepping upon the highest point, whilst a similar favour was to fall to my lot if we climbed Skagastölstind. Each was pledged to help the other to the utmost to gain the prize in view.

The tinned meat which had been carried from Tvindehougen formed the *pièce de résistance* at breakfast; indeed, we should have been badly off without it. Though up at six we did not get under weigh before eight o'clock, and delays were the order of the day. After going a mile or two, a telescope was missed, and a return to the sæter was necessary.

Half an hour's walk brought us to a bridge over the Utle, which we crossed. It was a novelty to us. Then came the Gjertvas stream, which was very high and difficult to ford. On a later occasion, I saw a man fall in this river and he was carried down about one hundred yards, but escaped with nothing more serious than a complete wetting. The day was fine, but the tops were mostly cloud-capped. Gleams of golden sunshine striking mossy slopes of spotless verdure, the red rocks at the mouth of Raudal (the red valley), and greyish-blue cliffs, combined with foam and cloud, showed exquisite colouring which recalled the Western Highlands of Scotland.



At nine o'clock we reached the ruins of the abandoned sæter Gjertvasbøen, the actual base of the mountain. Mohn planned the route, and a very good one it was, almost due west over a naasi called Klövbaklien. The old Aintskart shows a large glacier upon this, which apparently flows east. This does not exist, but there is a little one which drains south and throws its terminal séracs down upon the Maradalsbræ. We soon reached a belt of snow, then steep but good rocks, which brought us to the little glacier I have just mentioned. Here we got our first sight of the summit far ahead through a break in the clouds, and very fine it looked, an irregular cone. Our naasi gradually narrowed, became steeper, and had apparently four snow belts including the little glacier.

A line of crags rose straight out of this glacier, apparently inaccessible; but on the right, near the head of the glacier, they were lower and possessed a promising snow gully. We made for this, and after cutting up some hard-frozen snow we reached it and had some good fun, as it was steep and narrow, and afforded an opportunity for Knut to try his prentice hand at step-cutting.

As we ascended the interest increased, as it always ought to do when ascending any properly constructed and well-behaved mountain. The ridge grew narrower, in one place almost sensationally so, and the blue crevasses of the great Maradalsbræ could be seen through occasional cloud-rifts at least 1000 feet below the sheer wall on which we stood. Across this glacier two weird monoliths, the Maradalstinder, rose also straight out of the ice; one of these some years later afforded a good climb to Dr. Claude Wilson and other friends,<sup>1</sup> whilst the other, now named Jomfrue, gave an equally good climb to a French climber and Herr Sulheim.<sup>2</sup> We sat down, and whilst Mohn smoked I sketched, until, in a moment, all the view had vanished. Have we been dreaming? No; a narrow lane of light reveals a portion of a glacier, and soon all is gloom again; but it is cold, and a shiver suggests an advance. We erect little cairns here and there to guide us on our return, and have many interesting rocks to climb, then we come to a peerless and steep crest of snow reposing upon a narrow rock ridge. There is no cornice here, and the snow-crest is guarded on each hand from a fall of destruction by rows of firm rocky teeth on the verge of the cliffs.

At 2.15 Mohn had the satisfaction of being the first man to stand on the summit of his well-beloved mountain. Though we had often seen the Gjertvastind in profile, and knew that there

<sup>1</sup> *Alpine Journal*, vol. xiii. p. 153.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. xiv. p. 508.

was a great precipice in place of a western ridge, we were hardly prepared for the reality. Within a few yards of the summit a little rock platform runs out into space, and a stone simply dropped, not thrown, over the edge, touches nothing for the long period of nine and a half seconds, when it strikes the ice some distance from the base of the cliff. We heaved many rocks over the edge and timed their flight very carefully, by sight not by ear. The actual calculation for a fall of  $9\frac{1}{2}$  seconds gives 1440 feet, but to avoid exaggeration we will say that this slightly overhanging precipice is 1400 feet in height. Where is there such another? Possibly on Glitretind, but even if it be still higher, it is not so sensational, as it cannot be seen in profile against the sky. Can Lauterbrunnen, the Grandes Jorasses, the Zinal Rothhorn, or the Petite Aiguille du Dru rival this? Perhaps not in the same line, but in other respects. Ah! I love the Alps almost as much as I love Norway. 'Comparisons are . . .'

At first a sea of tempestuous clouds dashed against the crags and whirled through the gap just below us, covering us with cloud foam, and the stones which we threw over the edge disappeared from sight long before we heard the crash. Fancy the horrors of a nightmare in which a dive is being made into such a sea! Horrible! Fortunately, mountaineers never seem to visit the scenes of their adventures in dreamland, and it is well that this is the case, otherwise members of the Alpine Club would be unpleasant bedfellows.

Seen from the south-east, even as far as from Lake Tyin, Gjertvastind, or the eastern Styggedalstind, as it was called when we climbed it and for many a long year afterwards, has the appearance of a half cone cut down from the apex to the base. The piece—the small half, by the way—which has been cut away, seems to have been carried away bodily to the extreme west of the Horungtinder, where it now exists as a very fine mountain which bears the name of Austabottind, but it has lost height in the transit. After a long wait, a dismal ghost clad in white appeared through the clouds beyond the precipice and vanished in a moment, only to reappear shortly afterwards. This was Store, or the great, Styggedalstind, a grand peak which has persistently defied me. Bit by bit we saw the whole of the Maradalsbræ, the finest glacier in the chain, and the noble mountains which overlook it, but the siren Skagastöltind never once withdrew her veil.

At 3.45 we started off again, and, when some little way down, I suggested as a variety that we should descend to the great

Gjertvasbræ by a steep tongue of glacier which comes up close to the arête. Knut, who was in a most boisterous humour, said he was ready for anything, but Mohn, the wisest of the three, pointed out that we had plenty of work before us with Skagastölstind the following day, as, much to our chagrin, Knut declared that he could only spare one more day to be with us. So prudent counsels wisely prevailed, as the suggested sporting route would have entailed much step-cutting, and we returned by the way we had come and had many most enjoyable glissades. At 5.35 we regained civilisation in the form of our knapsacks and soon were greeted by graceful birch and alders, most of which were down-beaten by winter snows.

A walk of two or three miles through lovely sylvan scenery in the trough of Utladal brought us to Vormelid at seven, well pleased with our day's work.

In 1889 I repeated this ascent, this time with three ladies and three men, from and to the tourist hut at Skogadalsbøen. We took six and a quarter hours up and four and a quarter down.

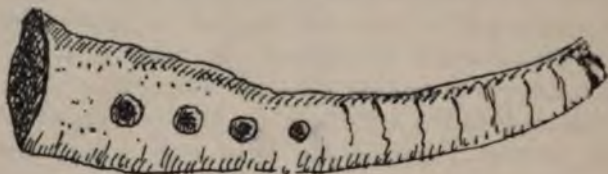
At Vormelid there are two sæter huts, one belonging to my friend Herr Thorgeir Sulheim, who lives at the pretty farm-house of Eide at Skjolden, and is a lineal descendant of King Harald Haarfager, and many another grim old warrior, and the other to another farmer in the valley of Fortun, for be it remembered that the gorge between Vormelid and Vetti, only seven miles lower down, is impracticable, and hence the exceedingly rich pasturage which abounds about Vormelid must perforce be grazed by cattle which are driven a distance of twelve hours from the home farms near sea-level, and over the snowy Keiser pass 4920 feet above the fjord.

Formerly, Vormelid was a gaard or farm inhabited by two families, some members of which, weary of the dreadful solitude, emigrated many years ago to America. In winter they were entirely cut off from the rest of the world for months, and the cattle were frequently buried in snow-drifts even in the early summer months. The so-called 'dead man's ride' occurred at Vormelid. I extract the following translation of an account of it in Norse from *Sketches of Life, Scenery, and Sport in Norway*, by Rev. M. R. Barnard, B.A.

'It was the first death that ever occurred there, for the inhabitants of Vormelid were always shifting. Death, however, at last asserted its dominion by carrying off a young lad of seventeen. The coffin was made, the corpse duly placed in it, and everything was ready for a start; then for the first time it struck the people

that to convey the dead in it to its last resting-place was an absolute impossibility. After turning over in their minds every conceivable plan, they at last resolved to leave the coffin at home as a *memento mori*, and to convey the dead man on horseback to church. In fact it was the only feasible plan. So they fastened the legs beneath the horse's belly, laid a sack of hay across the neck, so that the dead body could lean on it, and in this way carried it to church'—the old Fortun's kirke, which was removed a few years ago to Fantoft, near Bergen.

Two pretty rosy-cheeked lassies called Live and Oliva welcomed us to Sulheim's sæter. These girls came from the parish of Lom, a guarantee that their habits were clean and tidy, and our porridge, coffee, and milk were served to us in most fanciable crockery on a beautifully clean-washed table. The principal room was light and airy, and only needed a boarded floor to be luxurious. There was one bed which was set apart for Mohn and myself, whilst Knut and the girls went to the other hut. In addition to the usual sæter furniture were a gun or two, and a little cannon



BEAR SCARER

which was occasionally used to scare the bears. Some horns were also used for the same purpose as well as to call the cattle. Bears always have been and probably always will be a source of great annoyance at Vormelid, and many are the adventures which have befallen the old dwellers there.

One of the last men who used Vormelid as a farm, Kristoffer Tomassen, one day years ago missed eight goats and went with a girl to Kirkestigen to look for them. The girl gave a shriek, and Kristoffer, who was on a big rock, then saw a great bear plucking 'rogne bær,' rowan berries, close to. The bear sprang at the man and bit his foot. He was unarmed, and only carried a sack and a rope, with which he struck the bear, which enraged the beast so that it pulled him off the rock and bit his shoulders and arms. Then he drew his 'tolle kniv' and, oddly enough, this frightened the bear and it ran away. Kristoffer crawled home, a distance of about three miles. This is the only case which I have heard where a man has been injured by a bear in Utladal, though many



*The Horungttinden  
from the Sulefjnd*

*After the water colour drawing  
by the late Mr James Backhouse*

men have shot them, and the sæter girls, times without number, have frightened away these unwelcome visitors. I shall have more to say about Herr Bamsen, as Bruin is called, later on.

During the seven years, from 1869 to 1876, in which Sulheim had held one of the sæters of Vormelid, no stranger had visited this verdant amphitheatre but ourselves, and for several years after, I was the only visitor, and I think I am probably right in saying that, until our arrival, the only persons who had been to this fascinating place were Mr. James Backhouse and his son, who made a most adventurous botanical tour in the year 1851, when Mr. Backhouse, junr., made a remarkable painting of the Horungtinder range from the Suletind during the total eclipse of the sun. They were fortunate enough to meet a bear near Vormelid, which piece of good-luck has never fallen to my lot, though I have often just missed seeing one.

After as good a meal as the sæter produce, supplemented with Liebig and chocolate, could afford, Mohn, with a pipe in his mouth, and a Greek play in his hand, looked as happy as a bumble-bee in a foxglove. He had climbed the peak on which, above all others, he had set his affections, and I could not help a feeling somewhat akin to jealousy. Was my peak also to be conquered as Mohn's and Sars's had been? The weather, though fine, was undoubtedly treacherous, and all depended upon the next day, as Knut, on whose sturdy legs, well-knit muscles, and vigorous lungs I so much depended, was obliged to leave for home two days hence, and it was perhaps now or never. Is it to be wondered at that I hammered away at the old maxim, 'Early to bed and early to rise,' to little purpose unfortunately? My companions were too comfortable. We had made four new ascents in five days. Why hurry? Yet another birch log on the fire, another pipe, and—confound it all—another dram, and 'late to bed——' is the maxim. At this time, and for several years after, I was a teetotaler. Oddly enough, a few years ago nearly every Yorkshire member of the Alpine Club was a total abstainer, and several excellent climbers amongst them are so to this day.

A short description of the situation of Vormelid and its surroundings I think is necessary.

The range of the Horungtinder owe much of their especial grandeur to the fact that on the south side the Utlå River has, during countless ages, carved out of the gneiss rock the deep ravine of Utladal, probably the wildest gorge in Norway. Its principal features are its narrowness and depth, and the grand waterfalls in the many lateral glacier streams which tumble their icy waters

almost, and in one case, straight, into the Utle itself. In a length of some ten English miles there are four grand waterfalls on the north side, and four on the south, and in only one case, that of the Maradalsfos close to Vormelid, can the valley above be reached from below by following the side of the river which drains it.

The precipices rise on each side very steeply, and here and there nearly perpendicularly from the river, to a height varying from 1200 to nearly 3000 feet. Usually they are clad with Scotch firs, birch, and some aspens; in other cases they are gaunt, naked walls of rock. The river for some six miles between Vetti and Vormelid forms almost the only bottom of the gorge so effectually that between these two places there is no communicating path, and this portion has only once been completely traversed, by a man then living at Vormelid, who took advantage of an exceptionally hard winter, and walked on the ice and snow-bound river the whole way. As I shall have to relate, I failed to accomplish this feat myself.

In two places the gorge opens out to a width of perhaps half a mile, and here nature has given scope for agriculture on a limited scale. These are at Vetti and Vormelid. In one respect Vormelid has the advantage over Vetti. It is on the sunny side of the gorge, and is in a most verdant and beautiful amphitheatre, though no one seeing it from the slopes of Friken would credit it. The gorge generally goes by the name of the Vettis gjæl (or gjel), *i.e.* the ghyll of Vetti, as we should call it if we had the good fortune to possess it in the north of England. I know of no gorge in the Alps which is at the same time so narrow and deep, and which possesses for so great a distance such unclimbable precipices as the Vettis gjæl. The Val de Bagnes at and above Mauvoisin partakes somewhat of the same nature, but it is not so beautiful as Vormelid. The gorges in Glarus and some other limestone parts of the Alps are very grand, but none of the very narrow ones possess such varied beauty as the ghyll of Vetti. The lovely Klönthal is only wildly precipitous on one side, so cannot be termed a gorge, nor, for the same reason, can the beautiful Gadmen Thal. Even now, but few people have visited Vormelid, but those few have been much impressed with the beauty as well as with the grandeur of its surroundings. Some time it will be connected with Vetti by a driving-road which will be continued over the Keiser Pass, but I for one shall never see it.

## CHAPTER XIII

A LATE START; A CLOUD-FILLED VALLEY; A NEVER-TO-BE-FORGOTTEN SIGHT; WE HURRY TO THE FOOT OF THE MOUNTAIN; KNUT DOES NOT LIKE THE NOTION OF CLIMBING THE GLACIER; MOHN AND I AGREE ABOUT THE ROUTE; FOOTPRINTS ON THE SNOW; WHO HAS PRECEDED US? A DIFFICULT CREVASSE; STEEP SNOW; I AM IMPATIENT; MY COMPANIONS ARE TIRED AND SAY THAT THE MOUNTAIN IS IMPRACTICABLE; A SOLITARY CLIMB REWARDED BY SUCCESS; A SMALL CAIRN IS BUILT; THE DESCENT; ARE WELCOMED BACK TO VORMELID

'When time, who steals our years away,  
Shall steal our pleasures too,  
The memory of the past will stay  
And half our joys renew.'

THOMAS MOORE.

## THE ASCENT OF SKAGASTÖLSTIND

WHETHER it was the result of the hardness and narrowness of the bed, the thoughts of joyful conquest, or of ignominious defeat which alternately crossed my brain, or a guilty conscience, I cannot pretend to say, but when I unrolled myself from my Scotch plaid, and crept from under the sheepskin coverlet at three o'clock, on the morning—ever memorable to me—of Friday, July 21st, 1876, I did not feel that early rising was exceptionally virtuous. How could I do so, when I heard the musical voices of the bright-eyed Live and Oliva calling their cattle to come and give their rich store of morning milk? No, I felt that though Mohn had won his laurels, mine depended on the day before us, and I longed to be up and doing, and to get the most I could out of Knut on this his last day with us, as we had every reason to believe that the ascent of Skagastölstind would prove to be very severe. Vormelid is only about 1600 feet above the fjord at Aardal, and as Skagastölstind is 7874 feet, there was a considerable ascent to be made, in addition to the crossing of a high spur, before the actual base of the mountain could be reached.





*Skagastínd from East Ringstind.*



Early rising, when mountaineering, is not of such prime importance, in the almost nightless days of July in Norway, as it is in the Alps in the same month; still, when we waved an adieu to our hostesses, we could not help feeling that seven o'clock was at least two hours later than it ought to have been. However, as may be inferred from the heading of this chapter, 'All's well that ends well' is an axiom that may rightly be associated with this day.

Though the barometer had risen during the night, the weather was unpromising, and all the neighbouring heights were enshrouded with dense clouds. Knut said, 'You cannot climb anything to-day,' to which I replied, 'Possibly not; but we must go and do our best, and for anything we know, the whole of the higher Horungtinder may even now be quite clear above the clouds.'

I have often started for a high mountain from out of the mists of a low valley and have had a glorious day both in Norway and in the Alps. Low-lying clouds alone should never prevent climbers from starting. Some of the most enjoyable days I have ever spent amongst the eternal hills have been when in the early morning, if not during the whole day, the tops have been screened off from the view of those in the valleys. Twenty-four years ago my guides and I had a grand day on the Weisshorn, and revelled in golden sunshine, whilst the whole Visp valley was full of clouds, and when we got down to Randa we heard that a violent thunder-storm had been raging off and on most of the day, and the signs of recent heavy rain were unmistakable. Though just above the thunder-cloud, we had neither seen the lightning nor heard the thunder. On another occasion, five separate parties started from the Riffelberg about 2 A.M., for five different expeditions, and all were successful; that in which I was a member climbed Castor and Pollux. Meanwhile, the numerous mountaineers at Zermatt got up, looked out, and seeing nothing but heavy clouds, went to bed again, and were fearfully jealous when they heard that we had all been successful.

When, in 1898, Hastings, Haskett-Smith, Hogrenning and I made the ascent of the Lenangentind—or Storebotntind—probably the finest mountain in arctic Norway, we climbed through clouds into bright sunshine, which, by the way, we enjoyed at midnight on the summit. This condition is probably more often met with on mountains near the warm waters off the west coast in Norway, than in most regions. I have often experienced it on the lovely mountains that rise out of the blue waters of the Hjørundfjord. The Cumbrian, Welsh, Irish, and Western Highland mountains well know how to add to their beauty by the judicious use

of cloud-drapery, nor are our Yorkshire fells a whit behind their loftier fellows in this respect.

As Knut was evidently tired, owing to hard work and a succession of bad nights, I engaged to carry both my own rope and one of his, as well as most of the food. A steep, zigzagging cattle path led us easily alongside a fine cataract, the Maradalsfos, into the Maradal, a short valley so far as vegetation is concerned, which is headed by the Maradalsbræ. This is the finest glacier in the range of the Horungtinder, and several grand mountains rise out of its cold ice, one being the Gjertvastind, on whose snowy crest we had been the previous day.

At the top of the fos, which is 1295 feet in height, just above the birch-tree limit, and where the dwarf willows begin to grow, we called a halt, nominally to admire the view, but in reality because our limbs and lungs demanded it. Truly it was a fair picture to look upon, the peaceful sæter, with cattle and goats browsing around it in greenest of pastures; the foaming river Utle below, here a tempestuous rapid, there a deep pool; then, beyond the river, crag piled upon crag, terrace upon terrace, where until some rude avalanche shall suddenly come and sweep them away, grow the sombre pines and graceful silvery birches, which blend in most harmonious colours with the purest emerald of the mosses, and the rocks of greyish blue and brown. Other crags, as black as darkest winter's night, formed a strong contrast to the snows, the gauze-like cloud veils and the milk-white cataracts. Of sunshine there was little, and up the valley, where we were to go, clouds reigned supreme, and left much for our lively imaginations to picture.

A short rest sufficed, and Mohn led us up the valley. Amongst the rocks we found many large plants of *Angelica archangelica*, each of which had its top recently eaten off by a bear, whose footprints were plainly visible where the ground was soft. Since then I have often been to Vormelid, and have invariably seen fresh traces of Herr Bamsen.

A short distance from the glacier we turned to the left, to cross the buttress of Rolandsnaasi, then we descended 314 feet into a valley, which was there and then dubbed the Skoddedal—cloud-valley—where we could not see twenty yards in front of us. The ground was new to us all, and the maps were faulty, so we erected many diminutive cairns to guide us on our return. The weather was decidedly unpromising, we could see nothing, and nearly ran our heads against the base of that grim obelisk, the eastern Maradalstind.

Mohn and I had often noticed that, after being enveloped in thick mist for nearly a whole day, the higher Horungtinder frequently shone out with double beauty late in the afternoon or evening, and we told Knut that such would be the case to-day, though I fear we thought otherwise.

'A little gale will soon disperse that cloud,  
And blow it to the source from whence it came :  
Thy very beams will dry those vapours up ;  
For every cloud engenders not a storm.'

On nearing the top of a second ridge, 3276 feet above Vormelid, we found that the higher we got, the lighter were the clouds, so I ran forward to the highest point, and saw a most glorious sight.

Across the cloud-filled Midt Maradal were the serrated ridges of the Midt Maradals and the Dyrhougs-tinder, which form a colossal and nearly perpendicular wall, between 2000 and 3000 feet in height. The contrast which the top of this black wall showed to the white clouds below was wonderful. I shouted to Mohn and Knut to hurry up, and when they arrived they shared my delight.

Soon after their arrival we saw the trough of Midt Maradal, 1500 feet below us. At the lower end of this valley there is excellent grazing land, usually a mine of wealth in Norway. However, in this case the herbage is left to the bears, which are in the main herbivorous, and not carnivorous animals, and to an occasional reindeer buck which has crossed the Skagastölsbræ, at the risk of losing his life in the bergschrund on the north side of the pass. Certain it is that, in the year 1877, Anfnd Vetti, the owner of this valley, who had seen it thousands of times across the Uvla gorge, not half a mile off as the crow flies from his sæter near the top of the Vettis fos, had at that time never been in this romantic valley, and asked me to guide him into it.

Clouds again swept up the valley and for a few minutes blotted out the whole of the view. Then a grand and inaccessible-looking peak, a continuation of our ridge, appeared.

'Is that Skagastölstind?' we all exclaimed. We could only see the top, and the clouds lent it such additional grandeur that we had no proper conception of its height, nor of its relative position. It disappeared from our view as quickly as it had come, and all was gloom again once more.

After a minute or two, a truly noble aiguille appeared, a never-to-be-forgotten sight. Further doubt was impossible. This

was Skagastölstind, and the former peak, Mohn rightly said, was only one of the Maradalstinder. Another peak then appeared between the two, and for a while each seemed to be floating in clouds.

The marvellous panoramic changes caused by the drifting of the cloud curtains are far beyond my descriptive powers. Suffice it to say that we gazed in wonder and bewilderment until the guardian clouds were dissipated, and in a few moments all was clear.

Our excitement and anxiety were intense, as may be easily imagined. No thought of fatigue now. No memory of the meagre fare, the hard beds, and the short snatches of fitful sleep,



Skagastölstind

with which we had perforce been contented during the last ten days, now remained. No. Our task lay unfettered before us, and without a word being spoken, we began scrambling at noonday down the rugged crags into Midt Maradal.

A walk of a mile or so over horrible débris brought us at one o'clock to the flattened snout of Midt Maradalsbræ, at the actual base of our mountain, and 4396 feet from the top. Here we lunched in the glowing sunshine, and carefully reconnoitred the proposed route. The guiding was all left to me, as Skagastölstind was considered to be my special mountain, though of course I consulted the others.

The grandeur of Midt Maradal is in great measure due to the fact that the lowest pass across the range of the Horungtinder happens

to be close to the highest mountain, and entirely cuts it off from its near western neighbours, and this mountain is only connected with the peaks on the eastern side of the pass by a narrow ridge 518 feet below the summit. Hence, too, Skagastölstind possesses a delightful isolation. It rises majestically some 3000 feet above the head of the pass, and out of two fine glaciers, the Midt Maradalsbræ, which I have already named, and the Skagastölsbræ on the north side. There is also a much steeper and wilder glacier, descending like a cataract of ice from the heights of the eastern range. This glacier skirts the south-eastern walls of Skagastölstind, and Norse mountaineers, with the generosity of their race, have honoured me by associating it with my name. At the time of which I write, this glacier ended abruptly at the top of a line of crags 60 or 70 feet in height, over which the terminal séracs fell, and formed the nucleus of a minute secondary glacier below. The stream which drained the glacier made a waterfall into the snow, and added variety to the wild scene. Since then the icy foot has been withdrawn a little way up the mountain, though some other neighbouring glaciers undoubtedly have advanced, and still maintain their forward position. It was this rugged glacier that my sister and I had seen in the distance the previous year, and had considered to be the natural highway to the summit.

I proposed that we should cross the fan of the lower glacier which overlapped the junction of the stream from its neighbour with the valley, that we should climb up a little gully between two bosses of rock, which would lead us on to the right bank of our wished-for icy highway, and so gain the glacier itself. In fact, it was our only chance thus late in the day, though a few years later the route, which is now almost universally followed, was discovered entirely by rocks from the Midt Maradalskar—also called Bandet, the band—on the south-west.

On looking upwards, we saw a narrow belt of dark rocks at the head of the glacier which separates it from a steep snow-slope above. Here we apprehended difficulty, and Knut said, 'De kan ikke komme frem der, sneen er alt for brat.' (You cannot get forward there, the snow is much too steep.) I replied, that it was the only way where there was even the ghost of a chance, and that we must try it. Mohn loyally supported me, as he and I, having both seen the mountain from the north, thought that there was no possibility of climbing it on that side, whilst Knut, who had never been near it before, was inclined to think 'our best as bad.' The snow-slope leads up at a very steep angle to a gap or skar, rather more than 500 feet from the top, and though from the base we

could not see whether it continued further up the mountain, as it was hidden by a projecting crag, we rather expected a chimney, or a friendly ridge, to lead from the skar to the summit. The south-eastern face rises almost perpendicularly out of the glacier, so nothing could be done there.

We had no difficulty in crossing the fan of the lower glacier, and soon got up the gully, and on to a spur which separates the two glaciers. Here great caution was requisite, as the rocks were smooth and steep. We presently reached a snow-patch which we had to cross—where we saw before us footsteps! Crusoe's surprise at finding footprints in the sand could not have much exceeded ours. Horrid thought! 'Have we been forestalled?' 'Is some unknown party of mountaineers now on the top?' 'Surely not; we must have heard if other climbers were in this wild region.' A close inspection revealed the fact that they were the fresh tracks of a bear. What Bruin could have been doing up there, out of the way of all vegetation, we could not divine, but there were his traces, quite recent too. Perhaps he, too, was on a tour of exploration, or possibly we had frightened him the previous day, when we threw stones down the overhanging precipice of the Gjertvastind. He had proceeded in the direction we were taking, and when we reached the glacier a few minutes later, we found his tracks again, and followed them to our advantage, through an intricate maze of crevasses, until they turned off towards the lower crags of Centralind.

I have very often seen spoor of a bear on Norse glaciers, and on two occasions have followed them as we did here, and feel quite certain that Bruin understands the hidden dangers of the snow-fields almost as well as we do ourselves. Probably a bear is a better glacier-guide for human beings to follow than a chamois. It is certain that, though I have never been led wrong by the former, I have on one occasion got into great difficulties by following a chamois, when descending from the Aiguille du Plan.<sup>1</sup>

We had some interesting step-cutting through some séracs where a jutting crag contracted the glacier. After this, we turned a little to the left quite under Skagastölstind, which towered proudly 3000 feet above us. Hardly any débris seemed to have fallen from this awful precipice on to the glacier; a good sign for us, which suggested firm rocks above, whilst on the other hand an avalanche thundered down to the far side of the glacier from the ridge above it, and echo answered echo again and again.

<sup>1</sup> *My Climbs in the Alps and Caucasus*, by A. F. Mummery, p. 203.





*Skogastölutind from Midt Maradal.*



Near the top of the glacier, there about 500 yards wide, a large crevasse stretched nearly across. Where we first reached it about the middle of the glacier, it looked like a ravenous, open-jawed monster, awfully deep and ready to swallow a whole Alpine Club. As there were no snow-bridges here, we followed it to the western side where the friction of the rocks had broken down the snowy wall and had partially choked up the crevasse. Here we made sure of crossing. In the best place, however, there was a wall of névé, 12 feet high, above the snow in the crevasse. My companions anchored themselves safely and paid out my rope while I climbed down into the hollow. Twice I cut my way up the wall, but though I cut a dozen large steps, I could not get over on the top, as the snow, at that late hour of the day, was too soft for my ice-axe to hold in, and twice I came down again to the soft snow in my fruitless endeavours. The second time, my feet passed through and revealed uncanny depths and a blue haze which was not reassuring. If the snow had been strong enough to hold a second man safely, we could have got up the wall, as I could have stood on his shoulders and have hacked away a sloping staircase to the platform above. I tried once more, and though I failed, I all but succeeded. For some time, Knut had been calling out 'Til høire' (To the right). Now, I replied, 'Ja, nu maa vi gaa til høire.' We retraced our steps and, to our great joy, found a substantial bridge close to the eastern side.

The glacier became steeper, but we soon reached the black belt of rock, where from below we expected to find considerable difficulty or, possibly, defeat. Fortunately, the bergschrund at the head of the glacier and at the foot of the rocks was choked up with a snow avalanche, which gave us a ready-made road on to the rocks.

Though we were still 1114 feet below the summit, Mohn said he felt tired and needed rest. Both of my companions on principle wore boots which were quite innocent of nails or spikes, and in consequence they had found the steep portion of the glacier to be very trying, and they both acknowledged that their theories were wrong, and that Alpine nails were excellent and prevented many a fall.

As it was nearly 5 P.M., and the great tug of war was yet to come on, I said that we could not afford time for a rest, so I untied myself and soon reached the steep snow-slope at the top of the belt of rock. This snow-slope was nearly 600 feet high. As it was partially frozen it required very great care, and an ice-axe was a *sine quâ non*. I rather feared the descent of this part, as

being in the shade the snow crust was then hardening, the angle was severe, and a fall was not to be thought of. Where the rocks were feasible I preferred them, and left the snow until the rocks were too steep to climb.

An hour after leaving my friends I reached the top of the skar, and then took a look around. On the north or opposite side to that which I had ascended, instead of a friendly glacier or couloir close at hand, there was a grim precipice, and at its base



— Skagastölstind —  
from Vestik Skagastölstind.

was a glacier, the Skagastölsbræ, the sister to the Midt Maradalsbræ, which projected its icy foot into a weird mountain tarn, on the placid surface of which many quaint little icebergs were floating. Above the tarn and glacier rose the black precipices of the northern Dyrhougstinder, a grand wall.

Looking towards the true Skagastölstind, 518 feet above the skar, I felt that I was beaten after all, and my dream at an end, as it is difficult to imagine any mountain presenting a more impracticable appearance than is shown at first sight by this peak

from the skar. The latter consists of a narrow and flat ridge, perhaps 100 yards in length, of which one end abuts against a huge oblong tower of gabbro, the great peak itself. On the right is the precipice above the tarn, and on the left, the base of the tower springs from the glacier which we had ascended, nearly perpendicularly and almost entirely without ledges. There seemed to be no proper arête to connect the peak with the skar, but merely a narrow face, mostly consisting of smoothly polished and almost vertical slabs of rock. The first 150 or 200 feet appeared to be the worst, and I thought that if those could be surmounted, the top might be won, but really I did not then think there was the slightest possibility of doing it. Of course there was no snow couloir, as the rocks were much too steep to allow snow to accumulate there in any quantity.

Behind me, and rising at a comparatively gentle angle some 300 feet from the other end of the ridge, was another peak now called Vesle, or the little, Skagastölstind. As this seemed to be relatively easy to ascend, and thinking that it was better than none, I set off to climb it before my companions arrived. When I had gone a short way I looked down and saw the others rounding a rock just below the skar, so I hurried down and joined them.

‘What do you think of it, Mohn?’

‘Well, I suppose that we can now say it is perfectly impossible.’

‘We have not yet proved it to be so; we must not give it up without a try. Will you come?’

‘No.’

‘Knut, will you?’

‘No, I shall not risk my life there.’

‘I will at least try, though I do not think I can manage it.’

Fortunately, I was perfectly fresh, and of course had an excellent stimulant in the uncertainty of my enterprise and the delights of entering still further into the unknown; and besides this, it is rarely safe to say that a mountain wall which you have never studied in profile, but have face to face with you, is unclimbable.

I recommended the others to climb the lesser peak—then unascended. Mohn said philosophically ‘Aut Cæsar, aut nihil.’ Then I left them, and passed under a snow cornice which overhung the northern precipice like a wave arrested when about to break on a shingly beach, and soon reached the rock wall. Now! farewell to snow, that great aider of mountain ascents, and! 500 feet of cold rock. I found a small buttress projecting from the face of the rock, a little to the south of the skar. It formed a

corner. Up there I must go, or nowhere else: of choice there was none; but still, when viewed closely, it looked more hopeful than at the first glance. I soon found that the rocks were firm; the ledges, though so tiny, were secure. The strata of the rock inclined the right way, downward from the out-face towards the centre of the mountain.<sup>1</sup> Better than all, I was quite cool and in perfect training. Still, no trifling must be indulged in here.

After being hidden from my friends by the snow cornice, I came into view again, and every movement was eagerly watched by my well-wishers. Soon I got into difficulties in the corner, and, but for a ledge not so broad as my hand, from which I had to knock away the ice, I should thus early have been defeated, as, without the aid of this foothold, the mountain, on this side at least, would be inaccessible. My friends saw me at this place, and vainly tried to call me back, but with the help of my well-tried ice-axe I surmounted the difficulty. I avoid going into details about this and other places, though I made minute notes the following day, as if I were to attempt to describe them I should undoubtedly be accused either of exaggeration or perhaps of foolhardiness by readers unaccustomed to Alpine work, when at the same time I might be guilty of neither. Suffice it to say that what under the most favourable conditions must be a tough piece of work, was made more so by the films of ice with which every little ledge was veneered. Three times I was all but beaten, but this was my especial and much-longed-for mountain, and I scraped away the ice and bit by bit got higher and higher. In sight of the others I reached what from the skar we had judged to be the top. I raised a cheer, which was renewed below, when I found that there was a ridge—a knife-edged affair—perhaps sixty yards long, and that the highest point was evidently at the further end. There are three peaklets and a notch in the ridge which latter again almost stopped me. For the first time I had to trust to an overhanging and rather a loose rocky ledge. I tried it well, then hauled myself up to terra firma, and in a few strides, a little above half an hour after leaving my friends, I gained the unsullied crown of the peerless Skagastölstind, a rock table four feet by three, elevated five or six feet above the southern end of the ridge.

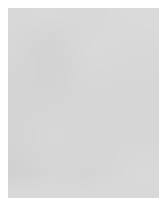
As to the view, which was perfectly free from clouds, it would

<sup>1</sup> In that best of all books on mountaineering, *Scrambles amongst the Alps*, p. 287, Mr. Whymper shows how much depends on the dip of the strata when difficult rocks have to be climbed.



*Skagauvitind from the North.*

*To face page 100.*





be futile for me to attempt to describe it at length, except to say that on every hand, some of the wildest crags, aiguilles, and glaciers in 'Gamle Norge' looked their very wildest. On one hand, our luncheon place, 4396 feet below, seemed to be only a stone's-throw off. On another, below an almost vertical precipice 3000 feet in height, was a portion of the glacier which we had ascended. On another, some 4000 feet down, lay the weird mountain tarn with its icy flotilla, and above it, the glacier and terrible cliffs I have before alluded to. Forests and green pastures here and there relieved the scene of most of its harsher characteristics, and in the distance the many beautiful domes and subtle curves of purest snow which together form the great Justedalsbræ showed for a distance of 45 miles from the Kamphammer pass to the snowy heights of Fjærland, a most lovely and harmonious horizon, a beauty which insensibly grows upon one year after year, and which is seldom appreciated when first seen.

The exquisite colouring for which Norway is so deservedly famous appeared in all its richness and variety; but in such a place, alone, out of sight of every living creature, one of the greatest desires of my heart granted to me, it will be easily understood, when I say, that a feeling of silent worship and reverence was more suitable than the jotting down of memoranda in a note-book. The scene was too overwhelming for notes. I longed to have my trusty friend Mohn by my side, and his absence was a bitter disappointment to me. Had he been with me his enthusiasm would have been boundless.

After a drink of cold tea, a bite of goat's milk cheese, a crust of rye bread, and a few prunes, I set to work to build a cairn, but as the rocks were so marvellously sound, I could find very few stones, so only made one two or three feet high.

I put a pocket-handkerchief under one of the stones, which was afterwards seen in the distance through a telescope. By my aneroid I made the height to be 6200 feet above Vormelid.

At 6.53, after pocketing a few little stones and some reindeer moss, I left the top in warm and golden sunshine, and after traversing the top ridge, turned into cold shade on the ice-clad rocks of the north-eastern face. The descent to the skar was certainly difficult, and, being alone, the difficulties probably appealed to me more forcibly than they would if I had had company.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The few climbers who have followed this route have all been impressed with the fact that this portion of the ascent is not easy. One writer says: 'There was no snow on the rocks, but they were wet and cold. We found several little

The steep snow-slope was now hard frozen, and the greatest care was necessary, but I passed it very well and was soon over the belt of rocks and on the glacier, where a few glissades materially helped me. I was very thankful to join my friends near the top of the glacier at 7.45, when they most heartily congratulated me. It was bitterly cold, and our warm gloves were a necessity.

At 9 o'clock we reached our former luncheon place, and I shall never forget Mohn's kindness in sharing with me his last bit of cheese and bread, as mine had been finished long before. A simple gift indeed, but nevertheless an act of self-denial, appreciable only by those who know the real value of a crust when nothing else is to be had.

We found the 1500 feet which we had to ascend on our return very fatiguing. I was the freshest, but probably success sustained my animal vigour. From the top of the great ridge—or 'naasi'—which we reached in twilight at 11 P.M., we had a most sublime view of sharp peaks still rose-tinted by the setting sun, though Jupiter shone like a bright beacon apparently on the snow-crest of Stölsnaastind, a beautiful mountain above the Vetti's fos. The snow was crisp and hard and sparkled like diamonds.

In Maradal it became much darker, and each of us tripped up now and then over the junipers and dwarf birches, but we arrived at the sæter all right a little after 1 A.M., where we found the elder girl awaiting us. She soon got us a roaring fire of birch logs, made us coffee and Liebig, and did all in her power to make us comfortable. Then we slept the sleep of the weary until the sun was high in the heavens, and the cattle were gone away a couple of miles to graze.

Such was the first ascent of what is usually called the finest mountain in Norway. The illusion of its inaccessibility had been at last dispelled, most probably too at the first determined attack upon its grisly towers, and a solid fact took the place of an ancient fable.

Though the ascent has become a favourite amongst experienced mountaineers, it will never become what in the Alps is termed 'a fashionable mountain' for tourists such as those whom one meets at Zermatt, and who are pulled and shoved up fine mountains by indifferent guides, because the last bit is too bad for that. I, for one, would never have attempted, alone, rocks such as those, upon

varde (small cairns which I had erected twenty years before) still standing. In two or three places, notably at one corner near the top, it was a solid satisfaction to know that one was on a good rope well held.'

any other mountain, but it was the particular one upon which I had centred my energies, and those 518 feet which I climbed in solitude, I always look back upon with a feeling of veneration, as they formed an event in my life which can never be forgotten; and although I have climbed very many of the higher Norse mountains, yet the ascent of none has left such a vivid impression in my mind as this. We set off in the misty morning with feelings of hope perhaps, certainly not of expectancy. The first portion was all in clouds, and we were oppressed by doubts; the second was in brilliant sunshine. Success had been granted to me at all events, and, better still, a safe return to us all.



LINNAEA BOREALIS

## CHAPTER XIV

MOHN AND I PART FROM KNUT AND CROSS THE KEISER PASS; WE SEE THE CAIRN ON SKAGASTÖLSTIND; THE COSY LITTLE INN AT FORTUN; A DELIGHTFUL ROW ON THE FJORD TO YTRE KROKEN: ARE WELCOMED BY KAPTEIN MUNTHE; A PRETTY COUNTRY-HOUSE AND A LOVELY GARDEN; LOTOS-EATING SUITS US WELL FOR A FEW DAYS UNTIL DISTANT ROSE-COLOURED SNOW-FIELDS INVITE US TO THE THRONES OF THE GODS; WE ARRIVE AT RÖDSHEIM WHERE WE MEET PROFESSOR SARS AND OTHER LOVERS OF THE MOUNTAINS; LATER HISTORY OF SKAGASTÖLSTIND

### 'REST AFTER TOYLE'

THE day following that on which Skagastölstind had been ascended, though the weather seemed to be quite settled and perfect; for mountaineering, Mohn and I felt so great a longing for

the joys of civilisation, that we determined to leave the fells for the fjords and to pay a visit for a few days to a friend of Mohn's and then to return to continue our mountain programme.

After drinking 'skaal' together we parted with Knut at the Guridal bridge with mutual regret. Knut, a lazy man by nature, had done very well for us, and though he did not carry an ounce of our baggage, we had worked him very hard during the week, which was all the time he could spare for us. In six days, five notable maiden ascents had been made, which is probably the most successful little campaign which has ever been waged in



Farm Skager  
in Fortunsdal

Jotunheim, and the hardy reindeer hunter was very proud to have taken a part in it.

Needless to say, we walked very leisurely over the Keiser pass; Mohn was fairly fresh, but I was dog-tired. At the head of Helgedal we had a grand view of the range of the Skagastölstinder above the Styggedalsbræ, and, much to my joy, we saw through Mohn's glass not only the little cairn which I had built on the top of the great peak, but also my handkerchief. At 10 P.M. we entered the cosy little inn at Fortun and received, as I have done on many another occasion, a most hearty welcome. How delightful it was to have, even at that late hour, a sumptuous meal nicely served, to be able to wash comfortably and to sleep between

spotless white sheets, none can tell unless they know what 'roughing it' means.

The farm Skagen, from which the mountain Skagastölstind derives its name, is near the inn at the mouth of the Skaga gjæl.

That night we slept the clock round and then had delicious pancakes to breakfast, and did not leave until after midday. The thermometer showed 82° F. in the shade; we sauntered slowly along to Eide, where we found Frue Sulheim, but not her gallant husband. Hearing that we came from Vormelid she said:

'Have there been any bears there, and are all the cattle alive?'

To these questions we were able to give a more reassuring answer than would have been the case had it been a week later, as in the meantime a bear had visited Vormelid.

We were soon lying down most comfortably on hay and rugs in the stern of a boat and being rowed down the romantic Lysterfjord by three stalwart rowers, who at that time were patriotic enough to wear the blue and white *top lue*, an ancient form of knitted head-gear the colour of which betokens the district to which the wearer belongs. Nowadays, ill-fitting and greasy 'bowlers,' black, brown, and grey, limp straw hats, and other abominations have almost replaced the picturesque native caps.

Feigumfos, a lovely waterfall not visited, solely because it is so easy to do so, looked beautiful in the distance. I have had two picnics up to this waterfall; in the latter one my wife and two children took a part. At each of the farms near the fall are capital apple and cherry orchards, the fruit of which is sent to the Bergen market and brings in a nice sum yearly. One farmer, a lover of children, who, by the way has twenty-six of his own, sent a box of apples to Skjolden for my youngsters, which arrived just before we left.

After passing a new farm-house, perched on a green shelf which replaced one that a few years had been swept away by an avalanche, and caused the death of many people, we were put ashore near Ytre Kroken, and after a lovely walk through a birch copse, along the bank of a trout stream, and through a field or two of barley, at that early date almost ready for the sickle, we arrived at one of the prettiest Norse country-houses I have ever seen, and were most hospitably received by its owner, dear old Kaptein Gerhard Munthe, a well-known historian and a handsome military-looking man, and his wife and niece, who were good enough to pardon all our shortcomings in the scantiness of our wardrobe, and set us at our ease at once.

The lovely houses, gardens, orchards, and balcony covered with *Aristolochia* and other handsome creepers at Ytre Kroken proved to be delightful places for us to enjoy idleness to our hearts' content, though when we needed exercise we played croquet with the



Feigumfos

ladies, and I fished. Captain Munthe, who was an enthusiastic arboriculturist, took us round his fields and orchards, and never have I seen so many cherries and red currants. These attracted hundreds of greedy thrushes, whose ravages could not be noticed amidst such plenty. It was too early for the apricots, which, how-

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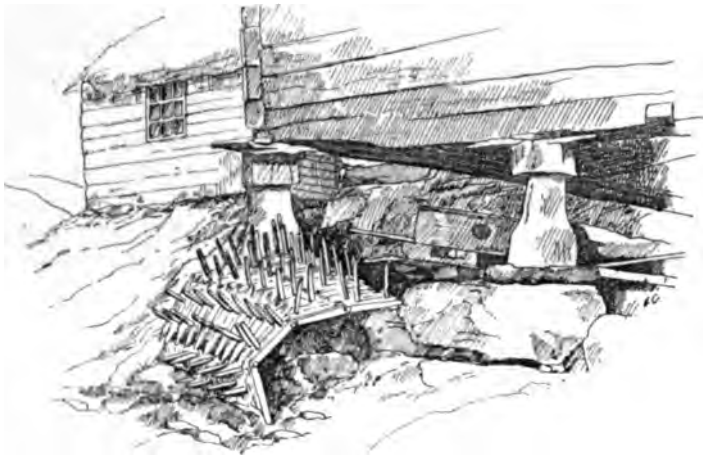
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At eleven they reached the actual base of the mountain, 4400 feet below the summit. The lad was frost-bitten and could go no further, and Peder was in almost as bad a condition. As Tönsberg insisted on going forward, his companions tried to hold him fast with a rope, but he was too strong for them, and broke away, and in twenty strides he disappeared in the mist. The men waited long for him, and repeatedly shouted out to him to come back, but as he did not appear they turned homewards.

For some weeks the weather was persistently bad, and a search was well-nigh impossible. At last, a month or five weeks after

the supposed accident had happened, Jens Klingenberg organised a search party of strong men, and found the remains in a deep chasm between a glacier and the rocks, as well as traces amongst the crags at least 2000 feet higher up on the mountain. The watch had stopped at 7.15. The route which had been attempted was that discovered on the third ascent described in the pamphlet; but, even if it had been followed minutely, which undoubtedly was not the case, it could not have been surmounted in a snow-storm and a gale of wind. The Bergen newspapers described the proceedings of the search expedition with a horrible minuteness in which I shall not indulge.

This dreadful tragedy, which cannot justly be included amongst the list of ordinary mountaineering accidents, had the usual effect of drawing attention to the mountain and to the range of the Horungtinder, and by degrees, very slow indeed compared with what would have been the case in the Alps, mountain-lovers were attracted to explore the deep corries, wild glaciers, and now and then to climb the weird spires of gabbro which distinguish this grand range of mountains, and in time also to climb the monarch himself.

It was not, however, until the year 1894 that Skagastölstind appeared to attract the attention which it deserved. The two first ascents of this year were made by Englishmen, and in each case the guides were Knud Fortun and Ole Öiene. Then, on July 30th, the first lady's ascent of the mountain was made. The heroine, I am glad to say, was a Norse lady, Fröken T. Bertheau, who has since then made many notable ascents. The following day two parties climbed the mountain. In one of these was the second lady, also Norse, Fröken Fanny Paulsen. Next day, August 1st, a third lady made the ascent. This time I am delighted to think that the honours fell to an English girl, Miss Evelyn Spence Watson. By a strange coincidence the mountain, which had never before been attacked by the fair sex, was climbed on three consecutive days by a different lady.

However, as can be seen from the list of successful and unsuccessful attempts recorded by my friend, Herr Carl Hall, in the *Nor. Tur. For. Aarbog* for 1891-92, which I translate and partly quote below, it will be seen that Skagastölstind was only ascended eight times in sixteen years, although seven unsuccessful attempts are recorded during the same period.

- 1.—1876. July 21. Wm. Cecil Slingsby. [E. Mohn and the guide Knut Lykken went as far as Mohn's Skar.]
- 2.—1878. Harald Petersen. [Knut Lykken remained behind

on Mohn's Skar, whilst Thomas Lystring was left farther down.]

- 3.—1880. Johannes Heftye with Jens Klingenberg and Peder Melheim.
- 4.—1882. The Danes, Alf. Lehmann and C. F. Weis-Ernst, and the Norseman J. N. Brun, with Peder Melheim and Niels Vetti.
- 5.—1885. Carl Hall with Thorgeir Sulheim and Matias Soggemoen.
- 6.—1888. F. H. Fox and H. Fox with T. Sulheim.
- 7.—1890. Hans Olsen Vigdal from Skjolden.
- 8.—E. J. Woolley and Benj. Goodfellow with Johannes Vigdal.

Three of the ascents named above were completed by solitary climbers, a form of mountaineering which can hardly be too severely condemned, unless the conditions are wholly exceptional.

Detailed accounts of all the early ascents of Skagastölstind, with the exception of the third, which appeared separately, and of the sixth, are to be found in various numbers of the *Nor. Tur. For. Aarbog*. The only two in English are those of 1891-92 and 1897.

All mountaineers who have climbed in the Horungtinder will agree with me when I say that to Herr Carl Hall of Copenhagen we are deeply indebted for the lucid and descriptive accounts of the numerous maiden mountain ascents which he has made in the range, for the many careful records of ascents by all climbers, and perhaps, above all, for the excellent illustrations from his own photographs which have so often enriched the pages of the *Aarboger*, and have induced many an active young fellow during the last dozen years to leave the valleys and to glean health, strength, and pleasure amongst the eternal hills.

## CHAPTER XV

THE EXPLORATION OF THE VETTI'S GJÆL; A DIFFICULT STREAM TO  
CROSS; THE HOME OF THE BEARS; FORDING THE UTLA

'A spider when it has caught a fly thinks it has done some great deed, and so does a sportsman when he has run down a hare, and a fisherman too when he has caught a sprat in a net. Some others must kill boars or bears before they can grow conceited.'

MARCUS AURELIUS.

(Translated by JEREMY COLLIER.)

## EXPLORATION OF THE VETTI'S GJÆL

AFTER our delightful visit to Captain Munthe's house and a long talk with dear old Jens at Aardal, Mohn and I set off again for the fells. We bathed in the boiling Utlå, and for the third time I climbed the cliff opposite Vetti. Mohn, who had not before seen the Vetti's fos from that side, was delighted with it, as well as with the view of Uranaastind, whose long level knife-edged top was well seen.

For the first and only time among the Horungtinder we were much bothered by mosquitoes, which are occasionally a great pest near the lakes of Jotunheim.

A woman at one of the sæters in Støls Maradal gave us a hearty welcome. This sæter sæl only possessed a porch and one room, where there was a fire in the middle of the floor under a hole in the roof. The smoke at least kept out the mosquitoes. Our hostess pointed out a bed for us to use. She had also the honesty to say, 'Der er mange loppe der,' and never did that worthy soul speak more truly. What with the rain which beat through the roof and walls, and the 'loppe,' which were indeed innumerable, and very active, we passed a lively night.

We had intended to make a new glacier pass across the range, but the fresh snow which greeted us when we looked outside in the morning forbade us, so we decided that it would be great fun to try to climb right down into Utladal, and if possible to walk along its so-called impracticable river bank to Vormelid. There is a sort of church-steeple route connecting Midt Maradal with Vormelid

ever, ripen well here, though it is 61° north latitude. Captain Munthe pointed with pride to some oaks, very fine trees too, some of which had only been planted for forty years. Though elms, except the single tree which is generally to be seen at most farm-houses, are scarce in Norway, we were shown a clump of noble trees about 120 feet in height. Farther down the fjord there is a small forest of elms which belongs to Herr Sulheim.

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At eleven they reached the actual base of the mountain, 4400 feet below the summit. The lad was frost-bitten and could go no further, and Peder was in almost as bad a condition. As Tönsberg insisted on going forward, his companions tried to hold him fast with a rope, but he was too strong for them, and broke away, and in twenty strides he disappeared in the mist. The men waited long for him, and repeatedly shouted out to him to come back, but as he did not appear they turned homewards.

For some weeks the weather was persistently bad, and a search was well-nigh impossible. At last, a month or five weeks after

the supposed accident had happened, Jens Klingenberg organised a search party of strong men, and found the remains in a deep chasm between a glacier and the rocks, as well as traces amongst the crags at least 2000 feet higher up on the mountain. The watch had stopped at 7.15. The route which had been attempted was that discovered on the third ascent described in the pamphlet; but, even if it had been followed minutely, which undoubtedly was not the case, it could not have been surmounted in a snow-storm and a gale of wind. The Bergen newspapers described the proceedings of the search expedition with a horrible minuteness in which I shall not indulge.

This dreadful tragedy, which cannot justly be included amongst the list of ordinary mountaineering accidents, had the usual effect of drawing attention to the mountain and to the range of the Horungtinder, and by degrees, very slow indeed compared with what would have been the case in the Alps, mountain-lovers were attracted to explore the deep corries, wild glaciers, and now and then to climb the weird spires of gabbro which distinguish this grand range of mountains, and in time also to climb the monarch himself.

It was not, however, until the year 1894 that Skagastölstind appeared to attract the attention which it deserved. The two first ascents of this year were made by Englishmen, and in each case the guides were Knud Fortun and Ole Öiene. Then, on July 30th, the first lady's ascent of the mountain was made. The heroine, I am glad to say, was a Norse lady, Fröken T. Bertheau, who has since then made many notable ascents. The following day two parties climbed the mountain. In one of these was the second lady, also Norse, Fröken Fanny Paulsen. Next day, August 1st, a third lady made the ascent. This time I am delighted to think that the honours fell to an English girl, Miss Evelyn Spence Watson. By a strange coincidence the mountain, which had never before been attacked by the fair sex, was climbed on three consecutive days by a different lady.

However, as can be seen from the list of successful and unsuccessful attempts recorded by my friend, Herr Carl Hall, in the *Nor. Tur. For. Aarbog* for 1891-92, which I translate and partly quote below, it will be seen that Skagastölstind was only ascended eight times in sixteen years, although seven unsuccessful attempts are recorded during the same period.

- 1.—1876. July 21. Wm. Cecil Slingsby. [E. Mohn and the guide Knut Lykken went as far as Mohn's Skar.]
- 2.—1878. Harald Petersen. [Knut Lykken remained behind

on Mohn's Skar, whilst Thomas Lystring was left farther down.]

- 3.—1880. Johannes Heftye with Jens Klingenberg and Peder Melheim.
- 4.—1882. The Danes, Alf. Lehmann and C. F. Weis-Ernst, and the Norseman J. N. Brun, with Peder Melheim and Niels Vetti.
- 5.—1885. Carl Hall with Thorgeir Sulheim and Matias Soggemoen.
- 6.—1888. F. H. Fox and H. Fox with T. Sulheim.
- 7.—1890. Hans Olsen Vigdal from Skjolden.
- 8.—E. J. Woolley and Benj. Goodfellow with Johannes Vigdal.

Three of the ascents named above were completed by solitary climbers, a form of mountaineering which can hardly be too severely condemned, unless the conditions are wholly exceptional.

Detailed accounts of all the early ascents of Skagastölstind, with the exception of the third, which appeared separately, and of the sixth, are to be found in various numbers of the *Nor. Tur. For. Aarbog*. The only two in English are those of 1891-92 and 1897.

All mountaineers who have climbed in the Horungtinder will agree with me when I say that to Herr Carl Hall of Copenhagen we are deeply indebted for the lucid and descriptive accounts of the numerous maiden mountain ascents which he has made in the range, for the many careful records of ascents by all climbers, and perhaps, above all, for the excellent illustrations from his own photographs which have so often enriched the pages of the *Aarbog*, and have induced many an active young fellow during the last dozen years to leave the valleys and to glean health, strength, and pleasure amongst the eternal hills.

## CHAPTER XV

## THE EXPLORATION OF THE VETTI'S GJÆL; A DIFFICULT STREAM TO CROSS; THE HOME OF THE BEARS; FORDING THE UTLA

'A spider when it has caught a fly thinks it has done some great deed, and so does a sportsman when he has run down a hare, and a fisherman too when he has caught a sprat in a net. Some others must kill boars or bears before they can grow conceited.'

MARCUS AURELIUS.

(Translated by JEREMY COLLIER.)

## EXPLORATION OF THE VETTI'S GJÆL

AFTER our delightful visit to Captain Muntbe's house and a long talk with dear old Jens at Aardal, Mohn and I set off again for the fells. We bathed in the boiling Utlá, and for the third time I climbed the cliff opposite Vetti. Mohn, who had not before seen the Vetti's fos from that side, was delighted with it, as well as with the view of Uranaastind, whose long level knife-edged top was well seen.

For the first and only time among the Horungtinder we were much bothered by mosquitoes, which are occasionally a great pest near the lakes of Jotunheim.

A woman at one of the sæters in Støls Maradal gave us a hearty welcome. This sæter sæl only possessed a porch and one room, where there was a fire in the middle of the floor under a hole in the roof. The smoke at least kept out the mosquitoes. Our hostess pointed out a bed for us to use. She had also the honesty to say, 'Der er mange loppe der,' and never did that worthy soul speak more truly. What with the rain which beat through the roof and walls, and the 'loppe,' which were indeed innumerable, and very active, we passed a lively night.

We had intended to make a new glacier pass across the range, but the fresh snow which greeted us when we looked outside in the morning forbade us, so we decided that it would be great fun to try to climb right down into Utladal, and if possible to walk along its so-called impracticable river bank to Vormelid. There is a sort of church-steeple route connecting Midt Maradal with Vormelid

which is called Kirkestigen, which, however, no tourist had ever trod, but we wished to make a route of our own, if possible.

In an hour and a quarter after leaving the sæter we reached the 'naasi' between Støls and Midt Maradal after climbing 1700 feet, and expected to reach the latter valley with ease. We set off merrily, but soon got fast. Mohn very pluckily suggested trial after trial, but all in vain. We descended ledge after ledge of loose rock covered with wet moss, and rolled tons of rock on to the screes below. It was, however, no good, and we returned to the 'naasi' and descended it nearly to the top of the walls of the Utle, where we found a steep ghyll which led us to the top of the Midt Maradals fos. In the ghyll we saw fresh traces of a bear nearly everywhere, and quite expected to meet with him.

The next problem to be solved was—how to cross the river, then much swollen. The only place at all likely was about fifty yards above the place where it leaps over the crags and makes a grand but not a quite perpendicular fall of about 1100 feet. Here, it was not to be trifled with. We talked about using the rope, but I believe did not do so. I made the first attempt, and well remember balancing on a rock a few inches under water, before making the big jump which was to land me in safe ground. It was a horrid place, but with a little mutual help we got over safely.

We made our way past a tiny tarn to a low gap between the eastern 'naasi' and an immense rock which rises nearly 1500 feet straight out of the Utle, and which is called Kirketaarn—the church steeple. We looked down a horrid rocky gully, at the bottom of which the foaming Utle raced furiously 1000 feet below us. This gully was our path. Even in the gap itself, the moss-covered rocks were heaped up in chaotic masses, just as in Uradal, and we had to go over and under them in turn, expecting almost at every turn to meet Bruin, who alone uses this route. Birches and alders grew wherever they could get a foothold, and many of the young shoots had been eaten. Ferns and grass recently trodden down and stones overturned also told us plainly that Bruin was not far off, and perhaps was watching us. The gully was very steep and covered with rank vegetation. Fronds of *Filix femina* grew to a man's height. Lilies of the Valley and Herb Paris were in greater profusion than I have ever seen elsewhere, and the giant Campanulas seemed as if they were grown for a flower show.

Rank vegetation is all very well on a roadside in any weather, but it has its drawbacks after rain in a place like this, where we had to descend by aid of trees which showered down their silvery



rain-drops like the spray from the hose of a steam fire-engine. I went first and paved the way by my falls, which laid down the ferns and bared the rock.

After a rough scramble of more than an hour we got near the river at the foot of the steeple, and evidently not far away from the Midt Maradalsfos, which we could plainly hear but did not see. A little further up on the other side, a smooth-faced, ledgeless crag rose straight out of the water. This contracted portion of the gorge is about four miles above Vetti and three below Vormelid. As I found out on a later visit, there is another block some two miles lower down.

Not knowing what difficulties yet lay before us on the way to Vormelid, we could not afford the time necessary to explore the ground at the foot of the steeple as we would have liked to have done, so we turned up the river.

While I was picking lovely sprays of *Linnæa borealis*, Mohn went on a short way, and I lost him. I climbed a spur of the rock and shouted lustily, but all in vain, as well I might with such a river so near to me. At last I saw him slowly threading his way amidst the colossal pillars of this gigantic ruin of nature, and joined him. He had not heard me, and was going slowly, expecting me to follow. In a cañon so wild as this, company is almost a necessity, as solitude is dreadfully oppressive. Half a mile an hour was good going here where screes were as big as houses, and luckily the bad ground was little more than the half-mile. Then bright green pastures succeeded, and in due time we were drying our wet clothes before the birch log fire in cheery Vormelid, and enjoying a meal of *sold*—fladbrød broken into milk—whilst the brisk Live and bright-eyed Oliva told us the news since we had left them a week ago.

The second night after we had gone, the sheep dog had wakened them up, and in the morning they missed a goat, and found traces of 'Herr Bamsen' close to the sæter. They were much troubled about the matter, and expected Sulheim to come to try to shoot the intruder. They shared a common belief that when a bear has killed any animal and has not been disturbed in the act, he will return to the same place on the eighth day. The next day was the eighth, but though I am credulous enough and superstitious to boot in most matters, and much wished for a bear adventure, my faith was not strong enough to tempt me to remain to endure the miseries of a cold night-watch on the rugged mountain-side in the pitiless rain on the bare chance of a stray shot, so we determined to cross the fjeld to Rødsheim to pick up our longed-for

letters, and perchance to make three more maiden ascents, and several glacier passes, and, for the time, to leave the exploration of the Vetti's gjæl alone.

Fortune, fickle dame, had deserted us. We had enjoyed good weather in the lowlands, where it mattered little. Now, amongst the crags, the wilds, and the snows, where good weather was all-important, she withdrew her favour, and rain was the order of the day.

A year later Anfind Vetti and I struggled down the crags opposite Vormelid in order to keep an appointment with Sulheim, who had invited me to help him to shoot the bears which had caused him much loss. The Utla, a narrow white stripe seen from above, was a broad, furious, and unfordable glacier river when we reached it. After much hallooing, a girl saw us and brought Sulheim. He signalled to us to go further down, and led a horse about a mile below the sæter, when he mounted the animal bare-backed and boldly plunged into the river. Anfind said it was impossible to cross, and I feared so too, but I well knew that Sulheim had the blood of the Vikings coursing in his veins, and that if any one could cross the river, he was the man. The Utla was fifty to sixty yards wide, the colour of the Visp at Zermatt, but with much more water. No bottom, of course, was visible, the current was frightful, and the bed of the river very uneven. We watched the bold pair with anxious eyes. Now the horse would be up to its belly in the water, then its forelegs would drop into a hole, and its outstretched nose would be floating on the surface while barely hock-deep behind. Next, its tail and quarters would be submerged, whilst it was only fetlock-deep in the front. At another time the current would seem to be carrying the animal down the river, when Sulheim would turn its head up-stream and urge the faithful beast onwards. Then there might be a few yards of easy going, when all at once the see-saw would begin again. At last, to our great joy, they got across, and Sulheim gave me a hearty welcome, and then carried my ice-axe, rope, and knapsack across, and how he managed to get safely over is a mystery. He then returned for me. I got astride behind him, carrying my rifle-case, and my own adventure began. Although there was considerable danger, I felt it impossible with such a man as Sulheim to have the least fear, and in fact we laughed most of the way across, and I much enjoyed the fun. Had we slipped into the water, which was not at all improbable, though we were both good swimmers, it is not at all certain whether we could have come to

land or not, as just below us were rapids exceedingly uncomfortable to look at. We came, however, safely across after the most exciting ride I have ever had, though I have ridden across country to hounds in England nearly all my life.

When we got across Sulheim said :

'Slingsby, you too must be descended from the Vikings. I brought you across here just to see if you had any pluck. There is an easier ford a little further down.'

I replied: 'Surely if you can trust yourself and your horse here, I ought to trust myself and my rifle.'

Three years later I was riding with Sulheim a little above the inn at Fortun. A sudden thought seemed to strike him. Telling me to follow him, he cantered across a field and forced his pony



*Ranunculus glacialis*  
(Rene Blomet.)

into the large Fortun's elv. I did the same. We forded it, and then he galloped up a high steep bank, laughing all the time. My pony followed gamely enough. Half-way up, my girths broke and off came the saddle with me as well. Sulheim roared with laughter, and I could not help joining in. In a few minutes, with the handiness of his race, Sulheim repaired the mischief with fine birch withes. We then recrossed the river and paid a visit to a friend's house several miles up the valley.

A quadruped has an immense advantage over a biped when fording a river, as when it raises one foot it still has its body supported by the other three; but it is almost incredible until seen, that a river in flood, like the Uvla below Vormelid, can be safely forded by a Norse pony.

I was now Sulheim's guest, and with him was to wage war on the bears. Though Vormelid is one of the most out-of-the-way sæters in Norway, being twelve hours' distance from the farms with which it is connected, I then found it to be quite luxurious; my host literally killed for me the fatted calf and had many little delicacies, unthought of in a sæter; in fact, the descendant of old Harold Fair Hair entertained me right royally.

As to the bears, they were about no doubt, but the question was how to find them. We had no dog except a cur of little use, and though Sulheim is an old hunter, the only plan seemed to be to try to find Bruin by chance. To make a long story short, we hunted early, we hunted late, up on the ridges and snows of Maradal, along the steep wooded slopes and down by the Utlå, again and yet again. We saw fresh traces every day, maybe an eagle hovering over the crags, a sure sign—in Utlådal—of Bruin's presence, or footprints in the mud. Here, under a rock had he slept; those Kvamme (*Angelica archangelica*) had he nibbled only a few hours ago. There had he torn up the earth in his fury. We always found footprints on the heights, and they apparently led towards Midt Maradal. We followed them closely one day, and came in time to a well-trodden path. Of men? No. Of bears? Yes. This led us to the foot of the little waterfall Skoddedal's fos. The little gap above is called Rolandstigen, but whether some Roland of old climbed up there or not, no one knows. The tracks led upward and over smooth-polished rocks, where we were both glad to make use of my ice axe, which I jammed in a crack. As the path grew steeper, the traces became plainer, and here and there were time-worn scratches wrought by Bruin's claws. It was a veritable rock climb, and not by any means an easy one, as here and there each had to help the other.

On a little boggy plateau we came to what appeared to be a grave-mound close to a pool of water in which grew *sphagnum* moss. After digging in the peat with my ice axe we found the carcase of a reindeer which undoubtedly had been killed and buried by Bansen. Indeed, though it was not a very recently made grave, the claw marks were still visible. This mode of preserving meat is precisely the same as a dog makes use of when he buries meat and bones in a garden.

Here we made a great but a pardonable mistake. We had landed just above the little gap by which Mohn and I crossed out of Midt Maradal into Kirkestigen, and as Sulheim had never been there before, he wished to see that grand valley and Skagastølstind at its head, and we thought that the best point of view would be

the top of the rock, Kirketaarn. We soon climbed this high rock, but unluckily had no view. Still more unluckily we made too much noise, and were soon told by newly trodden grass and ferns in the gap to which we returned, that our game had escaped whilst we were a hundred yards away on the top of the crag. Bamsen's lair was no doubt somewhere in the labyrinths of rock near the gap. There were hundreds of little caverns where he could hide, and as the vegetation was very rank, everything favoured our friend. We climbed down the horrid Kirkestige in the very tracks of Bruin, straight down to the most contracted part of the river, and proved satisfactorily to ourselves that he had swum across. Plucky fellow, he well deserved to escape. It was an awful rapid. At Sulheim's wish I fired off my rifle twice. No one can imagine what a wonderful echo there was unless they have tried the experiment in a similar place. Where is there one, however? It is the most contracted part of Utladal, or the Vetti's gjæl, where there are two mountain walls nearly two thousand feet in height and only, I suppose, one hundred yards apart. On our side there was the gully of Kirkestigen, otherwise the sides were literally mountain walls. Each wall from one place or the other rises without a shore from this river.

We quite agreed that our bear-hunting was now ended; we had worked hard, we had failed, but we had driven Bruin off Sulheim's territory on to that of Anfind Vetti, who would not thank us, as he had only too often suffered from the loss of goats, and now and then of a cow too.

Bamsen is the king of Utladal. None can dispute his rule. Who can ferret him out of such a stronghold? None, without the aid of watchers and dogs which are unattainable there.

Before leaving this wild place we struggled over the huge débris at the foot of the *church steeple* and followed a ledge which grew narrower and narrower, and finally terminated abruptly in the face of the ice- and water-polished walls of the *church*, where further progress was impossible. It was a most romantic natural observatory, where, clinging to a tree, we gazed into the seething Utla just below us, whilst a little round the corner, but yet partly in sight, was the Midt Maradalsfos, whose thundering waters tumbled directly into the Utla. Here then is the impracticable portion of Utladal, which no man can traverse, at any rate in summer, but about which I could never get the least information.

A short way down across the river, the crags fell back and some grand trees were to be seen growing out of the chaos of fallen

rocks. The place perfectly fascinated me, and I found it difficult to tear myself away from so wild, so beautiful, and so indescribable a scene, where order and chaos, savage grandeur and quiet beauty were so strangely and so harmoniously blended, and Sulheim and I both agreed that we must see more of this some time in the future, a wish that we realised three and a half years later.

I firmly believe that in the not very distant future a good path, possibly even a driving-road, will be made up the Vetti's gjæl, which will connect Vetti with Vormelid, and Skogadalsböen, and thus open out some of the grandest scenery in Norway. In no place is the gorge impracticable on both sides at the same time, and in the narrowest places bridges can easily be built.

After this, Sulheim was obliged to go to his farm, so I left Vormelid and spent about a month in reindeer-stalking in the wildest corries round Gjendin, Bygdin, and Tyin, and later followed the unwieldy elk in the forests of Hallingdal. My most interesting stalk was in Simle Hullet, but it was a failure. My successful stalks were probably the least interesting. Reindeer-stalking has been so often and so well described that it would be foolish of me to write more about this grand sport.



THORGRIM SULHEIM COMING DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAINS.

## CHAPTER XVI

ROUND THE HORUNGTINDER IN WINTER; CUTTING STEPS IN THE ICE FOR THE HORSE; A NIGHT OF SHIVERS IN A HAUNTED SÆTER; AURORA BOREALIS; BIRDS AT VORMELID; THE BEAR'S CAVE; IS HE AT HOME? SNOWED UP IN UTLADAL; A DIFFICULT CLIMB; RUINS OF A PRIMEVAL FOREST; BEAR'S FOOTPRINTS; A WELCOME CAVE, A ROARING FIRE AND A JOLLY NIGHT; A STIFF CLIMB; POUNDING THROUGH SNOW; THE VETTI'S FOS FROZEN; AN ICICLE 1000 FEET IN LENGTH; GORDALE SCAR IN WINTER; TEN MINUTES TOO LATE AT AARDAL.

'Fine weather for them as is vel wrapped up, as the Polar bear said ven he was practising his skating.'—*Pickwick Papers*.

## ROUND THE HORUNGTINDER IN WINTER

ROUND. Why round and not over, across, among, in fact anything but the word—round—which does not suggest adventure? I'll tell you why it was 'round.'

Two summer tours in the Alps had kept me from my first love—Norway. The fates decreed that a projected tour in the summer of 1880 could not be realised. Why not accept Sulheim's invitation to join him in another bear-hunting expedition?

I reached Skjolden at the end of October, and was soon ensconced in Sulheim's pretty house at Eide and welcomed with thorough Norse hospitality. Vormelid, outlandish as it is, was to be the base of operations. A day was occupied in making preparations, in which the greatest care was necessary, for, be it remembered that an empty sæter in winter does not mean *rømmegrød* in the evening round a fire ready prepared by a smiling girl. No, indeed. All our food, warm—that is heavy—clothing, rifles, and what not besides, soon added up to a heavy weight which we pared down judiciously. Halvar Halvarsen was engaged as a porter, and Sulheim's horse was to carry our things as far as Helgedal.

Though at Christiania at this time there was warm weather, in Sogn it was far otherwise. Winter had already set in. The lakes and rivers were hard frozen, and the crags in Fortunsdal,

fringed as they were with huge icicles, played a fitting prelude to the icy wonders in store for us.

Next day we were up betimes, and at 7.50 started off for our adventures. The horse, the same which three years earlier had carried us over the Utle when in flood, had a hard time of it up the Fortun's *galder*, and still worse up to Optun, where the road was to all intents and purposes a frozen waterfall. Cutting steps for a horse with an ice-axe was a novelty to me, but our gallant steed quite understood it, and trod in the steps like an old mountaineer. The two inches of snow in the lowlands were succeeded by well-nigh two feet as we neared Turtegrö, and our pace slackened in proportion. At Berge we had borrowed *ski*, and many were the falls I had before I learned how to use them. The route we had intended to take was over the Skagastölsbræ into Midt Maradal, and thence by way of Rolandstigen—the bear path—to Vormelid. About twelve hours we thought ought to clear it; but now in deep loose snow, and with our heavy burdens, it was not to be thought of.

Skagastölstind, plastered over with snow or encased in ice, we could see was then impracticable. Near Helgedal sæter the horse broke through the crust of a frozen morass and stuck completely fast: we took off his load and dug him out with our axes—a tiring business—then we gave him half an hour's rest at the sæter and took him on with us. We left the sæter at two o'clock, with no hopes of reaching Vormelid that night, and but faint hopes of Guridal. Seldom did path seem longer than this, and never was distance more deceptive. The depth of the snow was anything between two and six feet, and was too soft for using *ski*.

At four o'clock the last rays of the sun shone on Skagastölstind's glittering crown, and for a half-hour we were partly compensated for our toil by some of the most exquisite sky colouring I have ever seen. Ahead, over the Keiser pass, was a deep, dark star-spangled blue, which graduated imperceptibly on either hand and in the zenith, through all shades, to the lightest azure, and then through green to gold and carmine over the wavy line of the Justedalsbræ.

The slopes under Fanaraaken were horribly tiring, and recalled the almost interminable snows of Mont Blanc and Monte Rosa. The path was visible, though in deep snow. Our horse went first, and partly paved the way for us. At 5.10, when twilight was fast deepening into the sombre shades of night, and we were still a long way from the top of the pass, we decided to leave our luggage there and to beat a retreat to Helgedal sæter.



The horse was our guide, as it alone could keep to the track in the darkness; and, in fact, if ever we tried to cut a corner on the zigzags, we were sure to roll head over heels in the snow. Dog-tired we struggled into the sæter one by one between eight and nine o'clock, and passed a night of shivers, with the thermometer at 3° F. below zero outside, and precious little better inside, as the only furniture was one chair. There was something very uncanny about the latter, as both of my companions solemnly asserted that on several occasions during the night it moved half-way across the room, backwards and forwards, and made a great noise. Meanwhile I was asleep.

Next morning at 7.30, after Sulheim had bound his legs with hay bands, we parted from our gallant steed and driver, and marched quickly over the now well-trodden path. At 9.45 we gained our baggage, and our toils were renewed. Sulheim and I with *ski* fared better than the overweighted Halvar, who, with his *fættersko* (moccasins), sunk up to his middle at every step on the plateau below the tarn. We crossed the latter instead of following the usual track, as there was less snow there. On the steep above we had to carry our baggage by instalments, as it was impossible to take it all at once.

At last, at 1.50, the top of the Keiser pass, 4920 feet, was reached. Yes, think of six hours from the sæter, you who now enjoy the luxuries of Turtegrö, and saunter quietly to the top of this pretty pass in summer's sunshine. Very good going, too, was ours. You must not, however, expect to see such glorious views as we did, or you will be disappointed. Each one of us, used to mountain views as he was, was perfectly enchanted with the peep into Jotunheim. No one, who has only seen Stölsnaastind in summer, can have even the faintest conception of its majestic form and surroundings in winter, when all the dull brown ridges are transformed into shimmering snow-fields which seem to make the grand pyramid stand out in the blue vault of heaven to all appearance 12,000 feet in height, and a very Matterhorn in form. The sun gilded its proud crest and also the summit of Uranaastind, the Melkedalstind, and many another fine mountain, whilst their lower precipices looked by contrast colder and more terrible than ever.

It must not be supposed that all was white, for such a condition would indeed be monotony. No. Those dark precipices, which each Jotunheim peak possesses on one or more sides, can never hold snow, they can only be peppered as it were, and their swarthy sides do but enhance the purity of the eternal snows

above. I wish that each one of my readers could, at least once in his life, see such a scene as this, for, if he saw no other of a similar nature, this one would be sufficient to awaken in him, if need be, and to foster a love of mountain scenery which could only terminate at his death. But this may not be.

The cold did not allow us to linger over our well-earned lunch, and even during the few minutes we spent there, a change as of a kaleidoscope came over the scene as the bright gold vanished from the mountain-tops, and dark shadows crept stealthily up the grim Utladal, warning us to hasten, and proclaiming at the same time that winter in all its grandeur reigned supreme.

My *ski* gave me many a fall but plenty of fun, and we sped quickly down the snow-slopes to Guridal. Here we left most of our baggage and our *ski*, and determined to reach Vormelid that night at any price. Now, as Sulheim's associations with Vormelid were bright, warm, and sunny, he was bitterly disappointed to find that the snow was as deep in the Utladal gorge as on the high *fjeld*, and that it was weary plodding through the pine-woods. A bright *Aurora borealis* was our only light, and we were thankful to have it. Many a time we rolled head over heels in the snow, and but for Sulheim's excellent guiding qualities we should have failed to reach our haven of rest. At 9.10 we stumbled, tumbled, and rolled into Vormelid, tired out, and with no rosy-cheeked *pige* to welcome us and to minister to our wants. No, alas!

Whilst the others were kindling a fire I undertook to fetch water. Where was it gone to? The usual trough was dry, but far below the snow I heard a gurgling. After many vain attempts I made a well with my ice-axe; but before I could bring a pail from the hut close by, the water was hard frozen and had to be broken again.

Fatigue was soon forgotten before a repast of soup, corned beef, and other good things. When broken window-panes were stopped up, a snow-drift removed from the floor, the hay on the bed turned and fresh logs thrown on the fire, we went to bed. As it was too narrow for us all to lie the same way, Halvar lay dovetailed with his head at our feet, and we all had to lie more or less edgewise; but tired men soon sleep.

In the morning we put our castle in order and received a welcome visitor in the form of a beautiful Titmouse (*Parus major*) which hopped about everywhere picking up crumbs and fat, and this visitor remained with us most of the time we spent at



*Sæter Interior.*

*To face page 136.*



Vormelid. A pair of Water-ouzels hopped about outside, but could not be coaxed to come in, though they must have been very hungry. Sulheim and I then set off to seek for 'Herr Bamsen' down the valley. We often crossed the Utla, which, instead of being a large, noisy, muddy, and furious glacier river, was now a peaceful frozen stream of purest blue water. After hours of hard scrambling to and fro we found ourselves near the top of Kirkestigen, where twice before I had scared away a bear. Now, our wish will be realised. Ah! vain hope, not a trace could we find. We descended by a very difficult snow couloir, and were glad of our axes, and a little depressed in spirits we reached Vormelid at nightfall.

Profiting by experience, as my knees had been cold the first night, I adorned myself for bed as follows, with three pairs of stockings, two pairs of very warm nether garments, trousers, and woollen leggings, and then put my feet into the arms of my coat and buttoned it up over my knees; next I had two jerseys, a very thick *Islandströie* (Iceland jersey), two shirts, a waistcoat, an overcoat with a hood for my head, a knitted cap over my ears, and warm gloves. I spread my plaid over all three of us. Then! What then?—Sleep.

Next day we were to search some caves under Friken. All tourists who have walked over the track between Vetti and Skagadalbøen know what an awful precipice there is above the Utla on that side, and that it must be difficult to ascend or descend in summer. Such is indeed the case. Fancy then what it must be in winter, the snow knee-deep over icy débris, the trees bowed down with their snowy burden, so low and so thick too, that most extraordinary contortions have to be indulged in in order to get through, over, or under them with rifle and ice-axe in hand.

We crossed the river just below the crag on which the sæter is perched. The snow had blown off the ice, and we could see through this glassy covering to the bottom of the river, perhaps twenty-five feet deep. About 1000 feet above the Utla we reached a steep bare slope which had been cleared of trees by an ancient avalanche. Crowning this slope, which gradually increases in steepness, is a lofty cliff, at the base of which is a ledge and the cave Troldhullet, which can be seen from Vormelid. Here we were to meet Herr Bamsen, not exactly by appointment, but because we had made up our minds to meet him here. Sulheim had seen him near there in the summer, and had found traces of him in the cave. Surely he could not disappoint us this time?

Many of my readers know what it is to climb a long snow-slope of  $40^\circ$  or  $45^\circ$ , and that care is needed when the snow is in good order. Here the snow was soft, much of it had to be kicked away, and the angle was certainly over  $45^\circ$ ; in fact it was as steep as the top of the grand snow-gullies one meets with on the north face of Ben Nevis in the early spring. We were carrying rifles too, and were on the tiptoe of expectancy, and who could say whether Bruin was awaiting us securely entrenched above, and sleeping with the proverbial one eye open? At first, Sulheim leads and hacks out steps carefully in the snow, and as we approach the top the angle becomes very steep. Then I come abreast of him, and hardly daring to draw a breath, we press noiselessly upward, with our rifles in front and triggers at full cock. Only two feet more and we can look over. The top is like a wave of snow ready to break upon us, and horribly steep. Step by step we take together by instinct. We each scoop out a large last step with an ice-axe, then carefully get into it stooping, and after a hasty glance at our rifles and at each other, we raise ourselves slowly and look over the top. Is he there? If he be, he's gone 'i hi' (hibernated), and has been asleep some time, as the mouth of the cave is guarded by a seeming portcullis of icicles. We carefully look, and see at the entrance the bones of Sulheim's best calf, but Bamsen is away. Shall I say that we were much disappointed? Yes. Shall I also say that the disappointment was tempered by a feeling of relief that our shaggy friend had not pounced upon us, as he easily could have done, either on the narrow ledge or on the snow-slope, where he would have had nearly all his own way? Yes, a thousand times yes. When we had time to look around we found many rowan berries and angelica growing quite near and untouched. Evidently our friend had retired elsewhere soon after his feast of veal, or such vegetable dainties would not have remained undisturbed.

The view from the cave was magnificent. The birch-trees, oddly enough, were still in full and golden leaf in spite of winter, and formed a lovely contrast to the ice, snow, and dark crags around. The sæter huts of Vormelid appeared like two rocks far, far below us.

We decided to hunt for spoor up in Uradal. For nearly an hour we had some interesting and difficult climbing along the narrow ledge, where there was mostly a sharp ridge of hard snow glazed with ice from the drip of the icicle-fringed cliffs. In several places the icicles completely barred the way and had to be knocked down. The ledge wound at first gently and then

steeply upwards. By dint of climbing, creeping, and holding on, we managed to get along, but were very glad to reach the little plateau by the bridge over the Uradöla.

In Uradal—the valley of débris—a heavy snowstorm came on, and we wished ourselves back at Vormelid. As I did not relish the notion of descending by the way we had come, I proposed another but longer route. Sulheim would not hear of it; the Viking's blood was up, so I merely thought 'in for a penny, in for a pound,' and agreed to follow him. We soon reached our 'pons asinorum' or rather 'pons ursæ,' and with care got well over it. On the way down we saw several thousand little chirping reddish birds, presumably Lesser red-polls.

A strong wind had drifted the snow most alarmingly about the sæter, and there seemed to be every probability that we should be imprisoned there indefinitely. In the evening Halvar set to work to make snow-shoes, and I gave one of my many lessons in English to Sulheim, while the wilder the night wind howled the more we piled up birch logs on the fire and determined to be jolly, and we succeeded too.

Sunday was a day of much-needed rest. In fact the weather would hardly have allowed of anything else. Like a luxurious mortal I had breakfast in bed, chicken, coffee, and toast. Sulheim had never seen bread toasted before, and was much pleased when I gave him some the first day. I wore a pair of træsko—sabots—all day. When not engaged in cooking, we sang and read. Dinner was a great success. Water was difficult to get out of the snow-drifts, and water-fetching was one of my duties.

As there were no traces of Bruin about Vormelid, there was no object in staying longer than necessary. What next? 'The Keiser pass again?' No, no,—the mere thought of it was enough to make us shudder. Sulheim and I understood one another's thoughts on the subject. Each loved adventure. What could we do better than to try to reach Vetti by way of the Vetti's gjæl, and complete our explorations of this marvellous cañon? As the crow flies, the distance is insignificant, not above seven English miles, and the ice on the river might make, what in summer is no doubt impracticable, perhaps easy in winter.

Next day, November 1st, three heavily laden mortals bade adieu to Vormelid at 8.30, and very soon each plunged up to the neck in snow. What matter? 'Fram.' Sulheim, as a Viking of ancient days, insisted on leading. Soon, on the river, we got along merrily, cheerily, over the snow. Then came a rapid, most beautifully frozen and clear of snow. What a pretty embattled

tower of blue ice right across the river! Ice-axes helped us down, and again we went quickly along. A Dipper, *Fosse konge*—or king of the waterfall—as he is often called, kept flying and stopping just in front of us, and reminded me of scenes at home.

In little more than an hour we came near the most contracted part of Utladal at the foot of Kirkestigen, where I had been both with Mohn and also with Sulheim. Here, the huge rock *Kirketaarn*, over a shoulder of which the waters from *Midt Maradal* tumble a little over a thousand feet into a shoreless pool of the *Uti*, are confronted with a rocky buttress which is backed by the most uncompromising cliffs on the eastern side.

When we reached the buttress, the river no longer offered a safe passage, as an unfrozen rapid cut off our icy highway effectually. How could we reasonably expect it to be otherwise, as nowhere else have I ever seen *débris* of such colossal proportions, a very *Karnac* of nature's ruins? The Alps can show nothing like it. Indeed, they can do very well without. If the reader can imagine himself wandering amongst chaotic heaps of rock, from the size of a piano to a large *sæter*-hut, piled up a couple of hundred feet in height, and all covered, first with thick moss and then with two feet of snow, he can form only a faint idea of the work which lay before us. Our rifles were a great nuisance. In one place we had to climb over a rock about a hundred feet high, a very awkward place too. It was cruel work, but we felt that we must not grumble. We lunched in the middle of the river under the lee of a monster rock, and reconnoitred the buttress across.

In 1876 Mohn and I had noticed some steep smooth slabs of rock which spring from the *débris* in the river, and which led apparently to the top of the buttress. This was the only place where there was even the ghost of a chance of getting along, as grim inaccessibility stared us in the face everywhere else. We both thought that there was just a chance of success here, and each would have liked to have tried it then, but we were at the wrong side of an impassable river.

Our lunch ended, we crossed the river, a difficult matter, and our real work began. We put our baggage under a rock, and the Viking of *Eide*, who still insisted on taking the lead, was then bound fast with the rope, and during the space of forty minutes did some of the most brilliant climbing I have ever seen. That is perhaps an Irishism, as much of the climbing was out of my sight, as I was under a rock, holding his rope. The first difficulty was in climbing over an overhanging rock only about fifteen feet



above where I stood. Very little, is it not? Don't say so till you see it. The slope below me was about 55°, and it was one of those indescribable places where it was impossible to give a helping hand to the man above. As to a shoulder? Why, it was out of the question, as the climbing had to be done in zigzag. The slope was too steep to hold deep snow as on the level, still, where we had to climb, it must be all cleared off, as we below found to our cost; then ice appeared, and it too had to be demolished. After twenty minutes the first rope's-length was consumed,<sup>1</sup> a small platform was reached, and I can truly say that even with the aid of this rope, and with a by no means limited experience, I felt delighted when I had crossed that true *mauvais pas*, where a ledge in the rock half an inch wide was considered to be capital foothold.

With all this cold work my hands were getting frost-bitten, and I shall never forget our leader rubbing life into them with his own great warm hands. The baggage was hauled up, and then came Halvar in his *fættersko*, and how he came up in this extraordinary foot-gear I never could tell. We then had about forty feet more in the same style, except that here and there was a little vegetation below the snow. This length was up a straight gully, where I was able to give Sulheim a knee and then a shoulder as steps, after which he got safe anchorage and piloted me up. This process was repeated two or three times until finally Sulheim reached a birch-tree to which we lashed the rope and then drew up the baggage and Halvar. Though this gully was easier than the first pitch, it was difficult climbing, and had a minimum of foothold. It had taken us fifty minutes of real hard work to climb a height of not more than seventy feet to the birch-tree, which gives a faint idea of the difficulties. My companions went grandly and never hesitated a moment, and I felt that with two such men so staunch and true, I could safely trust myself on the Weisshorn or Dent Blanche.

After ten minutes more of most enjoyable climbing along a narrow ledge and up a gully, where little trees helped us, at one o'clock we stood in a small gap at the top of the buttress, well satisfied with our progress, and deeming Vetti to be almost within our grasp, as ahead, down the valley, I easily recognised a pulpit-like rock on which I had stood on three different occasions, and which I knew to be *vis à vis* to the Vetti's fos.

<sup>1</sup>Sixty feet. At this period, 60 feet was considered to be ample for three climbers, now 80 feet is considered to be the proper length, besides which a light rope of 100 feet is often carried for use in emergencies.

As we afterwards learnt, when Vormelid was a gaard and not a sæter as now, a man once went down the river in winter, climbed up to the gap from the back, then down to our friendly birch-tree, to which he affixed a long rope, by means of which the little pass was often used to fetch 'næver'<sup>1</sup> and grass down, and even now the place bears the name of Baglistigen. Without a rope no man living could descend there.

A few years ago I led a party of climbers up to Ossian's cave in Glencoe in deep snow, and was struck with the resemblance which that climb, which under the best conditions is by no means easy, bore, when ice-bound, to the more difficult buttress in Utladal. It is only fair to state that I did not come down last from Ossian's cave, but left that position of honour and difficulty to another mountaineer.

Over our gap, we entered what bear-hunters call Baglien, a large horseshoe basin, backed by huge cliffs on all sides save the south, up which the summer sun must shine most powerfully, hence the enormous trees we met with, elms and birches of a size I have seen nowhere else in Norway. Many birches still showed scars inflicted on them by the 'næver' cutters of old. I pointed out the scars to Sulheim as a proof that the Vetti folk were wont to come there. Ah! vain thought. Beyond a stray bear-hunter, perhaps once in a score of years, who follows a steep woody ridge and then scrambles down the crags by aid of the birch-trees from the Vettismark above to hunt his quarry in the recesses of Baglien, no one ever comes to this hothouse of nature. Tall fronds of *Osmunda regalis* cropped up above the snow, and wild raspberries, with their crystallised fruit still hanging on, grew everywhere. Huge trunks of noble elms lay where they had fallen a century ago, and between them was scarcely two feet of snow, which made it hard work to walk.

The Midt Maradalsfos, a grand fall close at hand and sparkling in the sunshine, was a gigantic pilaster of ice over a thousand feet high from the frozen pool of the Utle to the rock edge above, and close to which Mohn and I had experienced so great a difficulty in crossing the river in 1876. The ice masses piled up in the ravine just below Kirketaarn and at the foot of the fos, were marvellously beautiful in colour and form, and it would be mere folly for me to attempt to describe them.

I was the only one who knew anything whatever of the valley

<sup>1</sup> Næver, the outer bark of the birch-tree, is used for roofing buildings and for lighting fires. It ignites readily, blazes away most brightly, and is invaluable at sæter and when camping out.

below, and my knowledge was limited to sundry bird's-eye views of it from the top of the cliffs, 1400 to 1500 feet above the river on both sides, generally in bad weather.

'Halloo! Here are footmarks; we're all right, and shall be in Vetti before dark.'

'But where on earth do they lead to?'

'Ah! see, Herr Bamsen at last; those steps are his. Hang it! they're a day or two old, though.'

We followed the spoor some little time, but it led upwards, and as we dared not spare any more time, we left the tracks.

The beautiful and fertile slopes of well-sheltered Baglien soon changed to horrible scree, and we did not like to descend to the river some three hundred feet below us, where there was easy going, as we saw a place ahead where we should be obliged to keep up. Hour after hour sped by as we struggled on across spurs and gullies, the difficulties increasing as our strength and power to overcome them decreased. I pitied Halvar very much as he was carrying a cruelly heavy load, but I could not help him as I myself was overweighted. Though the pulpit rock seemed to get no nearer, a huge crag ahead of us looked more and more impracticable every minute. Except in one place this crag, which rose straight out of the river, was quite clear of snow and hence impassable; this one place seemed to be a narrow ledge about half-way up, and then, so far as we could tell in the deepening twilight, bare rock seemed to intervene and cut the path short. There was no hope of getting along on the river nor yet on the other side, where for a distance of about four miles the precipices are quite mural in character and from 1100 to 2000 feet in height.

Matters began to look serious, the débris got worse, and monster elm-trees, crossed over each other, lay on the ground like spillikins, where they had fallen ages ago. The interstices were filled with snow, and falls were common. The time was 4.30, and it seemed an act of unpardonable foolhardiness to attempt a second difficult climb, in the dark too, and one where there was but faint hope of success. We were also coming to a part of the gorge from whence it would be nearly impossible to take refuge in the high-level or Friken route. Nothing seemed left to us but to find out a good camping-place, to stop the night there, and to take to the high level in the morning while we could get to it.

Far above us was a long line of lofty crags rising out of the scree. Surely here we could find a hole? We climbed up a slippery gully where Halvar once came down neck and crop and

much alarmed us. However, like a good mountaineer he remembered his axe and soon brought himself to an anchor.

At 5.30, in pitch darkness, we climbed up a snow-slope much like the one below Troldhullet, and by sheer good luck we discovered by match-light a most palatial residence, the drainage and ventilation of which would have satisfied the most exacting of sanitary inspectors. The cave was a long broad opening in the rock, going about 15 feet back and about 8 feet high in front, perfectly dry and well sheltered by projecting crags. A bright fire was soon ablaze, as fuel was abundant. We were all nearly worn out, but still the Viking, always ready, went to prospect a gully by candle-light for the morrow, found it hopeless, and then tried another which he reported as hopeful.

'Now for some tea.'

'Where 's the kettle?' said Sulheim.

'Here it is,' I replied, holding up a small round meat-tin.

Sulheim pointed to a large unopened six-pound tin of Chicago beef. He soon cut it in two, took out the meat from one end, and said: 'This is the kettle.'

'Will you have snow for water?' asked Halvar.

'No, we won't,' replied Sulheim and I together, each breaking off an icicle; 'here 's something better.'

In a few minutes water was boiling. The icicles were most useful, as when the water threatened to boil over, the tip of an icicle was just dipped in and it cooled at once.

Knowing that we should be imprisoned for at least twelve hours we determined to keep up a roaring fire and to make a festive night of it. Lucky we were to have such ponderous baggage. Let the cold do its worst, we were prepared for it. When three hours had quickly sped away we resolved to prepare a grand midnight dinner. I was chief cook. As kettle number one was getting superannuated we requisitioned number two—the other end of the meat-tin.

Our menu comprised all the dainties of the season—in Utladal.

<i>Soup,</i>	.	.	Julienne.
<i>Fish,</i>	.	.	Sardines.
<i>Entrées,</i>	.	.	Deville'd chicken and tongue.
<i>Joints,</i>	.	.	Chicago corned beef.
<i>Dessert,</i>	.	.	Crystallised raspberries—chocolate.

After dinner we had tea, coffee, toasted bread and fladbröd.

The bright fire made the icicles above melt now and then, but

we easily avoided the drip. Candles illuminated our palace, and we read a good deal. I was reading *The Last Days of Pompeii*, just at the most exciting part too. We sang songs and scraps of songs innumerable and hymns, both Norse and English. Sulheim had taken a great fancy to 'Home, Sweet Home,' some days earlier, and I had sung it about six times through every evening. Now, as may well be imagined, we had a double dose, and our hero learned the words and the tune very thoroughly, as many of my friends can testify.

Poor Halvar, the only smoker amongst us, had exhausted his supply of tobacco. Seeing my tea, he thought it looked smokeable, tried it, and pronounced it to be excellent. As it kept well lit and made smoke, what more could be desired? We formed a capital subject for an artist, and I much wished for the power to put upon paper so picturesque a scene. Halvar had a most incongruous get-up with rough homespun clothes, cloth leggings tied round with string, huge yellow cow-skin shoes with a lining of straw, and a skin cap over his ears. Sulheim had a red Sogn *topfue*—woollen nightcap—which looked delightfully warm. I had my Iceland jersey, hooded plaided coat, and Alpine knitted cap. The rifles, ice-axes, and rope all conspired to give a brigandish appearance to the place, whilst the icicles gave it the appearance of a Yorkshire limestone stalactite cavern.

All things must come to an end; so did this night. In fact our twelve hours sped away quickly and pleasantly, and luckily there had only been 22 degrees of frost. After a breakfast in the dark we got under weigh about 6 A.M., and set off in twilight to scale the crags above us. Our difficulties began directly, and for three and a half hours the rope and axes were indispensable. Whilst the birch-trees, which grew wherever there were crevices large enough for their roots, were often a horrible nuisance, still oftener did they render rocks practicable, which otherwise could not have been tackled at all.

The baggage had generally to be hauled up by two of us, whilst the third tied it fast below. The mountain-side consisted of a series of low perpendicular crags, connected with each other by steep scree-slopes, where ling, juniper, and birches grew. The mean gradient could not have been less than 55 degrees, and I shall never forget the grand climbing of my companions. Had we anticipated such difficulties, we should either have tried to force a passage across the river-bed or rather further up the valley. As it was, we expected each obstacle to be the last, but no! one crag surmounted, another appeared.

Once we much feared for our rifles. By help of convenient birch-trees Sulheim had climbed a crag about twenty feet above us, who were at its foot, standing on next to nothing, and holding our treasures to prevent them rolling a couple of thousand feet below. The whole rock was hung with beautiful icicles, and the top part of the crag overhung, and so did the icicles. We knocked away all the dangerous ice within our reach, but the big fellows near the top we could not manage, and our rifles must be hauled up over them. The first went up grandly, but the second sent down an ice-spear which only just missed Halvar's head. Then we sent up a knapsack, which knocked down a shower of ice which we dodged. After this I went up by the tree route to help to haul up Halvar's nondescript load and the remaining knapsack. There was little to stand on, and only a rotten tree to hold to. This sort of work was repeated again and again, and about 9.30 we stood amongst the pine-trees in less vicious ground, where we coiled up the rope and shouldered our burdens, overjoyed with our victory and with the grand view of the Horungtinder, which stood up proudly in the clear blue sky, and looking double the height which they do in summer.

We found fresh bear spoor, but as it led down a gully, we had not the pluck to follow it.

The tramp to Vettismarken sæter, which we reached at 1.20, through deep snow, was the most arduous physical exertion I had ever endured, and though the previous year, with a friend and two Swiss guides, I had crossed Mont Blanc in one day of twenty-two hours from Courmayeur to Chamouni by the old Aiguille Grise route, and had carried a knapsack much of the time, that day was an easy one, physically speaking, compared with this tramp in Norway.

We went to the top of the Vetti's fos and enjoyed for a few stolen minutes the marvellous view, and then hurried on to find the top of the zigzag path before dark. Though I had often been on this weird path in summer, it is certain that, but for finding some old footmarks in the snow, we should have been benighted within sight of Vetti; as it was, it was difficult to keep to the path when rightly started.

At 5.30 we were heartily welcomed by friends at the old house at Vetti, as the first persons who had ever paid them a visit in winter.

The bear, whose tracks we had seen, had been at Vetti a few days before, and had been followed by two hunters, as far as the time allowed them to go, to a place above Baglien.

As to the passage of Utladal itself, it appears that some fifty years ago Jørgen Vetti and a brother went the whole way to Vormelid and back in one day about Christmas on the river, which was all hard frozen and free from snow. This is the only known passage. Bear-hunters have, however, now and then gone up the gorge as far as Baglien, and thus have crossed the rock which turned us aside, but that was when there was no snow. As far as this rock either side of the river is fairly easy, but rough, from Vetti. I hope some day to complete my exploration, which now only requires about an English mile.

Next morning young Nils Vetti, armed with crampons, went with us to see the Vetti's fos from below, and as Sulheim and I are the only tourists who have seen this grand waterfall in winter, a few words about it may not be amiss.

The jet-black semicircular cliff, over one corner of which the river takes its headlong leap of a thousand feet into space, is now well known to many tourists. Many, too, have peered over that highest place just opposite the fos, where a stone, simply dropped out of the hand, passes through more than 1100 feet before it touches the rock. Let such now picture, if they can, a colossal pilaster of ice from the bottom of the fos to the top. This has millions of ice jewels hanging in festoons from it, from the size of a finger of ice to grand fluted stalactites one hundred and fifty feet long, and each fluting is fringed with lovely ice embroidery. The colouring is of all shades of blue to purest pearly-white as the colours visible in a large crevasse. To the left of the fall, a series of gilded icicles nearly one hundred feet in height hang from the lip of rock, the result of peaty water which has trickled over the edge and then frozen. At the bottom of the fall there is a small glacier formed from frozen spray. A little water is still falling over the top, but the bulk of it falls in fine snowflakes around us. The whole scene is grand beyond description.

In summer the Vetti's fos is essentially a beautiful fall, as nearly all the elements of natural beauty are to be seen in its surroundings, and I am not sure whether, taking all in all, it is not the most beautiful fall in Norway. No doubt the best time for most people to see it is in the early summer when the snows on the uplands are melting fast, but let those who love Nature in her wildest moods pay a visit to this and to other grand waterfalls in the winter, and I can assure them that they will not be disappointed.

During the last fifteen to twenty years, ardent lovers of

Nature, anxious to escape from the dull prosaic humdrum of daily toil, have been much attracted to her wildest scenes in mid-winter. Men now regularly go to the Alps at Christmas-tide, and occasionally climb the highest mountains at this time of year, and some, too, go to Norway for ski-running and other sports. Others, who cannot go so far afield, keep to our own island, and frequent the inn at Wasdale Head in Cumberland, in order to get amongst the most weird mountain scenes in England, at a time when their dark precipices, fringed with icicles, are set in boldest relief by contrast with the snow, which almost fills the deep ghylls which intersect their rugged brows. Snowdon and Cader Idris in Wales, and Ben Nevis and many another grand mountain in Scotland, attract others.

A few miles from my own home is Gordale Scar, the grandest limestone rock scenery in Great Britain. This fine gorge, during a long protracted frost, is a scene of exceptional grandeur. At the head of a contracted gorge of overhanging rocks, three hundred feet in height, are two waterfalls in the same stream. At the top of the higher fall is a natural arch of rock, through which the stream runs before making a wild leap into space.

During a long frost in January 1891 Hastings and I went one day to Gordale, and a description which I wrote, part of which I now quote, has had the effect of sending a good many people to see the frozen falls.<sup>1</sup>

‘As we turned round the well-known corner of rock, a scene of inexpressible grandeur was revealed to us. The dark and frowning rocks were brought into unusually deep relief by the ice which filled every available chink and cranny. Long spears of ice hung threateningly down in some places, but, as it was not absolutely necessary to walk underneath any of them, there was no danger. A solemn silence prevailed, the music of the waters was completely hushed, as the stream was frozen into a series of miniature terraces of coarsely granulated ice which was very easy to cross. Both waterfalls were frozen up, but there was still a considerable stream of water running below the ice. The lower fall consisted of several huge bosses of ice, whose surface was most gracefully corrugated, and which sparkled like diamonds.

‘We climbed up the side of this fall the usual way without difficulty, as the rocks were quite dry, and were not glazed with ice as we had rather expected to find them. Then we faced the upper fall which emerges out of the natural arch of limestone rock. This fall is always most beautiful when frozen, and con-

<sup>1</sup> *The Yorkshire Post*, January 6, 1891.



sists of a curtain of fluted pilasters of semi-transparent ice about seventy feet wide, which hangs from the projecting lip of rock over which the stream falls.

'By climbing up the steep left bank we were able to get behind the curtain, and immediately under the lip of the rock, and found ourselves in a lovely ice grotto 18 feet by 8 feet. Here we found a water-ouzel, which had made use of this unusually warm shelter. Though we could easily have caught the bird, we allowed it to escape, for fear of injuring it. I have on several previous visits found an ice cavern here, but never before had I seen one quite so beautiful as on this occasion. The curtain of ice hung in graceful folds, very much as a curtain of cloth would have done, and the interior of the grotto might well have been the habitation of elves and water-sprites, and for aught we knew, it was so too, only we could not see them, unless the water-ouzel was one of them. Before leaving, we set some paper on fire and left it in the grotto, and the effect from outside was very beautiful. After descending to the base of the fall we crossed the frozen stream, and climbed up the right bank, where, though not absolutely indispensable, an ice axe proved to be of use to us. We found a second cavern which was very pretty, but smaller than the first.'

After this digression I must hark away back to Vetti.

All chance of bear-hunting from Vetti for some time to come was dissipated by another heavy snowstorm. Indeed the 'cute beast would most likely have gone '*i hi*,' as hibernation would certainly be preferable to starvation.

To Aardal then was the only possible move. The ghyll, grand as it is in summer, was now magnificent. Each black crag had its festoons of icicles, each rapid its towers of ice. The Afdal's fos, of course, was frozen solid and very beautiful. Still, nothing could equal the sublimity of the Vetti's fos or the weird grandeur of Baglistigen which we had left behind.

A storm prevented us getting over the Aardals vand, which lake was still ice-free, though oddly enough the bays in the Lysterfjord were frozen, so we spent a lively evening and a restful night with Ole Hestetun at Farnæs, where we met with one of the guides who had been with 'Coutts' up Skagastölstind, and who gave us a very lucid and amusing account of the expedition.

Ole's excess of hospitality caused us to miss by ten minutes a steamer at Aardal, which in turn made me miss the fortnightly boat from Bergen to Hull.

We went by slow stages to Skjolden, and arrived only just in time to prevent a search party being sent after us on account of the intense cold and snowstorms. Letters from England which had been on the boat that we missed, required my return home as early as possible, else we should have gone again to the mountains, as rain had fallen, which was succeeded by hard frost which had consolidated the snow.

I then undertook a very cold journey over a partly frozen fjord and a long sledge drive over the Fille Fjeld to Hallingdal, in a howling snowstorm, when the horses had icicles a foot in length hanging from their nostrils, and the postman and I barely escaped bad frost-bites. In Hallingdal I had superb weather, and at Christiania the frost was several degrees below zero. On the North Sea I came in for the end of a terrible storm, and saw several derelict fishing-smacks out at sea, and many wrecks at the mouth of the Humber, a very sad sight.

This is a plain unvarnished account of an expedition of failures, but yet one of much pleasure and of genuine adventure, which bequeathed to each of us a legacy of health, strength, and most pleasant memories, which I hope will not be effaced for many years, and I am sure that,

‘ All nature feels the renovating force  
Of Winter.’

I cannot speak too highly of my two companions. Sulheim's climbing was really superb, and would have elicited praise from an Anderegg, an Almer, or an Andermatten, if such heroes of the Alps could have seen him at work. As for Halvar the brave, Halvar the patient, Halvar the strong. Well! he was absolutely the best porter I have ever had. He was always willing, obliging, and cheerful even on the most trying occasions. I never saw any man in my life work so hard as he did, or carry such a heavy load with such arduous and difficult climbing, yet no murmur ever escaped his lips, and he was always ready for an adventure. Sulheim and he together formed the best purely Norse climbing combination I have ever seen, but though I have had many a good climb since with Sulheim, I have never had the good fortune to have Halvar as well.

Halvar was asked to form one of Nansen's party in the expedition across Greenland, but—to my mind foolishly—he refused.

Though I can hardly recommend any one to follow our footsteps literally, I can sincerely do so to a certain extent. Say, for example. Take a run on *ski* over Lake Tyin and through

Morka-Koldedal to Vetti in fine weather in January or February, when the snow is in good order, and see undreamt of mountain views where each peak with its lengthened shadows looks at least double its usual height, twice as difficult, if not impossible, to climb, and three times more beautiful than in July—then thank me for the suggestion. Sleeping at Tvindehougen and at Vetti, this would be a most enjoyable three days' expedition, which could be done easily in the short days if the snow were hard.



Skaga-Stöl

## CHAPTER XVII

TURTEGRÖ; AN ASCENT OF SKAGASTÖLSTIND WITH FRÖKEN BERTHEAU; A CHANGE ON THE MOUNTAIN SINCE THE FIRST ASCENT; HERR HALL'S GRAND EXPLOITS; MR. PATCHELL'S VICTORY; A GLORIOUS VIEW; FAILURE ON THE V GAP; A DIFFICULT BERGSCHRUND OCCUPIES US OVER TWO HOURS; WELCOMED BY HERR GRIEG; I WAIT AND WIN THE V GAP

'Who aimeth at the sky  
Shoots higher much than he that means a tree.'  
GEORGE HERBERT.

### THREE DAYS ON THE SKAGASTÖLSTINDER

PERHAPS the wisest course to pursue in the case of the heading of this chapter is, to say at once that the 'three days' were not three consecutive days, as were the 'Two days on an Ice-slope' in Mr. Carr's memorable paper. No indeed. They were merely three separate expeditions on some portion of the range of the Skagastölstinder.

There are five peaks in this range, four in a row, and one, the greatest, which has a basal axis almost at right angles to that of its companions, has in itself three peaklets which oddly enough stand parallel to the line of the four inferior peaks.

After some successful climbing elsewhere, a party consisting of Fröken Therese Bertheau (the first lady who ascended Skagastölstind), Messrs. Howard Priestman, G. P. Baker, and myself, with our porter, Elias Monssen Hogrenning, managed to squeeze ourselves into Ole Berge's inn at Turtegrö in July 1900. The name Tur-

tegrö signifies the place where 'Turt' grows. Turt, a local name for the *Mulgedium*, is a tall handsome plant with blue flowers somewhat resembling Monkshood, though not nearly related botanically. The place has become a famous resort for mountaineers hale and strong, as well as for those who, through overwork or other causes, need to inhale the pure breath of heaven and to put aside, for a time, the cares and worries of ordinary life. The latter often stay for several weeks up here, and almost invariably return with invigorated strength. Unfortunately, there are two rival inns, both of which in July and August are often cram full. Both are very comfortable, and both are kept by delightful men. I have stopped at both, and like both. I am often asked by people which is the best. I reply: 'Both.' I conscientiously recommend both.

What a jolly time we spent at Turtegrö! Is it heresy to say that the 'off days' picnicking were as enjoyable as the days spent on the mountains? Perhaps it is, so I'll not say so. Think too of the evening entertainments arranged by the 'Empress of Turtegrö,' the dances, the games, the songs, the mountain lectures, and the recitations. How jolly everybody was, Norse, Swedish, and English! Ah! listen to the 'sæter jente' at Skagastöl calling her cattle home to be milked. What mellow tones and lovely musical cadences she gets out of that little horn! Now it is midnight, and we want to start at 6 A.M. Just one more dance. How can one refuse when those who ask for it dance so well? I think of old sæter days, and come to the conclusion that if there were more poetry then, there is more food and fun now.

We climbed the Dyrhougstinder on a cloudy day and enjoyed a grand display of the Spectre of the Brocken. This highly respectable ghost made strange antics above the Skagastöls tarn and glacier, now and then bathing in the cold waters. He was photographed, but I believe he is still an undeveloped ghost. We also reconnoitred the V gap in profile, with a view to the future. We had capital glissades, and though the weather was pretty bad, we enjoyed ourselves.

I think I shall not betray a state secret by saying that we delighted our host, Ole Berge, who is an excellent climber, by asking him to accompany us on the first suitable day on an ascent of Skagastölstind and the traverse of Vesle and Mellemste, or the-little-and-middlemost-Skagastölstinder.

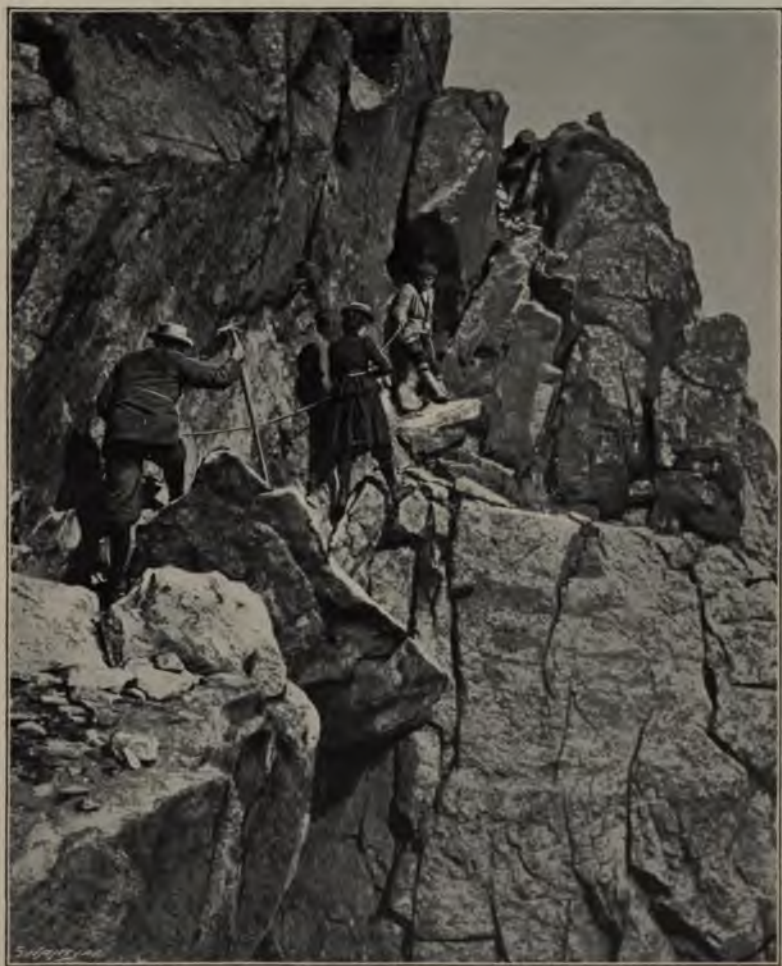
At 5 A.M. on July 28th, an ever-memorable day to us, we sallied forth over the dew-laden and flower-dotted moorland, very gently, as befitting the beginning of a long day. In two hours we

reached the Skagastölsbræ. The weird tarn into which this little glacier launches its icebergs was only partly frozen.

In September 1899, an unusually large mass of ice calved from the glacier, and by blocking up the outlet of the tarn, the water-level was raised 60 feet, which ultimately caused some alarming floods, which, however, did no great damage. This high-water mark was still plainly visible.

At 7.20 we reached the Skagastölshytte. This useful hut consists of two rooms, and is solidly built of stones and cement. The roof was blown away several times, but now it is held down by plaited wires which are attached to iron stanchions fixed into the solid rock. A wooden hut, erected by Herr Sulheim at great expense, was blown down, and some of its timbers may still be seen embedded in the ice-walls of a large crevasse. The *Norske Turist Forening* subscribed 2000 kroner for the erection of the present building. The hut is situated at the top of the Skagastölsband or pass. The term 'band' is an equivalent of the 'hause' in the north of England, and is used where the gap between the mountains is relatively broad. If the gap on the other hand be narrow, the word 'skar' is used. For the latter we have no equivalent in English, and when the words 'pass,' 'gap,' or 'neck' are not suitable, as is often the case, we generally draw upon the French for their word 'col.' I prefer the Norse word 'skar,' and use it. The view from the hut is superb. It is certainly in a draughty place, as those of us can testify who were there in a furious gale and hailstorm in the year 1889, before the hut was built. On that occasion we noticed, on that usually innocent-looking northern glacier, one of the most dangerous crevasses I have ever seen. From below it appeared to be only about two feet wide, but when seen in profile we realised that it was nearly thirty feet and very deep. An overhanging lip or eave of snow projected far over the crevasse. Where it was attached to the ice-wall it was not above four or five feet in thickness, and this thinned down to a few inches at the margin of the lip, which was clean-cut and not jagged. Strange to say, there was no depression or any other sign on the surface to indicate the hidden danger. During this summer of 1889 we saw many such crevasses on the Justedalsbræ and elsewhere in Norway, but it is only fair to add that this was an exceptional year, the like of which I have never seen before or since. Similar conditions will, however, occur again sometime. When they do—Beware.

In addition to Skagastölstind, which rises directly above the hut, there is choice of a dozen grand expeditions which may be



*Ledge on Skagastölstind.*

*To face page 204.*





made from here. Think of the Styggedalstind over Centralind; of the wild pass over to the head of the Maradalsbræ, made the reverse way by Herr Hall and never repeated; of that grand eastern ridge of the south Dyrhougstind made by Mr. Patchell's party; of the Midt Maradalstind climbs made by Messrs. A. W. Andrews, A. H. Fox-Strangeways, and Ole Berge. Many more could I name, but it is better to go and see them than to hear of them, and best it is to go and do them.

The hut is well provided with blankets and cooking utensils, and is about 5800 feet above sea-level.

At eight o'clock we started for the climb of the western face, the so-called Heftye's route up Skagastölstind. For an hour we had interesting but easy scrambling up little gullies and over steep bosses of rock. One long steep slab of some 30 feet afforded a minimum of hand-holds, and I was glad when Ole lowered me a rope. At nine o'clock we allowed our photographers a quarter of an hour. The day was perfect and the rocks warm and quite dry. With new snow or ice on the slabs great care is necessary here.

After our halt we roped in two parties. The first consisted of Ole, Fröken Bertheau, and myself; the second of Priestman, Baker, and Hogrenning.

For two-thirds of the height we go straight for the summit, which is soon seen after leaving the hut. In the centre of the noble tower which forms the top is a steep gully worthy of Cumberland. This was climbed in 1899, and afforded an excellent variety,<sup>1</sup> but by taking it, the most sensational though perfectly safe portion of the climb is avoided. Ole was willing to go either way, but I told him that I wanted to see the well-known traverse and 'Heftye's *rende*.'

Ole led unerringly through a little portal in a rock curtain on to an irregular ledge. It goes down a few feet and is narrow here and there, but there is a capital rock on which to hitch the rope, and with ordinary care there is no danger. At the end it rises and we come to another portal. Here we find a little platform, such a one as is welcomed on the Dent du Requin and many a grim Chamouni aiguille.

Now we have time to look about us. I have been on many a narrow ledge on the face of many a square-cut precipice such as that flat footpath on the Mer de Glace face of the Aiguille de Grépon, but never have I seen a precipice so high, so clean-cut, and so absorbingly interesting as this. Look over the edge; don't be frightened, the others will hold you tight. See those séracs on

<sup>1</sup> *Alpine Journal*, vol. xix. p. 604.

the Slingsbybræ over 2000 feet straight below you. There is no lateral moraine there. No indeed. The rocks on this face of Skagastölstind are well-nigh imperishable and everlasting. This huge perpendicular wall rises straight out of the ice, and there is nothing to carry the eye down till it sees the glacier. But let us go on.

A few steps up and round a little buttress, but we are still on narrow ledges, almost like flies on a wall, and we arrive at 'Hefty's *rende*.' This steep chimney starts about eight feet above the ledge, and is undercut below. The first man steps from a convenient rock-stool, on to the shoulders of one of the party, and easily reaches a tenpenny nail, which some sportsman has driven into a crack at the bottom of the chimney. This nail, like many of its brethren in the Alps, makes a good foothold. The chimney is now easily reached. It is narrow, and a long way from being perpendicular; still, the leader must be no bungler. He must know how to use back and knees, feet and elbows, and if he has had training in the ghylls of our Cumberland fells, so much the better. One man up, the rest soon follow.

We then traverse to the left, still on delightfully narrow ledges and firm rocks. Another steep little chimney, and at 10.48 I give Fröken Bertheau a hearty shake of the hand on the summit of Skagastölstind.

I will not catalogue the different points of interest which we saw in every direction, both far and near; but only remark that the snowy Folgefond, on the south side of the Hardanger fjord, was unmistakable, though 120 miles away.<sup>1</sup>

It was a little over twenty-four years since I had the good luck to make the first ascent, and it was delightful to be now accompanied by Fröken Bertheau, who had made in the year 1894 the first lady's ascent. She is a born mountaineer, and loves her own native mountains as she ought to do, and by this I mean a great deal.

As we wished to cross the Vesle and Mellemste peaks, we only remained forty minutes on the top, but would have liked four times as much. We left at 11.28. I was now on old ground, and was anxious to see how well my recollection of the route, as far as we were to follow it, was correct or not. I was last on our rope, and was prepared to have my work well cut out for me on the descent.

Yes, the three peaklets I remembered perfectly, and also the

<sup>1</sup> This summer, 1903, when climbing within the Arctic Circle, we saw mountains quite clearly which, measured on the map, proved to be 180 to 200 miles distant from us.



way down some 400 feet. 'Ole, that is not the right way; you are going too much to the left.' 'No, I'm all right. See, here are some of the little cairns which you built yourself.' 'I went down here,' pointing to a gully, 'but let me see your way. You are the head guide. On you go.' To my surprise he led down a series of steep shallow gullies and little buttresses, a perfectly straightforward way, where care was necessary on account of loose rocks, but where the climbing was interesting rather than difficult. We were all the time in sight of Turtegrö, and if we sent a stone down, it went on to the Skagastölsbræ, a novelty to me. Everything went well. It was a good climb, and resembled many a so-called difficult rock-peak in Switzerland, but the principal difficulties, which had originally faced me at the foot of the climb, were avoided altogether. We emerged on to Mohn's Skar from the north face, instead of from the east, as I had done.

Other surprises awaited me. Mohn's Skar now resembled a pier or sea-wall, with a steep battered wall on each side. On my first visit, the steep southern slope had much deeper snow than now, and a snow-wave was apparently breaking over the pier in the form of a large snow-cornice, and I had to go both under and over it, in order to begin my climb.

A similar condition also prevailed in 1878 when Herr Petersen made his ascent. Now, on the other hand, the snow had shrunk, and no wave from it is likely to break over the pier for years to come.

Whilst waiting for the second party, I had ample time to examine the mountain closely. I could see, away to the left, the exact place where I had begun my climb, and I am positive that the present route, one which every mountaineer would immediately choose for his highway to the top, did not exist in 1876, as, if it had done so, I could not have helped noticing it.<sup>1</sup> When I arrived all alone on Mohn's Skar on my first visit, I had plenty of time to examine the rocks carefully before Mohn and Knut came up, and I did so. I am certain that the ridge or pier abutted directly against a high wall of rock, and that no easy gateway then existed through or round the northern end of this wall. No, a large portion of this wall had been shattered and battered down by nature's artillery, probably within a few years of my first visit, and it has been carried away in the form of moraine by the

<sup>1</sup> Since writing the above I have received corroboration from Herr Petersen, who says he is certain that in 1878 my route, on the south side of the Skar, was the only possible route, and he agrees with me in thinking that a large fall of rock must have taken place after our ascents.

Skagastölsbræ. Much of the wall still exists and will continue to exist for hundreds of years on the south side of the skar. My chimney will also remain.

Certain it is now, that within view of Turtegrö, an irregular line, where a choice of routes is even possible, leads upwards from the end of the pier. None of the few climbers who have made the ascent from Mohn's Skar since 1878, seem to have been much impressed with the first 100 feet, though they all speak of difficulties on the final ridge. That has always puzzled me, but it never will again. In my case, by far the worst, in every respect, was the first steep, glazed chimney on the south side of the pier end.

Another fact is also very noticeable, namely, that the upper glacier portion of my route is more difficult now than it used to be.

The warm sun had melted all the snow crystals from Skagastölstind, and hence we were all thirsty. To Vesle is now the cry; but a halt is to be called at the first trickle of water. This soon happens, and we enjoy our lunch on some warm slabs, in full view of the noble peak and its greatest precipice. After a pretty climb of some 350 feet, we arrive on Vesle's crown at 1.40.

I frankly confess that, until that moment, I had never fully realised what grand exploits, during many seasons, had been scored by Herr Carl Hall. His foot first trod the peak we were now on. He first traversed the grisly rock ridge to right and to left. Nay, more; he first climbed Mellemste Skagastölstind, that fine rock-pyramid to which we are now making our way. The Centraltind and Styggedalstind, and their jagged connecting ridge, which Sulheim and I talked of traversing twenty years ago, but didn't, claim Hall as their conqueror. Hall has twice climbed Styggedalstind, and by different routes. I have twice tried it, and have twice failed. Ah! think of those two grand passes, each from the Maradalsbræ. They are magnificent. Look westward, and still see Hall's conquests. His footprints are everywhere. No one conversant with the climbing history of the Horungtiuder can stand on Vesle Skagastölstind without acknowledging that Carl Hall has laid his plans well, has worked patiently and persistently to execute them, and has met deservedly with great success.

After a half-hour of delightful ridge-climbing up and down, we arrive at the *pièce de résistance*, a smooth rock wall, thirty feet in height at the lowest place, which runs right across the narrow ridge. True, we are on the top of it, and can slide down a rope as Hall did, when he first completed the traverse. But he had to leave two men behind.



*Hefstye's Chimney on Skagastilind,*

*To face page 208.*



Patchell, Bowen, and Vigdal coming the other way, turned the rocks on the east, and Ole, too, had descended by that way in 1899, and showed us an old rope hanging down a crack in the ridge. By this way we were to go, but a new rope was to be fixed up, and left there. This was soon done, and was tied to a jammed stone, which overhung the top of the gully. Ole went first, and we lowered him out. It was a horrid place, with a truly Norse precipice, a good 3000 feet below us, and we did not much like it, even with our two ropes. It rather resembles the top of Savage Gully, on the Pillar Rock, but has a narrow crack up one side of it.

When Mr. Patchell's party made this ascent, Vigdal was hoisted up by the others, and he jammed an axe fast in this crack, then Patchell climbed up, and eventually pulled himself up and over the jammed stone. It was as fine a piece of mountaineering as has been done in the Horungtinder; but, as is often the case when great deeds are done, the doer of it made light of it.<sup>1</sup> Few, if any, men would care to climb down without a rope above them. With one, of course, it is different.

After sliding down and landing upon—well! nothing in particular, each of us in turn goes gingerly round a corner, and is told by Ole to 'hold on,' which he does most grimly. In thirty-five minutes all are down, and the ridge wandering begins again.

'Just look at Skag. What a grand view! Hang it all! I've fired off all my plates, and it's the best view in the Horungtinder. Why hasn't anybody taken it before?'

We all exhaust our stock of suitable adjectives, and, having done so, begin again.

'I'll come again. I must have this view.' It certainly was glorious, and came upon us in the nature of a surprise. Skagastölstind stands up like a huge gable, and looks infinitely finer from here than from anywhere else that I have seen. It reminded me of the end view of the Grandes Jorasses which suddenly bursts upon one on the top of the Col Ferret when going from the Swiss side—a view, the grandeur of which quite startled Mr. Horace Walker and myself when we crossed the pass a few years ago. The height of the crags above Mohn's Skar is of course small compared with that of the Grandes Jorasses from the Col des Hirondelles, but it is quite as impressive for all that.

Up and down, round or over, on we go. Ole never hesitates a moment. Here, the ridge is only a few inches wide; there, it

<sup>1</sup> *Alpine Journal*, vol. xviii. p. 254, and *Nor. Tur. For. Aarbog* for 1897, p. 54.



is as many feet. The rock is almost invariably firm and good, but now and then we find a loose slab, and when we do, we rarely resist the temptation to roll it down, down, down, to the great glacier below. Sometimes three or four of us sit down and shove off the rock with our feet. What a thud, and then a clatter, clatter, clatter, for it has broken into a thousand pieces.

At 3.23 we reach the top of Mellemste, and having broken the back of our day's work, we determine to rest and enjoy ourselves. Dry rock means no snow and no water. Eventually, the resourceful Baker finds an icicle, or hard snow, I forget which, and in process of time we are each treated to a couple of spoonfuls of water.

We stand in a row and wave handkerchiefs. At last, friends at Turtegrø see us, and their flag is raised and dipped in our honour.

There was one portion of the ridge of this range which had not yet been traversed, and one only. A link was needed to connect the two northern peaks with the Mellemste. It was the vicious-looking V-shaped gap in a depression of the ridge which we had reconnoitred in profile a few days earlier. The 'V' had a tilt over to one side, with the result that, though the northern side was steep, the southern side was all but perpendicular. The passage of this obstacle had been attempted more than once, and was pronounced to be impassable. What better recommendation could one wish for? None.

'Ole, come and let us look at the "V" from the top.'

'All right, I'll bring this rope.'

Leaving the others peacefully sleeping, and perhaps dreaming that they still had a lot of plates to expose, Ole and I start down the north ridge. I am lowered carefully over some nasty slabs and find that the top of the 'V' can be reached from above, though it is not quite a promenade. That is one point gained. To try to descend it at that late hour of the day with our large party is not to be thought of. We must try it from the north, and so meet the difficulties on the ascent.

'Wake up you fellows, Dampen piber.'

We set off at 4.32, having been over an hour on the top. Until 6.10 we have magnificent climbing which reminds me, in respect of the intricacy of the route and of its general characteristics, more of the Petit Aiguille du Dru than of any other mountain with which I am acquainted, and great credit is due to Herr Hall and his Romsdal guide for discovering it. For another hour we keep on the ropes, and it is wise to do so, though the

sensational parts of the climb are past. Screes, horrible screes, large and small, succeed. Then a long glissade comes as a great relief.

At 9.30 we reach Turtegrö well pleased with the world at large and the inhabitants thereof.

## II.—NORDRE SKAGASTÖLSTIND, SKAGASTÖLSNÆBBE, AND THE NÆBBE SKAR

Though we enjoyed perfect weather and bright warm sunshine on the two days when it was most essential for us to be so highly favoured—first, when crossing the Tyve Skar in Loen to the Nygaardsbræ in Justedal, and, secondly, on our ascent of the Skagastölstinder—the summer of 1900 will be remembered by mountaineers in Norway as being peculiarly treacherous and unreliable, and the weather prophets were more often wrong than right. Snow fell the day after we climbed the big peaks, and we had no chance of paying a visit to the 'V' for several days, and even then it was with the faintest hopes of success.

It was the last day of July, and we did not start until 12.10 P.M. At three we reached the top of Nordre Skagastölstind, the peak first climbed in 1820 by the plucky scientists, Professors Keilhau and Boeck. Here we remained till 3.35, waiting in vain for the sun to get round. Then we crossed the Næbbe, and all climbed some way down the 'V' and shivered in the cold wind. Our party was the same as on the last occasion, except that an active young journalist, Herr Eilert Sundt, had taken the place of Fröken Bertheau, who, to our great regret, was unable to accompany us.

The precipices on the east side of the gap were very savage and contained little hanging glaciers in their hollows, and though clammy clouds boiled furiously up and over all, we could see through occasional rifts that there was no chance of turning the 'V' on that side; and we knew that it could not be turned on the west except by a traverse low down to the usual route up Melleste. We concluded that if the 'V' be climbed at all, it must be straight up.

A front view of a rock face, whether distant or near, reveals much, but much more is always hidden. From the front, one can never properly gauge the mean angle of the rocks as a whole or in detail, and the difficulties almost invariably appear to be greater than they are in reality. A reconnaissance of a difficult rock face should be made in profile as well as in face, if possible.

We had done this from the Dyrhougstinder and from the western slope below the 'V' to a certain extent, and we knew pretty well that the face to be climbed was but few degrees out of the perpendicular. We had in addition the mountaineers' tell-tale snow, of two days old, which lay in little streaks here and there on the face of the crag.

Priestman, Ole, and Hogrenning, or 'the boy,' as we called him, climbed a few feet above the bottom of the 'V' and found that the first serious difficulty could be overcome. Amongst us we picked out the salient features of the crag, which we judged to be about 250 feet in height. We sketched it, and came to the conclusion that the probabilities were that it could be climbed, that it would be a teaser, or that quite possibly the final rock face might turn us back defeated after the lower portions had been conquered.

Clearly we must not attempt it with snow on all the ledges, and with that cruel and pitiless icy wind.

At 4.55 we reach the depression between the two northern peaks. As a steep tongue of glacier, perhaps 1000 feet in height, a portion of the great Styggedalsbræ, comes nearly up to the gap, it is proposed to vary our route back by making a new glacier pass. Ole very truly points out the fact that there is a large bergschrund at the bottom of the tongue, in fact just where it ought to be, and that no bridge can be seen over it. Naturally this is an encouragement to proceed. Tons of rock are heaved over as pilot engines to try the character of the snow on the slope. It is all right, there is no fear of an avalanche. Some of the stones leap gallantly over the crevasse, others are swallowed by its capacious jaws.

'You can never get over that,' says Ole.

'Oh yes; we can turn it some way or other. Nature is generally very good-natured, and if she bars one way she opens another.'

Four of the party, fired with a laudable thirst for adventure, rope together and prepare to descend. The two others, with a prudence which is equally laudable, keep to the ridge.

'The boy' goes first and soon reaches the snow. It is uncommonly steep, though perfectly safe. In time the lip of the bergschrund is reached. It consists of a straight face, perhaps 35 feet in height at the lowest place, and it certainly has no bridges. It cannot be safely jumped, because the snow which fills it up to a level with the lower glacier is of much too unstable a character to put trust in.

To the right or south side is a chaos of tottering towers of ice which plainly says 'No road, trespassers will be ——' (the last word obliterated). These might probably be turned by making a traverse of about a quarter of a mile along the side of the steep



*The V Gap and Bergschrund.  
from the Styggedalstræ.*

glacier tongue, and one of the party suggests it, but, strange to say, no enthusiasm in favour of its adoption is shown by the others.

To the left are steep crags of schistose rock, and at the base of these the Schrund is passable in most places. At 5.40 the party step on the rocks, Hogrenning leading. A nasty corner is rounded,

and a narrow ledge is reached which may or may not lead to a shallow gully 150 yards away, the nearest point down which it is even remotely possible to gain the glacier.

'One at a time please.'

'Hitch the rope on that knob.'

'Don't touch that stone, it's awfully loose.'

'Throw your axes down.'

Down they go, and the senders look with envious eyes on their axes on the snow below. Slowly, steadily, but ever forward. The ledge runs out into the face of the rock as ledges are in the habit of doing. 'Up there and along,' instead of down, is the order as the rock below is perpendicular.

'How lovely those flowers are!'

'Hang the flowers, and hold on!'

So the time passes. An unlovely boss of rock is climbed, another narrow ledge is traversed, and for the first time for an hour and a half there is good standing-room at the top of the shallow gully. Three men are lowered about sixteen feet. The last man throws the rope over a little spur, and with help from below he lands safely on the three-inch ledge, which, being on sound rock, is considered to be a real good place. A traverse back, this time on hard granite, is now made, then a crack is climbed down. Another traverse back again towards a snow-bridge. Three men are again lowered and their work is done. There is no hitch now, but it is barely twenty feet in height. There is only one hand-hold, and that is at the top. It is not a dangerous place, still it is not a nice thing for the last man to face. He lowers himself as far as he can, and then slides down on the head of Högrenning's axe, which is placed for the purpose, and at 7.52 all are safely on the glacier. Two hours and twelve minutes of real hard work have been consumed in turning a crevasse of only thirty-five feet.

The Styggedalsbræ, a large glacier, is unusually denuded of snow, and its many crevasses afford ample scope for practice in the finest branch of the mountaineer's art—that of snow-craft—in circumventing the difficulties of an intricate glacier. Opinions vary as to the best main line to be taken, and the leadership is changed, with the result that a fine steeplechase course is followed, instead of a longer and more prosaic one.

A very large avalanche of ice is seen to fall from a hanging glacier on the face of Mellemste, and its thundering noise is very impressive.

An ascent of Mellemste was made from the head of this glacier

in the year 1897 by Messrs. H. Kempson and C. E. Ashford with Ole Öiene. They cut up a steep glacier arm and then followed the more northern of the two buttresses which strike the ridge a little south of the mountain. It was a first-rate expedition in every respect.

At 9.15 the lovely gentians on the moorland below the glacier smile a welcome to the party. A glissade alongside the waterfall is a pleasant change, and in an hour after leaving the glacier, Turtegrö is reached.

The new pass, which had been descended—not crossed—was named the Næbbe Skar. Earlier in the season, this pass, which had proved on this one occasion to be so difficult, could be crossed with ease.

Soon after our return, I had the great pleasure and honour of a visit from Herr Edvard Grieg, who was staying at the other inn, and I feel sure that much of the delightful music with which he has charmed the civilised world has been inspired by the weird grandeur of the mountains and fjords of his native land, for which he has the most intense love and admiration.

### III.—THE ASCENT OF MELLEMSSTE SKAGASTÖLSTIND BY THE 'V' GAP.

'Fortune befriends the bold.'

My friends Priestman and Baker could not spare the time for another attempt on the 'V,' and went home, and though I had wished to spend the few remaining days of my holiday in another district, the 'V' proved too strong a magnet for me, so I retained Hogrenning and kicked my heels, impatiently waiting for bright sunshine to come and steal away the snow from the crags. Hogrenning did not find the time to hang heavily upon him, as he turned shoemaker. One day he soled nine pairs of boots and shod a horse as well.

Ole and I got up two mornings about four o'clock, but clouds and drizzle drove us to bed again. The second day we really ought to have gone, and would have done so but for 'the boy,' who hates snow-clad rocks, though in other respects he is an excellent climber. It was well for me that the company at Turtegrö was so charming, that the details of the moorland all around were so beautiful, the colouring of the mosses so exquisitely lovely and varied, and that many a favourite flower, and amongst them the *Linnæa borealis*, could still be picked in quantities near at hand. Had this not been the case, my impatience would have crystallised, and I should have been a general nuisance.

The last day which I could possibly spare for the expedition was Saturday, 4th August. Ole looked out at three o'clock, but as it was raining he did not waken me. However, I looked out about four. At 5.30 it was more promising, so I ordered Ole to rouse 'the boy' out of his slumbers, and also Sundt, who was most anxious to accompany us. 'The boy' talked about snow still left on the ledges, but agreed to come.

At 11.5 we stood once more in the 'V' gap. Snow lay here and there where we least wished to see it, but even if the sun were to come out brightly, it would not shine on these rocks until three or four in the afternoon, and as it was at best a doubtful day, we could not afford to wait. So an advance was ordered.

Ole was evidently wishful to lead, and as being a local guide it was of more importance for him to do so than for any one else, he was allowed to do so. 'The boy,' big, strong, and capable as he was, was placed second so that he could back up Ole. Then I came, and lastly Sundt. We used an 80 feet rope, which proved to be rather too short for four men, as Ole needed about 35 feet clear. We had also a spare rope for an emergency. Not a moment was lost. Ole now knew the first stage and was helped up a long slab to a three-inch platform by 'the boy,' while I hitched well behind to a capital belaying-pin. Then I shoved up 'the boy,' and Sundt hitched in turn. Ole had now to move on. The place was a shallow gully of some twenty feet in height, in which there was one big knob which stood out exactly where it was most wanted. Unfortunately, it was loose, and so was worse than useless, as it was in the way. Ole would have none of it, but, steadied by 'the boy,' he avoided it and just managed to reach a fairly good hold for the left hand. This formed a footstep too, and with great care he climbed out on to a broad but steep ledge directly over Sundt and me, as we soon found out when he shovelled away the snow and ice and gave us an unexpected bombardment. This is nothing unusual in mountaineering, but, for all that, it is a cold and cutting proceeding.

Now came my turn for the slab, easy enough with a rope above and a shove below. As there were only about a dozen feet of rope between Sundt and me, the former had to leave his hitch and spread-eagle himself for a minute on the slab, whilst I piloted 'the boy' up to the ledge. Then Sundt, who is a promising young mountaineer, climbed up very nimbly, and we knocked away the objectionable big loose knob, and both climbed together up to the ledge, a gruesome place in a wind. A short, easy, but straight-up chimney came next, and Ole, saying he had good hold,

we hurried on, as the cold wind was numbing his fingers and we could not say what was yet in store for us.

Next came some steep slabs without any visible joints. To the left was a sloping ledge covered with snow, and under those conditions it was a sensational place. Still, it seemed to offer the best route. Ole advanced very cautiously over it, and after climbing a short chimney he returned to another ledge just above us and at the top of the slabs, which, with the help of the rope, we soon climbed. An easy traverse to the right was now revealed to us, followed by an interesting chimney, and we knew that we must be near the top crag, which we feared might perhaps be too stiff for us after all. 'Can you climb it, Ole?' I called out when I was in the chimney but still out of sight of the crag. 'Yes, I think so. Come on,' was the cheering reply. Up we went, and at last stood on a roomy ledge. The top crag, perhaps 15 feet in height, was certainly straight up, but there was a crack up the face of it, invisible from below. Ole, however, followed the ledge to the right, and a still better crack appeared on the west side. We were soon up, and at 11.58, or in 53 minutes from the bottom of the 'V,' we found ourselves on the top of this troublesome letter.

Much of the climb reminded me of the north side of the Ennerdale Pillar below the Stomach Traverse, but on the whole, the Cumberland climb is perhaps rather the more difficult of the two, although not so sensational, which is saying a good deal.

On the top of the 'V' there is a remarkable flat rock platform of about 200 square yards. Seen from the neighbouring Dyrhougstind, this platform resembles the seat of a huge easy-chair, the crags above forming the back. This naturally suggested the name of Ole Berge's Stol, which it will doubtless bear for many a long year to come.

When the necessary cairn was built, we set off to complete the climb of Mellemste. Ole, encouraged by success, went straight at it up some nasty rock slabs where there was little to hold on by, although an easier way could have been found on the western side.

We reached the top at 12.14, and would have probably traversed the whole range as far as the Gjertvastind, a superb expedition, if it had been a fine warm day such as that which we had enjoyed exactly a week earlier on the same peak. It was, however, cold and clammy, and there was an icy wind blowing; so we descended by Hall's most interesting route, and reached Turtegrö at 4.20.

The Norse and English mountaineers at Turtegrö took a great interest in our expedition and gave us a very warm welcome.



They seemed to think that it was peculiarly fitting that the man who in 1876 made the first ascent of Skagastölstind, should have been one of the party to cross the 'V' gap for the first time, and by doing so, have forged the last link in the chain which connects the whole of the Skagastölstinder. This new route is a welcome addition to the many fine climbs within easy reach of Turtegrö. Indeed, it is the nearest of them all. Though Mellemske Skagastölstind has now been climbed from each of the four cardinal points of the compass, I am glad to believe that there is no way which can truthfully be called an easy one.

I much regretted that Fröken Bertheau had not shared in our success, especially as I have reason to believe that her sole reason for not joining us was that she thought, unselfishly, that the addition of another member to the party might possibly endanger its success by making us go rather slower in the doubtful weather which prevailed. If any one at Turtegrö deserved to share in so grand an expedition, it was certainly the excellent climber who had made the first lady's ascent of the great peak, and had, by so doing, set such an admirable example to her sex. Fortunately, Fröken Bertheau succeeded not only in crossing the 'V' gap, but traversed the whole range over to the Gjertvastind in 1901.

Apparently, two of my English friends had once thought of crossing the 'V,' but evidently had not realised what it was, as at the end of a paper in the *Nor. Tur. For. Aarvog* for 1897, they say, 'To have crossed Mellemske Skagastölstind over Nordre Skagastölstind and Skagastölsnæbbe would no doubt have been more thorough-going, but we all thought that it would be dull compared with the route we chose.' If they had scored this success in addition to what they did further along the same mountain wall, fortune would, I do think, have favoured them too much for one day.

By waiting for this climb, Hogrenning and I missed the steam-boat connection at Skjolden, and, oddly enough, it took him six days to reach his home in Stryn. I was driven to Dösen by Sulheim, and then had to take a weary boat row to Lærdal. Yes, but I would willingly have been rowed the whole 150 miles of the Sognefjord rather than have missed this last grand climb.

## CHAPTER XVIII

A FARM ON A SHELF; A RELIGIOUS REVIVAL; WAR WAGED UPON VIOLINS; REACTION; THE SECOND ASCENT OF AUSTABOTTIND; A NEW ROUTE AND AN UNEXPECTEDLY BAD ONE TOO; A CROAKING RAVEN; WE CROSS THE BERGSCHRUND IN THE DARK; BENIGHTED ON THE RAVEN PASS; WE LONG FOR COFFEE AND DECAMP; THE VIKING'S SKAR; A NEW ROUTE UP THE MIDDLE RIINGSTIND; THE RAVEN ONCE MORE; SKAGA GJÆL

'These high wild hills, and rough uneven ways,  
Draw out our miles, and make them wearisome.'

SHAKESPEARE.

'— wise is Odin . . .  
. . . and round about his ravens fly,  
and bring him tidings up from earth to lofty heaven.'

*Frithiof's Saga.*

(Translated by Rev. W. L. BLACKLEY.)

'The boding raven . . . sate,  
And with hoarse croaking warn'd us.'

'5th Pastoral'—GAY.

## THE WESTERN HORUNGTINDER

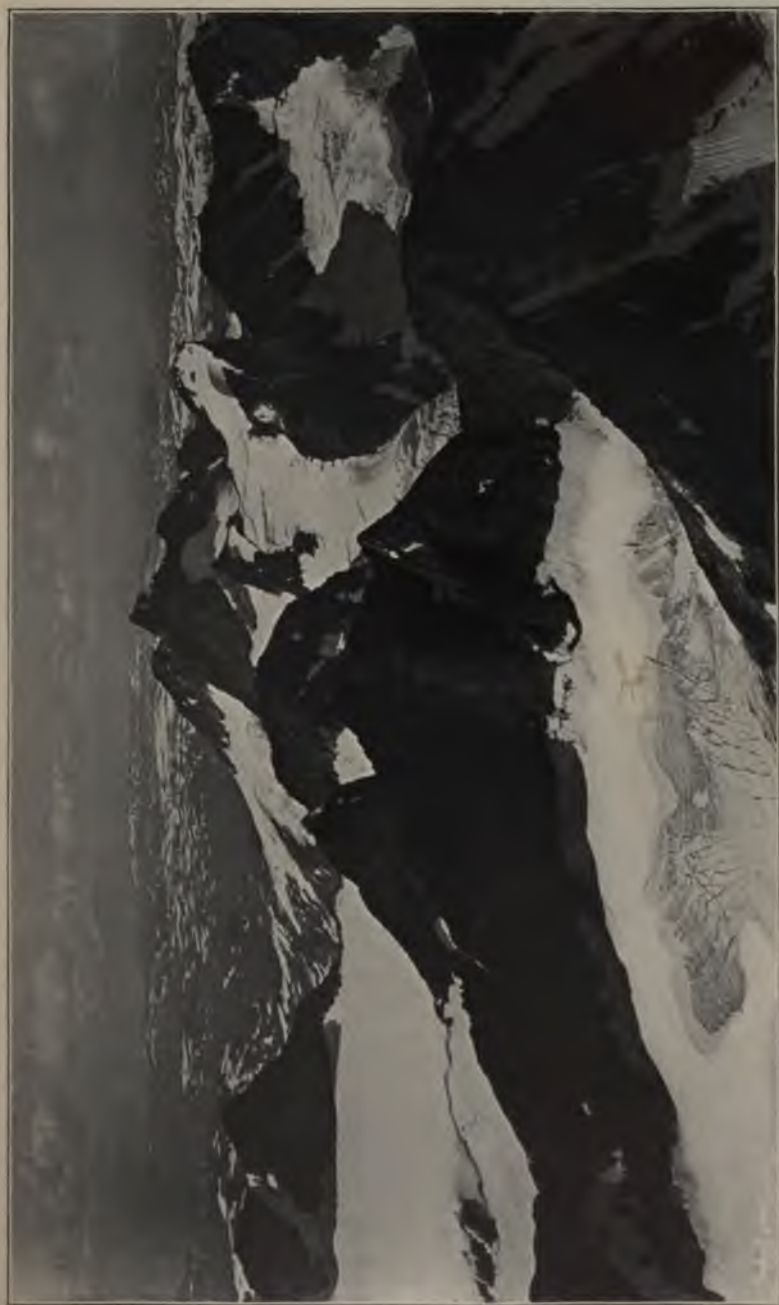
FROM the year 1876 until 1889, for some reason or other, what, I cannot tell, I woefully neglected the Horungtinder group, west of Midt Maradal. In the meantime, Herr Carl Hall made in 1883 the first ascent of Austabottind, the most western peak of the whole range, and by far the grandest of the western group, and which bears, in many respects, a striking resemblance to the Gjertvastind, the most eastern peak of the Horungtinder. Seen in profile, each mountain has the appearance of a cone, which has been bisected from the apex downwards, of which one-half only now remains, and in consequence each has a most appalling precipice, one facing south-west, the other north-east.

The graphic account of his successful ascent which Herr Hall wrote in the *Nor. Tur. For. Aarbog*, added to the scores of views which I had enjoyed of Austabottind, recalled me to a stern sense of neglected duty, and I determined to reform my ways.

In company with two English engineers, Hastings and I failed ignominiously in an attempt to make a new glacier pass from Fjærland to Aamot, and were driven to make another instead. We failed again, a few days later, to do what we had planned, and only with great difficulty succeeded in extricating ourselves from the jaws of the most vicious network of crevasses in which I have ever been involved. This was in the year 1889—a year of exceptional denudation of snow.

As a solace, we spent a long and most delightful morning listening to good classical music, at the house of my dear old friend, Herr Glöersen, at Solvorn. After this, we rowed lazily to Skjolden, where Sulheim and Mr. and Mrs. Hartley were expecting us. Unfortunately, our engineer friends could only spare one more day with us, so that was devoted to an ascent of Eidsnaasi. Owing to a little misunderstanding about the arrangements, a mistake which was easily made, as we were going in a lazy, happy-go-lucky and extremely enjoyable manner, one of the party passed the rest unnoticed on the steep forest path, and proceeded to the top alone. This caused us a little anxiety, and during the search which we made, Hastings and I made an unnecessary descent and ascent of 2000 feet, and thus it came about that we climbed altogether 6000 feet on a 4000 feet hill. Under ordinary circumstances this would have mattered little, but, as in this case, we had to ascend 4000 feet in the evening to reach our night quarters, it meant a total ascent of 10,000 feet on the day previous to that which we had set apart for the ascent of Austabottind. After parting with great regret from the engineers, at 7.10 P.M., Hastings, Hartley, Sulheim and I set off for the new hut in Berdal.

The path by which Sulheim led us was very grand, and wound in and out, up and down, backwards and forwards among the crags, until we reached a little fertile plateau about 2000 feet above the valley of Fortun, and not far from the Fuglesteg farm. Here, perched on the crags, but well sheltered by pine-trees, is the farm Furaas, and a lovely place it is too, when once you have got there. The view of Fortunsdal below, seen through the clusters of Scotch firs which fringe the cliffs, is most bewitching. A short distance above the house, a fine glacier stream tumbles over a crag, and its spray waters the neighbouring fields. This farm is higher and more difficult to approach than Fuglesteg, and in winter time the good folk are often entirely cut off from the rest of the world for weeks, if not for months, at a time. Fortunately, they appear to be very cheerful and contented, and have a good many resources of amusement in



*The Western Hörungtimber from the top of Skagastíslind.*



themselves. We called, and were much struck with their happy faces. One of the family used to be a good violin player, and thus the tedium of the long winter evenings was beguiled by music, singing, and dancing. Surely the most severe-minded and most straight-laced Puritan could do nothing less than approve and encourage such innocent amusement! Strange to say, the reverse was the case here. Some twenty years ago, not long after the great Moody and Sankey revival in England, a wave of religious fanaticism passed over Norway, and the tenets of the Haugianer were reawakened. This sect, which was founded at the end of the eighteenth century by Hans Nielsen Hauge, forbade the indulgence of most of the innocent amusements of its devotees.

In Fortunsdal, a worthy but misguided bachelor, a disciple of the Haugianer, and an able man too, persuaded his neighbours, who were formerly very lively and fond of music, that fiddles came from the devil himself. Many people, some of whom played very well, possessed them; but they were induced to sell them to this leader of men, whereupon he destroyed them. Consequently a few years ago there was hardly one to be met in the whole district. One fiddle came from Furaas, and was duly burnt. This misdirected zeal was most lamentable, and the very nature of the people suffered accordingly. Young people were rebuked if they even laughed or spoke loud, and instead of being bright, happy, and now and then vivacious, they became morbid and gloomy. Of course, in time a reaction set in, and lads and lasses began to dance, at first stealthily in the fields to the jingling of German concertinas, but well out of sight of the morbid kill-joys and fiddle-destroyers; then they took to their innocent pleasures more openly, and were joined by their elders.

One Sunday evening, when we were at Skjolden, about a fortnight after our visit to Furaas, more than sixty men, women, and children paid 10 öre (about three-halfpence) each to hear a poor girl, who was travelling to Gudbrandsdal, sing their national songs, which they had almost forgotten. This showed how deep-seated in the love of music in Fortunsdal.

A short way above Furaas we met its owner, Kristoffer Furaas, a tall handsome fellow, who has since become a very fair guide. He followed us up the steep mountain path to Berdal. This was a dry and thirsty path, where, though willows and bog-plants grew in profusion, we found no water for miles. At 10.55 we reached a hut which had just been built for the use of tourists. Unfortunately it was not finished, and as the walls were not caulked with moss, we passed a night of shivers on bare boards,

rolled up in Scotch plaids. As I have before mentioned, Hastings and I had climbed 10,000 feet that day, and, to put it mildly, we were tired.

Very early next morning the 200 goats, which fed in Berdal, came to the hut, and apparently engaged in a game of 'Aunt Sally' against the door. Kristoffer and his most obliging wife did their best for us, and gave us steaming coffee, which warmed us through. We were the first visitors to the hut, and preceded its furniture and fittings. Now, I believe, it is a very cosy place, and an admirable half-way house on the grand mountain walk from Aardal to Fortun, by the romantic Fuglesteg.

We set off for the ascent of Austabottind, and with the intention of making a new glacier pass, at 9.27, a horribly late hour, and in two hours reached the Berdal glacier, which we crossed to easy rocks on its left bank. We climbed or walked over two little peaks, on which we erected small cairns, to a gap below the great peak itself. Here we put on the rope, and had a very interesting climb up a steep and rather narrow ridge, where in all shady places we had hard ice instead of snow. At 3.15 we reached the top, where we found Hall's cairn. The summit is very small, merely a large slab of rock standing end on, and perched on the top of a narrow saw-toothed but flat ridge. Three ridges meet there, and head three gigantic precipices. The height is 7226 English feet.

Unfortunately it was misty. We started off again at 3.40, and in a few minutes, to our great joy, the clouds all blew away, and every peak of the Horungtinder stood out clearly, with sharply defined lines, against a bright blue sky, and more than any of the party I was astounded at the glorious view. I had not been in this district for several years, and in the meantime had been climbing amongst the Chamouni aiguilles and elsewhere in the Alps, and was quite prepared to find that I had exaggerated in my own mind the grandeur of these rugged peaks. Now, to my intense joy, I found that my old friends were infinitely finer than I had imagined them to be. In fact, I had never seen a wilder view before, nor have I since, I mean naturally the view of the Horungtinder range, seen looking east and north-east, as Austabottind is at the western end of the range. Skagastölstind towered far above his attendant satellites. One little corner of the Aardalsfjord was visible. Indeed, Austabottind is the only peak of the Horungtinder which can be seen from the sea.

Our proposed pass was just below us, east, but it could not be reached directly from the summit ridge. At 4.25 we were again

at the little gap, where we had left our rucksacks. Here, as we had before arranged, we left our former route with the intention of climbing down to a tongue of glacier that fills a little hollow in the mountain, and which would take us to the upper portion of the Berdal glacier, whence we could easily reach our projected pass.

At first all went well; we had 250 feet of difficult rock to descend. Sulheim led; then came Hartley, who was thoroughly enjoying his first introduction to mountaineering, and who climbed capitably; then myself; and lastly Hastings, who occupied the post of honour as last man. Here and there we in front had to be lowered, and then Hastings in turn required to be backed up by me. We reached the tongue of glacier at 5.55, having been an hour and a half in descending only 250 feet. Here, to our great disappointment, we found ice instead of the soft snow, which it appeared to be, when seen from above.

A descent, just where we were, was not to be thought of, so we determined to skirt the base of the rocks, about fifty or sixty yards, to a place where, apparently, a snow ridge would lead us down to the flatter glacier below. As is usual in such places, there was a little crevice between the top of the ice and the rocks, which, except at the one place where we had descended, rose straight out of the ice to a great height, and were quite unclimbable. No trifling could be allowed in such a place. The glacier tongue was probably not more than 250 feet in height, nor was the mean angle steeper than  $45^\circ$ , but at the bottom, plain enough to be seen, was a hungry-looking bergschrund ready to swallow us, and a few hundred more too for that matter.

I told Sulheim to lead as I was desirous that he should add to his experience in ice work, and he went admirably, though slowly. He made steps like coal-scuttles for our feet, and good hand-holds too where necessary. The ice, as was almost invariably found to be the case in the memorable summer of 1889, was as hard as iron. Where possible, whilst making this difficult traverse, one or more of the party always contrived to have the rope well hitched round the shaft of his axe, which was jammed in tight between the top of the ice and the rock wall. This ensured the safety of the party in case a slip should be made. Indeed, in every way the greatest care was needed and was taken. About half-way on, a very startling episode occurred. It was my turn to move, and it was necessary for me to unhitch the rope and to put the axe into another place as Hastings and Sulheim were well anchored. I tried to pull out my axe; it was tightly jammed; I



shook it and tugged at it in vain for some time, then Hartley moved back a step in order to help me, and we both tugged away. At last it came up with a bang, and the head of it knocked Hartley an awful whack just under the nose, which caused him to pursue, quite involuntarily, his favourite study of astronomy—to wit, 'to see stars,' for some minutes. However, he never flinched nor lost his hand-hold nor moved an inch in his icy steps. Stranger still, he used not a word of strong language, but tried his best to smile, and told us to go on. This was one of the most marvellous examples of presence of mind that I have ever seen, and I have had my share of adventures.

At 7.30 we reached the point where we intended to descend, having occupied an hour and thirty-five minutes in making this short traverse, which, under ordinary conditions, would not have occupied us more than five minutes. The little snow ridge we found, to our dismay, consisted of hard, coarsely grained ice, which needed all our care and the hacking of numerous large steps, most of which meant at least fifty strokes for each step. After a few minutes Sulheim and I changed places, whilst Hastings still acted as our sheet-anchor above.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, the shades of evening fell fast, dusky night was approaching, and as bad luck would have it, we had no lantern with us. Then, an old raven, perched on a crag not far away from us, croaked most dismally, and even the most prosaic and un-superstitious member of our party felt that an uncanny element had been added to the scene. Never did I hate a bird as I hated this. I am quite certain too, that I made the steps a wee bit larger than would otherwise have been the case, and I am equally certain that none of my companions objected to their size. By slow degrees the ice turned to hard frozen névé and lastly to snow, into which we could kick the necessary steps. In process of time we reached the upper lip of the bergschrund, and it was so dark that at first it was impossible to make out whether its depth was 5 feet or 500. At any rate it looked so bad that we made a short traverse to a place where we fancied that we could see the bottom. When the others had anchored

<sup>1</sup> A well-known mountaineer wrote saying that, 'It is far easier to cut steps down than up.' I do not agree with this at all, and though I am well aware that when cutting down a slope one can have a better swing with the axe than when ascending, I feel absolutely certain that in nearly all cases it is easier to cut up than down. On one occasion, when descending an ice slope in the Alps, it was necessary for me to re-cut steps for six consecutive hours so as to allow the best man to be the last on the rope. Had we been ascending, the work would have been done in much less time.

themselves safely in good firm snow, I excavated a groove through the lip of the crevasse, and told them to lower me down. Three or four feet were ample. I prodded with my axe and found the floor to be excellent. Then I gained a ridge of ice which projected obliquely half-way across the crevasse. This was good, hard glacier ice, and practically *terra firma*. The others came on to it, and then, one by one, we crossed the remaining portion, and at 10.10, or in two hours and forty minutes since leaving the top of



Austabottind

the slope, or in four and a quarter hours from the time we left the rocks above, we found ourselves on easy ground, on the Berdalsbræ. Under good conditions the descent from the rocks to the flat glacier could be made in a quarter of an hour. By good fortune we had found, as we saw the following day, the very best, if not the only, place where the bergschrund could have been crossed.

From the rocks above, the leader of the party had carefully noted the position of the open crevasses at the head of the glacier, consequently, by the aid of the dim light, we easily found our

way to the rocks at the top of the pass, which we reached at 11.30.

Some people will no doubt think that we must have run considerable risk in ascending this glacier when it was nearly dark. Such, however, was not the case, though great care was necessary, and the first man was allowed a longer rope than the rest, and was sent forward as a pilot engine. Our course was up the glacier, or at right angles to the line of crevasses. Had we gone across the glacier, and consequently parallel to the crevasses, we certainly should have been in danger.

The top of the pass consists of a flat ridge, perhaps 200 yards long. At the eastern end, the Store Riingstind rises up with gaunt black precipices, which are confronted with the still wilder cliffs of Austabottind at the western. On the middle of the ridge there is a sharp needle of rock<sup>1</sup> standing like a sentinel to guard the pass. Nowadays this is called my Bedstead.

As the wind had got up and a little snow was falling, we needed shelter, and we talked as cheerfully about finding suitable sleeping-quarters at the bottom of a dry crevasse as we should have done about engaging rooms in Northumberland Avenue. We descended a crevasse and though it was perfectly wind and snow proof, its fittings and furniture generally were not quite to our liking, so we went back to the rocks, where we found one partly overhanging which kept off the wind. As the ridge was broad we took off the rope, emptied our rucksacks, and put on all our clothes. After this, we had a meal of bread, cheese, and chocolate, and some Liebig, which Hartley very cleverly managed to boil or warm over a candle. Then we sang songs and spun yarns, and sitting back to back for the sake of warmth, we passed several hours not unpleasantly. Just above us was the sharp needle of rock, and it and the peaks of the Austabottinder appeared now and then like 'ghosts glaring in the gloom.'

The leader recommended, and what is more to the point, he practised, total abstinence, and told how the drinking of brandy lowers the temperature of the body, thereby rendering the imbibor more susceptible to cold. In fact, he gave a teetotal lecture, which was respectfully listened to, and afterwards, when no ill effects of the cold night were observable, he had in consequence a sort of 'Didn't I tell you?' air about him. Some time later, however, he was told that during the sleep of the lecturer and another man, the two other members of the party had derived

<sup>1</sup> The rock needle is shown on the accompanying sketch with the ice slope behind it.

much comfort by sampling the contents of a brandy flask. Though of course it was cold, there was no fear of frost-bites, and the little drop of cognac did no harm. I have, however, once known a teaspoonful of brandy taken on a similar occasion, but when it was much colder, have very injurious effects.

At three o'clock, day began to dawn. We looked down the Gravadalsbræ and between the two western Riingstinder, which was the route we had intended to have taken. There was no especial difficulty. Why should we not go on to Turtegrö and make two new glacier passes as well?

No one wished to suggest the word 'retreat,' and yet no one seemed to be keen to go on, though it was clear that victory could easily be gained if we did, and though we had worked very hard we had only made the second ascent of the big peak, a first ascent of a minor one, and had reached the top of a new pass. Ah! It seems to me now that we were lazy, but it did not at the time. It was raining too, and a chilly wind blew over the ice up from Gravdal.

'Shouldn't I like a cup of coffee?' said one.

'Rather.'

The word 'coffee' decided the question, and without another word I jumped on the hard-frozen snow of the Berdalsbræ, and the rest followed at once. It was then 3.15. We left the glacier at 4.38, reached the Berdal hut again at 6.10, and soon had our steaming coffee and then a short sleep. We descended by way of Fuglesteg and reached Sulheim's pretty house at Eide at 3 P.M., and in the evening had some good fishing in the lake.

I gave the pass, on the top of which we passed the night, the name of Ravn Skar, or Raven Pass, after the bird of ill omen, as either that bird or another followed us up to the pass and awakened the early morning echoes. Oddly enough, when descending the Central Riingstind, by a difficult route, in 1894, a raven, possibly the same old croaker, appeared and gave us the same dismal strain as before.

I am glad to say that the Ravn Skar was crossed in 1891 by Sulheim in company with Kristoffer Furaas and an Englishman. A few years later, Mr. A. C. Roberts and one guide descended from Austabottind by its steep southern face to an arm of the Gravadalsbræ, and then went round the mountain to Berdal and Turtegrö, a very fine expedition.

Speaking generally, the mountains in Norway are easier to climb than those in the Alps. But there are many notable exceptions. If they are easy under ordinary conditions, the reverse

may prove to be the case under extraordinary conditions, and if the description of our ascent of Austabottind does not prove the correctness of this statement, then indeed I shall have utterly failed to do what I intended when I wrote it.

Briefly, the facts are these. Austabottind, though a very fine mountain, is not a difficult one to ascend for experienced climbers. The route by which we chose to descend was apparently fairly easy too, and I have no doubt that usually it is so. We were a strong party, yet the 'apparently fairly easy' route proved, most unexpectedly, to be exceedingly difficult. Of course it may be said that the condition of the snows in 1889 was quite exceptional. To this I agree, and have pointed out the fact scores of times myself. But a similar state of things will occur again after some long unbroken spell of sunshine, and mountaineers ought always to be prepared to meet it.

#### VIKINGEN'S SKAR AND MIDTRE RIINGSTIND

On a fine but rather cloudy morning at the end of August, a few years ago, a party of seven storm-tied mountaineers set off from Øiene's cosy mountain inn at Turtegrö—the Riffelberg of the Horungtinder—for a day of fun on the Riingsbræ. Our principal intention was to explore, with the aid of candles and lanterns, an ice cavern in that glacier, which, as in the case of the well-known cavern at the foot of the Arolla glacier, has been bored through the ice by the sun-warmed waters of a lateral stream. The previous year Sulheim and others had been several hundred yards in the cave, but had been stopped by a deep little sub-glacial lake. On the present occasion, bold schemes of swimming were jauntily aired, whilst inward resolutions of a drier nature were privately formed, but not publicly proclaimed, by more than one of the party, and anticipatory and involuntary shivers were the lot of all.

It was also to be a big day for the cameras, and one too to be remembered by those who carried them.

Though the glacier is barely two hours' walk from Turtegrö, over three hours were spent, and well spent too, by the photographers, who, amongst other living subjects, photographed a ferocious lemming.

At last the Riingsbræ was reached, much to my joy, as I had not revisited it since making the first passage over the Riings Skar twenty years earlier.

We hastened onward to the cavern. Unfortunately the mouth of it was blocked up by an immense spring avalanche, and, as no one seemed to be inclined to dig through it, Sulheim proposed

several bold schemes. One commended itself at once, viz. : to cross the Gravdals Skar to the head of the Gravdals glacier, and to make from there a new pass over to the Stöls-Maradalsbræ, south of the Midtre Riingstind, and to return by the Riings Skar; in fact, to make a complete circuit of the Middle Riingstind. The fact that the proposed new pass would lead from nowhere to nowhere else, as is the case with many a fine glacier pass in the Alps, was rather a recommendation than otherwise.

Two parties were formed and roped. The first consisted of Messrs. Cyril Todd, G. H. Goodman, H. Congreve, and myself; the second, of Herr Sulheim, and Messrs. A. L. Bill and P. E. Sewell. Todd led very well up a steep belt of snow some 800 feet high, on each side of which was an ice-fall. It was here that, a score of years ago, we had a good glissade when making the first known glacier pass over the Horungtinder. To our great surprise we saw two foolish lemmings that were running about on a huge rectangular mass of névé, and apparently entirely cut off from the rest of the glacier. How they got there, or how they would get away, was a great puzzle. The only solution of the latter that we could think of, was that probably a snowy owl, or some other of the numerous birds of prey which always follow the lemmings on their migrations, would swoop down upon the plucky little fellows and for ever put a stop to their mountaineering.

When up the snow belt, two passes were open to us, my old friend the Riings Skar, to the east, and the Gravdals Skar, to the west. We took to the latter, and after an easy trudge we reached the gap and had a grand view of mist-veiled mountains, whose coyness gave the photographers much trouble. Not a mile away from us was the Ravn Skar, and Sulheim and I again bemoaned our bad luck in not having been able to connect the two passes a few years earlier. It was most probably from here that Mr. Willink made the first ascent of the Middle Riingstind in 1878, and from here also in 1890 Herr Hall made the first ascent of the Store Riingstind. A remarkable adventure also befell an English climber and Vigdal, who descended the Gravdalsbræ, and, so far as is known, made the first passage of the Gravdals Skar. In trying to recover a hat which had been blown off, one of the two slipped on the ice and dragged the other off his feet. They slid down several hundred feet, and were much bruised, so much so that one of them had to remain for hours alone at the bottom until his companion brought assistance, when he was carried down to a sæter, and afterwards with great difficulty to Vetti, where he made a long stay. I am almost certain that it was on the

Gravdalsbræ, but neither of the two concerned seems to be quite certain about it, and it might have been on the Stöls-Maradalsbræ.

After a walk of twenty minutes on the upper snows of the Gravdalsbræ we reached the rocks below Sulheim's new pass. Here we had about fifteen minutes of delightful climbing, and when we got to the gap we were glad to see an easy way down on the other side. The name Vikingen's Skar was unanimously adopted as the name for the pass, in honour of Herr Sulheim, who is a worthy descendant, not only of Vikings, but of King Harald Haarfager himself.

The views of Skagastölstind which we saw bit by bit through the clouds were most tantalising to the photographers, but at the same time were really glorious. On each side of the gap was a wild rock ridge leading to a fine peak. That to the north led the eye up towards the summit of the Middle Riingstind, which, like most of the peaks, was enveloped in clouds. On the south, a remarkable ridge abutted against the northern face of the Stöls-Maradalstind, which in the year 1891 had afforded an excellent climb to Mr. Hoddinott, Herr Sulheim, and K. Furaas. This fine peak, which has now been ascended three times, is one of the grandest in the range. No one should attempt to descend from the snow-field on the eastern shoulder of this peak down the rocks direct to the head of the Stöls-Maradal on account of the great danger arising from the looseness of the rocks. One party, after hours of anxiety, made the descent in safety, but there is no need for a second to attempt so dangerous an expedition, as there is plenty of choice of safer routes.

From the Viking's Skar the Riing's pass was soon reached, and the eastern face of the Midtre Riingstind, though peppered with new snow, seemed so very tempting that our section attacked it forthwith.<sup>1</sup> Todd still led. The rocks were very steep, and one chimney, about 30 feet in height, was very stiff. Much holding on, shoving, pulling, and hitching was necessary, and altogether it was an admirable climb of about one hour and ten minutes.

The descent, to the cheerful accompaniment of a croaking raven, occupied less time, and the chimney was avoided.

The second party at the same time climbed the East Riingstind, an easier peak, on the very top of which they found a living lemming, 6580 feet above sea-level.

<sup>1</sup> This peak, with a belt of cloud upon it, is well shown in the coloured sketch (p. 336) in *Norway in 1848 and 1849*, by T. Forester. The Riing's pass is to the right of the peak and the Viking's pass to the left, though the latter is barely in view.

## THE SKAGA GJÆL

Owing to bad weather, the last-named expedition was the only one which Todd and I were able to accomplish in the Horung-tinder, a great disappointment, as I had much wished to revisit Skagastölstind. As new snow made the ascent of the monarch impracticable, we determined to identify ourselves with the mountain in some other manner, however remotely. The Skaga Stöl, the sæter which gives its name to the 'tind,' was duly photographed, and the farm Skagen had already withstood the fire of the camera. There still remained the Skaga gjæl.

We would descend it. Sulheim told us that no tourist had ever traversed the ghyll, and he advised us to let it alone. How could we do so after this advice?

On the way down from Turtegrö we parted from Sulheim who was leading his horse, just before he crossed the bridge to Berge, and walked passed the farm Optun, where we found a stalwart man named Eirik. I asked him which was the way to Skagen, and he told us by Berge and the Fortun's *galder*. I said 'Nei, nei, jeg mener gjennem gjelet.' Then the following conversation was held.

'Der er ingen vei. Du må gå over Berge.'

'Hvis du selv gik til Skagen, hvilken vei vilde du tage?'

'Jeg? Naturligvis nedenunder,' pointing to the ghyll.

'Vi ønsker at gå den samme vei.'

'Du kan ikke.'

'Hvorfor ikke?'

'Fordi der ingen vei er. Veien er over Berge. Alle gamle folk og næsten alle de unge også går denne vei.'

'Vi er ikke gamle, og vi er vant til fjeldene.'

'Er du Slingsby?' 'Ja.'

After shaking hands he said: 'Slingsby! Ah! Jeg vil vise dig veien gjennem gjellet.'

He led us through his meadow to the top of the gorge, gave us some nuts, and pointed out a faint track below.

After thanking him, we set off at once and soon came to a narrow ledge about a foot wide, by which we skirted the face of a crag. Then we descended some slippery grass slopes by holding on here and there to hazel bushes. Eirik directed us for some time from above. We then had to traverse, almost horizontally, some steeply inclined slabs of rock some 50 to 60 feet. Bushes helped us here and there, but we quite felt that it was not a place for old people. The river was out of sight hundreds of



feet below us. Here and there we found footprints, but they were rather misleading, and we were out of sight of Eirik. As a rule, we kept as near as possible to the foot of a line of crags



Skaga-Gjæl.

which rise out of what by courtesy we might call a broad ledge, but which in reality sloped downwards at an angle of some 50 degrees. In one place we were driven upwards by a projecting spur to an unpromising and very dark corner, but when we got

there, a very pretty route was revealed, and we airily climbed round the spur on a little ledge which was overhung by a projecting rock. Steep slopes then brought us within 100 feet of the river, and, soon after, we emerged from this most interesting gorge at the farm Skagen.

The climbing is not difficult for decent rock climbers, but care is needed, and a rope would be a welcome addition to the outfit of any party who already know the Fortun's *galder* and wish for a little pleasing variety. The height to be climbed is about 940 feet. The rock is mica slate. There is no proper track, but on the more difficult places scratches and footprints are visible. The scenery is very grand, and the spray-watered vegetation is luxuriant.

Having passed through the ghyll we found Ole Øiene at Fortun, who was much amused to hear of our little exploit and treated us to some most refreshing tea.

Meanwhile, unknown to us, the gallant warrior Thorgeir Sulheim was waiting anxiously for us with a carriage at the church gates.

My readers will doubtless consider this little description of the winding up of our campaign in Jotunheim to be, at least, very sub-alpine in character and remarkably like small beer, but, at any rate, so far as I can see, it broke new ground from the tourists' point of view, and I am glad to have learned that a good number of them have already followed our example.

## CHAPTER XIX

A THUNDER-STORM; WE ARE ASKED TO KILL A COW; SNOWSTORM ON THE SMÖRSTABBRÆ; DEFEAT; ALONE ON THE MOUNTAIN-TOP IN THE CLOUDS; GUDE WIFE'S HOSPITALITY AT MORK; A STRUGGLE OVER THE MELKEDAL'S PASS; WINTER ON THE FILLE FJELD

'. . . thunder,  
Winged with red lightning and impetuous rage.'  
MILTON.

'The placid gleam of sunset after storm!'  
TENNYSON.

## WILD WEATHER ON THE HIGH FJELD

SOME ten days after our climbs in the Horungtinder, Mohn and I found ourselves snugly ensconced in what then was the principal mountain inn in Norway, and very well kept it was at that time. Rödshiem, however, needs its old hero, Ole, to be the Rödshiem where we loved to meet him in the seventies, and Ole was doing the honours on this occasion, with a goodly company assembled round his hospitable board.

After a couple of days of welcome rest, Mohn and I set off with the intention of thoroughly exploring the Smörstabbræ, and of climbing at least two of the sharp peaks which rise at the head of this fine glacier. This resolution was arrived at in defiance of the fact that the barometer was falling every day, that the rains which had persistently soaked us through and through a short time previously, had swollen the rivers to such an extent that many well-known routes were impassable, and that the mountains were almost buried in new snow. Ah! Why leave Rödshiem? Solely because a little blue sky had appeared after many days of gloom, and that every one else was moving onwards, or perhaps homewards, and that we convinced ourselves that for once the barometers were telling wicked lies.

After an hour's quick walk, a little rain fell. In two hours the storm began in earnest; heavy rain, then a strong icy wind coming from the glaciers of Leirdal, chilled us to the bone. Soon

distant thunder awoke the echoes, and developed quickly into a grand thunder-storm, when hail and veritable sheets of water, turn and turn about, assailed us.

'Meantime the gathering clouds obscure the skies ;  
From pole to pole the forky lightning flies ;  
The rattling thunder rolls ; and Juno pours  
A wintry deluge down.'

We hurried forward and gladly received the shelter of one of the Bøverkjøernhals sæter huts, and soon reconciled ourselves to our fate. The sæter was very cosy, and had a clean wooden floor. In fact, it was almost luxurious, and its grand situation on a knoll between the Leirdal and Bøverdalen, and in sight of the Bøver Lake and the Höidalsfos, was an admirable place from which to witness so grand a storm.

'Lightnings cleave the storm-cloud, seeming  
Blood-red gashes in its side.'

Thunder-storms are not very common in Norway, but I have seen a few. On two or three occasions also I have heard my ice-axe give the peculiar hissing sound, which is so well known to climbers in the Alps, and which warns them that there is thunder about, and the sooner they get down to the lowlands, the better it will be for them ; but I have never seen electric sparks emitted from my axe or clothing during a storm in Norway, as I have in Switzerland, notably upon one occasion on the Dent Blanche.<sup>1</sup>

This storm on the high fjeld was, however, very impressive, and we thoroughly enjoyed it.

Our hostess, a pleasant, intelligent girl, named Ambjör, provided us a sumptuous meal of pancakes. Pancakes at a sæter ? Yes, indeed, and they were the small variety, or flödelapper too, and cooked to perfection. She ministered to all our wants, dried our dripping clothes, one by one, read aloud her brother's poetry, an ode to his sweetheart, and explained the mysteries of cheese-making, and with Mohn's tales of university life, and a view of the storm outside, the day wore pleasantly away. During a lull in the storm, a girl ran in from a neighbouring hut. She walked, without speaking a word, solemnly across the room to a corner where there was a round pocket looking-glass. When she had placed the dozen or so of stray hairs into their proper position, a work of two or three minutes, she formally recognised our presence. It was a ludicrous little scene.

<sup>1</sup> *Alpine Journal*, vol. xv. p. 409.

The cows turned up early to be milked, and how dirty and wet they were to milk, Ambjör alone could tell.

The storm subsided in the evening, and we had glorious views of the ice-capped Hestbræpigger, whose long ice-cap was flushed by rosy sunset tints, and whose dark precipices were draped with golden mist, a beautiful evening, the memory of which I still cherish.

A rising barometer encouraged us, and we determined to set off early next day for the Smörstabbæ, as we expected to find little mountaineering difficulty in traversing its broad surface, or in ascending a quaintly shaped, flat-topped peak, which now is named Store Björn—the big bear—but which we then called 'The Ice Cliff'—a name given it by Mr. Hubert Smith,<sup>1</sup> who saw this remarkable mountain in faint evening light, and mistook it for a huge ice cliff.

Early next morning our friend of the mirror ran in, now in great trouble, poor girl, and wishful for help. Her case was this. After milking her cows in the evening, she turned them into a byre, where they were packed like trippers on a bank holiday, instead of turning them out again as usual. During the night, a favourite cow had been gored by the others, and was now dying. The girl wished one of us to kill it outright, so as make it at least edible, or as we term it in Yorkshire, 'to kill it to save its life.' Mohn tried in vain to prove that it was my duty to act as the butcher. I pointed to his new ice-axe, and told him that clearly he was the man, and that he had the proper tool.

We went to see the poor beast; it looked up most piteously, with its great soft eye, as it lay in the wretched mountain hovel, and we both said that we could not touch it. So the poor girl, whom we pitied greatly, cut through the windpipe with a knife, and watched her favourite die. I have always regretted that we refused our help, and think that the squeamishness shown on this occasion was unworthy of mountaineers. Possibly either of us would have taken the knife if he had been alone, but each looked to the other to do the ghastly deed, and looked in vain. After shooting a reindeer, I have several times been asked by the native hunter to give the *coup de grâce*, but I could never bring myself to do so. Still although it was a favourite cow, it was probably easier for the girl to kill it than for one of us, as she had no doubt often witnessed such scenes.

The 'sæter jenter' live a very hard life on the high fjeld, and are as a rule very courageous. Many a time have I been told that

<sup>1</sup> *Tent Life with English Gipsies in Norway.*

'A few days ago a bear came down the mountain, and I frightened him away.'

The barometer had risen four-tenths in twenty-four hours. We hurry along, but cannot see the mountain-tops.

'The day will improve,' says one.

'It has rained for a fortnight, and the supply must stop sometime,' says the other. 'Forward.'

'Ja.'

In due time we reach the great Smörstabbræ, near one of the streams which drain it. We hack away the ice and make a staircase, and so gain the snowy surface. 'Store Björn is up there.' We know it, but the maps tell us nothing. We put on the rope, and go carefully over the new snow. It is heavy work, and we are carrying knapsacks too, but we are both in excellent training, and plod upwards very steadily. We welcome the sight of an old reindeer horn, as it seems companionable. When we get into a network of large crevasses the interest increases, though the higher we go the denser are the clouds. We feel that we must be near Store Björn. We shout, but shout in vain for the expected echo to guide us onward. The aneroid tells us that we are rather more than 1000 feet above the foot of the glacier. I take out my plaid, and we sit down on it.

'Ah! this is snow again; let us wait a bit, and give it a chance to clear.' All in vain. A snowstorm begins in earnest, and a cutting north-east wind nearly freezes us.

'We must be off, else our footsteps will be covered.'

'All right; but isn't it hard luck?'

'Come along.'

Woollen gloves keep our hands fairly warm, but ears and noses have to be rubbed to prevent frost-bite. If we could see one peak for one minute, we would still make a new glacier pass into Leirdal. Now it is not to be thought of on this wide snow-field. Forwards and downwards we hurry along, and in a little over an hour from the time we started to return we reach the bottom.

Rusten sæter receives us late in the evening, wet to the skin—no new experience; but we are consoled by having *rømmegrød*—cream porridge—and sleep in a room full of an incongruous mass of humanity.

Some years ago a reindeer hunter fell into a crevasse near the bottom of the Smörstabbræ, and though he was not hurt, he could not manage to climb up out of it, and at first gave himself up for lost. Then he crawled down the snow to the bed of the glacier, where he heard running-water not far away, but which he

was not able to reach. Fortunately the crevasse was long, and had several lateral branches. These the hunter explored in turn, and eventually, after spending two whole days in his icy prison, he reached the sub-glacial stream, and with great difficulty he managed to squeeze and crawl along its bed, and out into bright sunshine once more. Strange to say, he was only very slightly frost-bitten, thanks to the hardy life which he had led. Other men have not been so fortunate, and there are many instances where lives have been lost on the glaciers of the north, probably in each case owing to the neglect of well-known precautions.

Above Rusten sæter a massive-looking mountain rises, at first at a steep angle, and then at a more moderate gradient, which continues up to the summit. This is the most northern peak of



RUSTEN SÆTER.

the Smørstabtinder, and is named Loftet, or the Roof, also the Vesle Fjeld. Though it is nearly 8000 feet above sea-level, and the seventh highest mountain in Norway, and was certain to afford a good view in fine weather, it decidedly lacked the qualities which attract mountaineers. Still, we had not been on a mountain-top of any description for a fortnight, and as it was after all one of the Smørstabtinder, a range which I had long wished to explore, I felt that we ought to make one more trial, and that there was a remote possibility that we might be successful.

‘Come along, Mohn, let us climb Loftet on our way to Rødsheim.’

‘It’s no use climbing anything to-day, look how low the new snow lies.’

‘We cannot lose our way, do come.’

‘No, I think not; I had rather go on straight to Rødsheim.’

'All right, we will meet there this evening. At any rate I'll climb over the ridge, and if the weather is bad I can run down and follow you.'

'Farvel, lykkelig til reise.'

'Tak. De samme med dig.'

Mohn's course was, I acknowledge, more prudent than mine. I was no doubt carried away by the enthusiasm of youth, and the bad luck which had been our lot for some time had stimulated me to 'try, try, try again,' and no doubt had made me more or less defiant; also I did so much wish to climb something more before we left Jotunheim. Yes, I must have another shot, and I can almost see the top. Surely the weather will improve?

We parted at 8.30. Steep and tortuous cattle tracks led me through a birch and juniper thicket. Then I had a stiff scramble for some 1100 feet, and reached a tableland slightly heeled over like a spiritualist's table. I saw a cairn which we had noticed two days earlier to my left and easy to get to. Above this, beyond an easy snow-slope, was what I thought to be the summit, perhaps unclimbed too. This tempted me onwards. Why should I resist the invitation?

The snow-slope was not very steep, neither was it long. It was, however, frozen nearly as hard as cast-iron, so I had over an hour's hard work hacking steps with my ice-axe, going my best too, until I reached the rocks beyond. I pricked a hare's foot-prints in some new snow, and then those of a fox. The one probably the cause of the other?

On I went, my very quickest too, and the way was clear enough. It began to snow, then a hurricane of wind assailed me, and sometimes the gusts were so strong that I could not stand, but had to spread-eagle myself on the snow. I could only see a few yards ahead, but I could not get wrong; so, forward again. I got nearly to the crest of a broad ridge at right angles to my course, which ended abruptly on the east at the top of a typical straight-cut Norse precipice. Then the snowstorm turned into an ice-storm. Yes, countless little sharp ice needles composed the shower. No hail! no indeed, no such luck. Simply minute ice spicules, driven horizontally by the relentless south-east wind with terrific power, attacked me. I sat down a bit, my back to the wind, and looked to my armour. A light helmet cap with two flaps, a handkerchief tied over my head and covering most of my face, and woollen gloves protected me pretty well. Long icicles hung from my beard, and short ones from my eyelids, and generally I must have looked like a frozen human hedgehog.



One thing was, however, clear to me, and that was that I must be near the top.<sup>1</sup> The ice, no doubt, was part of the ice fringe or ice feathers which had been formed on the crest of the eastern cliff on the windward side, and was being carried by the storm at my expense over the mountain's brow. I found this to be the case when I got to the edge.

I plodded on at the edge of the eastern precipice. There was no fear of being blown over, as the wind came from that side. In a few minutes I was completely involved in a thick cloud, but was above the snow or ice storm. I pulled the icicles off my beard and emptied my pockets. Then I made guide marks in the snow and built little cairns here and there on the rocks. At 11.15 I seemed to be on a top, and after looking round a short time, I saw a cairn much magnified by mirage, looming (I suppose the thing ought to loom, but why, I don't know) through the mist. A second cairn was soon afterwards revealed.

It was the top of Loftet, and the cairn had been erected a few years previously when the mountain was ascended by Captain Hertzberg during his survey of Jotunheim. My view was restricted to an area of about twenty square yards, and as I had 5200 to descend, and a long walk to make to reach Rödshim, and as, moreover, it was freezing very keenly, I soon set off to run down.

A few hundred feet below my wish for a view was granted, and the clouds lifted from the giant peaks. Skarstind, a square, stern, snow-capped mountain, rising with inaccessible precipices above Yttredal and the snow-crowned Galdhöpig beyond, in a frame of boiling clouds, formed one of the most impressive mountain views I ever had the good fortune to see.

The wind again blew a hurricane, and the cold was so intense that I only allowed myself time to make the briefest sketch, and then set off running or glissading whenever possible. The snow-slope which I had taken over an hour to ascend I cleared in five minutes. Then, after leaving my route of the morning, which would have taken me out of the way, I came to the inevitable line of crags, which are usually somewhere in evidence on every mountain. I hit it in a bad place and had to cross a slope of loose new snow in order to reach a gully. Great care was needed,

<sup>1</sup> The wind would not necessarily show this. To prove this, I may state that on making the ascent of the Finsteraarhorn with some friends a few years ago, when we reached the gap on the northern ridge, we met with such a hurricane of wind that we hardly thought it possible to go farther. However, when we did reach the summit, the air was so still that smokers of the party were able to light their pipes without wasting a single match. On returning to lower regions the wind was found to be as strong as ever.

and I had here and there to pound the snow to prevent starting an avalanche. It only took a few minutes, but those minutes meant a good deal to me. When descending a broad gully beyond, I heard the cannonade above me. A friendly corner gave me the desired shelter, and I waited until the danger was past. Then I looked up and saw half-a-dozen giddy goats which had evidently been larking. I shouted, but they stood stock-still, looking as innocent as lambs; so I bolted, and soon got out of range of their artillery.

At 1.50 I reached the footpath and raced to Rödshiem, which I reached at 4.30. I noticed by the wrack on the pier of a bridge that the river had fallen seven feet since I had seen it two days before.

I had hurried along, thinking that Mohn might be anxious about my having been in such a violent storm, and was surprised that he did not even mention it, so I said, 'What sort of weather have you had in the valley?' 'Oh! mostly fair, but now and then a little drizzle.' 'Any wind?' 'Perhaps a little.' 'What did the mountains look like?' 'Rather cloudy.'

Mohn and other friends would hardly believe that I had been in an awful storm. I was very tired and knocked up by my short but hard day's work, and went to bed soon after reaching Rödshiem. I slept well, and awoke hungry and fresh in the evening. Much to my satisfaction, my story of the storm on the mountain received a corroboration by the arrival of two mountaineers with the guide Eilif from an unsuccessful attempt to climb Galdhøpiggen. Six tourists had set off early that morning to make the ascent. Two soon turned tail; but the others kept on for some 4000 feet, when two of them, seeing clouds ahead, descended into Visdal. The remaining pair and Eilif crossed the glacier, ascended to the usual ridge, and then were attacked mercilessly by a storm, in all respects similar to what I had endured just across the Leirdal. They saw nothing, could not stand upright, and were nearly frozen to death. The two gentlemen were plucky fellows, and having travelled far to make the ascent, were loth to be beaten. They struggled on a few yards until it became plain to them that there were greater improbabilities than that of being blown over the snow cornice and the crags to the glacier hundreds of feet below, so they wisely gave in, though within a couple of hundred feet from the summit, a distance which in fine weather would not have taken above a quarter of an hour to accomplish. Such was the tale which was told by the trio at night, and I could well understand their dis-

appointment. They had in reality been in danger. I had not, though the ice shower had treated me worse than the snow which they had encountered.

Still more was to be told of the storm. Three days earlier, four Norsemen had set off to Gjendin with Rolf Alfsen as guide. They found the rivers to be impassable, and had reeled into a sæter nearly worn out, and returned to Rødsheim late the same evening that we arrived. The guides had never seen such storms in the middle of the summer before. Farmers feared for their crops; indeed we saw haycocks being washed away. We also saw some large pine-trees floating down the Visa and threatening to sweep away the few rustic bridges which span it. We heard later that several ladies were imprisoned for a week at Gjendin. In fact, Jotunheim seemed to have been reconquered by the Jotuns, who were making the best of their time.

I have often thought of the storm which attacked me on that rugged mountain-side, so terrific and so real to me, whilst to those below it was only betokened by a cloud on the mountain brow, no unusual attendant of variable weather.

Whilst Mohn was walking down the valley, he had often turned round to look up at Loftet, but he little thought that the storm fiends were raging up there, not 5000 feet above him.

Who knows what meaneth the little cloud fast clinging to the snowy crown of some fine mountain pyramid, the pride of the vale? A clammy Scotch mist, or a whirlwind, with snow, ice, or hail?

An unexpected storm on a high mountain is a good school-master, and those who are caught in one learn lessons which they could never acquire in fine weather. A leader may require considerable skill and pluck to extricate his party from a situation on an easy mountain which a storm has rendered very difficult. Poor guides, and there are many of them both in the Alps and in Norway, soon lose their pluck in a storm, and what is more serious, they soon lose their way too. Then is the chance for the intelligent amateur, and he, fortunately, usually keeps his wits about him. However, no one should ever climb any fine snow mountain unless he has a reasonable hope that the weather will be favourable.

Capital practice in route-finding and map-reading can be obtained on our English hills in bad weather, and I would strongly recommend, both to those who know the district and to those who do not—it makes little difference—the fells between Rosthwaite in Borrowdale and Grasmere, as being the most suitable practice ground with which I am acquainted, for a tramp in the mist, or,

better still, in a snowstorm. The start should be made from Rosthwaite by way of Greenup Ghyll. A Scotch plaid and semi-Arctic clothing may come in useful, and it may be as well to order no rooms beforehand at Grasmere, Dungeon Ghyll, or in Wythburn.

The fells around our Yorkshire dales are nearly as good, and I have had many a tramp over them in snowstorms, and have invariably acquired some new experience and learnt some new lesson. Frost-bites are almost as much to be feared on our British hills in foul winter weather as in Norway or in the Alps. On no account, however, should a man venture *alone* over our broad fells in bad weather unless it be a case of necessity. He must have one or more companions.

It will no doubt be noticed that Mohn and I wilfully ignored several well-established canons of mountaineering, and that I was the worse of the two. We ascended a glacier full of crevasses in foul weather, and were only two on a rope. All I can say is that we ought not to have done so, but this was twenty-seven years ago, and I did many things in the seventies which I would not do now. Undoubtedly the old rules are the best. Never go on a snow-covered glacier in a smaller party than three, and avoid the heights in bad weather.

During the night after the storm on Loftet the barometer fell two-tenths, so we abandoned all hope of fine weather for Jotunheim for some little time, and with that, all hope of making, at least that summer, several grand expeditions, two of which indeed have not yet been undertaken. No, we had played our game fairly and squarely, but it was of no use, we would go westward to Söndmöre. Our route was to be by the wild Kamphammer pass which just skirts the most northern limit of the Justedalsbræ.

The long drive from Skiaker (pron. Shoke) to Mork was very tiring. The roads were washed out, and in many places almost impassable. The rain fell in torrents too, and a good deal of resolution was needed to continue the journey stage after stage. At Lindheim—the home of the linden-trees present only in name—the ‘dag bog’ at that time was nearly empty. From here the road to Aamot grew gradually worse. At this station three valleys meet, and we followed one west. The road here passed over smooth glaciated rocks, then through a morass in a forest where pine-logs did duty for road-metal. One rickety bridge with rotten planks had to be crossed. So also the swollen river which it spanned. But we had lots of fun. Each had a cariole,

and each expected the other to be pitched out, and each was disappointed too at the failure of his hopes. Soon after ten o'clock we sighted our destination, the farm-house Mork, which means Forest. The gudewife, whom we roused from her slumbers, received us most hospitably, though Mork is not a station, and soon had a blazing fire for us to dry our dripping clothes.

Mork, situated as it is on high rolling uplands, has suffered more than any place I know in Norway from the ruthless cutting down of the timber in the late sixties and early seventies. Until then, every hill in the immediate neighbourhood was more or less covered with pines. The farms were fertile clearings facing south, and well protected from the winds. Now, nearly every tree worth the stroke of an axe has been cut down, and in its place may be found stunted juniper and dwarf birch in arid sun-scorched ground. The clearings still exist, and the fields may be enlarged, but the cruel icy blasts blowing directly from huge glaciers on every side make sad havoc with the corn and starve the cattle and sheep, and a great sterility now takes the place of a little fertility. In the Vaage district, the barren hillsides and complicated system of aqueducts and irrigation tell the same tale of former reckless tree-cutting. If judicious belts of pines had been left on the ridges, all would have been well, but at that period the present forestry laws did not exist. The old adage, 'Plant five trees when you cut one down,' is very sound in Norway, as well as in England, where unfortunately it is so often forgotten.

At parting with our hostess at Mork we had great difficulty in persuading her to accept two marks (1/9) in payment for two excellent meals and capital beds. We at first offered her half a dollar, but she seemed so unhappy at having so much offered to her that we reduced it to the two marks. Scores of times on the mountains I have been told that I had offered too much in payment when perhaps it was one-fourth the amount asked in poor stations in the lowlands.

What shall I say of our long trudge over high mountains to Sundal? What shall I relate of the weather? What can I tell about the noisy avalanches which so often startled us, but which we could not see? Nothing. Rain, driving rain. Snow, which searched for and found every opening in our clothing. Wind, which at times forced us to lie down to prevent our being blown away, and then was still. Hoar-frost, which nearly closed up our eyes and encased us in armour of ice so that we could hardly bend our limbs.

On and ever on, no stopping on the shores of the Leirvand. Up the well-marked zigzag where thousands of Nordfjord horses used to be driven every year in early summer to the Christiania market, but which now go by another and an easier route. To stop for a long rest would mean to be frozen to death. Forward it must be. Words were necessarily few, but what need of words? Each knew what was before him. The distance from house to house was nearly 6 Norse, or 40 English, miles. We took 13 hours to accomplish it, and had no temptation to linger. It was a terrible walk. Early in the day a solitary goat accompanied us for 4 or 5 miles until it found others, when it scampered away. On the shores of a dismal lake we popped unexpectedly upon a dreadful little hut built of stones and mud. It was occupied by an old woman, a bonny little lad, a goat, and a lamb. There was neither window nor chimney, and only a tiny door to let in the light, and the icy wind from the neighbouring glaciers, and to be an outlet for the smoke. There was not a particle of furniture there, and only some damp hay for a bed. And yet these two would have to stop in all twelve weeks there, and would at the end of the time only receive a miserable pittance as a reward for tending a flock of goats which had a very poor pasture. I have often thought of that little boy, perhaps eight years old, whose only amusement would be in fondling his lamb or goat. Hardly a flower could be seen near the hut, and it was many hours from any other dwelling. As it was above the pine-tree limit, they would have to depend on juniper for firewood, which is a poor substitute for birch or pine logs.

The mountain Rambler of to-day must go farther afield than Jotunheim, if from any whimsical idea that possesses him, he is wishful to experience the discomforts which have to be endured in a poor sæter in foul weather in September, when the days are short and the nights are long. Nowadays, cosy mountain huts can be reached in a few hours' walk from any given point in the district, and the sæters have also much improved during the last few years. Well do I remember arriving late one evening years ago, drenched to the skin and all alone, at Guridal sæter. Here were three worthy but somewhat odorous reindeer hunters in addition to the solitary sæter jente who was in charge. I found a few nearly dry clothes in my knapsack and put them on. After a meal of excellent fladbrød and milk, we four men went to bed, whilst the girl sat over the fire in the outer room. We could just lie edgewise without dovetailing, by two lying with their heads at one end and two at the other. For obvious reasons I

lay next the wall—a dry wall in one sense, but a terribly wet wall in another, as it was not even caulked with moss and clay. Soon, a drop of water fell on my forehead, and in a few minutes it streamed in and drove me to the other end. The wind howled most wolfishly and drove the rain through every crevice on the windward side, and made pools several inches deep on the floor.

At the first streak of dawn we all got up. The hunters were returning to Fortun, and I could not persuade any one to accompany me. I was on my way to Eidsbod to meet a grizzled old hunter who ought to have joined me at Vetti. I turned out of the rain, which again was falling, into the most luxurious sæter at Skogadalsbøen, and the two rosy-cheeked lassies whom I found there gave me an excellent meal of sæter dainties, and did their best to persuade me not to attempt to cross the pass, called the Melkedalsband, in the bad weather. They did not tell me to 'Beware the pine-tree's withered branch,' because there were no pine-trees, but they did tell me to 'Beware the awful avalanche.'

I was stubborn. I was foolish. I wanted to get to Eidsbod, and was determined to try my luck. 'Farvel, Farvel.' In eight or nine hours I ought to reach my destination.

There was no bridge at that time over the Skogadøla, so I was obliged to follow for some miles the rougher right bank. At last I thought I could cross, and I succeeded, but it was not easy. When I neared the foot of the large Skogadalsbræ, the rain turned to snow, and soon after, a horrid wind arose. As the pass goes through a deep notch between two high mountains, I could not easily go wrong, as I had to follow up one stream to its source in the gap, and down alongside another towards Lake Bygdin. I was terribly overweighted, as I carried a heavy knapsack, a 60-foot rope, an ice-axe, a rifle in its case, and nearly 100 cartridges, and was wrapped up in a warm Scotch plaid. At last I reached the gap, nearly 5000 feet above sea-level, and here had a well-earned meal under a rock, as I had been nearly eight hours from Skogadalsbøen. The cold was so intense that I had great difficulty in avoiding frost-bite, and I only spared a few minutes. I struggled on and on, determined if possible to win, and to carry all my baggage too. By degrees, however, I realised that if I persisted I should get frozen, as I was obliged to rest frequently by the way, so at last I put down my rifle-case and rope on the shore of a tarn, and then plodded through six inches of new snow, and tumbled and fumbled amongst the horrid scree in mist and darkness, finally reaching Eidsbod some nineteen hours after I had set out, and fell asleep in a few minutes. I sent a hunter

the next day for my rifle, and had the satisfaction, a couple of days later, of shooting my first reindeer. It is a strange fact that though I have slept dozens of times in wet clothes and have played, unintentionally, many pranks of a like nature in Jotunheim, I have never yet taken any cold. On the other hand, I have often got cold down in the valleys or by the fjords. Other men have had a similar experience.

Whilst writing about bad weather, I am reminded of a wild winter sledge-drive by night over the Fillefjeld from Breistøl to Bjöberg. A furious snowstorm was raging, accompanied by a gale of wind which we faced.

‘Bleak, wintry storms, with tenfold fierceness armed,  
And snows and icy blasts and hunger keen!’

I drove with the postman, and we huddled as closely together as possible, entirely covered up by my plaid, except one eye each. All my clothing was at least doubled in quantity, and very thick and warm. I had large Lapland shoes or moccasins stuffed with straw over my boots, and hay bands round my legs in addition to very warm leggings. The snow-posts, about 12 yards apart and 12 feet high, which alone showed where the road was, in some places were nearly buried in snow. The ponies trotted and sometimes galloped along merrily enough, in spite of the fact that each had icicles 18 inches long hanging from its nostrils. My companion, a jolly young fellow, felt the cold as much as I did. He had rarely seen such a storm, and was anxious that I should not be frost-bitten. The distance was only six or seven miles, and lay over a bleak moorland some 3500 feet above sea-level. I shall never forget the hearty welcome which I received from the kind folk at Bjöberg, who took off my frozen outer garments, my boots and stockings, and soon restored the partially arrested circulation in my feet and hands by vigorous rubbing. On no account would they allow me to go near the glowing fire until they were assured that I had no frost-bites. Never did coffee taste more delicious than what I had that night, and never did I meet with more kindness and consideration. To my great regret I was obliged to leave early the following morning in order to make a quick journey to Christiania through Hallingdal.

It is only fair now to add that I have a much larger and richer store of happy memories of bright invigorating sunshine in Norway than of the storms of which I have been writing. I was once five weeks in the country and had only two half-days of rain. Another year I had only one wet day during the same space of time.



## CHAPTER XX

## THE LARGEST SNOW-FIELD IN CONTINENTAL EUROPE; ANCIENT AND FORGOTTEN PASSES; YARNS ABOUT BEARS

'The frost performs its secret ministry.'—COLERIDGE.

'Cold snow melts with the sun's hot beams.'—SHAKESPEARE'S *King Henry VI*.

'White mountain-snows dissolve against the sun.'—DRYDEN'S *Virgil*.

## THE JUSTEDALSBRÆ

FROM earliest tourist days up to a dozen, or let us say, a score of years ago, an air of mystery hung about the Justedalsbræ. Men spoke of its glaciers and unknown mighty snow-fields with bated breath. Picturesque, but probably unpractical, superstition peopled its snowy domes with elves, trolls, and witches. The huge size of this snow-field and its numerous glacier arms, though its area consists of nearly 400 square miles, was grossly exaggerated. How could it be otherwise, when the portion which is now known to be the most contracted part, that between Böiumsdal and Langedal on the one side, and Jölster and Stardal on the other, was represented in most maps as being about three times the proper width?

In many cases, men living in the south and eastern valleys did not know what lay on the other side of the bræ, and the same was the case with those living on the north and west. They did know, however, that the snow and ice ought to be avoided by all self-respecting men.

The ignorance of the natives about the Justedalsbræ at this period is, however, a great mystery, as it is absolutely certain that a hundred years ago many passes were frequently crossed by traders between the district, of Sogn, Jölster, and Nordfjord.

This may be attributed to two reasons: to the shrinkage of the glaciers, which probably made the western ice-falls to be more free from snow, and consequently more crevassed; and to the diversion of the traffic from the backs of the sturdy bagmen to the decks of the fjord steamers.



Authors Routes.....







In reality, twenty years ago, only two glacier passes over the range were recognised. These were the Greidung Skar, between Stryn on the north and Justedal on the south, and the Lunde Skar, between Fjærland and Jølster. The former is still much used by drovers in spring and occasionally so late as St. Han's Tid—Midsummer's-day—when the Nordfjord horses and cattle are driven over to Sogn before the sun has laid bare the crevasses, which, later on, are often very troublesome. It is also often used by the merry, light-hearted swains who cross over it in order to dance at the weddings which frequently take place in June, just before the hay harvest. This pass much resembles the well-known smugglers' pass in the Alps, the Col de Mont Collon, where, as well as over the St. Théodule, horses and cattle are still often driven between Switzerland and Italy. With regard to the latter, a few years ago I met with an accident on the glacier on the eastern face of the Dent d'Hérens, and was laid up for some time at Breuil. As I could not walk, the question arose whether I should ride a mule over the St. Théodule to Zermatt and so go home, or should go down the Val Tournanche and thence by Turin and the Mont Cenis. Ultimately, my friends decided that I should take the latter route, as if I were to try the former, there was one big crevasse which the mule must jump over if I were to reach Zermatt, and the animal would probably fall in. Though I have been used to hunting all my life, and enjoy a ride across country as well as any man, I took the Turin route, but rode down to Val Tournanche on the mule with a side-saddle.

The other recognised pass, the Lunde Skar, was known, but probably was not crossed oftener than once in a dozen years.

Here and there, I have met an old dalesman, and after jogging his memory a bit, he has told how, when a boy, his father crossed over there, pointing upwards, and that he himself had gone as far as the snow. Friends and I have discovered a good number of little cairns at the edge of the snows in various parts of the range. These most certainly had been erected as sign-posts to indicate the places where the descent could most easily be made, and naturally they were more numerous on the north and western sides than elsewhere, because of the greater severity of their precipices, very many of which cannot be descended.

Tradition says that peasants have left the sæters at Kvandal in Loen at 3 A.M., and have been at the church in Justedal in time for morning service at 10 and 11. The distance is 18 miles on the map, and the height to be ascended and descended is about 6000 feet. I fear that this is a fable.

Another, the Tyve Skar, has more or less historical corroboration.

This pass, which involves on the Loen side a stiff ascent of over 5000 feet up an exceptionally steep rock face by means of ledges, and which from below appears to be almost impassable, is called the Tyve Skar, or Robbers' Pass. It was pointed out to me in 1881, but at that time no one living had crossed it. Since I called attention to it in the *Nor. Tur. For. Aarboeg* for 1881, several parties have crossed over it to Liakslen and Faaberg, and in 1900 I had the pleasure of crossing it myself to the Nygaardsbræ in excellent company. The easiest way which can be taken over this pass is more difficult than the well-known Petersgrat in the Alps, which in some respects it resembles.

The Justedalbræ, the largest glacier region in continental Europe, i.e. leaving out Iceland, much resembles the inland ice in Greenland. It consists of, apparently, a boundless extent of rolling snow-fields and purest white domes, a region of impressive solemn solitudes, a realm of perfect purity, spotless and undefiled, where the most beautiful and simple curves blend together and form a harmonious and majestic whole, and where it seems almost profane to tread with mortal foot. The more snow there is, and the fewer crevasses, the more beautiful is the scene, because the lines are unbroken and free from flaw. There is a marvellous subtlety in the alternate concave and convex lines of these snowy domes, the like of which I have not seen elsewhere.

I confess, however, that it was not until I had made many visits to this weird region that I was able to appreciate fully the especial beauty and quiet grandeur of the scene. At first, my eyes wandered listlessly over these wide expanses of snow, searching in vain for some fine rocky peak, and a feeling of disappointment took the place of what I am thankful to say is now the keenest enjoyment.

Islands of rock, or nunataks, as I suppose we should now call them, the ribs of buried mountains, protrude here and there through the crystal crust, but rarely break the white skyline, and near the northern end of the snows there is one fine peak, and one only, which rises out of the main snow-field. This is the Lodals Kaupe, a remarkably fine pyramid of gneiss, which, especially when seen from the north-east, is a very grand mountain. On one of the great glacier arms which radiate from the main snow-field like the tentacles of an octopus, the arm between Loen and Stryn, there is a range of fine rock peaks closely related to Lodals Kaupe, but these are the only mountains of the Justedalbræ

which may be termed peaks. From the valleys below, many apparently fine peaks are noticeable, such as the Kjændals Krone; they are, however, merely mountain bastions, and if seen from above, their peak formation is invisible, and they can be reached by a trudge over snow.

The bounds of the Justedalsbræ are even yet barely recognised. Unless a statement be true that a low rock escarpment breaks the glacier in two between Mundal and Gröndal, about six miles from the southern end, the completeness of which I doubt, there is an unbroken length of glacier from the Myre Skar on the south to Kamphammer pass, 48 miles in length. In other words, one could walk for a distance of 48 miles as the crow flies on snow without once touching rock. The breadth varies from two miles at the Lunde Skar to 23 miles between Tunsbergdal and the Ravnefield. The longest crossing which I have made is from the Tunsbergdal to Kjændal, 18 miles as the crow flies, but I have made many passes 10 or 12 miles on glacier.

The height varies from 5000 feet to 6600 feet. On the north and west, nature's graving tools have gouged out of the gneiss and granite five deep main valleys and many lateral valleys, mere grooves, and on the south the same powers have formed the Fjærlandsfjord and its valleys, and the three valleys of Hveitestrand, which pierce almost into the centre of the snows. On the east is the lovely valley of Justedal which gives its name to the Justedalsbræ. This valley has some remarkable lateral valleys, but none so much so as the Tunsbergdal, whose flat glacier, 9 miles in length, is almost parallel with the valley of Justedal itself. Between these two is an interesting glacier system still unmapped.

Most of the mountain arms which overshadow these valleys are cased in an icy coat of mail, and are directly connected by glacier to the main snow-field, and are rightly called a portion of the Justedalsbræ. Even the complicated glacier system between Lodals Kaupe and Skaala is connected with it. So also are the Sæterfjeld and the Sikkelbræ.

Formerly, however, several neighbouring snow-fields of considerable size were thought to be part of the Justedalsbræ, but are in reality not glacially connected. Such are the Grovebræ, the glaciers of Björga, the large snow-field west of Oldendal, and some which are cut off by the Kamphammer pass.

The rocks are mostly gneiss and granite.

The glacier arms, which descend in some cases to within a few hundred feet of sea-level, on the west and south, as a rule are



terribly steep and are hemmed in relatively narrow gorges by titanic walls of gneiss. The result is that wilder ice scenery can here be met with than anywhere in the Alps. Hard blue ice, probably the result of great pressure owing to the steepness of the angles, is very commonly seen, and the loveliest of ice grottoes and pools are common objects.

Speaking generally, the glaciers are very clean. There is little moraine, because there is comparatively little rock exposed above the surface. The exceptions are the four long glaciers which worm their way through miles of rocky gorges, whose containing walls, when attacked by rain, frost, and heat, contribute their share of moraine.

On these four glaciers, the Austerdalsbræ, Tunsbergdalsbræ, Nygaardsbræ and the—wrongly called—Lodalsbræ, excellent examples of glacier tables, sand cones, dirt bands, medial, lateral, and terminal moraines, surface streams and moulins, and all other well-known glacier phenomena may be seen. On another glacier, the Aabrækkebræ, the southern lateral moraine consists in great measure of the wrecks of Scotch firs and birches, which a snow avalanche must have thrown down from their home on a broad wild ledge far above the glacier.

The floors of many valleys descending from the Justedalsbræ, notably Sundal and Erdal, show wonderful traces of ancient glaciation in huge, smoothly-polished *roches moutonnées*, out of the cracks of which, in scores of cases, grow Scotch firs which bravely defy the storms in spite of their apparently insecure roothold. Ancient moraines and other signs of enormous former glaciation may be seen many miles below the snouts of the glaciers of to-day.

As may easily be imagined, the Justedalsbræ and the snow-fields of Aalfoten and Gjegnalund, being so near the western coast, act as huge condensers, which precipitate into rain the moisture which the warm breezes accompanying the Gulf Stream have gathered from the Atlantic waves. Thus it happens that on the west and north-west of the Justedalsbræ the rainfall is especially high, and that a south-west wind is almost certain to bring rain.

The glistening whiteness of the Justedalsbræ is proverbial, but once, to my knowledge, its purity was defiled. It was in the year 1875. One morning during the last week in March there was a calamitous volcanic eruption from the Oskagja, a crater in the neighbourhood of Vatna Jökull in Iceland. The same evening, all the mountains in Söndmøre, Romsdal, and Nordfjord were covered with black specks brought by the wind from Iceland, in

reality the finest dust, or pulverised pumice-stone. My sister and I saw it first on the snows above the Melkevoldsbræ, and in many other places afterwards. Our own Shetland Islands at another time were dosed, and very thickly too, at the time of the noted eruption of Skaptar Jökull.

However, these are trifles compared with the performances of Krakatoa in 1883.

I have been into, or have looked down into, every main and lateral valley of the Justedalsbræ, and may safely say that there is not a dull yard in any one of them. Nowadays, Fjærland and its grand glaciers, so difficult of access twenty years ago, are known to every tourist, so are the wondrous valleys of Olden and Loen, and more or less that of Stryn. It is strange, however, that the main valley of Justedal, lovely as it is, is but little more visited than it was when Professor Forbes went there in 1851. Grøndal, Stardal, and Hveitstrand are still less known. The restless tourist of to-day only recognises the existence of four glaciers, the Böiumsbræ (which he calls the Boojum), the Suphellebræ, the Brixdalsbræ, and the Kjændalsbræ, though he might, if he would, count up to nearly 100 glacier arms which descend from the great snow-field. I have counted 87 of them.

Bears, though not so numerous as they were a dozen years ago, are still often seen. Reindeer never cross the main snow-field south of Lodals Kaupe, but are now and then seen between Erdal and Raudal. Red deer are met with occasionally on the north, south, and west.

Twenty years ago, the bears were very troublesome in Justedal, and many a good horse and fat cow, as well as countless sheep and goats, fell as their prey. This led to combined and successful hunting, and the bear-hunters of Justedal became renowned.

Wolves, formerly common, are now extinct. I know a lady who was being driven in a sleigh in the forest between Sogndal and Solvorn in the winter, when she was chased by a pack of wolves, and just managed to reach a friendly farm-house in the nick of time.

One hunter was attacked by a wounded bear, and though he was completely scalped, he was obliged to sham death. He recovered, and I suppose wore a wig. Many bear stories, quite true too, are common in Fjærland.

Some twenty-five years ago two men followed a bear on the Vetelebræ. One of them fell into a crevasse nine or ten fathoms in depth. The other went for help, and after several hours, the rescue party came with long ropes and pulled the hunter out. He

was much scratched, was badly frost-bitten, and had lost several teeth. After several months' illness he recovered.

More recently, my friend Johannes Mundal met with a most interesting adventure which shows what a thoroughly cultured, friendly, and warm-hearted gentleman 'Herr Bamsen' is when properly treated. Mundal had ascended several hundred feet up the crags of one of the mountain buttresses near his home in Fjærland, in order to cut some firewood, and was coming down a steep and narrow ledge well laden. In the narrowest place he met Bruin. Both of them stopped; there was no room to pass. They looked at each other for some little time, and I believe they smiled. Then Bruin, who is rightly credited with possessing 'Ti mønds styrke, og tolv mønds vid,' ten men's strength and twelve men's wit, realised the difficulties of the situation, and standing on his hind legs, he put his fore paws up the face of the rock above, and so made himself as small as possible, and left room for Mundal to pass; this the latter promptly did with his load on his back. Then, after bowing civilly to each other, they continued on their respective journeys.

I hope that this bear is still living and will do so for many years. So too, I fancy, does Johannes.

On August 8, 1881, I took part in a bear-hunt in the forest above Balholm, but though several times I saw the bushes shake when he was brushing his way past, I never got a sight of him, a great pity, as I had an Express rifle with me. I tried to persuade the hunters to go a second day, but they were disheartened, and would not come, so I went to Fjærland. Next day, some one remembered that a man at Lekanger had a good bear hound and sent for him. The following day they went out again, and with the help of the dog soon found the bear. The infuriated animal, which had been wounded four days previously, charged at the party, who fired at it at the same time. The bear seized one of the men by the throat, and both man and bear rolled over dead together. I saw the young fellow in his coffin the next day. He was a schoolmaster, and I had been with him the whole of the first day's hunting. Herr Grieg, the eminent musician, who was staying at Balholm at the time, got up a subscription for the young widow. I described this episode at length in *The Field*, December 10, 1881.



— COPPER GRINDING AND ROASTING. —

## CHAPTER XXI

THE VALLEY OF JUSTEDAL AND THE OLD PASS OF GREIDUNG; A  
NIGHT ADVENTURE; GUIDED BY SHEEP

'A fool always wants to shorten space and kill time; a wise man wants to lengthen both.'—RUSKIN.

### THE VALLEY OF JUSTEDAL AND THE OLD PASS OF GREIDUNG

EARLY travellers in Norway often walked or rode up the valley of Justedal, though the only available accommodation was at the priest's house, and the road was both bad and dangerous. The luxurious traveller of to-day considers this truly alpine valley too far out of his beat, and too rough for him, though there is a capitally engineered driving-road, and at least one good inn. Few valleys in Norway can show such a grand combination of river, pine forest, and glacier scenery as Justedal. From the fjord to Faaberg, the highest farm, it is twenty-eight miles, and it is all beautiful. The valley runs from north to south, and being narrow and overshadowed by high mountains, it is rather cold and bleak, and, as in other similar valleys in Norway, the inhabitants seem to have suffered in consequence. Certainly the men, women, and children

who live on the open, rolling uplands, such as in Vos and Horningdal, or on the sunny shores of the great fjords, are taller, better built, and stronger-looking altogether than the dwellers in the narrow, trough-like valleys, or on the cold shores of the narrow fjords. In the one case, nature is kind, and liberally repays the efforts to cultivate the soil. In the other, there is a constant struggle against adverse conditions.

‘The mountayne men live longer many a yeare  
Than those in vale, in playne, or marrish soyle ;  
A lustie hart, a cleene complexion cleere  
They have, on hill that for hard living toyle.’

In the fourteenth century the ‘Black Death’ fell upon this valley early one spring, and, with one exception, every person took it and died. The exception was a pretty little girl, who lived at the farm Björkehaug—Birch Hill—near the Nygaardsbræ, and about fifteen miles from the fjord. She fled out of the house, and for several months lived upon roots and berries, and became quite wild. Late in the autumn some men came up the valley and saw the little maid, who ran away frightened into the forest. Eventually she was caught, taken down to Lyster, and given the name of Rype, or ptarmigan. When she grew up she married and settled at Rønneid, where some of her descendants may still be found.

The priest showed me on the altar in Justedal church a brass candlestick, which had been given by some of the family in the year 1636. On it there was the figure of a ‘rype’ as the crest.

My first visit to Justedal was in 1874. I rode up the valley as I had an inflamed toe, the result of camping on the mountains in cold and wet. I shivered during the last three or four hours nearly all the time, and was horribly wet. My companion became as bad as I was at Faaberg, where we were weather-bound for several days. One day we welcomed, in one Norse sentence, two Yorkshire dialect words. I was asked if my foot ‘warked,’ and was told to wrap it up in a ‘clout.’

When the weather allowed us to move, we set off to cross the Greidung Skar with Rasmus and another guide, who carried a bear-skin which I had purchased, and whose original owner had been shot just before our arrival.

I tried to put a boot on my sore foot, but nearly fainted in the process. ‘Try, try, try again,’ I thought, but don’t be beaten by a toe. I borrowed a long and very roomy Wellington for the sore foot, and used my own hobnailer for the other, and by riding as far as the glacier, I managed to cross the biggest glacier in Europe with odd boots. During the day I had ample opportunities of

testing the merits of each kind. On ice, snow, and ordinary rock-work, I found the English hobnailer to be incomparably the better of the two; but upon the smoothly-polished *roches moutonnées*, which are so striking a feature in Erdal, the nailless Wellington gave a much more secure foothold.

On this occasion we were caught in a heavy snowstorm on the open snow-field, which alarmed our guides, as it is very easy to get wrong on the western side. Rasmus called a halt, and we sat on my bear-skin.

However, the cutting wind warned us to move on to avoid frost-bites. In a few minutes Rasmus fell into a crevasse up to his middle, which undoubtedly we were very glad to see, and he was then glad enough to tie the rope properly round his waist, which



he had refused to do before. At this period, if the natives used a rope at all, they usually contented themselves with holding it in one hand. In one case, I saw a man tie a rope round his wrist. What would have happened if he had fallen into a deep crevasse? I cannot pretend to say, but a broken arm could not help to extricate him. Nowadays the proper use of the rope is fairly well recognised and put into practice.

Many years ago a farmer and his dog were crossing this pass; the farmer fell into a concealed crevasse. The dog hurried, barking, down to Justedal, and showed plainly that a misfortune had befallen his master. Some men followed the dog, and were led to a crevasse, where the poor animal began to howl. The men shouted and lowered a rope, but in vain. The faithful dog had to be forced away from his master's icy grave.

In the year 1820 the intrepid mountaineers, Professors Keilhan and Bock, attempted to climb Lodals Kaupe from the east or north, and were nearly carried away by an avalanche. One of them was carrying a large mercurial barometer, upon which a rock fell; this instrument saved his life.

The grand glacier which travellers usually traverse on the east side of the Greidung Skar is called the Lodalsbræ. This name is inappropriate and very misleading. The glacier has nothing whatever to do with Lodal, which is a valley on the other side of the mountains. I may be told, though I never have been, that the name is an abbreviation of Lodals Kaupebræ, to which I should reply that such an abbreviation is inadmissible. If the present name has been given by Justedal men to their own glacier, it betokens a paucity of ideas, with which I should be loth to credit them. Surely a more suitable name might be found?

On my first crossing, we had a momentary view of Lodals Kaupe from the north-east through a rift in the clouds, and I resolved to climb the mountain sometime, if possible. This I did ten years later, and again five years afterwards.

In 1874, and for several years later, the only comfortable inn on the upper Nordfjord was at Faleide, and friends and I have many a time felt very grateful to Fru Tenden for ministering to our wants when we have arrived there in a state of demi-semistarvation. The change from Faaberg and Greidung to Faleide was indeed delightful, and so it would be to-day.

After a day or two at this cosy hostelry, we set off for the now well-known overland route to Vadheim, and on the way met with some adventures.

After having been buffeted about rather unmercifully in a boat by the waves on the Bredheimsvand we arrived late one evening at the station of Skei or Øvre Vasenden. We knocked at several doors, gently at first, then more forcibly, but could make no impression, and the doors were all locked. We were hungry and tired, and wanted both supper and bed. All at once we heard some dogs barking on a hill above.

'Where there are dogs there are men. Shall we go up there?'

'It's a long way up and very dark.'

'Well! we must go somewhere. I'm very hungry, aren't you?'

'Yes, by Jove! off we go then.'

We scratched our way through an ugly fence and got nearly up to the knees in a bog. Then we tried another way, and by groping in the dark we climbed some little rocks from which we

saw a small house outlined against the dark sky. Three or four dogs barked most viciously, and we were glad that we had ice-axes with us.

After showing an apparently bold front, though we felt anything but warlike, all the dogs disappeared but one, which led us along a dark passage to a door. After opening this we entered a large fire-lit room where there was one bed. Up jumped a man, in costume slight, it is true, who began talking and gesticulating most wildly. We understood very little of what he said, but the word 'Rövere'—robbers—occurred very frequently. No doubt we looked very fierce, with ice-axes in our hands and slouched wide-awake hats on our heads. I took off my hat, put on as innocent a face as I could, and eventually convinced the man that we were only two benighted Englishmen in search of a night's lodging. He then lighted a pine-torch and agreed to find us room. However, as his daughters in the next room were still frightened at the robbers, he led us down to Skei again. When we reached the house he tapped gently at a window and said quietly to those inside, 'Sove de folk?'—Are you asleep, people?—and was replied to at once by the inmates, to whom he explained our case in most beseeching tones.

We were soon inside, where we found three good beds for the use of travellers. The woman who let us in had heard our first knock, but as we were travelling on foot and in the night time, she thought we could not be honest folk. The only thing at all stealable, by the way, was a dirty candlestick. We brewed our own Liebig, otherwise we should have done very badly.

A few days after leaving Skei we arrived at Sande, and I met with a little adventure on the evening of our arrival, the relation of which has often caused a laugh to be raised against me.

As my companion had gone out fishing, I determined to walk rapidly up the mountain at the back of the station, in order to study the lay of the country and to prospect generally. This I like to do when I arrive in any fresh district, in fact I always want to know what there is at the other side of the hill. In this case I was very anxious to get a view of the southern portion of the Justedalsbræ, as I intended to explore it before long.

It was after 5 P.M. when I set off across the fields into the birch and juniper thicket at the back of the house. Some of the juniper bushes were evidently very old. I cut a small stick with my 'tolle kniv,' which showed between forty and fifty concentric rings, but it was merely an infant. Above the birches I came to



## NORWAY

Another, the Tyve Skar, has more or less historical corrobora-

This pass, which involves on the Loen side a stiff ascent of over 1000 feet up an exceptionally steep rock face by means of ledges, which from below appears to be almost impassable, is called the Tyve Skar, or Robbers' Pass. It was pointed out to me in 1881, but at that time no one living had crossed it. Since I had attention to it in the *Nor. Tur. For. Aarboeg* for 1881, several parties have crossed over it to Liakslen and Faaberg, and in 1900 I had the pleasure of crossing it myself to the Nygaardsnes with an excellent company. The easiest way which can be taken through this pass is more difficult than the well-known Petersgrat in the Alps, which in some respects it resembles.

The Justedalsbræ, the largest glacier region in continental Europe, i.e. leaving out Iceland, much resembles the inland ice in Greenland. It consists of, apparently, a boundless extent of snow-fields and purest white domes, a region of impressive solitude, a realm of perfect purity, spotless and undefiled, where the most beautiful and simple curves blend together and form a harmonious and majestic whole, and where it seems almost impossible to tread with mortal foot. The more snow there is, and the fewer crevasses, the more beautiful is the scene, because the snows are unbroken and free from flaw. There is a marvellous subtlety in the alternate concave and convex lines of these snowy domes, the like of which I have not seen elsewhere.

I confess, however, that it was not until I had made many visits to this weird region that I was able to appreciate fully the especial beauty and quiet grandeur of the scene. At first, my eyes wandered listlessly over these wide expanses of snow, searching in vain for some fine rocky peak, and a feeling of disappointment took the place of what I am thankful to say is now the keenest enjoyment.

Islands of rock, or nunataks, as I suppose we should now call them, the ribs of buried mountains, protrude here and there through the crystal crust, but rarely break the white skyline, and near the northern end of the snows there is one fine peak, and one only, which rises out of the main snow-field. This is the Lodals Kaupe, a remarkably fine pyramid of gneiss, which, especially when seen from the north-east, is a very grand mountain. On one of the great glacier arms which radiate from the main snow-field like the tentacles of an octopus, the arm between Loen and Stryn, there is a range of fine rock peaks closely related to Lodals Kaupe, but these are the only mountains of the Justedalsbræ

which may be termed peaks. From the valleys below, many apparently fine peaks are noticeable, such as the Kjændals Krone; they are, however, merely mountain bastions, and if seen from above, their peak formation is invisible, and they can be reached by a trudge over snow.

The bounds of the Justedalsbræ are even yet barely recognised. Unless a statement be true that a low rock escarpment breaks the glacier in two between Mundal and Gröndal, about six miles from the southern end, the completeness of which I doubt, there is an unbroken length of glacier from the Myre Skar on the south to Kamphammer pass, 48 miles in length. In other words, one could walk for a distance of 48 miles as the crow flies on snow without once touching rock. The breadth varies from two miles at the Lunde Skar to 23 miles between Tunsbergdal and the Ravnefield. The longest crossing which I have made is from the Tunsbergdal to Kjændal, 18 miles as the crow flies, but I have made many passes 10 or 12 miles on glacier.

The height varies from 5000 feet to 6600 feet. On the north and west, nature's graving tools have gouged out of the gneiss and granite five deep main valleys and many lateral valleys, mere grooves, and on the south the same powers have formed the Fjærlandsfjord and its valleys, and the three valleys of Hveitestrand, which pierce almost into the centre of the snows. On the east is the lovely valley of Justedal which gives its name to the Justedalsbræ. This valley has some remarkable lateral valleys, but none so much so as the Tunsbergdal, whose flat glacier, 9 miles in length, is almost parallel with the valley of Justedal itself. Between these two is an interesting glacier system still unmapped.

Most of the mountain arms which overshadow these valleys are cased in an icy coat of mail, and are directly connected by glacier to the main snow-field, and are rightly called a portion of the Justedalsbræ. Even the complicated glacier system between Lodals Kaupe and Skaala is connected with it. So also are the Sæterfjeld and the Sikkelbræ.

Formerly, however, several neighbouring snow-fields of considerable size were thought to be part of the Justedalsbræ, but are in reality not glacially connected. Such are the Grovebræ, the glaciers of Björga, the large snow-field west of Oldendal, and some which are cut off by the Kamphammer pass.

The rocks are mostly gneiss and granite.

The glacier arms, which descend in some cases to within a few hundred feet of sea-level, on the west and south, as a rule are

terribly steep and are hemmed in relatively narrow gorges by titanic walls of gneiss. The result is that wilder ice scenery can here be met with than anywhere in the Alps. Hard blue ice, probably the result of great pressure owing to the steepness of the angles, is very commonly seen, and the loveliest of ice grottoes and pools are common objects.

Speaking generally, the glaciers are very clean. There is little moraine, because there is comparatively little rock exposed above the surface. The exceptions are the four long glaciers which worm their way through miles of rocky gorges, whose containing walls, when attacked by rain, frost, and heat, contribute their share of moraine.

On these four glaciers, the Austerdalsbræ, Tunsbergdalsbræ, Nygaardsbræ and the—wrongly called—Lodalsbræ, excellent examples of glacier tables, sand cones, dirt bands, medial, lateral, and terminal moraines, surface streams and moulins, and all other well-known glacier phenomena may be seen. On another glacier, the Aabrækkebræ, the southern lateral moraine consists in great measure of the wrecks of Scotch firs and birches, which a snow avalanche must have thrown down from their home on a broad wild ledge far above the glacier.

The floors of many valleys descending from the Justedalsbræ, notably Sundal and Erdal, show wonderful traces of ancient glaciation in huge, smoothly-polished *roches moutonnées*, out of the cracks of which, in scores of cases, grow Scotch firs which bravely defy the storms in spite of their apparently insecure roothold. Ancient moraines and other signs of enormous former glaciation may be seen many miles below the snouts of the glaciers of to-day.

As may easily be imagined, the Justedalsbræ and the snow-fields of Aalfoten and Gjegnalund, being so near the western coast, act as huge condensers, which precipitate into rain the moisture which the warm breezes accompanying the Gulf Stream have gathered from the Atlantic waves. Thus it happens that on the west and north-west of the Justedalsbræ the rainfall is especially high, and that a south-west wind is almost certain to bring rain.

The glistening whiteness of the Justedalsbræ is proverbial, but once, to my knowledge, its purity was defiled. It was in the year 1875. One morning during the last week in March there was a calamitous volcanic eruption from the Oskagja, a crater in the neighbourhood of Vatna Jökull in Iceland. The same evening, all the mountains in Söndmøre, Romsdal, and Nordfjord were covered with black specks brought by the wind from Iceland, in

reality the finest dust, or pulverised pumice-stone. My sister and I saw it first on the snows above the Melkevoldsbræ, and in many other places afterwards. Our own Shetland Islands at another time were dosed, and very thickly too, at the time of the noted eruption of Skaptar Jökull.

However, these are trifles compared with the performances of Krakatoa in 1883.

I have been into, or have looked down into, every main and lateral valley of the Justedalsbræ, and may safely say that there is not a dull yard in any one of them. Nowadays, Fjærland and its grand glaciers, so difficult of access twenty years ago, are known to every tourist, so are the wondrous valleys of Olden and Loen, and more or less that of Stryn. It is strange, however, that the main valley of Justedal, lovely as it is, is but little more visited than it was when Professor Forbes went there in 1851. Gröndal, Stardal, and Hveitestrand are still less known. The restless tourist of to-day only recognises the existence of four glaciers, the Böiumsbræ (which he calls the Boojum), the Suphellebræ, the Brixdalsbræ, and the Kjændalsbræ, though he might, if he would, count up to nearly 100 glacier arms which descend from the great snow-field. I have counted 87 of them.

Bears, though not so numerous as they were a dozen years ago, are still often seen. Reindeer never cross the main snow-field south of Lodals Kaupe, but are now and then seen between Erdal and Raudal. Red deer are met with occasionally on the north, south, and west.

Twenty years ago, the bears were very troublesome in Justedal, and many a good horse and fat cow, as well as countless sheep and goats, fell as their prey. This led to combined and successful hunting, and the bear-hunters of Justedal became renowned.

Wolves, formerly common, are now extinct. I know a lady who was being driven in a sleigh in the forest between Sogndal and Solvorn in the winter, when she was chased by a pack of wolves, and just managed to reach a friendly farm-house in the nick of time.

One hunter was attacked by a wounded bear, and though he was completely scalped, he was obliged to sham death. He recovered, and I suppose wore a wig. Many bear stories, quite true too, are common in Fjærland.

Some twenty-five years ago two men followed a bear on the Vetebræ. One of them fell into a crevasse nine or ten fathoms in depth. The other went for help, and after several hours, the rescue party came with long ropes and pulled the hunter out. He

was much scratched, was badly frost-bitten, and had lost several teeth. After several months' illness he recovered.

More recently, my friend Johannes Mundal met with a most interesting adventure which shows what a thoroughly cultured, friendly, and warm-hearted gentleman 'Herr Bamsen' is when properly treated. Mundal had ascended several hundred feet up the crags of one of the mountain buttresses near his home in Fjærland, in order to cut some firewood, and was coming down a steep and narrow ledge well laden. In the narrowest place he met Bruin. Both of them stopped; there was no room to pass. They looked at each other for some little time, and I believe they smiled. Then Bruin, who is rightly credited with possessing 'Ti mœnds styrke, og tolv mœnds vid,' ten men's strength and twelve men's wit, realised the difficulties of the situation, and standing on his hind legs, he put his fore paws up the face of the rock above, and so made himself as small as possible, and left room for Mundal to pass; this the latter promptly did with his load on his back. Then, after bowing civilly to each other, they continued on their respective journeys.

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— COFFEE GRINDING AND ROASTING. —

## CHAPTER XXI

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'Well! we must go somewhere. I'm very hungry, aren't you?'

'Yes, by Jove! off we go then.'

We scratched our way through an ugly fence and got nearly up to the knees in a bog. Then we tried another way, and by groping in the dark we climbed some little rocks from which we

saw a small house outlined against the dark sky. Three or four dogs barked most viciously, and we were glad that we had ice-axes with us.

After showing an apparently bold front, though we felt anything but warlike, all the dogs disappeared but one, which led us along a dark passage to a door. After opening this we entered a large fire-lit room where there was one bed. Up jumped a man, in costume slight, it is true, who began talking and gesticulating most wildly. We understood very little of what he said, but the word 'Rövere'—robbers—occurred very frequently. No doubt we looked very fierce, with ice-axes in our hands and slouched wide-awake hats on our heads. I took off my hat, put on as innocent a face as I could, and eventually convinced the man that we were only two benighted Englishmen in search of a night's lodging. He then lighted a pine-torch and agreed to find us room. However, as his daughters in the next room were still frightened at the robbers, he led us down to Skei again. When we reached the house he tapped gently at a window and said quietly to those inside, 'Sove de folk?'—Are you asleep, people?—and was replied to at once by the inmates, to whom he explained our case in most beseeching tones.

We were soon inside, where we found three good beds for the use of travellers. The woman who let us in had heard our first knock, but as we were travelling on foot and in the night time, she thought we could not be honest folk. The only thing at all stealable, by the way, was a dirty candlestick. We brewed our own Liebig, otherwise we should have done very badly.

A few days after leaving Skei we arrived at Sande, and I met with a little adventure on the evening of our arrival, the relation of which has often caused a laugh to be raised against me.

As my companion had gone out fishing, I determined to walk rapidly up the mountain at the back of the station, in order to study the lay of the country and to prospect generally. This I like to do when I arrive in any fresh district, in fact I always want to know what there is at the other side of the hill. In this case I was very anxious to get a view of the southern portion of the Justedalsbræ, as I intended to explore it before long.

It was after 5 P.M. when I set off across the fields into the birch and juniper thicket at the back of the house. Some of the juniper bushes were evidently very old. I cut a small stick with my 'tolle kniv,' which showed between forty and fifty concentric rings, but it was merely an infant. Above the birches I came to

dwarf willow, then to dwarf birch and alpine flowers. Across a boggy moorland I saw what was apparently the top of the hill. When I got near it, I saw that though it was—a—top, it was not—the—top, and that the latter was half a mile farther, and across a gully. I ran forward and reached the real summit soon after seven.

The deep and springy reindeer moss made a most luxurious couch and was very welcome. The view was grand and the weather perfect. No jealous cloud screened off the beauty of the distant mountains from my sight, and even the jagged crests of the Söndmøre peaks far far away stood out with sharp lines against the golden sky. I could see the wavy outline and graceful curves of the Justedalsbræ for forty miles, from Lodals Kaupe to the glacier arms above the Haukedalsvand. Here and there savage and characteristic precipices recalled the almost forgotten fact that it was the same great snow-field which descends with such awful ice-falls into the valleys at the head of the Nordfjord, otherwise it much resembled the gentler Folgefond. With my field-glass I examined many arms of the great glacier, and made sketches which have since been useful to me. There was nothing extravagantly wild in the shapes of the mountains, or of uncommon beauty in the many valleys which I could see, but it was perfectly delightful all the same. Where can you see such brilliant as well as such soft and subdued colours as in Norway? In Switzerland? No. In Italy? No. In Scotland? Well! Yes, you can see them there, as you can also in the English lake country. Fertile valleys, pine-fringed lakes along which the blue mists crept stealthily, and then slowly climbed up the low foot-hills, dark precipices and the eternal snows which put on a faint rosy blush when the setting sun gave them his last evening kiss, formed a picture which I often recall with great pleasure.

In due time the sun sank to rest behind the Aalfotenbræ, and a chilly breeze warned me to be off again, as I had 2970 feet to descend. As I always like to return by a different route from the one by which I have ascended, I determined to descend towards the west and to join the road between Sande and Förde, about a mile above the former. Off I run in a merry mood, perhaps 500 feet, and find myself on the top of a crag. I retrace my steps a short distance, and then find some little terraces inclining downwards along the mountain-side. This is capital, as the terraces lead toward Sande; I run along one, then descend to others, and follow each in turn a short distance. The terraces contract in

width, and I can see that they gradually run into the face of the mountain, which becomes very steep. 'Night's dark mantle' is being gently laid over the shoulders of the mountain, and I go very cautiously downwards from ledge to ledge. A cold wind creeps along the mountain-side, and I feel it is quite possible that I may have to make my 'lodging upon the cold ground.' I think of turning back again over the top of the mountain, but I feel doubtful whether I can find my way in the dusk. The slope below gets steeper as I advance along another ledge. There is a crag above me too; I pass some nasty places, and the long dry grass growing in the crannies is not to be trusted too far. The ledge almost disappears as I try to get round a projecting corner. Still, there is decent foothold and handhold too, though great care is necessary, and I go very slowly and get round the corner. Ah! what is that? A bell, close at hand too. Now I am all right. Here are some sheep, and they know the way to easier ground, if I do not.

'Now then, my friends, show me the way,' I shout to them. After a look of evident astonishment at my boldness in intruding on their special domain, they trot along a narrow but gradually widening ledge which leads upwards, and here and there I have a difficulty in keeping up with them. Soon they lead me over a little ridge and on to the boggy moorland which I crossed on the ascent.

Farewell, you best of guides; you have led me well, and but for you I should probably pass a night of shivers on one of the ledges. When at last I reach a footpath, I hurry along, and arriving at Sande, I find that my companion has caught a score of fine trout during my absence. Moral: Never climb an unknown mountain alone, and never attempt to descend a steep mountain-side unless you have plenty of time to spare, or have carefully reconnoitred the route from below, or have been told by some one who knows the ground that it is all right, and never fail to show due respect to your guides, whoever or whatever they may happen to be.

On arriving at the posting-station at Förde, we found two men at the door, one evidently the 'skydskaffer,' or landlord. We said, 'God aften' (good-evening), to which he replied with a few correct English words. Upon this we asked in plain Anglo-Saxon if we could have two beds? To this the reply in English was: 'Oh! no, very little.' Dewhurst then said, 'Have you had good weather lately?' The Norseman's reply, this time in his own language, was, 'He is my brother-in-law, he married my sister.' After this

we hammered away in broken Norse, and soon found all we required.

As so few English travellers can speak Norse, it is not to be wondered at that the natives usually take it for granted that English, or, failing that, signs must form the medium by which their wants are to be communicated.

## CHAPTER XXII

THE LUNDE SKAR, SÖKNESAND SKAR, AND GRÖNDAL; BALHOLM TO  
SOGNDAL OVER THE FJELD; MOUNTAINEERING WITH A FISHERMAN

'Failures are the pillars of success.'—*Welsh Proverb.*

## THE LUNDE SKAR, SÖKNESAND SKAR, AND GRÖNDAL

EARLY in the year 1881 a friend and I planned a somewhat ambitious mountain programme, which with the assistance of Johannes Vigdal we hoped to bring to a successful issue the following summer.<sup>1</sup> The day before sailing, my friend went to a dentist to have a tooth drawn. The dentist bungled; the result was partial lockjaw and no Norway. I should have liked to have imposed as a penalty for the dentist an enforced walk uphill for twenty-four hours at a stretch on soft snow and with a 25-lb. rucksack on his back.

My friend being *hors de combat*, I had to modify the programme. Vigdal was to join me after the first week. Until then I had no one in view.

The year 1880 was a memorable one for the few persons who took an interest in the Justedalsbræ, as in that year the *Amtskart* was published, and until its appearance the existing maps showed many strange freaks and entirely ignored many important features. I bought a copy in Bergen on my arrival in 1881, and noticed at once the Tunsbergdalsbræ. This remarkable glacier pierces the very heart of the great snow-field, and I said, 'There must we go, if nowhere else.' The Austerdalsbræ was also another magnet.

On the steamer which took me to Fjærland I met a man, whom I called Sam, who had acted as guide to the king up to the Böiumsbræ in the previous year. Telling me that he had been up the glacier 'for moro's skyld,' I engaged him to guide me over the Lunde Skar and to make a new glacier pass from Jölster over to Hveitstrand.

As it looked like rain, Sam asked if he must take an umbrella.

<sup>1</sup> *Nor. Tur. For. Aarbog* for 1881, p. 87.

'Umbrella on a glacier? No. Get a good long stout stick.' Then he said, 'May I bring my dog?' I had refused the umbrella, and I did not think that a dog sounded like mountaineering, especially as I had expected some stiff work the second day, but remembering that a dog had been up Mont Blanc, and to keep Sam in good-humour, I said, 'Oh yes, certainly, bring the dog!'

Up the steep mountain-side we came upon a belt of ferns, *Aspidium filix fœmina*; generally they were breast-high, but sometimes they reached our heads. They were wet with the rain. Sam wisely let me go first and make a way. We were obliged to traverse this belt diagonally. Just when I had got wet to the skin, I found a road newly made through it. A bear had been there shortly before.

At the top of the pass there is a cairn called Kvite varde, probably built by the Ordnance Surveyors. From here I wanted to take an easy glissade, but Sam led me away to the paths of virtue in the shape of a prosaic snow trudge. The glacier which we descended, and two other offshoots from the snow-field, drain into a weird tarn of blue water, well-named Troldvatn, on whose surface were many tiny icebergs. This lake is not shown on the *Amtskart*. The stream which drains it runs north and forms a magnificent cataract.

After leaving the glacier I got a good glissade, but Sam did not like to see it. The little river which drains Troldvatn was in flood and very difficult to cross. The only suitable plan was to jump from a rock on the crest of a thick sloping wedge of snow, under which the river ran. After I had cleared it, I heard a voice saying, 'Jeg er bange, Jeg tør ikke,' but he came for all that. After Sam, the dog. Doggy did not like it, and refused to come for a long time.

The descent to Lundedal by the only gully which for many miles is passable, is very interesting, and care is necessary as it is steep and nearly 1200 feet in height. Lundedal and the Kjösnaesfjord, an arm of Lake Jölster, together form one of the most extraordinary defiles, a mere groove cut squarely out of the mountains to a depth of from 4000 to 4500 feet, a grim cul-de-sac, at the head of which are two hanging glaciers from which avalanches are constantly falling.

This was the first tourist crossing of what is now a very favourite pass.

In the *Nor. Tur. For. Aarboj* for 1881 I wrote about this place as follows:—'At the N.E. corner of the cirque was a steep gully which at first sight seemed to afford a passage from the



*Fjerrland.*

*To face page 264.*





valley upwards, but an avalanche, which we saw, plainly forbade experiments at the time, though under certain conditions I believe this chimney could be climbed.' This unfortunate sentence was interpreted by Herr Bing as a strong recommendation to go and try it. In 1895 he did so with Daniel Söknesand. They succeeded in climbing it up to one of the hanging glaciers and so got on the snow-field above, but they had literally to dodge an avalanche and barely escaped with their lives. The 'certain conditions' did not then exist, and very rarely will do so. I say no more.

Three days after Bing's adventure, my nephew, Cyril Todd, Mikkel Mundal, and I made a new glacier pass from Fosheim—the home of the waterfall—near Skei, over to Fjærland, along the top of the line of cliffs which overshadow the Kjösnesfjord and Lundedal on the north.<sup>1</sup>

As I found that Sam had not the remotest intention of keeping to his bargain and of accompanying me in a new pass over to Langedal, we went to the farm Söknesand, from whence we could easily cross to Gröndal and make a new and easy pass over to Mundal, or, better still, to the Vetlefjord.

Well do I remember the vicissitudes of the next day. Up at four, I could not rouse my mate, but by dint of coaxing and spurring him, we got under weigh at five o'clock. An arm of the Grovebræ projected down to the first skar. The glacier was snow-free, and I ascended its white dome. The view of the blue lake, green pastures below, and of stern nature above was delightful.

When, to Sam's surprise, an easy way to the Troldvatn presented itself, it was hopeless to think of my projected route, and we parted at eight o'clock, he to return over the Lunde Skar, and I to toil with the two heavy knapsacks, one full of tinned meats, and a Scotch plaid on my back, down the unknown and wellnigh unmapped Gröndal to Myre and from thence over to Vetlefjord.

We parted good friends, it being of no earthly use getting angry, as fear had thoroughly taken possession of the poor dalesman, and I sent a kind greeting to his wife. The dog really seemed sorry to part with me, and I certainly was to part with it.

An alarming incident occurred soon after we parted. I was crossing a flat snow-field when a loud explosion took place right under my feet, and I saw a long crack run across the snow from

<sup>1</sup> See page 292, also *Nor. Tur. For. Aarbog* for 1895, p. 33.

one side to the other. I ran off it pretty quickly, supposing that there was a pool of water below. On another occasion I heard and saw a crevasse form suddenly on a glacier, but the crack was so small that I could barely insert a penknife into it.

What a wild valley this Grøndal is, nor is it so very green! Glaciers to right and glaciers to left, and great was the temptation to do away with prudence for once and to climb one of the eastern glacier arms, but I resisted it and trudged along over moss, bog, snow, rocks and mud, where I often saw fresh traces of Bruin.

Two glacier streams were very difficult to cross, one being only just possible where it split up into a delta close to the main river. However, I conquered it in detail with the aid of my ice-axe as a third leg.

At 10.40 I reached a sæter. The girl did not understand the new coinage, though it had been in circulation six years. No stranger had ever been seen there before.

Down the valley, and at the wrong side of the main river, which must be crossed. The whole valley is in flood, and I wade, nearly knee-deep, in the pastures to get within hailing distance of a sæter. I whistle with a dog whistle for long in vain. The river must be crossed, and I must swim it. I put down my load and begin to prepare for a swim. The water is horribly cold and very swift. I'll whistle again. Hurrah! a boy comes out and points to the little lake below where there is a boat. I wade and jump over deep drains and reach the boat, a leaky old tub, but what matter! It is a boat. Beyond the lake the valley falls rapidly, and a pretty pastoral scene is revealed which reminds me of kind friends forty miles lower down.

At Myre gaard—Bog farm—I ask the way to the Myre Skar. This pass, which is long, tedious, and difficult to find, is parallel to the Svære Skar, over which King Svære crossed with an army. The farmer, after long bargaining, sends his son with me. He is a fine stalwart lad, and if he had been with me up Grøndal, I am sure we should have crossed the glacier. Near the most southern point of the Justedalsbræ, we come to a swollen river, and as is often the case, the only fordable place is just at the top of a waterfall. I try it first and stick fast knee-deep in the middle, well aware that if I raise a foot an inch without leaning on my axe, I shall be over the fos in a trice, and the difficulty arises from not being able to find a good hold with my axe. The lad gets over in a rather better place and comes to my rescue with his long pole, and I get safely over. I am well practised in fording



*Troldvatn and the head of Gröndal.*

*To face page 206.*



rivers, and have crossed many a bad one in Jotunheim before the days of bridges, but I never had quite the same spice of danger as on this occasion.

At the top, or rather the second top, of the pass I bid 'farvel' to my guide and take the whole load again.

What a wild view into Baardal and what a grand glissade down that snow gully! Yes, fully 1000 feet in five minutes. At a sæter the rosy-cheeked Sunniva gives me a welcome meal. Off again all too soon, down, down, down a rough cattle path in a beautiful glen, and I lose my way in the forest. Rain comes on and the alder leaves wet me to the skin. At 8.15 I reach the farm of Mel too tired to eat anything, and with a minimum amount of dry clothes I sleep the sleep of the weary.

Next morning up at five, as fresh as a lark, the glaciers looking reproachfully at me. Ah! sad fate. The Jöstefond, as that portion of the snow-field between Fjærland and Gröndal is marked on the map, has in recent years been crossed several times, but still much of it is yet unknown. The Grovebræ, which I partly crossed, was, I believe, never visited till a year or two ago.

#### BALHOLM TO SOGDAL OVER THE FJELD

'O peak of Odin's royal throne,  
Eye of the world, thou golden Sun,  
Did thy bright disc belong to me,  
A shield for Frithjof it should be!'

*Frithjof's Saga.*

(Translated by Rev. W. L. BLACKLEY.)

My next adventure was a journey from Balholm to Sogndal over the mountains, with an old fisherman as porter.

On the ascent, we had a glorious view of the scene of 'The Frithjof Saga.' My companion was enchanted, and recited the whole Saga most dramatically, going up hill all the time. Poor old fellow! He lost his wind, and eventually I was obliged to carry both knapsacks again.

Our route was certainly very long and tiring. Beginning with a steep ascent of nearly 4000 feet, we toiled over three broad, rolling, snow-flecked mountain wastes, which were pierced by two deep valleys into which we were obliged to descend. As the poor old man became dreadfully tired, I proposed that he should walk down the side valley to Lekanger and let me go on alone, but his pride would not allow him to do so. The result was

that we got benighted, and lost our way in the dense pine forests of Sogndal, and both of us fell into water waist-deep.

A good-natured bonde rescued us out of the watery labyrinth, and we got to house at midnight.

Moral: Do not expect fishermen to be mountaineers, and do not talk too much when going uphill.

## CHAPTER XXIII

THE GLACIERS OF FJÆRLAND; ACRES OF PINK SNOW; IMPASSABLE CREVASSES; EXCEPTIONAL DENUDATION OF SNOW IN THE YEAR 1889; DRIVEN OVER THE BEFRINGSSKAR; A PLEASANT SUNDAY AT AAMOT; THE BJÖRNEBOTNSKAR; RECTANGULAR BLOCKS OF NÉVÉ AND OVERHANGING EAVES OF SNOW; GREAT CARE NEEDED; DISCOVERY OF THE UPPER GLACIERS OF THE AUSTERDALSBRÆ; A TEMPTING BAIT WHICH FORTUNATELY DOES NOT CATCH US; THE ICY LANGEDAL; NORDRE NÆS AND 'EN MEGET SNIL MAND'; A HALF-DAY WITH JUDGE GLOERSEN AT SOLVORN

'Tis fate diverts our course, and fate we must obey.'

'Good unexpected, evils unforeseen,  
Appear by turns, as Fortune shifts the scene.'

DRYDEN'S *Virgil*.

## FJÆRLAND AND DEFEAT

FIRST PASSAGE OF THE BEFRINGSSKAR, AND DEFEAT ON THE  
FONSDALSBRÆ

THE mountaineer, like every other sportsman, has three distinct periods of enjoyment connected with his sport, and it is a fair subject for an argument which of the three is really productive of the most genuine pleasure.

The joys of anticipation, which often last many months, are real solid joys. During this period the happy mountaineer fairly revels in the maps, guide-books, and mountain literature, which litter the table in his sanctum. His books have markers in them here and there to point out his references. His friends' letters are marked, maybe, with red ink. Photographs are closely scanned with the aid of a powerful magnifying glass, and, at last, after many projects have been put aside for the future, the details of a campaign are decided upon, subject of course, when the time comes for putting them into execution, to constant changes and omissions.

The second period, that of active realisation, and passive sub-



mission to all idleness enforced by bad weather and other reasons, possesses its supreme moments which neither of the two other periods can possibly afford. It is also generally a period of more or less continual enjoyment unbroken by everyday cares and worries of this busy work-a-day world. But it is usually the shortest of the three.

The third period, that of after-dinner fireside retrospection, with its bright memories of joyous days spent on the mountains in the company of friends, tried and true, is indeed a happy time, though often mingled with a shade of sadness. At this period, if there linger in the mind any memory of the cold, the wet, the fatigues, the disappointments, petty annoyances, and many little disagreeables, a humorous side is pretty sure to be seen, and the remembrance of grim discomforts has developed into real pleasure.

On August 9th, Hastings and I gave three enthusiastic novices their first lessons in ice-craft on the Suphellebræ in Fjærland. These gentlemen were Baron Molander, a nobleman from Finland, and two English engineers, Messrs. Frank Grove and J. Walker Sutton. The two latter we persuaded to join us on our projected glacier passes. The baron had arranged to cross the Lundekar and the Oldenskar, provided that his 6-kroner Lærdal shoes would stand the test.

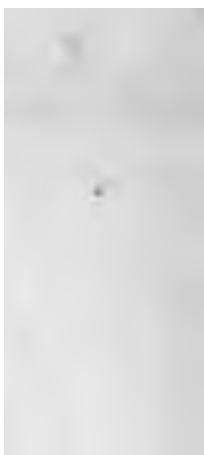
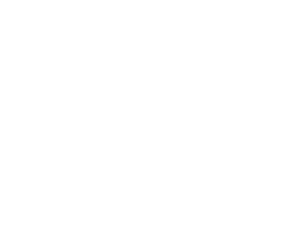
The Suphellebræ is now well known to tourists who can drive from the fjord close up to the ice. Professor Forbes, who visited Fjærland in the year 1851, says: 'It was not until (as is my custom) I had mounted some way over the ice itself, that I discovered, to my surprise, that a very lofty cliff of rock entirely separates the upper from the lower glacier, the latter being in fact what is termed by the later Swiss writers a *glacier remanié*, formed altogether of icy fragments from the steep and pinnacled glacier above. It is an exceedingly remarkable arrangement, which has no parallel in the greatness of its scale in the Alps. By the aneroid barometer, I estimated the lowest part of the Suphelle glacier at only 105 feet above the level of the sea.'

It is certainly a very remarkable *glacier remanié*, or 'secondary glacier,' as Professor Forbes himself terms those glaciers which are not directly connected by snow or ice to the parent snows above. There is, however, in Arctic Norway one which is much larger. This was discovered in 1898 by three friends and myself. It lies in a grim *cul-de-sac* in the Fugledal, and is fed by avalanches from Jæggevarre—the Mont Blanc of Arctic Europe. Its broad icy snout, standing nearly 100 feet above the dark waters, projects



*Ice Cavern of the Suphellebrae.*

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far into the weird Fugledalsvand, into which it launches many an iceberg. This scene, I feel confident, has no rival in Norway or elsewhere in Europe, but I must not write about Arctic Norway, though it is so fascinating a theme.

A few years ago, with the help of Mikkel Mundal, I took two of my children on to the Suphellebræ up a steep flake of ice, a bit of fun which they much enjoyed. We also saw several fine avalanches. In this respect we were more fortunate than the German Emperor, who, on one occasion, ascended some little distance on the ice. As no avalanche would fall down, a man was sent up with a crowbar to the crags above to send down a mass of rock as a substitute for the séracs which would not fall to order.

Let me 'Hark away back,' so as to 'get forrard.'

After many delays, the four of us started at 5.30 from Mikkel's house at Mundal, and walked briskly up to Böiums sæter, where we ate a *rømme kolle*—a bowl of thick curds.<sup>1</sup>

The 5000 feet of chaotic ice-falls, which form the Böiumsbræ, is broken by one small plateau. It looked superb, glittering in the morning sunshine, and clearly the early morning is the best time to see this noble glacier.

In point of time, the wisest plan would have been for us to have crossed the river by a bridge and to have skirted the eastern side of the glacier by climbing steep grass slopes where cattle feed most of the way; but the ruling passion, a laudable thirst for legitimate adventure, was too strong for us, so we climbed a lateral moraine on the western side up to the little plateau which I have named.

We crossed the glacier pretty easily, but had much difficulty in getting on to some smooth slabs of gneiss, from which the ice had shrunk, as is so often the case on the sun-heated rocks bordering a glacier. We had to cut a staircase down into the chasm, and, as a stick fell down, I had a very interesting and perfectly safe journey under a portion of the glacier in order to recover the lost property.

As usual, we found fresh traces of Bruin, who of course kept out of sight. The steep slopes, intense heat, and well-laden rucksacks, combined with the fact that, not many hours earlier, we had been tossing on the choppy waves of the North Sea with the usual results, made us go wearily and heavily; but at last,

<sup>1</sup> Now, alas, this sæter delicacy can no longer be had here, as the introduction of cream separators has revolutionised the art of cheese-making and has abolished the curds.

at 11.50, we gained the snow above the ice-fall. Soon we were threading an intricate course amongst deeper and wider crevasses than I had hitherto met with on the Justedalsbræ. This was in a wide glacier trough, and we turned gladly to a spur of rocks on our right, and followed a broad snow ridge, which after a time merged in the usual undulations. Thin clouds enveloped us and we went warily. Our intention was to descend to Fonsdal, the upper portion of the Stardal, by the Fonsdalsbræ, a glacier which I had examined five years previously from the north. The total distance as the crow flies, from the foot of the one glacier to the foot of the other, was only about six English miles, and the height to be ascended little more than 5000 feet, so we had not anticipated a very big day and little thought what we were in for.

The snow was in excellent condition and evidently several weeks old. All at once, some one saw 'blood on the snow,' and at first we looked in vain for the cause. It was, however, 'pink snow,' *Protococcus Nivalis*, and, instead of seeing merely a few square yards, we trudged over many acres of it. This was also the case on nearly every snow-field which we had crossed this summer—

'. . . as if the South had set  
All its fair roses in the northern snows.'

This microscopical organism is much more frequent in Norway than in the Alps, but I have never seen so much in the whole of my life as I did in the summer of 1889. Arctic explorers frequently find the *Protococcus*, and in other colours besides pink, such as green and blue. Showers of rose-coloured snow have been recorded in Tyrol, the Apennines, and elsewhere. I think that I have seen pink snow on a Yorkshire fell, but am not absolutely certain. Naturally enough, the older the snow, the darker is the pink, as the colouring matter is the more concentrated.

After trudging a couple of miles over a flat snow-field without a landmark in sight, like being on a ship in mid-ocean, we realised about four o'clock that we were descending. Soon the clouds rolled partly away, and we saw the trough of the Fonsdalsbræ before us, with isolated crags on each side of it. We went merrily along down several hundred feet, and then threaded a tortuous way amongst a maze of huge crevasses, many of which had overhanging lips or caves of snow, which Hastings and I found to be the case on nearly every one of the many glaciers which we crossed that year.

This peculiar but most dangerous glacier phenomenon was the

result of the exceptionally fine weather during the months of June, July, and the beginning of August, the longest unbroken spell of sunny summer weather that living Norsemen had ever known. During much of this time there was actual sunshine streaming down upon the snow-fields for nearly twenty hours during the day. The overhanging eaves in some cases projected twenty-five to thirty feet over crevasses which were, to all intents and purposes, unfathomable, and yet, strange to say, they could rarely be detected by any hollows on the surface of the *névé*, but could only be seen in profile. The eave, generally speaking, faced the south and had been formed by the melting of one of the walls of the crevasse by the rays of the sun, which shines in the higher latitude of Norway more nearly horizontally than is the case in Switzerland. One can easily understand that it is much warmer in the crevasse near the top than outside where a cool breeze must be ever present. Many of the eaves tapered off almost to a sharp edge, but in nearly all cases the edge itself was well defined and not ragged; thus there was practically nothing to show on the surface where the eave was attached to the wall. In other words, except one could see the eave in profile or from the opposite side of the crevasse, there was often no means of determining whether the latter was five or fifty feet in width. This condition is never seen in the Alps, and, fortunately, but very rarely in Norway. In fact, the summer of 1889 was wholly exceptional, but such another will come again, and if it do so, I hope that every party which may cross the *Justedalsbræ* under such conditions as I describe, may number at least one person in its ranks who is really a capable leader, and one who has had a good schooling in snow-craft, and has also the moral courage to order a retreat when he feels that to advance would be to run an unjustifiable risk and possibly to court disaster.

The unusual denudation of the snow in this summer enormously increased the difficulties of mountaineering. Many glaciers, which under ordinary circumstances could be crossed with ease, were exceptionally difficult to traverse, and some were impassable, as ice-falls and *séracs* were met with which were unknown before. There were no slopes of steep snow high up on the mountains, but instead, hard blue ice was the rule. Few mountaineers were in Norway in 1889, and it was well that this was the case. The few who were there met with plenty of adventures, and it was quite a common occurrence to be benighted high up on the mountains.

Oddly enough, fewer snow cornices were seen on the crests of

mountains than usual, as the sun's power had melted them away. There were also rectangular masses of névé which were difficult to deal with, but as I shall have to refer to them again, I will say no more now.

We must return to the Fonsdalsbræ. After circumventing many awkward crevasses, and going with the utmost caution, we were at last stopped by a wide crevasse at least a quarter of a mile long; beyond this were others still worse, and we realised that we were fairly beaten. Fortunately we had another new string to our bow, a descent into the Befringsdal, west.

After a long trudge up to the snow plateau, we turned due west on the apparently illimitable expanse of snow, and in time saw a low line of rocks ahead which we reached at 6.25. These rocks in reality were the crest of a high lateral moraine which is pressed well up against, and higher than, but not over, the top of the ridge of a spur which divides the Befringsdal into two arms. It is not by any means certain whether the stones of which this moraine is formed have been derived from the ridge close at hand, or from the bare rocks of a somewhat higher hill about a mile further south. A few years later I crossed this hill from Fosheim, but I could not satisfy myself that it was contributing anything towards the formation of the moraine in question, and the snow-field there is so flat that one cannot say with certainty which way it drains. The moraine has not yet been shoved over the ridge, though probably it may be sometime. Or, possibly, in the remote future, when flying-machines have almost destroyed the sport of mountaineering, these great snow-fields may have shrunk into insignificance, and this ridge will appear from the east as well as from the west, as a high mountain crest consisting of two parallel ridges, the lower and western being the firm rock, the higher and eastern being the moraine, the size and depth of which we have at present no means of estimating. The looseness of the moraine will in that case ultimately lead to its own destruction, but it may exist long enough to puzzle many a hard-headed geologist.

The western arm of the Befringsdal ends in a cul-de-sac enriched by a tarn, a gem of turquoise blue. We tried in vain to get down to it, and wasted much precious time, but at 7.15 we again were forced to retreat. Warily and heavily we crossed the spur, and at 8.30 reached the head of what is now called the Befrings-skar, where an arm of the glacier flowing northwards forms a miniature Märjelen See. The gorge below, the eastern arm of Befringsdal, was easily followed, and at 9.45 we reached a sæter where we had a good meal and a half-hour's rest. Led by a

sleepy man from the farm below, we had a lovely moonlight walk along the wettest of wet footpaths, and finally reached Aamot—Waters' meeting—on Sunday morning at 1.10.

Tolleif Aamot was soon wakened up, and he and his household, with their limited resources, spared no pains to make us comfortable.

Baron Molander had not turned up here as he had intended to do, but, though we never heard the reason, we thought it must have been that his shoes had worn to pieces.

After so hard a day's work, a restful Sunday was most enjoyable. We lay abed till 10.30 and then, with the help of some soup provided by Sutton, we made a capital breakfast, after which we simply revelled with keenest animal enjoyment in the bright sunshine of a perfect summer's day.

As Aamot is far away from any church, the good folk, donned in their best, assembled to have a religious service amongst themselves.

After the service, the young Norsemen came one by one to where we were lying on the grass, and soon took the most lively interest in our maps, compasses, a clinometer, and in a pretty water-colour sketch which Grove was painting. Though naturally inquisitive, they were thorough Nature's gentlemen, and I think that I never met a finer, handsomer, or more intelligent set of young men in my life, and we all treasure in our memories the two or three hours of pleasant conversation with these born mountaineers of Stardal. We told them of our failure and success of the previous day, discussed our plans with them, explained to them the true use of the rope, and were delighted to find several who had crossed the snows to the head of Langedal, east, merely 'to find out the way which Mr. Russell Starr had discovered.'

The women of Stardal screw up all their hair into a comical little cone about three inches long at the back of their heads. This causes their ears to lie perfectly close and flat against their heads. Over the cones they wear smooth black cloth caps. The result is the reverse of pleasing. The men, as usual in Norway, were very well dressed.

Though we had failed to make a pass direct from Fjærland to Aamot by descending the Fonsdalsbræ, this pass was made two years later by the Rev. F. M. Beaumont, Mr. A. L. Bill, and two guides with great ease, when no gaping crevasses barred the way. It was merely a delightful mountain walk, and has since pretty often been taken by others, some of whom cannot even now understand where, how, or why we had been beaten. For my



part, I feel sure that whenever conditions similar to those existing in the summer of 1889 recur, the passage of this glacier arm will prove to be impracticable, or, if practicable, will be so dangerous to accomplish, that prudence will dictate the abandonment of any attempt contemplated by good mountaineers.

The main valley of Stardal—or the Stordal or great valley, as it probably was originally termed—and the two valleys at the head, Fonsdal and Aamotdal, form a letter T, of which the stalk is Stardal. The farm Aamot is at the junction. The Fonsdal is headed by the fine Fonsdalsbræ, and has on each side lateral glens into which pour steep ice-streams.

Tværdal, the eastern glen, has terrible mural precipices, and it was by a sheer piece of good luck that Mr. Russell Starr's party, and Messrs. Priestman and Wilson on another year, happened to find the one place where a descent could be made from the upper snows. The western glens, descending from hills near the Befringsskar, are quite unknown, and invite exploration.

The men at Aamot and other farms fully recognise that Stardal has a bright future before it. A small but increasing stream of tourists now passes annually over the Olden Skar to Nordfjord. This pretty pass only requires a little more of the energy of the *Turist Forening* to be expended on the formation of a path up the steep slopes on the Olden side, to become a popular sequence to the Lundeskar. The Langedalskar is a most useful connecting link between east and west, and the Befringsskar, or the Fonsdalskar in ordinary condition, is the natural route to be followed by stout-limbed pedestrians who wish to go from Fjærland to Nordfjord.

In a letter from a young fellow at Aamot, he told me that he was anxious to guide travellers wherever they wished to go over the Justedalsbræ, and I believe him. Under ordinary conditions a party with local guides would meet with little or no difficulty except late in the summer, but it must be remembered that, though these fine fellows are bold as lions, they have not even yet attained much proficiency in snow- or ice-craft, and probably also they undervalue the importance of using a rope, and of keeping it taut too, on an apparently uncrevassed snow-field.

It is very strange to think that the only recognised pass over the southern part of the Justedalsbræ, from time immemorial, appears to have been the Lundeskar, which I introduced to tourists in 1881. There are no traditions of ancient passages over the Langedalsskar or Fonsdalsskar, and the absence of cairns on the edge of the snow-fields is a corroboration of the theory that,

unlike the central and northern portions of this uncanny snow world, where several passes were known and used two generations ago, and forgotten by the last generation, Stardal was never visited by its neighbours east and south until a few years ago. Possibly this was partly caused by the audacious inaccuracy of the early map-makers, who represented the southern portion of the Justedalsbræ to be about three times its actual width. It is very different now, and I heartily congratulate the surveyors on the success which they have attained in mapping a region full of geographical puzzles. There are mistakes, of course, but these will in time be rectified.

#### THE BJÖRNEBOTNSKAR

For our next expedition we wished to make a glacier pass direct from Aamot to the head of the Austerdalsbræ, and to descend this glacier to Hveitestrand, a pass parallel to and north of the Langedalsskar.

The walls of Stardal and Fonsdal, as in the case of most west Justedal valleys, are very precipitous, and our Aamot friends were much puzzled when we told them that we wished 'to go up there.' At last old Tolleif pointed out a small hollow far up the mountain, which he said was the way by which bears came down to the valley after crossing the glaciers, and that in consequence it was called Björnebotn. It did not, however, at all follow that we could go up where Bruin could come down, as this good-natured beast is a wonderful climber over glaciated rocks, but, to our joy, we heard that hunters had been up to the hollow, so we engaged a lad to guide us up there on the morrow.

We were duly called at 2.30, but 'the strong man' of our party was wickedly lazy, so we did not get off till 3.30. The whole valley was bathed in a cold clammy mist, but after a climb of about 2500 feet we emerged suddenly into bright, invigorating sunshine.

The view was wild indeed, all the tops were clear, but a cloudy sea filled the valleys. A glance at the chaos of crevasses of the Fonsdalsbræ made us laugh at our audacity in having attempted to force a way through them.

Without difficulty we reached the snows 4300 feet above Aamot at 9.25. As Sutton had no goggles, we painted the skin round his eyes with lampblack, which successfully prevented him from being troubled by the glare of the sunshine on the snow.

Across a trough of the glacier we saw an island of rocks—a *nunatak*, as it would now be called. This I thought to be the Onsdags Næbba, and on looking through my glass I saw the cairn which we had built in 1884. An immense change had come over the scene since then. In 1884 not a single crevasse was visible for miles round this rocky islet; now, on the other hand, it was begirt with gaping fissures, and, beyond, was an impenetrable chaos of wild séracs. We reached the cairn, and found, as before, a delightful alpine garden. On the north side, where on my first visit there was a tiny pool, there was now a little tarn of purest blue water encased in a chalice of rock and ice.

With some little trouble we mounted a steep snow dome, and saw, far ahead, the concave head of the Langedalsbræ. As we feared a snowstorm, we hastened towards the mountain buttress which separates Langedal from Austerdal. Fortunately we had taken our bearings very carefully, as dense mists surrounded us. At noon we suddenly became involved in a very intricate system of wide and deep crevasses, and saw through the mist many huge rectangular blocks of névé which quite blocked the way. We retraced our steps a short way, and turned northwards, but soon returned to the attack at another place. The mists luckily blew away, and we saw rocks a quarter of a mile away, and between us and them the crevasses seemed to be very bad and interspersed with detached cubes of snow, surrounded by wide and impassable crevasses.

These rectangular masses, which are usually snow-covered and very rarely visible, occur on the glacier-covered buttresses, and are formed by there being pulls in three different directions, one down or along the ridge, and a lateral pull on each side in the direction in which the two adjoining glaciers are moving. In this case, to the difficulty connected with zigzagging about the cubes, was added the peculiar danger, actual and apparent enough, which was caused by the overhanging eaves or lips of the crevasses to which I have already referred.

The problem, 'how to reach the rocks,' was not an easy one to solve. We had many narrow snow lanes to walk along, many icy vaults of unknown depths to look down into, and were often beaten back, but at last, after little more than an hour's patient and careful plodding, we got through, and at 1.10 we stepped gaily on to the rocks where we revelled in golden sunshine, surrounded by some of the finest ice scenery in Europe. There were dozens of blue glaciers in sight, each of which had a steep ice-fall.

We found, unexpectedly, and contrary to what was shown in

the *Amtskart*, the head of the buttress to be a narrow neck falling away steeply on the north to a high glacier basin which flows down to the then unknown Austerdalsbræ, and on the south with high precipices down to the Langedalsbræ.

Whilst lunching, we looked back with great satisfaction upon the course which we had followed, and realised the fact that, but for one narrow snow ridge, which bridged diagonally over two large crevasses, we should probably have been beaten, and have been forced to go round to the south side of the Langedal, a weary trudge of many hours' duration.

The glacier basin on the north side, which we named 'Godt Haabsbræen,' or the Glacier of Great Expectations, offered a most tempting bait for us to explore, and try to descend to the Austerdalsbræ, and, had it been a month earlier, we should have yielded to the temptation. However, though it was easy going so far as we could see, we knew that the great glacier lay far below the level of the basin, and that, in case of failure to descend, an event which, a few years later, I proved conclusively would have happened to us had we tried to descend, it would have been our fate to have spent a cold night out on the rocks; so, reluctantly enough, we abandoned for this time the exploration of the most interesting glacier of the Justedalsbræ.

We set off at a rapid rate on the broadening ridge of Skytternaasi, crossed a little glacier, explored a lovely ice grotto, and descended to the Langedal by a steep gully, at the bottom part of which we had to force a way through or over birch-trees growing horizontally out from the rocks and to beat down the ferns, *Aspidium filix fœmina*, which grew fully six feet in height. This was hot work, trying for the temper, and not good for my fishing-rod.

At 7.30 we stepped into a clean sæter hut at Nysæter, and at 10.20, after having roused more than one stalwart bonde from his slumbers at a wrong house, were welcomed at Nordre-Næs by Kristoffer Knud Næs, 'en meget snil mand.'

Nordre Næs is perched, like a Rhine castle, defiantly on the top of a crag, and in this case a crag rounded and polished by the ice of old into a series of smooth bosses very slippery and very round.

Our host, who did not belie his good character, is one of the most charming farmers it has ever been my good fortune to meet in Norway, and that is saying a great deal.

Next day, the row over the Hveitstrand lake and walk to Solvorn were most enjoyable. Still more so was the half-day

which we spent with the old judge, who with his wife had expected our arrival at Solvorn the previous day, and had been anxious for our safety in consequence of our non-appearance at their delightful home.

This terminated the first section of an ambitious programme which Hastings and I had drawn out with great care in the spring and early summer. It was also the termination of our mountaineering companionship with Grove and Sutton, who had proved on two long and trying days that they possessed the true English grit, and though neither of them had had any previous experience of glaciers, they at all times followed our lead without question. We parted from them two days later with mutual regret.

A strange thing in connection with this campaign is that on its conclusion we felt that we had enjoyed a rare good time in spite of the fact that we were defeated on six of the expeditions which we had contemplated making. Four of these six have since been made with comparative ease.

## CHAPTER XXIV

FOOTPRINTS OF A BEAR OR OF A MAN? A GLEAM OF SUNSHINE AND A RIFT IN THE CLOUDS SHOW US WHERE WE ARE; THE VALLEY OF OLDEN; A WELCOME AT AAMOT; A NEW GLACIER PASS AND A LOVELY WALK TO FJÆRLAND

' And idle gleams will come and go,  
But still the clouds remain;  
The clouds themselves are children of the Sun.'

TENNYSON.

A FOUR DAYS' TRAMP FROM FJÆRLAND, WITH THE  
EXPLORATION OF THE AUSTERDALSBRÆ

NEARLY all who have visited the Sognefjord have been struck with the beauty of Balholm. Many have read the Frithjof Saga, the scene of which is laid here and on various other neighbouring promontories and bays. The tumulus of King Bale is also well known. Among other special interests which I associate with Balholm, one is that I look upon it as the gate to Fjærland and its mighty glaciers.

According to geologists, however, the glaciers of to-day are but baby glaciers compared with those of old. A few miles east of Balholm, the greatest depth of the Sognefjord has been sounded. This has the surprising depth of 660 fathoms, or 3960 feet. The adjacent mountains rise steeply out of the waters to a height of over 4000 feet. If the fjord were empty, the mountain walls would therefore be 8000 in height. Able and deep-thinking men who have studied glaciology in Greenland, assert that this grim cañon has been cut out by the graving tools of ancient glaciers, and this belief is gaining ground. There are, however, many like myself who have for years looked upon glaciers as preservative rather than destructive agents, and though we cannot fail to admire the boldness of the glacier-plough theory on so stupendous a scale, we long to hear other solutions of this great problem.

When I first knew Fjærland, a fortnightly steamboat was

deemed to be a sufficient connection with the outer world, and even in the year 1889, the little house where Mikkel Mundal has his shop supplied ample accommodation for the few tourists who cared to stay for more than a day amongst the finest scenery in Sogn.

Between the years 1889 and 1894 great changes took place, and, by the building of a large and beautiful hotel, it was proved, as was the case in London not many years ago, that a supply may create a demand. During the fortnight which our family party spent at the Mundals Hotel in 1894, this well-managed house was mostly full, and has since then always been so during the holiday months. Steamboats, full of tourists, ploughed the blue waters of the fjord nearly every day, and, shall I say it? some of them discharged amongst their human cargo some awful specimens of the English 'Bounder.' Fortunately for Fjærland, 'Arry and 'Arriett contented themselves with driving to the Suphelle or Bøiumsbræ, and returned to their steamer.

In the period I have named, several notable glacier expeditions had been undertaken; the principal one was made by Herr Annæus Öyen with two guides in 1893. These three braves crossed the snow-fields from Suphelledal to Olden, a long and fatiguing tramp of twenty-six hours. The following year, Herr Öyen joined the unfortunate Wellmann Arctic expedition, and was left alone in Danes Island. The Fonsdalsskar, which had beaten us in 1889 had been crossed with ease, and Mikkel Mundal had at my suggestion crossed the glaciers at the head of Mundal, though he did not descend into Gröndal.

In the rough map which accompanied my paper in the *Arbeid* for 1890, are shown, so far as could then be ascertained, all the various passes, ancient and modern, which had up to that time been made over the Justedalsbræ. In 1894, I pointed out to Mikkel Mundal, and to the bold climber, Herr Bing of Bergen, the one great blank on the map. I need hardly say that this blank was the Austerdalsbræ. When, in 1890, I saw the printed proof of the map, I was quite startled by the provoking and insinuating manner in which this one untrodden and unknown glacier seemed to invite the exploration of mountaineers hungering for adventure. Ever since 1881, when Vigdal and I first traversed the long neighbouring Tunsbergdalsbræ, I had had the Austerdalsbræ in my mind. In 1889, three friends and I started from Stardal with the intention of descending by this glacier, but were defeated, as I have shown in the preceding chapter, and we had to content ourselves with a view from above of the grim northern

walls and two of the three tributary glaciers which feed the sea of ice below.

Mikkel, whose enthusiasm is positively bewitching and infectious, seemed to be delighted when one day I asked him to join in a four days' expedition which was to include the exploration of the Austerdalsbræ.

On Friday, August 10, our party set off. It consisted of my nephew, Cyril Todd, Mikkel, and myself. Our first pass, a very ancient connecting link between Hveitestranden and Fjærland, the Hveitestrandskar or Skarbakken, is visible from the hotel, and seen from there is a most inviting one. It is through a deep V-shaped gap at the head of the Suphelledal.

We reached Ny Sæter after a delightful walk of eight and a half hours. The buxom rosy-cheeked girl who had given us so warm a welcome five years earlier was not there, but a younger sister was in charge, and when we asked for a night's lodging, she seemed to be rather overwhelmed by her responsibilities. However, Mikkel, who is a diplomatist, soon smoothed away her difficulties, and she and a girl from another hut made us a fire and soon boiled a kettle.

Amongst the provisions, which Mikkel had not only provided for our four days' tramp, but had also carried, was a large tin of soup, on which our present hopes were built. On the morrow we were to explore new regions, still untrudden by mortal foot, and unseen by mortal eye, the most mysterious recesses of the great ice world. For aught we knew, we might meet with a belated griffin, a dragon such as one of those depicted in Scheuchzer's *Itinera Alpina*—even the two-tailed variety might prove an awkward adversary, if the time chosen for his attack should coincide with that of our crossing an awkward bergschrund—or, worse still, a trolld might bar our way. Prudence alone dictated the necessity for good feeding. The soup would inspire us with the necessary courage, and foster the growth of muscular tissue and vigour. Clearly enough, everything depended upon the soup. Mikkel deftly inserted the tin-opener into the crown of the tin. Then we heard a gasp, a sigh as of a troubled spirit, a weird, ghostly murmur. What was it? Whence, and why did it come? Were we, against our will, to be persuaded that the hobgoblins and wicked sprites, believed in so firmly in our days of childhood, were stern realities at Ny Sæter? We sat tight, held our breath, and looked round for our axes. But of what avail could an axe be against a spirit of Langedal? We tried to look and to feel brave, but were instead very hungry, and—oh! horrors! the



groaning came out of the tin! Who could cope with a soup spirit? I for one could not.

Todd and I gazed anxiously into the tin, and then heard another, and almost a heart-broken sigh. This time there was no mistake: the sigh came from Mikkel. He poured out the liquid. It was olive-green, and we knew then that if we had to fight the dragons, it would have to be without the help of the soup. We managed to comfort Mikkel after a time; but he was much distressed about the tin. We had, however, plenty of other food.

Todd and I went to pass the night in another hut. We waged war nearly all the time, not against dragons, but *loppe*, which really appeared desirous of devouring us. The name '*loppe*'—we will not say also the *loppe* themselves—was introduced by Vikings of early days into the north of England, and the phrase, 'as cobby as a lop,' or, as active as a flea, is still heard in our dales.

Next morning, about two o'clock, we turned out to meet a cold icy wind, and in vain shook our clothes repeatedly to get rid of our enemies. While Mikkel and the girls prepared a rare good breakfast, Todd took a photograph in the half-light, which came out well. The mountains and distant glaciers were robed in light cloud-drapery; but we had every reason to expect a fine day for us to 'climb the frozen Alps, and tread th' eternal snow.'

After a flat three miles' walk, partly over the desert land which was formerly ice-clad, where bright *Silene*, *Cerastium* and *Linaria* occasionally gladdened the eye, we reached the snout of the Austerdalsbræ at five o'clock. The river which drained this noble glacier issued from a fine ice cavern in a face of blue ice about eighty feet in height.

We could easily have skirted the south bank of the glacier for a long distance over some old avalanche snow, as is usually the case on the left bank of the Mer de Glace beyond the tank, but we wanted a more sporting route, and wished to get on the north or convex bank, as we knew that better views would be afforded on that side, so we turned to the ice. We found a convenient ice rib and cut a staircase up it, and by the aid of Mummery spikes, which we all used, and which saved much step-cutting, we crossed diagonally over to the left bank.

The glacier is a mile in width, about the same as its long-limbed neighbour the Tunsbergdalsbræ; but, whereas the latter consists of one straight river of ice nine miles in length, without a single ice-fall, the Austerdalsbræ, on the contrary, though only two-thirds the length, possesses a beautiful curve, by which the head of the glacier is entirely hidden from the foot, and, thanks



Head of Austerdalsbreen

to this curve, the magnificent scenery, the exploration of which our party had begun in 1889, and which we were now to complete, was possible. It was still virtually a *terra incognita*, quite unknown to the map-makers.

After an hour's walk on the ice, we were forced by a maze of crevasses to some avalanche snow on the north side, where we made quick progress and easily gained the large plateau which heads the main glacier. The grandeur of the scenery increased as we advanced, and was revealed to us, bit by bit, unlike the case of the Tunsbergdalsbræ, where the upper snow-fields are seen from the foot of the glacier beyond a long vista of nine miles of ice.

The head of the Austerdalsbræ is a grand fan-shaped cirque or cul-de-sac. It is fed by three large tributaries, or three immense ice-falls, which drain the upper snows. The southern arm, which I named 'Godt Haabsbræ,' drains the high snow basin into which we had contemplated making a descent in 1889, which, fortunately for us, we did not attempt to execute. Early in the year its descent is no doubt feasible, but rarely so in August. Its lower ice-fall is probably 1200 feet in height. The middle tributary, or Mikkelsbræ, is an impassable ice cataract of 3000 feet in height. The northern arm is the wildest, and is much contracted near its base by the projection of the huge north-eastern wall, an almost vertical precipice over 3000 feet in height, which rises without a shore straight out of the ice. This contraction causes the ice on the left bank to be curiously turned over like a gigantic wave just about to break. A remarkable feature of the cliff is, that there is on the face of it one broad ledge, and one only, which descends gently from the snow-field, and, after traversing the face of the cliff for about a quarter of a mile, runs into the rock itself and vanishes completely about 1500 feet above the large glacier below. It is just the sort of ledge down which a party of mountaineers might be tempted to follow from above. They would get on swimmingly at first, and then, almost without warning, their highroad would come to an end. In 1889 I saw a part of this ledge in the distance, made a sketch of it, and resolved to try to reach it from below. Vain thought! Precipices such as this are unknown in the Alps.

Not having been fortified by partaking of the green soup at the sæter, we went very quietly so as not to awake any slumbering dragon. All to no purpose. No sooner had we set foot upon the ice plateau, than we heard a furious din near the top of the northern glacier. Clearly enough there was a dragon or frost-giant up there. He was angry too; and though he did not spit fire out



*The Anterdalbrøen, with the Ice-falls of the Golt Haubroe and the Mittelbrøen.*

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at us, he threw down hundreds of tons of ice in our direction, and roared out lustily as he did so. When we realised that he was chained fast and could not reach us, we laughed at him and derided him, as in days of old Ulysses did to Polyphemus. This increased the dragon's anger, and the avalanches became bigger and more numerous. We named the glacier Hymirsbræ. Long may the frost-giant rule supreme there.

For some time we had seen that the only probable way to reach the snow-field would be by climbing up the rock buttress south of the Mikkelsbræ, but we were by no means certain that it was feasible. We bent our steps towards it.

The main glacier was extremely interesting. All the well-known glacial phenomena were well represented, such as glacier tables, all tilted more or less towards the south, sand cones, surface streams and moulins.<sup>1</sup>

There were two medial moraines and some twenty-five well-defined dirt bands. All the moraines, both medial and lateral, are larger than those usually found on Norse glaciers; this is owing to the fact that there is a thick stratum of soft schistose rock near the base of all the crags at the head of the glacier, which is constantly adding to the supply.

Near the base of the buttress we came upon the usual hard-compressed avalanche snow. In this the crevasses were wide and deep, but we managed to pick out a zigzag lane which led us towards one of the only two weak places which we could detect in the wall of the buttress. We found the usual bergschrund, and here, oddly enough, we put on the rope for the first time, as it was necessary to cross a long and narrow snow bridge over the dim blue depths of the icy chasm.

At 7.45 we set foot on the rocks. All was not joy here. They consisted of steep slabs of micaceous schist all ready to slide down on the slightest provocation. Great care was needed; we scrambled or crawled upwards on all fours, and sent many an undainty morsel down to the greedy jaws of the crevasse below. As soon as we found a place where we could lie down safely, we had breakfast. A sitting posture was unsafe.

Just above us there was a long wall of rock, only twenty to thirty feet in height, but everywhere perpendicular or overhanging. Here and there it was seamed by cracks, which would have been easy and pleasant to climb if the rock had been gneiss or granite. As it was, we were puzzled to know how to overcome the difficulty.

<sup>1</sup> Why not call the latter 'pot-holes,' which they would be, if they occurred on a plateau of carboniferous limestone instead of on a glacier?

Of course we were determined not to be beaten on a first-rate expedition by a bit of a wall.

A shallow gully and mossy chimney some thirty feet in height was suggested, but in order to reach the foot of the chimney we should have been obliged to crawl across a very uninviting water slide, in every way an uninviting place. Mikkel pointed in the opposite direction to a dark corner and said he thought that he could climb up 'somewhere about there.' As our minds were wholly unbiassed, Todd and I fell in with this scheme, though we had not the remotest idea what the attraction was. Mikkel possesses in a high degree the happy faculty of inspiring his companions with confidence in his powers, and on this occasion we followed him without dreaming of questioning his judgment. A leader can always tell whether or not he possesses the confidence of those whom he leads, and when he feels that they have full faith in his leading, his powers are undoubtedly increased and his judgment is clearer. If, on the other hand, he hears suppressed or outspoken grumbling, or by other means feels that in some measure his companions do not fully trust his guidance, his powers are in a corresponding degree diminished and his judgment perverted. I have experienced both conditions on scores of expeditions, and I feel sure that all who have acted as leaders when mountaineering will agree with me in this conclusion.

We traversed the treacherous face very carefully for some 300 feet; it sloped down towards the bergschrund at an angle of about fifty degrees, and a slip was not to be thought of. We held on by feet, hands, knees, thighs and elbows to loose slaty rocks, and to roots of *Saxifraga stellaria*, a rope-rooted *Sedum*, moss, *dock-sorrel*, and other water-loving plants which grew in rank profusion on the unstable bed at the base of the wall, and in process of time we came near the corner. Here we found an oblique crack about ten inches wide and six inches deep, which led apparently to a flat ledge about fifteen feet above the bottom of the wall. The ledge inclined gently upwards and ended in a hole through which we saw the blue sky. Above the ledge were towering and overhanging rocks clearly enough, but there were only about fifteen feet to climb.

Mikkel, whose working motto is *vi non verbis*, set off at once, merely saying, 'Hold firmly, please.' 'Yes,' we replied, but I doubt if we could have held a twopenny bun. Our hero wedged himself in the crack, wriggled slowly and carefully upwards like a caterpillar, and reached the ledge without dislodging a single stone. He then planted himself firmly in a little cavern and told us to

come on. Todd followed and joined him in the hole. Then the caterpillar crawled onwards and upwards through the little tunnel, and the work was done, as he was now standing on good honest gneiss. After this the camera, rucksacks, and I were hauled up. Mikkel was used to such places, we were not. I believe that one could qualify for such work by climbing for two hours a day for a month up some heap of disintegrated slates at a disused slate quarry, but I leave the experiment for the editor of a future text-book on mountaineering. The only place where I have met with such horrible loose rock as this was on the descent of the South Dent des Bouquetins, near Arolla, in 1887.

The buttress, carpeted with bright alpine flowers, sloped gently and pleasantly upwards. At 10.45 we reached the top, about 5800 feet above sea-level, and, to our great surprise, we found a cairn of stones capped by a large lump of white quartz, and near it were some recent footsteps.

'Bjørnespor'—Bear's footprints—said Mikkel and I together. 'Uncommonly like a man's,' said Todd in his ignorance. 'Ingen mand har været her'—No man has been here—observed the knowing ones. However, after following the track some 300 or 400 feet higher on a snow dome on the glacier above, we saw that they led to a hole in a snow-covered crevasse.

'Er bjørnen faldt i sprækken?'—Has the bear fallen into the crevasse?—I asked Mikkel.

'Nei langt fra, bjørnen vilde nok vide bedre. Det maa ha været en mand'—No indeed, the bear would know better than to do so. It must have been a man.

Todd's surmise was correct. A few days previously I had met Bing at Fjærland and had talked to him about the Austerdalsbræ and other choice corners of the Justedalsbræ. Partly in consequence he had crossed the Lunde Skar, and then with the help of Daniel Söknesand he had climbed, fortunately without any mishap, up to the snow-field by a savage gully and steep tongue of ice direct out of the head of the Lundedal, a feat which ought never to be repeated. Then they crossed the snows, and were benighted on the top of this buttress, which they found by sheer good luck, as it is the only one by which a descent could be made into Austerdal. They built the cairn a few hours before our arrival and descended the side of the buttress above the Godt Haabsbræ, while we ascended the end of it. They followed the right bank of the great glacier and we took the left. Consequently, though each party saw traces of the other, we did not meet until three days later. Thus it happened by a strange



coincidence that Bing and Daniel share with our party the credit of exploring for the first time the fastnesses of the Austerdalsbræ, and I was glad to have the opportunity soon afterwards of congratulating the bold Bergen mountaineer on his success upon this and several other notable expeditions on which he acted as leader.

We plodded steadily ahead on snow in excellent condition, but soon entered into a thin mist, often the accompaniment of a northerly wind, so that we were unable to see more than the ghosts of three crags not marked on the maps, which I was anxious to locate and have photographed if possible.

These crags, I fancy, only appear as rock faces on the south side, otherwise I should have noticed them in former years when traversing the snows north and west. It was all in vain; I could not even make as good a sketch of the ghosts as I did in 1889. An aggravating feature of the mist was that it was so light that we could see blue sky through it.

Our course, planned five years earlier, lay along the trough of a shallow snow valley which falls gently and almost imperceptibly from the watershed for about two miles towards the head of the Mikkelsbræ of which it is the feeder. There could hardly be a greater change than from the pure and almost spotless snow-field to the chaotic ice-fall beyond.

Mikkel led, and developed a by no means uncommon tendency to be always turning to the left hand. Being last on the rope, I could easily notice the slightest deviation from a straight course, and had to call out scores of times 'Til höire,' to which Mikkel's cheery voice never failed to respond 'Ja ja,' and his course was altered, only to be forsaken again after a few yards.

After two hours' tramp the mist was thicker than ever, and I looked in vain for Onsdags Næbbe, which I had twice ascended, and which ought to have been visible. We had crossed the watershed and were slowly descending. Though I felt almost certain that we had not gone quite far enough west, I ordered the course to be turned to north-west, so as to avoid any possibility of descending towards the Olden Skar. Of course we overdid it, and reached rocks at the head of the Brixdalsbræ, a terrible ice-fall, instead of the Melkevoldsbræ. We only proved ourselves to be wrong by descending a few hundred feet to a zone below the mists, where I recognised the glen of Brixdal far below. Eventually, we followed a route which a party of four of us had taken in 1884 on the right bank of the Melkevoldsbræ, and

at seven o'clock, in cold, wetting rain, we reached the valley of Olden, and made our way to the Brixdals gaard, where we stopped the night very comfortably.

Our day of adventure was ended. A new and perhaps the mightiest and most picturesque of all the great passes over the Justedalsbræ was at last conquered, and we were very happy and contented in consequence. Though we had met with no great glacier difficulties, such will not always be the case. The high snow valley which we traversed so easily will sometimes be full of gaping crevasses.

We spent a jolly evening, and were naturally pleased with the world at large, and with ourselves in particular. It was Todd's first glacier pass, and the best expedition that Mikkel had ever made, and I believe that they had enjoyed themselves as much as I had done. That is saying a good deal.

Two of our projected four days' expedition had now passed. The third, fortunately short, we occupied very pleasantly in crossing the Olden Skar, a pass which will sometime become a favourite with pedestrians. We sauntered leisurely along, and took eight hours on the way to Aamot, though we could easily have walked it in five.

Old friends of mine gave us a hearty welcome. The son of Tolleif now owned the farm, and he and his bright and clever young wife had introduced several improvements into the house.

Whilst discussing plans for the morrow, a heavy shower of rain fell, and I began to doubt the wisdom of adhering to our original plan of traversing Fosheimsdal, so suggested to Mikkel, to whom the whole of the little campaign was new, that we should cross the Fonsdal Skar instead. But no, our warrior would have none of it. It had been done before, so did not smack of adventure, though our party in 1889 had been defeated on this pass. Mikkel was almost indignant at my proposal, and said, 'Nei, nei, det har været gjort to eller tre gange før; vi maa gjøre noget nyt.'

Our host consented to drive us next morning to Fosheim. We were up at three, but as the horse was away on the hills and had to be caught, fed, and shod, we did not leave till five o'clock. The drive of eleven English miles was lovely, and the views of mist-wreathed mountains, with a clear sky above, augured well for a fine day. We reached Fosheim in two hours. The fos, or waterfall, which gives its name to the farm, is pretty, but the only pretty feature of the valley above is its name. There are several sæters, but what we remember the most are the bogs, the

moltebær—cloud berries—and the hosts of pugnacious lemmings, which invariably challenged us by a shrill squeak whenever we passed within a couple of yards of them.

At the head of the valley we had a steep ascent of about 1000 feet to a little plateau, where, in a dark, sunless cirque, overshadowed by frowning precipices, we found a tarn on which many little icebergs were floating. There was something very uncanny about the place, and we felt glad that we had lunched before we came in sight of it. I proposed that we should cross over the top of a hump of a mountain named Björga, but the romantic Mikkel wisely suggested that it would be a much more beautiful walk along the top of the cliffs which bound the Kjösnes fjord, and Lundedal on the north. We adopted this suggestion, with the result that we had one of the most interesting walks I have ever taken. Mile after mile we traversed the broad crest of those stupendous cliffs, and saw 4000 to 4500 feet below us the greenish blue waters of that weird arm of Lake Jölster, into which we could almost have thrown a stone. The weather was perfect.

‘A dreamy haze

Played on the uplands, but the hills were clear  
In sunlight, and no cloud was on the sky.’

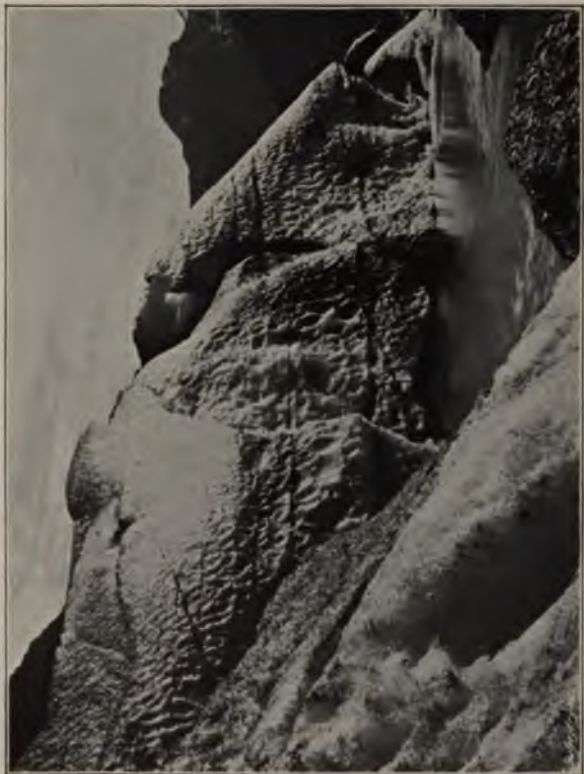
We encountered no difficulties, but passed over three mountain-tops, where we built small cairns. We descended one large snow-field which came down from Björga, and met in the middle of it a peripatetic lemming which was very wroth with us, when, for a moment, we stopped him on his solitary and snowy march.

Then we climbed a rocky hill which entirely disconnects the glaciers on Björga from the Justedalsbræ proper, and discovered that the most western limit of the latter is at a little gap just above, and due south of, the little Befringsdal.

This western point is at the end of a narrow glacier arm which the great snow-field thrusts out over the head of Lundedal, and it was up this arm that Herr Bing and his plucky companion had climbed only three days before.

Our walk over the snow domes to the new path leading up to the Lunde Skar was straightforward enough, as no provoking mists were there to puzzle us, and about five o'clock we unroped.

We were soon amongst the hurry-scurry and away-they-go tourists in the busy Böiumsdal below. We had arranged to meet my wife and children at the Böiumsbræ about five o'clock, but,



*The Brimabrat.*

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though they were there, we unfortunately missed them, because one of Mikkel's brothers, whom we found with a carriage, told us that they were at Mundal, so we did not go to the foot of the glacier. We drove down the valley with a couple of good-natured but misguided British tourists. One of them on several occasions threw a 25-öre piece—about 3½d.—to children who opened the gates. When I protested and told him that he was spoiling and demoralising the dear children, he said, 'I always like to give pleasure wherever I go, and as we only come ashore from our steamboat two or three times during our tour, I feel that I must be more generous than usual when we are on land.' This type of man does much more harm to the country than he is aware of. On some of the few principal roads frequented by the modern type of tourists who bring the fair name of England into more or less disrepute, the *skyds gutter*, or postboys, have been so ridiculously overpaid and over-tipped that their fathers have begun to take their places, and in consequence the work on their farms in many instances is neglected. This is a great pity. A man 6 feet high, and weighing 14 stone, is too big and heavy to sit on one's bag at the back of a Stolkjærre, and he might be much better employed.

Our four days' expedition was now ended. Each had been most enjoyable. We had fulfilled my desire of thirteen years by exploring and traversing the Austerdalsbræ, and had connected Hveitestranden and Olden by means of a glacier pass. I had, however, previously proved such a connection to be feasible (*N. T. F.'s Aarboeg* for 1890, p. 32). We had made a new pass from Fosheim to Fjærland, and had discovered the true western limit of the Justedalsbræ. We were, in fact, well satisfied with the success we had attained, and for a few days took very kindly to the fisherman's gentle art.

Never was a leader better supported by his companions than I had been. Mikkel has an intense love of his native mountains, his enthusiasm is boundless, and he possesses the best qualities of the grand old Norse race. I considered it to be a privilege to act as leading guide to such a man. Though he left his shop, and the hotel which he manages with Herr Dale, at great personal inconvenience, he had not the least intention of accepting any remuneration whatever for his services, saying repeatedly that the pleasure which he had derived had amply repaid him, and it was with great difficulty that I ultimately persuaded him to accept anything whatever.

It was Todd's first campaign; he went as well as any man

could have done, and I believe enjoyed himself thoroughly. In fact, my two companions spoiled me and did all the work, allowing me all the fun.

Farvel Mikkel, lev godt, Jeg haaber vi ofte skal reise sammen igjen.

## CHAPTER XXV

TUNSBERGDAL TO LOENDAL; THE LARGEST GLACIER OF THE JUSTEDALSBRÆ; THE HIGHEST PART OF THE SNOW-FIELD; A DANGEROUS DESCENT; THE COVERED LEDGE

'The glacier's cold and restless mass  
Moves onward day by day.'

BYRON.

A FEW days after the bear hunt at Balholm, which had such a tragic ending, Vigdal joined me at Skjolden on Sunday, August 14, 1881, and as he expressed his willingness to follow my lead wherever I chose to go, I felt sure that a good time was in store for us. This was fully realised, and the campaign which we were entering upon proved to be one of the best I have ever had.

We took a boat to Röneid. The first hour we conversed in English, but it was hard work and did not pay, so we changed to Norse and continued it to the end. After a drive of about a Norse mile we left the main valley, turning up the narrow Leirdal, and after fifty minutes' walk we reached the Leirgaard.

A lad rowed us over the icy waters of a lake, and we ascertained that at the bottom of Tværdal there was a sæter, not shown on the map, and that we should find folk there. Tunsbergdal into which we had now entered proved to be mainly one huge bog covered with pathless brushwood, though there is good grazing here and there. The State usually keeps one or more entire horses here for the benefit of the farmers in Indre Sogn.

About 10 P.M. we got clear of the bush on a large terminal moraine, and saw towering above us and glittering in the starlight an escarpment of rugged ice, a noble termination to a noble glacier. Our destination was Tværdal, a tributary valley west, but the snout of the great glacier overlapped the mouth of it, and we could not at first see how to reach it in the dark. We made several futile attempts to climb the rocks near the ice, and just when we were getting disheartened, we found a pathway up the glaciated rocks, and at 10.50 were welcomed by a most



hospitable old woman to the luxuries of a good building with a boarded floor, which latter we, who know what sæter life is like, thoroughly appreciated.

Next morning we were up at three, and Vigdal wisely put some nails in his boots whilst our hostess prepared us some delicious coffee.

At four we sallied out into the clear cold air, not knowing what would be our ultimate destination, but determined to explore the great unknown Tunsbergdalsbræ. After a descent of ten minutes we reached the ice, just above its terminal ice-fall; but we should have done rather better if we had ascended about one hundred feet from the sæter to a ledge of rock from which the glacier can be easily gained.

We hacked our way upon the ice, but were obliged to leave it directly in order to turn some large crevasses. Soon we were jogging along at the rate of a good four and a half miles an hour. The glacier, which is well shown on the map, much resembles the Aletsch glacier above the Mårjelen See, and is fairly flat for some eight or nine miles. As it is almost straight, its beauty cannot compare with that of the serpentine Nygaardsbræ, nor with the Austerdalsbræ, which has such a lovely sweep. The level and even surface of the Tunsbergdalsbræ causes it to be a singularly easy glacier to traverse.

On either side there are fine precipices, and on the west is a narrow cul-de-sac of rock fringed with ice. At 6.15 we enjoyed an alpine sunrise, the beauty of which cannot be realised until seen. While it is yet twilight, the sun suddenly touches the snowy crown of the highest peak with a soft rose colour, which insensibly spreads down the mountain, and as it does so, the colour of the snow passes through the softest gradations and most delicate tints to pure glistening white at last. Each peak in order of height receives the gladdening rays, and whilst the stars fade one by one away, bright daylight takes the place of brilliant starlight, and warmth often replaces bitter cold.

The head of the glacier expands like a fan and is connected by steep rolling snow-fields, divided by ribs of rock, with the parent snows above. On the east side, just under some high cliffs, there were some tiny tarns of dark blue water which were held up by the glacier. We left the bare ice of the flat glacier and had a steep pull up rocks and snow, and at 8.25 we reached the top of the ridge, over which we could see the glaciers of Krondal. Here we built our cairn, had breakfast, and put on the rope.

At 9.10 we set off on the snow towards what was marked on

the map as 'Bræen's høieste Punkt, 6495 feet,' apparently an hour's trudge. What wonder that we should bend our steps there and so probably score another maiden ascent?

At noon we felt that we were actually on the top, but it was about the most topless mountain I had ever been on. Used as I was to large expanses of snow, I was not prepared to see such a white Sahara as this. Excepting Lodals Kaupe, ten miles away, and some rocks north-west, there was nothing to be seen but undulating wastes of snow on every hand for many miles. All the neighbouring valleys had apparently vanished, and many snow-fields, far away beyond the Justedalsbræ proper, seemed, on account of their extraordinary similarity in height and rounded forms, to be really one huge snow waste. It was in some respects a most impressive view, and I am glad to have seen it. Nowhere else on the Justedalsbræ can you get the same idea of enormous space, and nowhere else are you so much impressed with the solemnity and solitude of the high mountains.

'Snows swell on snows amazing to the sky;  
And icy mountains high on mountains pil'd  
Seem to the shivering sailor from afar,  
Shapeless and white, an atmosphere of clouds.'

We prodded our axes as deep as we could in many places on this marvellous plateau, but could never touch the rock. Who can tell how deep these snows are here, 50 feet, or 500? Even on the comparatively narrow ridge which forms the summit of Mont Blanc, where the wind can blow the snow over the steep slopes either into Italy or France, M. Jansen and his engineer, M. Eiffel, failed to reach a rock foundation for a proposed observatory. A tunnel was driven, 'on the north side 14 mètres below the summit, and was carried horizontally for 29·4 mètres, till the boring corresponded with the actual summit. . . . This gallery was subsequently carried 23 mètres further beneath the snow, still no rock was touched.' Hence, most fortunately, the summit of the noblest mountain in Europe is not likely to be permanently disfigured by any building, as the present corrugated-iron erection, which in shape so much resembles a huge tin of Chicago beef, is subsiding slowly but surely, year by year, and before long will probably have vanished entirely out of sight.

Here on the Justedalsbræ, if the north wind blows the snow a mile away from the top, a south wind may blow it back again the following day. It may be drifted about backwards and forwards, but there is no precipice near for it to be blown over, and in all probability the depth of snow is immense.

We steered towards the rocks north-west, and longed for ski. For perhaps two miles, not a crevasse was to be seen, and for one and a half hours we hardly descended at all.

All at once a snowy bay opened out before us, with a view of séracs and rocks far down below. Just at first we did not know which valley lay before us, as steering with a small compass on a waste of snow like this and with no landmarks whatever, is not child's play.

It proved to be the Kjændalsbræ. Six years earlier my sister and I had climbed several hundred feet up this glacier from the foot. Naturally enough, I had then examined the glacier critically, and thought that a pass could possibly be forced up it, if the séracs at the top could be avoided. At that time, however, there was very much snow on the glacier.

After a little deliberation we decided to try the descent. In the morning we had had sufficient of the ordinary glacier work to give Vigdal confidence in his guide, and me in my pupil.

At 2.40 we reached the bare ice, about 3050 feet above the foot of the glacier, as I afterwards proved. By zigzagging, we got along merrily for nearly an hour, and then were driven to the rocks on Nonsnibba, just where the glacier became a magnificent ice-fall. At first, we got along well, and then came to steep glaciated rocks. We had some difficult places, where a rope to help the first man down, and an axe-head for the second, were a *sine quâ non*. We had turned the ice-fall, but now there was a bend in the glacier to the left, and we could not guess what there was ahead.

At 4.10 we came to a genuine West Justedal precipice, hundreds of feet without a ledge. What now? To the ice? Horrid thought! The precipice projected into the glacier, cutting it partially in two. Here we saw the latter for the first time in profile, and I have rarely seen such weird, clean, and broken séracs. It was about two-thirds of the mean width of the Schwarz glacier, below the Schwarz Thor, but infinitely steeper, and generally as much broken as the Glacier des Bossons. Here and there it was cut nearly in two by cliffs in its rocky bed, over which avalanches fell every few minutes. The whole was wedged in between two walls of rock, low, and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles apart at the top, but each about 5000 feet high, and in true Norse fashion almost ledgeless, and only a quarter of a mile wide near the bottom.

Immediately in front of us were two narrow towers of ice which I can even now picture distinctly. They were 25 to 30 feet high and about 12 feet apart. The lower one was perched



*Svalbard*

*Ice-fall and rock cliffs of the Kjendalibræ.*

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on the top of the cliff, and seemed ready to fall at any minute. Between these we must go or nowhere else. To the ice, or a night of shivering on the cold rocks. The distance between the towers was only about twenty yards, but surely that was far enough to run the gauntlet? After a moment's natural hesitation we got to work. We had to go a-straddle along a sharp ridge of ice and to climb up and down over many angular hummocks with the towers and huge icicles overhanging us. Once the rope got round a knob, and we spent an anxious time in disentangling it. After some five minutes we emerged very thankfully from a place which possessed much of grim interest, though it was certainly dangerous.

Then we had to creep under an ice-table, some 12 feet long, safe itself, but with a crevasse underneath. Below us was a chaos of ice impossible to tackle, so we descended diagonally about 200 feet until we reached the trough of the glacier, when we went merrily down some small avalanche débris for several hundred feet, and so got below the cliffs. Soon we had hundreds of steps to cut among the séracs, and had to leap and climb into and out of numberless crevasses. It was all hard blue ice, and we worked like trolks, each thoroughly trusting the other. Every trace of the fatigue which we had felt on the snow had long ago been driven away by the excitement. In a place like this two men can go twice as fast as a party of four. We fled to the rocks again, and by them scored some 500 feet more, when suddenly we were brought to a halt by another line of cliffs, higher than the previous ones. This was a dreadful disappointment, and again we were forced to seek the icy highway. Close to us was a hollow in the ice, a regular avalanche track, and in it a considerable stream of water which fell as a splendid cataract over the cliff which is visible from the valley below. Across this hollow was a second line of cliffs almost surrounded by glacier. In the face of this remarkable rock we saw a ledge running apparently diagonally down towards another avalanche lane below. Above the ledge there was an overhanging rock. Here must we try or nowhere else. Strangely enough there was no choice, as though there was what at first sight appeared to be an easy way leading into the centre of the glacier at the top of the rock, it was constantly being swept by avalanches.

The chances seemed against success, but there is nothing like trying. To the ledge then, but with much doubting. Vigdal was ready, and I was proud of his companionship. The stream, paved with ice, was difficult to cross, but we managed it, and were soon under the ice of the overhanging rock. The ledge, a mere

groove cut into the face of the rock, twelve feet deep, two feet wide, and about twenty-five yards long, was no myth, and we crawled along it without difficulty, and in perfect safety, though a regular avalanche track was just a few feet above our heads and



a frightful abyss was below us. Water and chips of ice, large and small, kept falling over us, but it merely added to the interest, and we were quite safe. At the end of the ledge, a jump of six feet on to the powdered ice in the avalanche lane, little as it seems, was no joke. Vigdal lowered me and held me unnecessarily

fast while a stream of iced water trickled down my neck. Then I helped him down, and we glissaded down the lane. Near the bottom I got one foot fast in a tiny crevasse, and we had to dig it out with our axes. Needless to say, we wasted no time over the process.

We had now turned our precipice, waterfall, and third ice-fall. Surely now we were safe! We were on a long ice plateau the existence of which is quite unsuspected from below. Now we began to admire the grandeur of our surroundings, and to watch the avalanches fall in quick succession over crags which here and there broke up the eastern side of the glacier, the opposite side to that which we had descended. Kjændals Krone looked from here a grand mountain rising nearly 4000 feet straight out of the ice, and, though such was not actually the case, it appeared to tower far above the snow-fields.

But night was coming on; we must hasten. Where we could do so, we ran. We steeplechased over scores of crevasses and threaded our way through an intricate maze, when lo! an open-jawed beast of terrible dimensions, and quite unjumpable, closed that way to us, as it stretched from one side to the other. We retraced our steps nearly as far as the base of the cliff. When we were near it we saw a splendid ice avalanche topple over, which crashed down into the bed of a surface stream close to us, and about five feet deep. This soon filled, and with a rush, a roar, and a flood, the ice passed us and in a few minutes disappeared into a large crevasse. We stood on the ice bank above and were quite safe.

We soon reached the rocks on the side, but they were difficult, and we passed the big crevasse, but again were stopped by a waterfall which fell from the crags above us and disappeared in a dark chasm under the glacier. Once again it was necessary to mount the ice. As every mountaineer knows, it is often difficult to get on to a glacier from the side. In this case, the best place was up a steep crystal wall thirteen feet high. Up this I cut coal-scuttle steps and handholds, starting from the head of Vigdal's axe in order to save time. I soon reached a narrow ridge of ice which I sat across and pulled Vigdal up. Then we had some straggle-legged locomotion, which later on gave work to the tailors. We went at a tremendous speed over places which under ordinary circumstances we should have felt inclined to shirk. I was reminded of a similar difficulty which I encountered once when I descended the Aletsch glacier quite alone from the Märjelen See to the Bel Alp. I jumped down on to a low ice-table, and



then had no alternative but to go astride several sharp ridges which ran up and down at horrible angles.

After a time we gained good ice, and though we had to cut many a step, we got along quickly, and at 7.20, in dusk reached the bottom of this truly terrible glacier, and thankful enough we were to do so. After struggling through an alder copse and across many bogs, at 9.30 we reached a farm-house at Næsdal—a filthy place it is true, but rest for the weary for all that. The people received us most hospitably, though they thought we had come from the skies, and would not for a long time believe our tale.

I have had many a glacier adventure, but, with the single exception of the ascent and descent of the ice-wall on the face of the Aiguille du Plan, where Mr. Mummery did all the work, the descent of the Kjændalsbræ will always be indelibly impressed in my memory as being the most formidable ice work I have ever shared in, and nothing could tempt Vigdal or myself to try it again. Where the great difficulties occurred there was no choice of routes. At a glance we could see that it was there or nowhere. The covered ledge was the most extraordinary outlet of escape I have ever seen in my life, and was the strangest solution to a difficult problem. Without it, we should undoubtedly have been beaten, and have been driven, after a cold night, over the mountain into the neighbouring Kvandal, where the descent is easy.

I took copious notes the whole day, and I even jotted down the height of the ice towers when waiting for Vigdal.

From where we put foot on the Tunsbergdalsbræ to where we left the ice, is, as the crow flies, a distance of eighteen miles, no little, when we had to zigzag so much. Kjændal itself is only about 160 feet above sea-level, and the top of the glacier is 6495 feet. A descent of 6335 Norse feet was therefore made. On the eastern side of the glacier there is a continuous ice-fall of nearly 6000 feet.

In my five years' absence from this glacier a great change had been wrought; it had shrunk and retreated considerably. In 1899 I ascended the snout with my boy and a nephew, and saw it again in 1900 from the crags on the north side of the Kronebræ, whence there is a magnificent view, and I noticed a still further shrinkage, though in all probability there had been, in the eighties, an advance, as was generally the case in Norway at that period.

In 1875 the Kronebræ terminated at the edge of a precipice above the eastern side of the Kjændalsbræ, and sent its séracs thundering down on to the latter glacier. Now, the Kronebræ has retreated up the hill, and its fallen séracs melt on the ledges

above. In *How to see Norway*, by Colonel Campbell, the frontispiece is a view of the Kjændalsbræ, then mis-called the Næsdalsbræ, at a time of much snow.

This valley of Kjændal is now visited by hundreds of tourists every year; indeed, I am not sure that the excursion from Loen, or from the yachting steamboats in the fjord, to Kjændal and back, a remarkably easy day's work, is not the most favourite expedition in Norway, and rightly so too, as in form, colour, and endless variety, nature is most lavish. Where can such a view be had as from above the boat-houses across the bridge at the foot of the lake? Many a time have I enjoyed it, and many a time I hope to do so again. Many a lovely trout too, the colour of the blue-green water, have I pulled out of the narrows in the foreground, and many a one I hope to do again.

Before the Justedalsbræ was as well known as it is now, I always advised those who came to me for information to go from the west to the east, as by doing so they would be less likely to become pounded on the top of an unclimbable wall on the east than on the west side. Preaching is one thing, practising another. By neglecting my own advice, we met with the adventure on the Kjændalsbræ. So much the better as it turned out. For 'All's well that ends well.' I know that I ought to moralise on this expedition. I will, however, leave this really very simple duty to some one else and merely say that for many years I have, in season and out of season, in the pages of the *Nor. Tur. For. Aarboger*, and elsewhere, preached the old sound mountaineering doctrines, such as, 'Three persons form the smallest party which can with safety traverse the upper snows.'

It is not so easy to believe now that three of the most popular tourist resorts in Norway to-day, Fjærland, Loen, and the Hjörundfjord, were up to a few years ago always associated in the minds of the few of us, who sought their inmost mountain recesses, with hunger and discomfort. Yet such was the case. Usually, Fjærland was visited from Balholm, and Loen from Faleide or Olden, and, as to the Hjörundfjord, one took one's luck and starved upon it.

In spite of this, what jolly days I have spent, and in what grand expeditions I have had the luck to share in each of these districts!

## CHAPTER XXVI

THE FIRST LADY'S ASCENT OF THE LODALS KAUPE; IN THE CLOUDS;  
DIFFICULT STEERING ON THE SNOW-FIELD; A SWOLLEN RIVER;  
ATTEMPT TO ASCEND ONE OF THE TINDER FJELDE; TRUE NORSE  
HOSPITALITY; THE CHURCH AT LOEN

'The hill, though high, I covet to ascend,  
The difficulty will not me offend.'

*Pilgrim's Progress.*

'... an eminence ...  
The last that parleys with the setting sun.'

WORDSWORTH.

## THE MOUNTAINS OF LOEN

THE FIRST LADY'S ASCENT OF THE LODALS KAUPE

THE very name of Lodals Kaupe must recall, to my Norse readers, at any rate, the names of four mountain warriors, of whom Norway will always feel justly proud. I mean Gottfried Bohr, Lieutenant Daae, Professor Keilhau, and C. Boeck, whose deeds of daring on this mountain are duly recorded in the *Nor. Tur. For. Aarbog* for 1874. These feats, enacted in 1820, may be favourably compared with any of a similar nature in the Alps at that date, and the writings of Bohr and Keilhau may be truly termed mountain classics; and when it is considered how little was then known of glacial phenomena, the theories which they broached regarding the stratification of glacier ice, the formation of crevasses, sand cones, moraines, the motion, the advance or retreat, of glaciers, the daily rise and fall of the Justedal River, etc., are indeed excellent.

As to their pluck, a reference to pages 97 and 104 in the same *Aarbog* will reveal much, and in the latter will be found one of the earliest records of the use of an ice-axe.

After this excellent example had been set, one would naturally have expected that Norsemen would have continued to practise and to develop the sport of mountain climbing until the present day. Such, however, was not the case, and during the space of at

least half a century, ice-axes were not used by the natives as implements of snow-craft, and the sport died out entirely, and even the science of glaciology became neglected as well.

On Saturday morning, August 2nd, 1884, a party of six of us arrived at Olden. The weather was perfect. The Nordfjord had never looked more lovely than on the previous evening. The sight of the broad crest of Gjegnalund and its guardian snow-fields glittering in the rosy evening sunlight had increased our zeal and impatience to be on the snows. What wonder then, that, though the ascent of the Kaupe did sound to be rather an ambitious expedition, to be undertaken directly after our arrival from England, we should fix upon it as the goal of our ambition for the Monday!

At Faleide we met Dr. Spence Watson, who agreed to join us with his wife on the Kaupe; but, owing to the carelessness of our host at Olden in not despatching a message which we had promised to send to Faleide, they did not accompany us, which was a general disappointment.

Though sorely tempted, I will not linger over the beautiful scenery on the journey to our sleeping quarters at Bødal sæter on the Sunday afternoon, the row over the fjord, the walk through English park-like scenery, then the row over that most glorious of all lakes, Loenvand, nor will I describe our hospitable reception at Bødal farm.

Though we knew it was late when we walked up the stony path through the fragrant birch woods in Bødal, we often stopped to admire the view, for two reasons. The first, which we acknowledged, was because it was a very lovely view. The other reason, which possibly was not stated, arose from the fact that the path was steep. How often it happens that a most matter-of-fact, unpoetical, undemonstrative, and unobservant man will, when going up a steep hill, break out into a rhapsody and an apparently intense enthusiasm over the beauty of some very commonplace view which demands time for its gratification, and time too for him to blow! Our party consisted of my wife, my brother-in-law, Mr. Wm. Ecroyd, Dr. Tempest Anderson, and myself, with Lars Janssen, an uncommonly handsome, well-built man, who ought to sit to some artist as a model for an ancient Viking, and Jens Rustøen, the poet of the party, a tall and enthusiastic lover of the mountains.

It was no new ascent which we were about to attempt. No, the Lodals Kaupe, as well as Kviteggen and Slogen in Søndmøre, Galdhøpiggen and the Romsdalshorn were first climbed

by an adventurous *bonder* who lived at the bases of these fine mountains in the period of mountaineering stagnation after Keilhau's time and before the reawakening of the sport of mountain-climbing in the late sixties and early seventies.

Bödäl sæter, where we were to pass the night, consists of a good many different huts. Two of these had been cleaned out in anticipation of our visit, and the floors well sprinkled with sprays of juniper. The sæter occupies a sunny position, but the near proximity of glaciers on each side of the valley makes it very cold.

The sæter girls were most obliging, and proud to act as hostesses to the first English lady who had visited them. They called us at three o'clock the next morning, and we felt that, for once in a way, an early start could be made. I soon woke up Lars and Jens, but the wretches went to sleep again and delayed us horribly, so that we did not get off till 5.30. A great pity.

At three, the mists were close down to the sæter, but here and there we saw blue sky through the rifts, and slowly the clouds rolled up the mountain sides and promised a fine day.

Over the bogs, where the *Drosera*, *Pinguicula*, *Comarum*, and *Cotton Grass* grow, and away to that long and heavy slab of granite which forms a bridge over the icy river. Then a mile or two on the level, and we reached the stream issuing from the blue caverns of the Sæterbræ. The river was high, the water was cold. As Lars and Jens had not had their morning tub, we felt no compunction in letting them doff their hosen and carry us over.

A sharp ascent brought us to the basin of the Brattebakbræ—the glacier of the steep hill—we crossed its river by a snow bridge and made our way on to a buttress which descends from the great snow-field on the south side of our valley.

We now had our first full view of the Kaupe. There seemed to be three peaks, the Kaupe the most northern, then the Lille Kaupe, and a minor peak. These all rise with fierce precipices from the shores of the Kaupe vand, a lake then and usually frozen. On the north a snow-capped mountain wall also rises almost out of the lake, the whole forming a very uncanny and snowy amphitheatre.

From the head of the lake, a long, narrow and steep snow-belt led immediately under the basement cliffs of the Kaupe to a glacier which projects an icy tongue far up the mountain itself. This snow-belt naturally suggested itself as our highway, but as much step-cutting would probably be required, prudence dictated an easier course up our buttress to the snows and a trudge along



*Lodds Koupe and the Koupe Vard.*

*To face page 306.*



the tops of the south walls of the amphitheatre, over the Lille Kaupe, and a traverse to the icy tongue.

The weather had steadily improved since our start. Sunbeams had chased the clouds away, and the peaks and snow-fields were projected with clear and sharp outlines against a bright blue sky. During a short rest, however, a few ominous signs came stealthily to warn us of a change. First of all, the wind gently whispered from the west. Then a feathery cloud hovered like a bird over the mountains of Olden. Another floated over Skaala, and far away in the west a fleet of cloudlets seemed to be sailing through the deep azure seas, and we began to fear that they meant to attack the Kaupe itself.

After a steep and tiring ascent in the hot sunshine, we reached the Justedalsbræ once more, and directly afterwards were robbed of our view east and south. We roped in two parties, and had nearly a mile of flat walking. Then, steep and easy rocks proved a grateful change, and we were soon on the first of the three peaks. The top was flat and its edge was fringed with a splendid snow cornice through which we hurled rocks down the precipices.

The little Kaupe rises from the northern end of this peak, and is thought by Lieut. Lorange to be the one climbed in the year 1820 by Bohr, though this is a point which can never be settled. We crossed easily over the top, and then had a short descent on a narrow snow ridge to a gap under the Kaupe. On our right, some jagged ice-pinnacles looked like dismal ghosts grinning through the gloom, and this scene was rendered still more ghostly by the frequent fall of avalanches. On our left now and then we could see the Kaupe vand. In front, but far above our heads, a dark square tower of rock appeared occasionally. This was the Kaupe, and this side has not yet been climbed.

Thanks to a sketch drawn on the buttress, our way was clear. We crossed the steep Kaupebræ to the foot of the tongue of snow which leads far up the western face of the mountain. The snow was unexpectedly good, but the weather was bad, and we seemed to be doomed to disappointment just at the last. A snow-storm came on, we held a brief consultation and unanimously agreed to make a trial.

After a struggle and flounder through snow crusts at the edge of the rocks, we took to the crags and faced south. A steep gully of loose snow-covered rocks led to a rock face of large and loose slabs of gneiss, which enforced caution upon us. After half an hour of interesting climbing, the cairn was reached, and the Kaupe was won.



Two o'clock, but, thanks to the two hours lost in the morning at the sæter, two hours too late. The fleet of cloudlets had indeed stormed the Kaupe, and they disputed with us for the victory. We had won the peak, but the cloudlets robbed us of the view, and we stood apparently on a rocky islet surrounded by a sea of cloud and mist, whose waves dashed against the black precipices and broke over our heads in a spray of sleet. Unlike the summit of most of the finest mountains in Norway, which are topped with gabbro, the whole rock pyramid of the Kaupe is built up of huge flakes or slabs of gneiss, which form, on the precipitous north face, a series of remarkable ledges, by means of which two other men and I made the ascent five years later.

After a hurried meal in the cold, we prepared to descend. As the rocks below were so loose, we took two parallel routes to the head of the tongue; Ecroyd, Anderson, and Jens went by the way we had ascended, whilst my wife, Lars and I took a gully a little to the north. Our half hour's work was sufficiently interesting to make us forget for a while the cold wind, and the general instability of the rocks rendered care necessary though there was no actual danger.

After this, we sped along at a rapid rate, and in due time came to the mile of flat snow-field, the only place about which we felt any uneasiness. The mist limited our view within, at most, a radius of one hundred yards. We wished to keep above our former course so as to avail ourselves of some steep snow gullies down which we could glissade and so save time, and our footsteps were already blotted out by the wind and snow. Fortunately, we knew the proper direction and so made use of a plan which is well worth knowing. We were still on two ropes. The first party set off and the other kept back until their comrades were nearly out of sight, when they followed. All now depended upon the leader of the second party, who had to take a sight along the line of the vanguard and to insist by calls of 'to right' or 'to left,' as the case might be, that the view of the last man should block out the leader. This is an easy matter in the case of two parties eighty or a hundred yards apart, and it can be done, though less effectively, in one party of three or more persons by the last man. A gradual, or even a sudden turn may unconsciously be made in a mist, and the snow-fields of the Justedalbræ would be a terrible place on which to go astray.

All went well, and, much to our surprise, we came upon a large cairn, which at first sight we mistook for a couple of bears. This cairn was doubtless erected in the good old times when men took

as naturally to the snow passes between the east and west as their grandsons now do to their steamboats.

By running and glissading down steep snow slopes we soon got to the zone of dwarf birch and willow, but the mist became thicker and the rain teemed down most viciously.

Ecroyd said that we were too slow, so ran off alone to secure his *römmegröd* before us, and Jens followed him. Hereby hangs a tale which I will tell presently. Dr. Anderson and Lars kept together, and my wife and I did too.

We two gained the valley a little below the Brattebakbræ and were much interested by the immense slabs of flat ice-polished rock, almost as white as snow, which paved the ground. We thought we would cross the main river which issues from the Kaupe vand, and thus make a shorter route to the sæter, but a glance at its swollen waters and steep rocky bed showed that it was too dangerous an experiment to attempt, so we made for the other river draining the Brattebakbræ, but unfortunately a good way below the snow bridge which we had crossed in the morning. This river seemed almost as bad as the other, so we followed a cattle track down between two waterfalls and through a copse of dripping birch-trees growing out horizontally from the hillside. After this, we could defy water so far as its mere wetting properties were concerned.

Each river was yet uncrossed. I saw several places where cattle had gone through; but a quadruped has an immense advantage over a biped in fording a river. The former only moves one fourth of its legs at a time. The latter moves one half, unless he counts his stick as a third leg. At last, I found a place just above where the two rivers meet which was feasible and carried my wife over, though I could not have managed it without a stick of some sort.

At seven o'clock we reached the sæter, and to our surprise were welcomed by Dr. Spence Watson, who was most kind and attentive in ministering to our wants. We were the first arrivals, the others came half an hour later. Ecroyd wrote as follows about his adventures: 'Carried away by the impetuosity of youth, I endeavoured to force a way down the glaciated rocks overhanging the Brattebakbræ, but after descending 400 or 500 feet, and finding the streams suddenly disappearing over the edge of a precipice, I thought it advisable to remount as rapidly as possible to find the tracks of the others. After climbing along some terraces which seemed to possess no downward steps, it seemed advisable that, if a *mauvais quart d'heure* was not to be transformed into a night

of snow, the vocal organs had better be called into play. My *jodel* was soon responded to through the mist, and, a way being found, I soon reached Jens, and a rapid ascent was made to the plateau of Bödal.' This was a happy termination to a disagreeable adventure, and in five minutes after reaching the sæter he was in dreamland. Others have met with difficulties and even danger in crossing the Kaupe river. I quote as follows from the *Nor. Tur. For. Aarbog* for 1896: 'After some search a spot was found where it seemed possible to jump the stream. On both sides the rock was wet and slippery, and the landing looked particularly uninviting. The most active of the party volunteered to try, and was roped and held by the rest. In his anxiety not to overjump, and perhaps not allowing for the drag of the wet rope, he just missed the ledge, and was instantly tossed down the tremendous current like a cork. The strain was so severe that three able-bodied men were carried off their legs, and it was with the greatest difficulty that we brought our man ashore with no worse hurt than a strained shoulder, an injury which practically put an end to his climbing for the season.'

Owing to the limited stock of our wardrobe, which in my case was rendered still more scanty by the burning of a stocking on the blazing logs, my wife and I, accompanied by Dr. Spence Watson, set off after a hasty meal for our headquarters at Olden, which we reached at three o'clock next morning. The remembrance of the two long boat rows in the cold night with wet clothes almost gives me a shiver now. In most countries, severe colds and rheumatism would have been the penalty, but in Norway, with most people, pure mountain air is a never-failing specific.

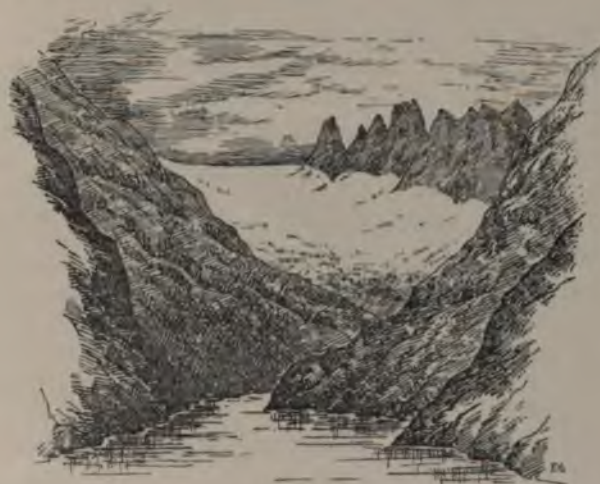
Our choice of this day for the Kaupe was singularly unfortunate, as there were only two wet days during the six weeks we were in Norway.

Soon after our ascent, we met Gabriel Rustöen, the father of Jens. He and a man from Indviken with another friend made the first ascent of the Kaupe about the year 1844. Gabriel, who was an active and daring man in his youth, told us that ours was only the fourth ascent. Certainly no strangers had climbed it before us. Now the Kaupe is frequently ascended, and it is deservedly a favourite expedition.

#### AN ATTEMPT ON THE TINDER FJELDE

I had made many visits to Nordfjord before I realised that the chain between the lakes of Loen and Stryn contained some remarkably fine peaks, and that a statement which I have often

made, namely, that the Lodals Kaupe is the only real peak which rises directly out of the snows of the Justedalsbrae, was incorrect. Along with nearly every one interested in the orography of this attractive region, I thought that the glaciers of the Tinder Fjelde and Skaala were not connected with the great snow-field. However, they do form a part and parcel of the Justedalsbrae, though it is true that the glacial connection in one place partakes rather of a ribbon-like nature; but it is there all the same, and it is possible to walk from the snows of Fjærland almost to the top of Skaala, without once touching rock. Thus Skaala and the Tinder Fjelde mountains, which are well seen from Lake Stryn, are peaks of the Justedalsbrae.



The Tinder Fjelde Lake Stryn.

A few years ago Herr Bing and his guide Hogrenning climbed one of the three aiguilles, which constitute the Tinder Fjelde, and both men recommended me to attempt the ascent of another, which promised to be a teaser. In 1899, Mr. Patchell, my nephews Aldred and Erik Todd and I had intended to climb Lodals Kaupe from the north, and then to make a glacier pass to the farm Hogrenning, taking one of the Tinder Fjelde on the way. However, after a long day from Sundal to Greidung, we were seized with an unconquerable fit of laziness, so we crossed the Fosdalskar instead and by going wrong, and much too high, we learnt a good deal about the range, and noted at least one grand climb, which must be made some time. I call this the letter Z expedition.

In the fickle weather of August 1900, Fröken Bertheau, Mr.

G. P. Baker, Hogrenning and I set off very early one morning from the hotel at Loen to tackle the Tinder Fjelde. We had a good many little adventures, crossing a new glacier pass, the Sandenæbskar about 5100 feet, and made a long and tedious traverse of at least a mile over a steep snow-slope, which was trying to the nerves, because the bottom could not be seen through the rolling and boiling clouds far below us.

At last, presumably near the foot of the wished-for peak, the ascent was abandoned as the mountain could not be found, but I believe that it has been since made by others. What fun we had in the mist, running, glissading, step-cutting, and boiling soup too. A descent through a pretty valley and birch forest brought us to the gaard of Hogrenning, the birthplace of our guide.

His parents and sister gave us a hearty welcome, entertaining us with cream-porridge, home-brewed beer strong and wholesome which we drank out of a quaint old wooden goblet, and other delicacies. Mons Hogrenning, the father, had once made a short visit to America, and told us in an amusing manner how fast his money melted away in New York. The farm is an excellent example of a good, old-fashioned Nordfjord house, with its large *peis* or open fireplace and the numerous objects of interest, such as a spinning-wheel, loom, cheese-press, etc.

The famine prices of coal in England had done well for them here, as an increased trade, at higher prices too, was being done in birch faggots, which are made up into bundles of uniform size, and shipped to Bergen. Mons told us many interesting facts about life on the shores of the lovely lake of Loen, and then, with another son, he rowed us to the foot of the lake, and would not accept a farthing for his trouble.

In Loen, Loendal, or Lodal, as in most other valleys, where I am well known in Norway, I have often received special acts of kindness from the farmers. In 1899, my wife, two children, a nephew and I went in the little steamboat up and down the Loenvand. The skipper and the principal owner of the boat, both farmers, would not allow me to pay a single penny for any one of the five of us. This I felt to be decidedly embarrassing, but I tried to render something of a *quid pro quo* by giving various presents to their wives.

The natives of Loen are, as a rule, well-built, strong, and muscular; and good looks, in both sexes, are pretty common. The same is the case in Olden and Stryn.

Few of the visitors to Loen are aware that there is anything interesting to be seen at the church, and yet outside, near the



*Edvard Munch*

*Loen Vand and Kjendals Krone.*

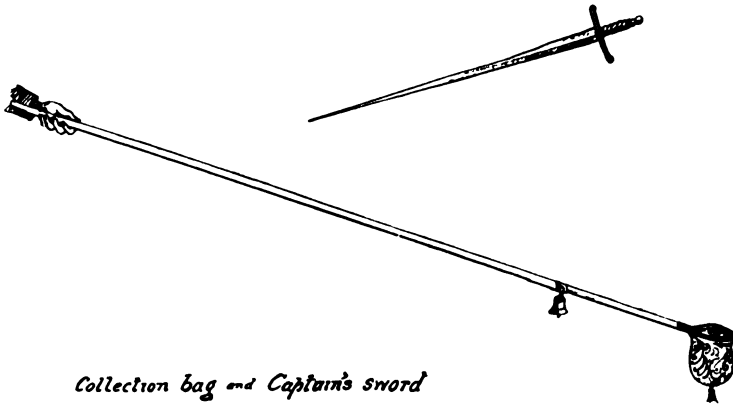
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gate, there is a fine old stone cross, which formerly stood at Korsvik—'the bay of the Cross,'—by the fjord below.

In the church is an old embroidered collecting-bag, like a child's landing-net, at the end of a stick. About a foot from the bag is a bell, which no doubt is used by the churchwarden, when he is collecting the offertory in order to waken up those who have fallen asleep. It is a good plan, and worthy of adoption in more than one English Church. I saw this first in 1875. In 1900 the bag was mislaid, but was found after a little search.

Suspended from the roof is an excellent model of a 50-gun frigate, about the date of 1666, which has no doubt been given as a votive offering. Similar models are found in French and also in a few English churches.



*Collection bag and Captain's sword  
in Loen Church*

Many years ago a lieutenant made a bet with his captain that he would go into the church and bring a book out of it at midnight on Christmas Eve, which is the most uncanny hour of the year.

He went and got his book. At the door he thought that he heard something following him, so he ran out and down the little hill as fast as possible. As he was getting over a fence, he fell on his sword and died soon after. The sword is now nailed up on the chancel screen.

There have not been so many destructive avalanches in Loen as in Stryn, possibly because there is a sparser population; but still some are recorded. Many years ago an enormous snow avalanche fell down the gully above Brengsnæs, on the east side of the lake. The rush of wind which it caused swept two farmhouses, their inhabitants, and all the cattle into the lake. It is said



that a cock was blown across the lake, and that on landing it immediately began to crow a song of thanksgiving for its deliverance. The lake is about a third of a mile in width at this place. The rush of wind caused by avalanches is often very destructive, the most notable examples being the destruction on two or three occasions of the village of Randa, near Zermatt, the result of avalanches from the Bies glacier.



## CHAPTER XXVII

A DAY UP THE MELKEVOLDSBRÆ; A FLOWERY OASIS SURROUNDED BY GLACIER; A SLIP ON THE SNOW; FOLLY OF MOUNTAINEERING WITHOUT NAILS IN BOOTS; SUNDAL REVISITED; DISASTROUS AVALANCHES

'As wreath of snow on mountain-breast  
Slides from the rock that gave it rest.'

SCOTT.

'In things difficult there is danger from ignorance; in things easy, from confidence.'

DR. JOHNSON.

'Oft, rushing sudden from the loaded cliffs,  
Mountains of snow their gathering terrors roll.  
From steep to steep, loud-thundering down they come,  
A wintry waste in dire commotion all;  
And herds, and flocks, and travellers, and swains,

Or hamlets sleeping in the dead of night,  
Are deep beneath the smothering ruin whelm'd.'

THOMSON'S *Seasons*: 'Winter.'

### GLEANINGS FROM THE NORD FJORD

#### A DAY UP THE MELKEVOLDSBRÆ

EVERY one who has been up the Olden valley in clear weather has admired the Melkevoldsbræ, and followed its course, almost unwittingly, through insensible gradations, from purest rolling snow-fields, nearly 6000 feet above sea-level, down through crevassed névé, to cataracts of ice, and lower still to the relentless ice-plough. This at times advances, rooting up the scant herbage and young trees that grow above the terminal moraines in the upper basin of the valley, and then retires once more, leaving a reign of peace behind it until another advance shall take place.

Every one must also have noticed the large ice cavern, which for a generation has been seen on the western side of the glacier.

After a short expedition on the Brixdalsbræ, where we had rubbed off the rust from our ice-axes, a scene of marvellous beauty was presented to us as we rowed down the Olden's vand on a Saturday night in soft and silvery moonlight. The wavy snow-fields and glistening ice, intensely pure by contrast with the dark shadows under the steep mountains, were reflected upon the glassy surface of the lake. St. Cecilia's Krone towered above us, and, glittering in the moonlight, her tiny glacier looked like a necklace of pearls hanging gracefully over her shoulders. The deathlike stillness, alone broken by the splash of the oars, seemed hardly of this world. Each one felt it to be a time for thinking, and not for talking, and each of us will treasure in our memories this scene as being one of the most impressive in the storehouse of nature.

After our return from Lodals Kaupe, it is not surprising that an expedition up the Melkevoldsbræ and its unknown recesses in snowland should tempt Ecroyd and me to an exploration, and the only wonder is that no one had ever forestalled us. Lars, still thirsting for glory, and promised the use of my wife's ice-axe, hailed with delight the proposition that he should join us, and I believe would have been really glad to go without any payment whatsoever, had we wished to be niggardly, as he seemed to be very anxious to emulate the deeds of his ancestors, and to feel, as they undoubtedly did, at home on the snow-fields.

On Wednesday, August 6th, in perfect weather, we stole out of Olden in the morning twilight. At Rustöen we found Jens at work in the hay-field. We pointed to the glacier sparkling like diamonds in the sun, showed him a business-like axe, which we had brought for his use, and asked him if he would go up there '*for moros skyld*'? 'Ja, ja,' he replied. What a contrast these West Justedal men are to many of the so-called guides in Jotunheim! Would they go up there '*for moros skyld*,' '*for penges skyld*,' or, 'for' any other '*skyld*'? There are many exceptions I know very well, men who do not hesitate to follow the reindeer alone on the Smörstabbæ, the Memurubræ, the Leirungsbræ, and many another glacier. From geographical reasons alone, if for none other, the Justedal men ought to be the best ice men in Norway, and I dare say they are too. The rudiments of the science of ice-craft are in reality bred in them. If they wish to see their neighbours just over the mountain, they must either go over the glacier, or perhaps a hundred miles round.

An hour and a half's quick walking from Rustøen brought us to the foot of the glacier, which, like every stream of ice which is projected far down into any deep western valley from the Justedal snow-field, looked terribly steep and hacked up into most fantastic shapes by hands of Jötuls.

We had intended to climb up the rocks on the western side of the glacier as far as the big hole, and, after examining it, to cross over to the other side, on what we took to be a small plateau, between the two ice-falls which occur in the lower and most con-



THE KAISER'S POOL, OLDENDAL

tracted part of the glacier, and we set off for that purpose. We soon saw that there was no shadow of a possibility of crossing the ice where we had intended, so we trudged away to the eastern rocks, which alone could offer us a passage. At first we climbed up the ice, but were soon driven off to the rocks, which were very easy; then difficulties arose, as the granite was polished like silver plate, and we took to the ice again, but before long had to change once more.

After a climb of 300 or 400 feet we came to a most romantic place on the glacier. In a hollow, encased in an irregular

chalice of ice crystal, there was a large and most bewitching pool of water, perhaps 50 feet deep, through which every shade of blue, those colours only revealed in their perfection to the mountaineer, was presented by the ice at various depths, and in nooks and crannies in the pool. Above us, and reflected clearly in the water, weird and tottering towers of ice, which imagination peopled with innumerable gnomes, formed an impenetrable barrier right across the glacier, and a fitting foreground to the snowy world far, far beyond. Just opposite to us, the fine mountain Middags Næbba projected its inaccessible precipices far into the glacier, whilst, on our side, steep rocky terraces led the eye far away to the eternal snows. Below, the pretty valley of Olden lay outspread before us, a gem of fertility smiling with golden cornfields, and the placid lake, hemmed in by towering snow and ice-capped fjelde.

What more inviting place for breakfast could be desired than by the edge of this crystal pool? And what more charming scene for fond memory to recall in the future?

The pool, which was of pretty nearly equal diameter for a great depth, resembled those seen on large, flat, ice-fields such as the Mer de Glace, the Aletsch glacier, the Gorner glacier, the Tunbergdalsbræ. I wonder if it be possible that this lovely pool, and the big round hole just across the glacier as well, have originally been *moulins* on the flat part of the glacier basin, a few hundred feet above where they now are, and that, in process of travelling, they may have been turned over from a vertical to a horizontal position in their descent? If these two most singular and weird-looking cavities had been found at the top of the ice-fall, I should have certainly concluded that they were old *moulins*, as I have often come across ancient and disused ones in the Alps, but I fear that ice is of too plastic a nature to allow of them passing through the ice-fall without a general collapse. Still, there they are, and must remain for many a long day, and the ice containing them has journeyed down from the plateau in some form or other. We saw several small *moulins* on this plateau later on.

After a hearty breakfast, over which we lingered long, at last we tore ourselves away from the loveliest little pool I have ever seen and took to the rocks again, but as close to the ice as we could get. We started with about sixty feet of very awkward rock; a tiny gully with smooth rectangular sides, one of which was vertical, was formed by two strata, of which one stratum had, in ages long gone by, been split off the other by the frost as far as the gully. This was the first of a series of rock faces and tiny

gullies, varying but little in steepness by the difference in the angles of fracture of the upper strata. These gullies or corners were the only places where even a goat could climb up, as hardly anywhere on these ice-polished slabs was there such a thing as a nick or a crack to be found for hand or foot.

Lars led us here, and right well too; true, he often required a shove, or an axe-head to stand on, but we required a pull in turn. For many years Lars had been the man at Olden to undertake the rescue of any unfortunate crag-fast goat; in fact, he was the general volunteer for any adventurous work to be done either on land or water there, and on these smooth rocks he felt quite at home. We three, I honestly confess, did not, having not yet quite mastered the mysteries of the art of clinging to smooth granite with the chest or elbows, and wriggling upwards like caterpillars, by drawing up the knees or thighs, and then in turn clinging by the latter and raising the former.

After, I will not say losing, where we were gaining knowledge and experience, but passing much time by this sort of work, we found ourselves far above the second ice-fall and its grim towers. The question then arose: Should we descend to the glacier plateau, and attempt a most tempting zigzag towards Middags Næbba, or should we join the glacier a little further up, but where it was névé in place of ice?

We soon decided on the latter, because the former involved a descent, and in addition to that, telescopic observation had revealed the presence of two very doubtful places.

After an interesting climb alongside a waterfall, we came to some very steep snow shelving upwards from the glacier. We were then face to face with a fine mountain, which is visible from the Brixdal, though not from Oldendal, and which is not honoured by a place on the *Amtskart*. I proposed that we should cross the upper basin of the glacier, and climb this, or another mountain from the back. Lars and Jens both demurred, said it was '*meget farlig*,' and that there were '*sprækker*.' However, thanks to a most laudable rivalry which existed between these two men, and to the real love of adventure possessed by each, their scruples were soon overcome, though it must have seemed to them opposed to all precedent to endeavour to force a way amongst the crevasses, when these might all be avoided by climbing the rocks up to the snow-field above, and then by following along its broad back. We were now nearly 5000 feet above the fjord. We set off at a run, as it was slightly down hill. Ten minutes brought us to some deep crevasses, well bridged over, then we began to ascend,

and presently came to several wide transverse crevasses, which we avoided by zigzags and a bridge now and then. Once, Jens partially disappeared in a narrow crevasse, but, like a sensible man, he leaned forward, and came with his body on the snow. I was glad to see him fall in, for the sake of experience. After a time we came to a trough of névé on each side of which were huge crevasses. Our peak was guarded by a network of them, and from this side was invincible.

After an hour and a half since leaving the rock we got above all difficulties, and once more stood on the mighty undulating snow-field itself. There is, I am almost sure, no other place on the Justedalsbræ, and probably none in Europe, where the lines are so graceful and free from flaw as here in the trough above the Melkevoldsbræ.

Our object was to get to some point from which we could take a bird's-eye view into Stardalen and its two upper tributary valleys. After a trudge in capital snow of about half an hour in a S.S.W. direction we saw some rocks ahead which we thought we could reach in fifteen minutes. When that time had elapsed, we seemed as far as ever from them. At last we reached the rocky islet at 3.50, and were rewarded for our pains by a lovely view, though we were not quite far enough to see the region of Sogn eastward.

Below us, wild glaciers and precipices carried the eye far away down to the sunless sæters of Fonsdal. Of Stardal itself, we could only see the tops of its cliffs. Far away westward, over the wintry Gjøgnalund, the cliffs of Hornelen, blue with the distance, were unmistakable. Many a bright and sunny fjord, rocky island and green hillside, led away to the open sea; and two and three-quarters Norse miles off a beautiful peak rose majestically out of the snow, Lodals Kaupe. On seeing this Jens felt the inspiration of genius and wrote a few lines of poetry of a religious tendency, which were left in the cairn which we built. As this little peak is not on the road to anywhere, and as there was no trace of heaped-up or overturned rocks, we assumed that we had made a new ascent. Lars dubbed it Onsdags Næbba. We found the rocks to be almost covered with sun-loving alpine flowers.

We thought we deserved an hour's rest, so we took it, and literally basked in sunshine. Then we made our way towards the mountain which had tempted us earlier in the day, and reached its rocks after twenty-five minutes' quick walk, and soon were on a summit wholly composed of colossal blocks of detached rock. This hitherto unknown mountain is now well known in Oldendal

by the name of the Lars Næbba. It is 5610 English feet high, and affords a splendid view of the great basin of the Melkevoldsbræ out of which it rises with grand precipices.

After the usual stone-mason's work, we were quickly under weigh again on the west of Lars Næbba, intending to descend by the Olden Skar.

Lars had been very attentive to our guiding among the crevasses in the morning, and was a most willing pupil. In front of us was a network of them at the head of the western arm of the Melkevoldsbræ, which runs up between Middags Næbba and Lars Næbba. Our direct route lay across these, but they might have been turned by keeping higher up to the left. We pointed out the direction to Lars, and asked him to lead us. He very willingly took the reins in hand, and threaded his way very cleverly amongst the crevasses.

After rounding this glacier basin, we came to the S.W. spur of Middags Næbba, which looked very pretty from here. Though it was six o'clock, we could not resist another appeal from Nature, so we unroped, and left our axes and knapsacks behind us. A climb of 455 feet up moss-covered rocks, where there was capital herbage, out of the way of goats, brought us on our third maiden summit. The whole valley, with the lake and also the fjord, lay outspread before us. Jens pointed with pride to a little brown speck beside the fjord. It was the home of his ancestors. The view was glorious, but time was relentless, and forced us unwillingly away.

A run and a climb soon brought us to our axes again, and to the glacier. From this place a long and hollow slope of snow, 1450 feet in vertical height, led down to the so-called path of Olden Skar. This slope was very steep, but there were no crevasses in it. It was the kind of place beloved by all true Alpine climbers when on a descent, and Ecroyd and I hailed it with delight. The snow was just right, soft enough for safety, but hard enough for a glissade.

Lars went first, then Jens, and next Ecroyd, whilst I as head guide, was last. We started off merrily enough, then Jens began to flounder and roll over now and then, but we nevertheless scored several hundred feet in a few minutes. Towards the bottom, rocks appeared, but through them, a narrow ribbon of snow seemed to lead down to a second wide snow-slope, and to the valley itself. Under the crags of Middags Næbba, but above the rocks I have named, a little fork of snow trended off to the right. It too seemed to promise a glissade beyond, and to



a lower portion of the Olden Skar. Lars proposed this way for us to go; I had thought of the snow ribbon. In a weak moment I gave way, as Lars had steered so well up above. We had now to take a diagonal course and to descend very little for about 150 yards. We were going very cautiously, with the rope taut, when, without warning, Lars fell on his back, starting off at a rapid rate, and was soon joined by Jens. Neither used his axe. Ecroyd and I instinctively dug our axes and feet well in the snow, and when we in turn were pulled off our feet, we turned on our faces, and dug in our elbows. By-and-by we brought the others to a standstill on the top of the rocks. If we had been without ice-axes, or going carelessly, the consequences would have been disastrous. As it was, however, it added considerably to the experience of Lars and Jens, who at the time were literally as helpless as horses poised in mid-air, when being slung by a steamboat crane into a boat. If Lars had been directly below us when he fell, we could have stopped him at once. As it was, he was almost on the same level that we were, which was a very different case.

Though Lars wished to pursue the same course we had been doing, I peremptorily refused, and after a climb up and then across rounded bosses of glaciated rock, we came to a place where a wide jump would put us on the lower snow-slope. Seeing a grand and safe glissade before me, I slipped the rope over my head, made the jump, and had one of the quickest and best glissades I ever had in my life. The others, I fancy, thought I was bewitched or something of the sort; at any rate they gave me a few minutes' rest at the bottom.

As to the descent to the valley. A scramble through birch-trees growing horizontally out of a steep rocky face, and a tumble now and then into a juniper bush, or a slide down a wet mossy rock into a pool of water, then a half-run down rough scree, where are all sorts of cunningly devised traps to trip one up, may give one a good lesson of patience, but, for my part, I had rather do without it. If the *Turist Forening* would pay more attention to this slope, a most interesting route over the Olden Skar would be within the capability of most pedestrians who visit Olden.

When we arrived at the first habitation, Ecroyd and I did full justice to the milk, whilst Lars and Jens disburdened themselves of much fine language, about their exploits, to their wondering friends.

After leaving Jens in the bosom of his family, and still pointing



*The Abrekkehor.*

*To face page 302.*



up at Middags Næbba, in due course we others reached Olden, well tired out, at 1 A.M.

If any one imagines that all the good new climbing about Olden is exhausted, he labours under a great delusion. Though most of the cream is skimmed off, there is yet a goodly amount left, before even the milk is arrived at; it too will last for many a long year yet. Lars and others recognised the fact that a climbing era was at hand, and each acknowledged the necessity of having nailed boots and ice-axes. In fact, Lars made himself an axe a few months later.

#### THE AABREKKEBRÆ

In September 1884 my friends Mr. and Mrs. G. P. Baker, with Vigdal and two porters, made a very grand glacier pass from Krondal, descending to the valley of Olden by the Aabrekkebræ. Two whole days were spent on this remarkable adventure, and the descent through the séracs of the upper ice-fall, and in one place through a tunnel under the ice itself, constituted one of the most notable mountaineering achievements yet accomplished in Norway.<sup>1</sup> In the summer of 1900, in company with Mr. Baker and two others, I had the pleasure of ascending some 1200 feet up this glacier, until we became involved in a chaos of séracs, when we came to the conclusion that at least six or seven hours of step-cutting would be required to get above the ice-fall, upon which prudence, plus torrents of rain, suggested the retreat which was undertaken at once.<sup>2</sup>

After our descent, we crossed a long but frail bridge over the Olden River. The following day we saw this bridge floating down the Olden vand. The flood which carried it away was the greatest known for many years. We had slept at the farm Myklebostad, and during the night we heard hundreds of big rocks falling down a neighbouring waterfall. Indeed, occasionally we saw them strike fire in the waterfall itself. Much damage was done.

Though this glacier is so near a much-travelled tourist route, it is practically unknown. There are few places in Norway, or in the Alps, where the mountains, which rise straight out of the ice, show such grim and high prison-walls as they do on the Aabrekkebræ.

Another remarkable adventure in Oldendal was the ascent of the Brixdalsbræ, in the year 1895, by Herr Bing and Rasmus Aabrekke. These plucky native wielders of the ice-axe hacked their way through this ice-fall of hard-compressed blue ice, without

<sup>1</sup> *Alpine Journal*, vol. xii. p. 269.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. xx. p. 269.

rest from 7.35 A.M. until 4.30 P.M., almost nine hours of hard toil, and succeeded in getting through, and, provided that the game was worth the candle, which I think it was, they deserve our hearty congratulations for setting an example which is not very likely to be followed by others.<sup>1</sup>

#### SUNDAL TO LILLEDAL (OR THE LILE DALE)

The lovely lake of Stryn, like those of Olden and Loen, now has its steamboat, and scores of tourists annually steam over its blue waters on their way to Grotlid and the Geirangerfjord. Not one in five hundred of them—almost all of whom stop the night at Hjelle—even know of the existence of the gorge of Sundal, not a couple of miles away; neither do they know how grand Erdal is, though this valley heads the lake; nor do they realise that dozens of fine mountain expeditions may be made from Hjelle. How many have crossed the Fosdalskar from Opstryn to Loen, a lovely and easy glacier pass under Skaala?<sup>2</sup> How few even walk from the fertile farms of Flo over to Hellesylt! I will forgive mountaineers in general for not following the steps of one of my Bergen friends from Hogrenning to Erdal, as the route is too dangerous to be repeated; still, a grand and perfectly safe pass has yet to be made between the upper Erdalsbræ and Hogrenning, and other good new climbs invite climbers.

In 1876 Emanuel Mohn and I crossed the Kamphammer pass in evil weather, and slept at the farm of Sundal, where we could get no breakfast, so had to wait until we reached Grov, five miles away; and in 1874 I crossed the Greidungskar, and resolved that, sooner or later, I would revisit both these valleys. This resolution was not realised till 1899, when I saw both.

Up to a few years ago, when the excellent mountain road was made from Stryn to Grotlid which caused a general diversion of the horse and cattle traffic between west and east, a large number of Nordfjord horses—occasionally as many as a thousand at a time—were annually driven in the early summer through the Sundal and over the Kamphammer pass. As this pass, which has originally been admirably constructed, attains the height of 4272 feet above sea-level, and on the east side skirts for some distance the left bank of the most northerly arm of the Justedalsbræ, it can easily be understood that the drovers and their droves were often detained by bad weather for some days at the Sundal sæters. At such times the rich mountain pastures were

<sup>1</sup> *Alpine Journal*, vol. xviii. p. 50.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. xix. p. 608.

eaten as bare as if they had been visited by a plague of locusts, or by an army of lemmings. Naturally the absence of the drovers nowadays is not regretted by the farmers.

Long shall we remember the hearty welcome which was given to us on our arrival late one evening in 1899 at the farm Sundal, by the cheery Absalon and his wife. What cosy beds they fitted up for us on the hay in the barn, with sheets, blankets, and pillows too, and how beseechingly they asked us not to set fire to the hay!

'Small cheer, and great welcome, makes a merry feast.'

In the year 1868 a snow avalanche carried away one of the houses at Sundal gaard and killed eleven people. Strange though it may appear, another house was erected exactly on the same site as the former one.

The route which we had planned on the map was to climb one of the two tongues of glacier, or the rocks which bound them, due south of the sæter. However, a fleeting view of these tongues through the clouds which enveloped the summits in the early morning hours, dispelled the illusion that they were suitable highways, so the Sognskar, an old glacier pass, was mounted instead. The ascent is over a series of little rock escarpments and, when we took it, up fairly steep ice till the snow was reached. The view of the neighbouring Lodals Kaupe and of the distant Horungtinder was very fine.

A few years ago, a man was driving a horse over the Sognskar. The horse fell over a crag and was killed. The drover, like most of his clan, was a shrewd business man. He skinned the horse, cut it up into suitable joints, and did a good trade in what he termed reindeer venison, which is seldom seen in Stryn.

What a jolly day we had! and even though we did find a cairn, as we expected we should, on the top of the Stryns Kaupe, our route down the steep north ridge, certainly a new one, was a sufficient compensation. The ice-fall of the Lilledalsbræ afforded us an intricate route and capital sport. Below came the real disappointment. We called at a sæter and asked for a *rømmekølle*. Alas! the advance of science had reached even here; a horrid cream-separator (I have one of my own at home) had been used in the morning, and the cream had been taken to the co-operative dairy miles away.

At Greidung we slept. Was it any more luxurious than when I stopped there a quarter of a century earlier? No.

I love the valley of Stryn. It is never oppressive. What pleasant memories our family party cherish of the happy fort-

night spent at Hotel Viig at Visnæs! Andrine, bright and cheerful, is an admirable hostess, and even the stolid Johann was not very wroth when we took his boat so often by mistake for that belonging to the hotel.

What a glorious river, too, is that of Stryn! We need well think so, as, thanks to the kindness of Mr. Hooper, my wife, daughter, and I have had some excellent fishing there, enjoying the music of the reel as much as that of the evening breeze sougling softly through the birches of the uplands, or the roaring of the gale on the jagged mountain crests.

Well do I remember hooking, playing, and bringing to the gaff, my first salmon, and I think that at least two ex-presidents of the Alpine Club, who are keen fishermen, will agree with me when I say that it was a supreme moment, and perhaps comparable to that experienced on the attainment of a first mountain ascent.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

THE TRAGEDY OF THE TYVESKAR (ROBBER'S PASS); DOCK-SORREL AND A THIRSTY SNOW-FIELD; WE WANT A SPORTING ROUTE AND FIND IT; AN INTRICATE GLACIER HIGHWAY; WORSE ROCKS; HALF A MILE AN HOUR; REMAINS OF AN ENORMOUS AVALANCHE; WE REACH THE VALLEY AT LAST

'He tires betimes that spurs too fast betimes.'

SHAKESPEARE.

'Yet in their turn the snows and frosts produce  
Various effects, and of important use.  
Th' intemperate heats of summer are controll'd  
By winter's rigour, and inclement cold,  
Which checks contagious spawn, and noxious steams,  
The fatal offspring of immoderate beams;  
Th' exhausted air with vital nitre fills,  
Infection stops, and deaths in embryo kills.'

BLACKMORE's *Creation*.

## THE TYVESKAR (ROBBER'S PASS) AND THE NYGAARDSBRÆ

The grim gorge of Kjændal has a strange fascination for me, and I have taken many friends to see it. When in the year 1881 I was told that the upper snows could be reached comparatively easily by its eastern wall, and that it was recognised as an ancient though forgotten pass, I hardly credited the statement, so steep and forbidding does it appear. But after looking at it for some time, I noticed two steeply-inclined ledges, well covered with timber, and I realised that the Tyveskar was a pass well worth making, so drew attention to it in the *Aarbog*, with the result that it has since been crossed several times. On the evening of July 21, 1900, Fröken Bertheau, Messrs. Priestman and Baker, with Hogrenning, two porters and myself, arrived at the restaurant on the little pier at the head of Loenvand with the intention of crossing the pass the following day.

We started at 5.40 in lovely weather and soon found that our loads, divided as they were, were uncomfortably heavy, so we pressed into service, up to the snow, Mons Næsdal. This was the man who in 1881 had rescued Vigdal and myself from a labyrinth



of swamps and alder copses after our descent of Kjændalsbræ. It was well that we met him, as he knew the way up to the ledges, which is rather intricate. He told us of the tragedy of the Tyveskar, and proved to be a willing and cheerful companion.

The history of the Tyveskar is this. Some 200 years ago, a young girl had been in service in Justedal, and had earned what was for her a considerable sum of money.

This was paid to her, and she set off quite alone to climb the mountain and to cross the great glacier over to her home in Loen. After going some hours she noticed that a man was following her. She went very quickly and ran over the snow and descended to Kjændal by a steep rock face over 5000 feet in height, ultimately being overtaken by the man beside a large stone now called the Fante Sten, which is close to the modern footpath on the way to the Kjændalsbræ. The brute then murdered and robbed the girl. Blood on his clothes aroused suspicion, and eventually he confessed his crime. Soon after he was put into a spiked barrel and was rolled down a hill into the Fjord. Apparently at this period the crossing of the Justedalsbræ



STERN JUSTICE

was looked upon as a matter of course.

Where there were not rock escarpments, the sunny and sheltered slopes were clothed with a dense vegetation. The trunks of huge moss-covered birch-trees, lying where they had fallen ages ago, were bright with *Linnaea borealis*. The *Lilies of the Valley* were over, but their leaves were everywhere. *Pyrolas* and starry *Saxifrages* gladdened the eye, and the temptations to linger by the wayside were not solely caused by the steepness of the ascent. Here and there was a patch of pink *Epilobium*

surrounded by *Aconite*, *Mulgedium*, and *Lady-fern* six feet high.

Now and then, to a height of 3000 feet, we found grass cut and drying for hay. This steep mountain wall was in reality the principal part of one of the farms of Næsdal, and the man who cut the grass was nearly ninety years of age, and had climbed these precipitous slopes nearly all his life.

An abundance of *Dock-sorrel* reminded one of us that we had a thirsty snow-field to cross in bright sunshine, so he gathered a quantity of juicy leaves, and later on we were very glad to slake our thirst by nibbling them.

The views of the mighty ice-falls so close at hand, and of the lovely blue lake below, were superb. At noon, after a climb of rather over 5000 feet, we reached the glacier far above the snout of the Kronebræ and sent Mons home. At two o'clock we stood on the white watershed and enjoyed a grand view of the Horungtinder.

So far, no new ground had been touched, and the way over Liakslen to Faaberg was clear enough. However, it was not a sporting route, and we felt that the mountaineer's route must necessarily include the descent of the classic glacier, the Nygaardsbræ, an admirable coloured picture of which appears in Professor Forbes's *Norway and its Glaciers*, p. 267.

This glacier had, indeed, been twice traversed, once up and once down, when there was an unusually large amount of snow, but, so far as is known, it had never been connected with the Tyveskar.

The head of the Nygaardsbræ opens out like a huge fan, in a plateau of *névé*, and the few crevasses which we circumvented were of a size and depth in harmony with their surroundings.

We ought to have gone through an easy ice-fall to bare ice on the right or south bank of the glacier, whose huge serpentine form lay outspread before us, but in spite of the *Dock-sorrel* we all wished for water, and expected to find it on the rocks of Liakslen; so we bent our steps there, reaching the rocks at 3.25, and finding them as dry as the ridges of Sgurr-nan-Gilleán in Skye.

We had a long and fruitless hunt for water, and were tempted on to a crag for the photographers, and then followed a rock terrace which came to an abrupt termination about one thousand feet above the glacier. Two porters set out as scouts to pick out a route, if possible, down the mountain wall, and were successful. Suffice it to say that, after a long, difficult, and uninteresting climb down a series of loose gullies, at 6.35 we regained the glacier

barely half an English mile from the place where we had left it over three hours earlier. Half a Norse mile now remained to the snout of the glacier.

For half an hour we got along easily. Then came a little ice-fall, and we had the usual exciting steeplechase work and a few knife-edged ridges to traverse, such as we encounter so often in the Alps. An hour of dogged perseverance would have carried a well-equipped party to easy ice below. As it was, however, we were all carrying rucksacks, and the three porters, two of whom were without nails, were very heavy laden, so it was deemed to be wiser to take to the rocks on the left bank. A glance at Professor Forbes's sketch will show at once the beautiful curves of this serpent-like glacier and the broken character of the convex portions of its sides. As is well-known, there is invariably more or less of chaos on the convex side of a glacier, provided that there is a corresponding concave margin on the other side. The movement of the ice, being quicker on the former than on the latter side, causes fracture. There is an exact parallel in the case of a river, where there is always rougher water at the outside of the bends than on the inside, where slack water is to be seen.

As bad luck would have it, we were near a convex bend, and the ice-men of the party had their work cut out to reach the shore. We certainly had some fun too. Hogrenning and his brother, one of our two extra porters, gaily cut a staircase down a fifteen-foot ice wall. A little ledge half-down helped matters, but we were glad when we saw all our baggage safe on a broad platform below, and not in the gaping crevasse which was ready to receive any contributions which might be given to it. After this, we had the usual ice gullies and an occasional narrow edge to traverse such as those one meets with when larking on the Gornier ice-fall or the Mer de Glace. In this case, however, we sought and followed the line of least resistance, and by sheer luck found an easy way to the side. At first, we got along well, then we came to steep 'boiler-plate' rocks which, I am sure, were never intended for the hobnailed boot or the hand of an Englishman.

At a corner we came to the remains of an enormous ice avalanche which had recently fallen from a glacier on Liakslén, some 2000 feet above. It was fully a quarter of a mile long and 300 or 400 feet deep. The blast of wind caused by this fall must have had terrible force, and it was well that it was expended upon bleak mountains and the surface of a large glacier, rather than upon the homes of men or the pine forests of Justedal.

Here we ought to have gone again to the centre of the glacier



*Ice Cataract on the Kronbrøkk.*

*To face page 330.*

Vertical line on the left side of the page.

but did not. Had we done so we should have been spared much difficult climbing over most uncompromising rocks, where, though there was no fun to be enjoyed, there was considerable anxiety. The Loen men, used to glaciated rocks from their cradles, went excellently. I, on the other hand, never felt at home, and looked wistfully on the pure ice. Here and there we were forced to take to the icy highway, but never went far enough towards the centre, and the tumbles of our nailless companions invariably caused us to take to the rocks again. Once, one of the porters took a header from a ridge of ice down a narrow crevasse and was pulled out by the legs little the worse for his acrobatic performance. His pack luckily rolled into safety, excepting one leg of a camera, which could not be recovered.

At 11.15 P.M. we reached the foot of this noble glacier, having been nearly eight hours in accomplishing a distance of barely four English miles. We arrived at Faaberg dog-tired at 2 A.M., well satisfied with our long day's expedition.

Professor Forbes says: 'The Nygaard glacier, which is of great length, descends the valley by angular zigzags, resembling a carefully constructed, but gigantic highway, embanked at the turnings by its own moraines, and there are three such turnings quite distinct. The whole is on a grand scale, and the slope, except beyond the highest turning, appears tolerably equable, and the glacier is most likely practicable throughout the greater part of its length. It is in all probability the most regularly developed glacier in Norway.' This description of Professor Forbes's is not so accurate as his coloured sketch. There is nothing angular about the Nygaardsbræ; its 'three turnings' are in lovely curves, though it is true that, when seen foreshortened from the valley of Justedal, the curves do appear more or less angular. The practicability of traversing the whole length of the glacier has twice been proved—in a time of much snow. For my part, I think it can be ascended or descended at any time by a strong party. There are little lateral and no medial moraines, consequently, there are no glacier tables nor sand cones except at the edges. Its beauty, which is undeniable, arises from its serpentine form and the purity of the ice. Otherwise, it is not so fine as several other ice streams of the Justedalsbræ. The Nygaardsbræ 'spends itself on nearly level ground at the expansion or embouchure of the valley which it occupies'—a wilderness of ancient terminal moraines.

I had long wished to traverse this well-known glacier, and hope yet once again to do so. Speaking generally, it will be found easier to keep to its south-west side. The two highest

## NORWAY

falls can both be turned on this side. On the other hand, the north-east side on which we boggled so wearily is the wrong way all through. For at least half the total length of the glacier, the centre can be easily followed.

It is quite clear that, unless the Nygaardsbræ was much easier to traverse formerly than is now the case, the girl and the robber followed her over to Loen, after whom we named the pass, and did not follow this route, but most likely climbed the buttress of Liakslén on the north, by which the great snows can easily be reached.

There still remain several glacier recesses which are unexplored and yet within easy reach of the valley of Justedal. Mr. Schell has solved some knotty problems of glacial geography in this region, but more yet remain.

Why are most mountaineers like a flock of sheep? If one happens to go through a gap or takes a big jump over an imaginary crevasse or a rope end, all, apparently, must do the same.

Yes! Some of you climbers, I mean you English climbers, have precious little originality. You cross the Greidung Skar and you go from Krondal to Næsdal. Very pretty expeditions too. But why don't you——? Yes, perhaps you are right; you know you might get lost.

As I have already pointed out, the valley of Justedal is one of the most beautiful and interesting in Norway, and yet few tourists visit it, though now there is an excellent driving-road and a good inn at Sperle.

Perhaps there is no bell-wether?



*The Nygaard's Bre.*

*To face page 332.*



1

## CHAPTER XXIX

BENIGHTED ON THE MOUNTAIN; A SNOWSTORM; A DIFFICULT  
ASCENT; BATTLING WITH THE GALE

'Thou thrivest best when storms tumultuous ride their foaming battle-steeds  
across the seas.'

*Frithiof's Saga.*

(Translated by Rev. W. S. BLACKLEY.)

THE FIRST ASCENT OF LODALS KAUPE FROM THE  
VALLEY OF JUSTEDAL

WHATEVER be the condition of the weather or the barometer, it is always a pleasure to return to the lovely valley of Justedal. My first visit was in 1874, when I crossed the well-known Greidung Skar. Though more or less misty, we had a few good peeps of Lodals Kaupe, and I resolved that I would attempt to climb it from the north-east whenever a suitable opportunity should present itself.

In 1884, my wife, four others and I climbed it from the west, but, as we were surrounded by dense clouds, we could not study new routes. I had, however, frequently sketched the Kaupe from a distance and knew it to be a bluntly truncated obelisk, three sides of which rise, with walls of terrific steepness, some 700 feet out of the snow-field, while the fourth, or west side, has been carved and broken down by relentless time into a deep hollow, which holds a glacier tongue, up which climbers from Loendal can easily mount to the summit.

So far back as the year 1820, the veterans of the old guard, Keilhau, Boeck, and Bohr, had courageously attempted to make the ascent from the valley of Justedal, and though they were not successful, the history of their adventures forms a brilliant chapter of mountain classics. There is also a legend that, for many years a large reward was offered to any person or persons who should succeed in climbing the mountain from this side.

At the end of August 1889, a party of three of us arrived on a lovely evening at Faaberg, and arranged to start next morning

at daybreak to try to solve the problem which had been set sixty-nine years earlier and still awaited solution.

Our host, Rasmus, delayed us in the morning, and it was 5.30 when we set off, a very late hour on which to enter on an unknown adventure. The usual three hours' walk to the glacier occupied us till 10.10, principally owing to the attractions offered by bilberries to fruit-loving mountaineers.

On the miscalled Lodalsbræ we saw, as is so often the case, hundreds of dead lemmings on the ice, no doubt frozen to death on their mad journey over the glacier, and though we admired their courage, we could hardly commend their prudence.

The Kaupe itself was in clouds, but short spells of sunshine encouraged us. At 1.30, just where the final steep ascent on the Greidung pass begins, we came to snow, so put on the rope. We left the usual pass, and turned up the next glacier arm to the west, which, for want of a better name, was called the Trangebræ, or Narrow glacier. This glacier descends from a small plateau north-east of the Kaupe, and usually would be simple enough to traverse. However, as I have pointed out elsewhere, the summer of 1889 was wholly exceptional, and many glaciers, which under ordinary circumstances could be ascended with ease, were impassable. The Trangebræ was no exception. For several hundred feet we got on merrily; then we came to wide crevasses, which at first we dodged. Hastings cut a way for us over a broad but shallow one by making steps down one side and up the opposite one, a brilliant piece of work, unfortunately of no avail, as directly afterwards our way was completely barred by crevasses which were open from one side of the glacier to the other.

At 2.30 we turned back, determined to try to climb the rocks which bound the glacier on the south, and which form a broad but steep buttress, almost due east from the Kaupe.

After a descent of 300 feet, we crossed to the rocks over an uncanny bergschrund by a narrow and very interesting bridge. An easy climb of 200 feet brought us to a broad ledge which led upwards with a steep gradient. On our right was a precipice which increased in height as we advanced, and on our left was a steep snow roof to the buttress, and which recent experience taught us to respect as ice. We walked through a beautiful arch of ice in a little gully, and by this means reached a higher terrace. Then came a tongue of ice where, in crossing, we had to cut good large steps, which consumed valuable time. After this came steep rocks with perfect hand- and foot-hold, and in process of time we gained the top of the buttress, a pretty little peak—the eastern

Kaupe—where we built a cairn. Lodals Kaupe looked grand from here, and was only connected with our peak by a savage, broken, and wholly impassable ridge, which separated the two glaciers, north and south of the buttress.

It was now six o'clock, and we had long ago abandoned the idea of climbing the Kaupe, but resolved instead to skirt the eastern foot of the peak on the snow, a route which Dr. Spence Watson had taken in 1884. The head of the glacier on our left was a mass of broken ice, and the plan of skirting it seemed to be as wild as any other. We had, however, several alternatives, but several reasons obliged us to go forward.

We then turned to the glacier plateau above the Trangebræt. The Kaupe, only half a mile away, looked superb. As Dr. Spence Watson's route was impracticable, we must needs try another. In ordinary seasons, a descent from this plateau could easily be made by steep snow to the little lake—the Kaupe vand; now, it was no doubt a slope of hard ice horrible to contemplate.

On the north-west ridge of the Kaupe there is, about 400 feet from the top, a small notch, which is easily reached from the west. We could not see it from the buttress owing to the foreshortening, but I knew exactly where it was, so we determined to try to climb the rocks up to this notch, only about 300 feet above the glacier. From the notch, the descent to Bødal would be quite easy. At the same time I had a lingering hope that we might still make an ascent of the Kaupe. We were soon over the glacier, and looked into the bergschrund under the notch. It was hopeless. We followed this huge crevasse eastwards, and found that there was only one place in the ice-armour of the Kaupe that was at all vulnerable. A delightful staircase was cut down into the crevasse by one of the party, whilst the others anchored safely in the hard névé, and the rocks were soon gained. It was then 6.30, and we expected that a half-hour's climbing would bring us into the notch.

As the strata of the rock are almost perpendicular, it can easily be understood that the mountain is exceptionally steep. This face, which is like the face of many a Chamouni aiguille, consists of huge smooth slabs of gneiss, many of which, ten or twelve feet high, and twelve inches thick, partly overhang the precipice. The tops of the slabs form narrow ledges, mostly flat, though some are tilted. Here and there a narrow chimney is to be found between the mountain and a semi-detached slab. As we expected, the rocks proved to be difficult to climb; in fact it is a persistently difficult rock face, but we were all in good training, which is a

great asset for the climber. We had to take a very zigzag course from ledge to ledge, and though we wished to traverse the face of the crags westwards towards the notch, we were constantly being forced in the contrary direction. We mountaineers talk glibly of 'narrow ledges,' and novices may be tempted to think that, on almost every expedition, we spend many hours in traversing ledges no wider than an ordinary mantel-shelf. Of course we do nothing of the kind, and though now and then we do pass along a short shelf six inches wide, and sometimes only half that width, our 'narrow ledges' are generally as wide as an ordinary garden footpath. On the north-east face of Lodals Kaupe, however, the ledges are all of the typical narrowness, none are even decently broad. Fortunately, a thin layer of hard frozen snow bound the small stones fast, otherwise they would have been troublesome, and though the snow had often to be scraped away, it is probable that we found the rocks in their very best and safest condition. Combined climbing was very necessary, and so was the constant hitching of the rope wherever it was possible to make a hitch.

At eight o'clock, after we had climbed 500 or 600 feet from the glacier, we came to a miniature cavern which would accommodate half a man if he stood up. This suggested bed-time, so we agreed to stop. About ten feet lower down there was one of the usual ledges, which was formed into a capital bed for one man by the removal of innumerable small stones at the back of a narrow slab of rock, which stood up vertically, and which formed a firm stone rim about three inches deep, making the bed as safe as a berth on board ship. We took off our boots, emptied our rucksacks in turn, and put our feet into them, and then donned all our available clothes, of which we had a good supply. Unluckily our Scotch plaids had been sent round to Olden by steamboat, but one of the party had a macintosh which nearly covered us all. We enjoyed a good meal of fladbröd, chocolate, raisins, and cheese, and then tried to settle down into our places. Two axes were jammed fast in a crevice, and this gave us a capital hitch for our rope.

We were 6500 feet above sea-level, a good height in Norway, and the only thing we had to fear was that of becoming frost-bitten. As there was no room to turn round, we had to kick our legs about now and then in order to keep warm. We talked incessantly and discussed many subjects till they were almost threadbare.

By twilight we had wild views of frost-riven rocks, glittering ice towers, and the bergschrund at an angle of nearly 80 degrees

far below us. Then stars peeped out one by one, and we feared a clear night and a hard frost. Soon after, to our joy, clouds came. A few straggling snowflakes fluttered by, and presently snow fell steadily and threatened to cover us entirely. At first the wind whispered with gentle and musical voice, but soon it began to whistle and roar wildly, though harmlessly, amongst the crags above and on each side of us, and eventually it blew a gale, but as we were on the lee-side of the mountain it did us no harm. Three times during the night, gusts of wind swept straight down the crags, and brought streams of fine powdery snow upon us. Once, just to show us how lucky we were to be on the right side of the mountain, a stream of snow poured down our necks, and the thought of it almost causes a shiver to-day. Occasionally we heard the thunder of a distant avalanche, which echoed grandly among the mountains.

As on the occasion when I spent a night of shivers on the crags of the Dent Blanche,<sup>1</sup> and again on the Aiguille du Plan,<sup>2</sup> we had some difficulty in preventing ourselves from falling asleep, and reserved that luxury for the morrow.

On each occasion it was necessary to keep awake to prevent frost-bite, and to avoid falling down.

About three o'clock, grey dawn appeared, and with it a more piercing coldness. It was not sufficiently light for climbing purposes until nearly four o'clock.

After a snack of frozen food, we set off at 4.15, having spent eight and a quarter hours on the ledge, and, strange to say, we felt rather sorry to leave our uncomfortable night quarters. We were all in good condition, and were clad in strange night attire. I had a large red cotton handkerchief tied over my hat, a flannel shirt over my coat, and a pair of flannel trousers tied round my neck, whilst my beard was fringed with icicles. Our outer clothes were frozen as stiff as boards, and our boots were as hard as cast-iron.

About two and a half inches of snow had fallen during the night, and this made the rocks look worse than ever. Just above the ledge, we had to traverse a steep and smooth slab of rock, twelve or fourteen feet long. Great care was needed, and here, as well as everywhere else, the snow had to be scraped away. At the head of the slab was the little cave which we had seen the previous evening, and which was formed by a tilted slab. It was necessary to climb over or round the edge of this slab, and the

<sup>1</sup> *Alpine Journal*, vol. xv. p. 404.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. xvi. p. 422.

latter route was chosen as the best. Though the hold was good, it was a trying corner to pass at that early hour. Whilst his companions hitched the rope firmly, the leader carved a way through the snow up a steep gully, and then he in turn anchored on the top of a boss of rock, as the others climbed in a masterly way over the tilted slab. Then came the worst place, a traverse on a little shelf above the slab and round a knob which projected maliciously beyond the shelf. It was a difficult manoeuvre to get round it, but it was done, and had to be done quickly too. A short gully now led to a higher ledge from which help was given to those below to climb straight up a place, which, without the help of a rope, would have been an impossibility. There was no place to hitch the rope to, but there was fair standing-room. An increase in the strength of the wind told us that we were approaching the summit ridge, and proved a welcome encouragement. Then came a short and narrow ghyll shaped like the letter S, where there was no hold except for the knees and elbows. The top of the S brought us out to a vicious-looking crag, the rocks became easier by degrees, and at 5.10 A.M. we reached the cairn at the very top of Lodals Kaupe, and felt the full force of the wind with fine snow and a little hail.

The climb from the glacier in many respects resembles some of the best face climbs on the Cumberland fells, and in good weather the ascent of the Kaupe from the north-east is an expedition which I can strongly recommend to any party of competent mountaineers. It is a remarkable coincidence that, though we had not sought to reach the top when we left the snow plateau below, we had been gradually forced away from the notch by repeated little rock obstacles which always drove us to the left hand.

The clouds were scudding about at a great rate below us, and we could hardly stand upright. For the second time I stood on the top of this grand and solitary obelisk surrounded by clouds, and yet was conscious that the view on a clear day must be most impressive.

We set off directly to descend by the western route, and could not see above six yards' distance. The rocks on that side seemed to be child's play compared with those which we had ascended. When we reached the steep glacier tongue which projects so far up the Kaupe, we found thin powdery snow upon a hard frozen surface. This did not look well, so, instead of cutting a staircase down it, we skirted the rocks upon or within the lip of the little crevasse at the edge of the tongue, and in this way also rounded

the foot of the Kaupe, soon gaining the ridge of the Lille Kaupe with an ease which surprised us. After walking along a funnel of ice just under the ridge of this little peak, we emerged out of this temporary shelter into as wild a gale as I have ever faced. We were obliged to meet it, but were nearly blinded by snow and hail whenever we raised our heads.

For one and a half miles the way was clear enough along the crest of the crags overlooking the Kaupe Vand, but even this was not easy to follow with one eye covered up and the other perpetually winking. Still, by battling with the gale, we reached the flat snow-field, where we steered by the compass only and longed for a really good map. I was leading, and went a little too far south; consequently we missed the ancient cairn near the head of the Brattebakbræ, and I led my party to the rib of rocks west of that glacier. Fortunately, the clouds broke a little, and we saw the cairn behind us. We reached this cairn at 8.50, and after a capital glissade we gained the high pasturage of Bødal, entering Bødal sæter at 11.15 very tired.

After two hours of well-earned rest, we started down the valley and made our ways respectively to Olden and Faleide, where we thoroughly enjoyed the good meals, and clean sheets, between which, if we did not sleep the clock round, we nearly succeeded in accomplishing that difficult feat. Fortunately, mountaineers are never haunted by nightmare connected with any of their climbing adventures. Were it otherwise, I am sure that there would be fewer mountaineers than there are. If we do dream about the mountains, and I am glad to believe that we do sometimes, it is always the gentle and not the stern features which 'gild the glowing scenes of fancy.'



## CHAPTER XXX

'Witness the sprightly joy when aught unknown  
 Strikes the quick sense, and wakes each active power  
 To brisker measures. . . .'

AKESIDE.

THE EXPLORATION OF THE AALFOTEN AND  
 GJEGNALUND GLACIERS

*A paper written by MR. CHARLES HOPKINSON and MR. WM. CECIL SLINGSBY,  
 and read by the former before the 'Alpine Club,' April 10th, 1888.*

IN the summer of 1884 a new sheet of the *Amtskarter*, or Ordnance Survey maps of Norway, was issued, and revealed, or suggested, the presence of a large snow-field, about seventeen miles long, and four to six miles broad, between the Förde and Nord Fjords, and west of the usual route from Vadheim to Faleide. On the map, no great difference in height is indicated. At the east, a fine peak, Gjegalund, rises with grand northern precipices to a height of about 5600 feet. We had often noticed this mountain, but had no idea that its surroundings were so fine, as a glance at the map suggested. West, the snowfield, which seemed to vary from 4000 to 5300 feet, terminates in two peaks, Kjeipen and Hjelmen (the Rowlocks and the Helm), whose steep precipices face the storms of the Atlantic.

In the geological map this region is very conspicuous, as it forms the only important break in the continuity of the great mass of gneiss and metamorphic rock which stretches from the Sogne Fjord far past Romsdal. From the coast to the Hye Fjord, the characteristic formations are sandstones and conglomerates classed as 'Siluriske,' which lie in massive layers, best seen in the cliffs of Skjærdal, and which form a striking series of terraces on the upper Fjeld. In Skjærdal also are remarkable examples of conglomerate, where small white and red granite boulders are aggregated into large secondary boulders, and are as clean and round as if they had only just been raised out of the sea.

In 1885 we agreed to take a short autumnal tour in Norway,

in order to explore this snow-field, to try to climb some unascended peaks in Söndmøre, and, better than all, to attempt the conquest of Mjöltnir, a peak in the Romsdal district, which we had every reason to expect would prove to be an exceedingly difficult rock climb.

On September 4th we were joined at Florö by Lars Janssen, a handsome man, who had just returned from a short campaign with Mr. Russell Starr. Lars is a good type of a race of men descended from the old sea-kings, and has himself many a thrilling adventure, experienced during winter fishing at the Lofoten Islands, with which to beguile the easier hours of travel. He was to act as guide, porter, or companion, as the case required.

The captain of the little steamboat *Voss* most obligingly steamed some twelve miles out of his course to deposit us at the mouth of Nord Gulen Fjord. Before leaving steamer-comforts we provided ourselves with a long and substantial loaf, affectionately dubbed 'the baby.' Whilst waiting for a boat we watched a withered dame decapitating and cleaning herrings. Though in all probability we were the first foreigners who had visited her little cove, she was not in the least surprised to see us. The Norse folk, though innocently inquisitive, rarely show surprise.

The evening row to the little hamlet of Rise was delightful. Nature's picture, wet as if fresh from her easel, showed her wondrous powers as a colourist. The richness and softness of the evening glow on the mountains, from rose red to deep purple, the contrast of the dark pines and silvery birches in the forest fringe, the golden yellow of the ripening corn, the vivid mosses and the tranquil greys and blues of the Fjord, were beyond the art of pen or brush to portray.

On our arrival at Rise we found that a recent increase of population prevented our stopping where we had expected to do, but fortunately a woman who had travelled in our boat with us hospitably offered to accommodate us. We were provided with separate beds, occupied, alas! by thirsty armies.

Soon after three o'clock next morning we were rowing in the twilight up the Rise Vand, a lake about three and a half miles long, and headed by the two mountains Hjelman and Kjeipen. We intended to climb the latter, and, if possible, to traverse the great snow-field over a white dome about 5300 feet high, and to descend to Strömsbotten Hej sæter, which is about 520 feet above sea-level. The distance from Rise to this sæter, as the crow flies, is only about sixteen miles, and, if the map had been correct, we could easily have succeeded. Next day we intended to reascend to the

snow-field by a wild gully, well shown on the map, and to make a glacier pass to Fördedal or to the West Öksedal, and, for the third day, we had set apart the ascent of Gjegalund and the exploration of Skjærdal.

Leaving the boat, we toiled up the woody slopes on the left, where the honeysuckle filled the air with fragrance. The morning sun was hot and our knapsacks heavy, so that an occasional pause, to glance at the perfect reflections in the lake behind, was welcome. We cleared the woods at 6.10, and turned well to our right across a peat bog, in which Bruin had been having his morning tub, and a red deer had left his footmarks. The bear's route was ours for nearly a mile, and after it diverged, we commenced our attack on the successive rock faces. At 9.20 the last escarpment was behind us, and a pretty peak, up which a snow-slope offered an easy route, stood before us. We had had a magnificent climb, and for at least 2000 feet we were on rocks



where hand-climbing was necessary. It was a capital beginning, and each had gained confidence in his fellows.

The view was magnificent, and embraced the jagged Søndmøre peaks (north), the vast Justedalsbræ with its subtle curves and snowy domes (east), and the open sea and many fjords, with the precipitous Hornelen (west). Hornelen calls to mind the earliest and the greatest climbing feat recorded in Norway—Olaf Tryggvessön's rescue of one of his followers, who, more daring and less discreet than his companions, had climbed to a place where he could not get up and dared not come down. Olaf rose to the occasion, scaled the cliff, and tucking the crag-fast warrior under his arm, carried him down again.

The tract of fjeld and bræ before us was very remarkable. The cliffs and terraces which had marked the ascent continued eastward in serried array. We could count in succession fourteen, most of them with small tarns on the terraces, each of which dipped towards the next cliff east.

We soon set off again eastwards along the ridge of the snow-field, manfully resisting the temptation to climb a fine crag which we passed on our left. Beyond it, we turned north through a break in a rocky ridge, and passed close under a most remarkable tower of rock some 300 feet high. It is entirely cut off from an adjacent ridge by a deep gap and an overhanging precipice.<sup>1</sup> We skirted this rock and its neighbour through deep snow, aiming for a glacier slope which rose to the ridge. On nearing this, we saw that the crevasses were many and deep, so we looked about for a quicker route. The cliffs to our right, though difficult, were practicable, if we could once get on to the rock.



The ledges, though narrow and smooth, offered good hold. The long-legged members of the party, having found a narrow place, had a great advantage in crossing the bergschrund, which was deep. A stride, even if long, gives a steadier pitch and is less sensational than a jump, over blue depths, on to a narrow ledge. Above the rocks, an easy slope led to the top of a small peak, Tremøndstind, where we built a cairn. Though lower than Kjeipen, this peak affords a better point for criticising the *Amtskart*, which is feeble, save in imagination. To our great surprise, we saw immediately in front of us a deep depression, and a series of tarns not even suggested by the map-maker.

<sup>1</sup> This little peak was climbed in July 1894, by Herr Bing, who found it to be very difficult, and had to work up a chimney by back, knees, and head.

Above the tarns, a rampart of high cliffs sprung up, and upon the top of them, in the distance, we saw the snow dome which we had intended to cross. We gave up the idea of crossing the snow-field, and decided to try and skirt the mountain-side as far as possible above Grøndals sæter. Leaving Tremcøndstind at 12.35, we rapidly descended over easy rocks, and at 2.15 halted by one of the characteristic tarns for our frugal 'middag.' We had one of the wildest views in Norway. The great feature was a large lake, Storebotten Vand, from which the precipices rose, without a shore, to a great height.

We climbed a cliff and turned southwards on the terrace just below the high rampart. Our terrace gradually narrowed to the typical ledge, with a perpendicular wall both above and below, so often imagined by the valley tourist, but so seldom found by the mountaineer. This one, however, just served our purpose, as it emerged on to a steep grassy slope, at the foot of which, far below us, was Grøndals sæter. Having still three hours of daylight, we determined to push on for Strømsbotten Hej sæter, and worked eastwards, until we saw a little lake about 2000 feet below us. The lake was of rich turquoise blue, and with its setting of vivid grass and dark pine forest made a striking picture. Beyond this lake, four miles away, we saw the gap leading into the valley, where our intended sæter was situated. The direct way was down by the shores of the lake. As we did not relish the notion of going down 2000 feet merely to reascend the same height beyond, we sought an alternative. We could not follow a contour line on account of impracticable precipices, so, though we were all fagged, and daylight was fading away, we turned upward towards the snow-field. We soon came upon some difficult rocks, where Lars climbed brilliantly. In one awkward place he shoved us up and then climbed up nimbly himself without help.

Beyond the rocks, we reached a small glacier arm, which we crossed with some care and step-cutting. The purer air braced us all. We glissaded down a snow-slope to an easy moraine, and crossed below the ice-fall of another glacier just far enough to avoid the danger of falling séracs. Then we toiled up a rough glen, where we found cattle tracks. Lars skilfully piloted us in the fast-falling shades of night up to the little gap, where all signs of a track disappeared.

We pressed on down the glen, whose steep sides intensified the darkness, until two points of support were insufficient, and we had either to squat on our haunches or go on hands and knees,



with the risk of slipping into the icy stream which rattled down from an adjacent glacier. We put on the rope and soon had need of it, as we had to wade in the darkness a little stream about knee-deep. Progress was so slow that we began to look for a sleeping-place, but found none for a long time during which we descended a steep spur of rock for half an hour.

It may look all right in daylight, but it was a strange place at night. At 11.30 we found a hole, in which we perched ourselves by match-light on stones of aggressive angularity, making ourselves as little uncomfortable as we could. 'The baby' then claimed our attention, and grew—smaller; and afterwards English and Norse songs were lustily sung to the running accompaniment of the torrent.

At four A.M. we stretched our stiffened limbs, and after four hours of scrambling, wading, and pushing over and through rocks, screes, streams, rain-wetted birch copses, and the like, we reached the sæter, which is beautifully situated on the shores of the Skjælbrej Vand.

We were disappointed to find no food except milk and fladbröd, but soon discovered that potted game, cream, and water, suitably mixed, make an excellent white soup. The sæter method of cleaning the horn spoons by careful licking did not commend itself to our fancy. The bed into which we turned after our breakfast was small for two, and after Slingsby had had a short sleep he was ungratefully, though fortunately, kicked awake, whereupon he remembered his trout-rod and went out. His efforts resulted in a Sunday dinner of two trout weighing about a pound each.

Though our expedition occupied about twenty-eight hours in covering sixteen miles of distance, from point to point, we do not think our route could be much improved, and we certainly travelled fast considering the nature of the ground.

The Skjælbrej Vand has not the morose grandeur of so many Norse lakes, as shores of pasture-land and gentle slopes covered with copsewood, pines, ferns, and grass give it quite an English beauty, but its background of ice-capped mountain cliffs is worthy of the West Justedal regions.

We were much too tired to think of attempting the glacier pass we had thought of making, so were rowed down the lake by a small boy, who told us that every lake and tarn thereabouts was 'fuldt af fiske.' We descended by a good road through a charming village called Hope; then were rowed over the Hope Vand to Strømme, a fishing-village at the head of the Hye Fjord, where we found decent quarters and stopped the night.

Next day, as the weather was bad and the commissariat department a failure, we were rowed hungry along the fjord to Hestenæsören, where we found good and clean accommodation at the post-office. The Hye Fjord is almost unknown to tourists. It is the wildest arm of the Nord Fjord, and the mountains which rise from its western shores form a weird skyline of jagged peaks.

On September 8th we made our second expedition in the hope of finding Gjegnalund to be the fine peak it looked from below, and in the belief that it was unclimbed.

Though disappointed in these hopes, we had a memorable day.

We started as soon as it was light to row across the fjord, and by five o'clock were fairly on our way up Skjærdal. This valley is nearly parallel with the Hye Fjord, from which it is separated by the narrow range of fine peaks already alluded to. The track was good for the first forty minutes, but then grew rough and boggy. Whilst halting at 6.15 we were astonished to be overtaken by a little lad from a farm an hour behind us, who, in breathless anxiety, and with dishevelled hair, warned us to turn back—for fear of bears! We showed him our axes. He shook his head in dismay, and at last we gathered that, on the previous day, three bears had been seen near a tarn just in front of us, and that the men of the valley had concealed on each side of the lake, on the usual goat tracks, '*selv skyt*,' or an arrangement of rifles and guns heavily loaded with bullets, slugs, and old nails, with concealed strings attached to the triggers. But for our timely warning we might possibly have fallen victims in place of poor Bruin. As there was a leaky boat on the tarn, the difficulty was soon solved by the boy rowing us over.

The beauty of this lake and its varied surroundings will make it some day a favourite spot with those tourists who love the solitudes of Nature. The blue water was studded with huge rocks greened over by moss, fern, and birch. The whole valley around and above the lake was covered with these rocks, which had fallen from heights above. Eastwards were thickly wooded slopes; west, an enormous precipice, crowned here and there by snow and séracs, and relieved by waterfalls; whilst to the south an enormous amphitheatre of rocks and snow rose towards the jagged mountains beyond. We plodded steadily up the valley, winding in and out, amongst, or over and under, the mossy rocks, many of which were far bigger than a sæter, till the slopes became steeper and the vegetation less luxuriant, and soon reached the snow. We passed the amphitheatre seen from below and entered a second, still finer, whose centre was filled with a small lake of deepest

blue, flecked with an ice flotilla from the glacier flowing into it. The rocks around showed their stratification by great curved bands on the western cliffs.

After a steep ascent up hard snow we reached a gap from which a most tempting descent could be made to the Hope Vand. Crossing near the head of West Öksendal, we saw below us in that valley a large tarn, into which the glacier we were on projected, and on each side precipices arose out of the water and seemed to block the way entirely. We roped and crossed the névé south-east of Gjegalund, and walked straight up a long rocky ridge to the top, which we reached at 12.17. Here we found, as on Kjeipen, the cairn built by the Ordnance surveyors, who had preceded us not long before.

We studied briefly the north-eastern face, which we had thought of descending. It looked formidable, and we decided that in driving snow and rain it was better left alone. We returned, therefore, in our tracks, which were then rapidly filling up, until we were able to descend to the eastern snow-field.

After a long trudge due east we climbed, very easily, a small peak, Björnetind, which stands directly above the lower tarn of Skjærdal.

After building a cairn, we turned northwards along the snow parallel to Skjærdal and crossed a little glacier above a very broken ice-fall, which terminates in a shoreless lake with lofty precipices on its south side. We were consequently driven to the rocks on the left and over them to the next side valley, and eventually descended by steep terraces to Hyenæs, whence we were rowed by a stalwart girl to Hestenæsören.





HUNTER'S SWORD AND AN ANCIENT SWORD OF ONE OF THE  
VARANGER GUARD AT CONSTANTINOPLE

## CHAPTER XXXI

HISTORICAL INTEREST; NAVAL BATTLE OF HJÖRUNGAVAAG; THE  
ISLAND OF SELJEÖ AND SAINT SUNNIVA; THE SÖNDMÖRE FOLK  
USUALLY SUPERSTITIOUS; AVALANCHES; STRANGER'S CATECHISM

'Avec leurs grands sommets, leurs glaces éternelles,  
Par un soleil d'été que les Alpes sont belles !  
Tout dans leurs frais vallons sert à nous enchanter,  
La verdure, les eaux, les bois, les fleurs nouvelles.  
Heureux qui sur ces bords peut longtemps s'arrêter !  
Heureux qui les revoit, s'il a pu les quitter !'

GUIRAUD.

### SÖNDMÖRE

ONE of the most interesting and beautiful mountain districts in Norway is to be found in the ancient kingdom of Söndmöre, or South Möre, which name distinguishes it from Nordmöre, or North Möre. These two ancient kingdoms, as well as that of Romsdal, form the *Amt* or province of Romsdal. In recent years—mainly, it is true, because a couple of good inns have been built—the so-called 'Alps of Söndmöre' have attracted a considerable number of cragsmen, who, as a rule, have been well rewarded by the grand climbs which they have had, and the victories which they have won.

The mountaineer's Söndmöre, however, is pretty well confined to the Hjörund and Sökkelv fjords, the rugged mountains which overshadow these most beautiful sea-lochs, and the many wild glens which intersect this weird and fascinating region, and does not include the Geiranger Fjord.

Söndmöre is very rich in historical interest. It was from Aalesund, its chief town, that Ganger Rolf, or Rollo the Sea-King,

as we call him, set sail to conquer Normandy, and to become the progenitor of kings and queens of England.

At Hjörungavaag, in the tenth century, one of the greatest naval battles which history records was fought, in which Haakon Jarl completely overthrew the Jomsburg Vikings—a most numerous and powerful body of pirates, who sailed periodically out of the Baltic to harry the coasts of nearly every country in Europe. We can even now see on the shores adjacent to the scene of the battle many tumuli, which cover the bones and honour the deeds of those heroes of old. Can we not also in some measure picture the mighty wind-tossed pirate fleet sailing round the stormy headland of Stadt? Do we not also see the gallant young hero, Erlend, son of Haakon, leaping aboard the warship of Sigvald Jarl, the Jomsburg leader, to court death and win Valhalla, as the willing sacrifice which the gods demanded as the price of the victory which was to follow?

Many a gallant Viking first saw the light of day in Söndmöre, and many a bloody battle has been fought along its grisly coasts.

When steaming up the Vartdals fjord, near the scene of the great battle, a singular mountain named Mastdal Kloven is passed. It consists of a long ridge, the segment of an immense circle, with the concave side uppermost, its southern end raised higher than the rest. Near this end is to be seen a gigantic V-shaped cleft, as at Kinns' Kloven, and if the mountain ridge could be doubled up, the two sides of the cleft would fit accurately, and the whole ridge would then become a perfectly uniform segment. From one place, a sharp-peaked mountain is visible through the cleft in the far distance. This I saw in 1872, and made a sketch of it, and this was my first introduction to the finest mountain in Söndmöre, Kjölaastind, of which I had the pleasure of making the first ascent four years later.

On the Island of Seljeö, a few miles south of Stadt, are the ruins of one of the few ancient stone buildings in Norway, a Benedictine monastery, built in honour of Saint Sunniva, an Irish princess, who, in order to avoid a forced marriage with a Viking who invaded her kingdom in Ireland, entrusted her handmaidens and herself to the mercy of God in three open boats, without either sails or oars. The Gulf Stream drifted most of them to the island of Seljeö, and the rest to the island Kinn, as in recent years an old woman was borne by the same current from Shetland to an island near Aalesund.

Miss Vonen has given me the following account: 'Both islands were uninhabited, and used only as pasturage for cattle.

Sunniva and her companions sought shelter in the caves, which they found in the hill on the west side of Seljeö; in these caves they lived a long time, dependent for food on their fishing, and peacefully worshipping God.

At length, however, the inhabitants on the mainland discovered them, and, imagining them to be Vikings or evil-doers, applied to Haakon Jarl, requesting him to help them to overthrow the pirates. The Earl agreed, and went to Seljeö with a strong force. When Sunniva and her people saw them coming, they went inside the caves, praying God to grant them a happy death, and to save their bodies from falling into the hands of the heathen. Their prayer was heard, for great masses of rock fell



VIEW OF OLD MONASTERY ON SELJEÖ

down and closed the mouths of the caves, and the Earl and his followers did not find a single person.

Sometime after, two brothers on their way to Thronthjem passed close by Seljeö, where they saw a wonderful light rising from the shore. They landed and discovered the radiant head of a man which emitted the sweetest perfume. Wondering at this, they took the head to show it to the Earl Haakon. They soon heard that Haakon was killed and that the Christian, Olaf Tryggvesson, was made king. They continued their journey to Thronthjem and were well received by King Olaf.

They showed him the head, and both the king and bishop said at once that it must belong to a saint.

The king and Bishop Sigurd, with many others, went to Seljeö, and, after seeking among the rocks, found in caves many bodies which emitted a heavenly perfume, and at last they discovered the body of Sunniva herself, uninjured and beautiful, as if she were newly dead. A church was soon afterwards built

where all these remains were preserved. In the year 1170 Sunniva's remains were removed to Bergen and placed in a large silver shrine above the high-altar in Christ Church, where they remained till the year 1531, when the church was destroyed.'

The Söndmøre folk are, even now, I am glad to say, delightfully superstitious, more so in fact than they will readily admit, though why a man should be ashamed of acknowledging the beliefs which he holds, and which in great measure direct his daily actions, is more than I can understand. Who could reasonably be expected to live, say, on the west shore of the Hjörund fjord, in the shadow of those uncanny-looking mountain ridges, and not believe in a greater or a less degree in the old legends which have been handed down from generation to generation for centuries? Surely it is most natural to associate the name of St. Olaf with what we may call supernatural powers, when the results of his works are still in evidence?

In the year 1876, Emanuel Mohn and I met at Standal a farmer who had a rich store of legends connected with the Hjörund and neighbouring fjords. He was an excellent storyteller, and certainly believed in much that he told us. Mohn retold some of these legends in various papers which he wrote about Söndmøre, and other writers have occasionally quoted them, but never in the racy and earnest manner in which we heard them.

I will refer to a few. Rising out of a green alp just above Standal is Kjölaastind, or the Gluggentind, as it is called at Standal. It is the grandest mountain in Söndmøre, and the highest west of the Hjörundfjord. There is a hole about 18 feet high and 6 feet wide which goes through the southern ridge, through which I have seen the fast-scudding clouds beyond. This hole, the *glugge*—or peephole—which gives the name to the mountain, was formed in the following manner. St. Olaf, the king who introduced Christianity into his country by the edge of the sword, was, once upon a time, on a mountain near Standal when a Jotun or Troid appeared on Gluggentind. St. Olaf's wrath arose, he drew an arrow from his quiver and shot at the mountain demon. Whether the arrow killed the Troid or not matters little, but it pierced the mountain and made the *glugge*, and was almost buried in the ground where it fell. A portion of the arrow, which in time became stone, is now used as a bridge; it is about 16 feet long, and we walked over it. How could we disbelieve our eyes?

On a mountain south from Sæbö is to be seen a large round-

topped hollow in the face of a high cliff, and on the opposite mountain above the church is a smaller hollow. St. Olaf jumped across the valley here, but for once missed his footing, and thus caused the hollow which to this day is called St. Olaf's Gjæl.

The same great hero of old was once being rowed on the Norddals fjord in the eastern part of Söndmöre in one of his war-ships, when it was suddenly attacked by a great sea-serpent, such an one as is so well and, presumably, so faithfully depicted in the *Natural History of Norway* by Bishop Pontoppidan. St. Olaf seized the serpent and dashed it with such force upon the rocks that after a few horrible convulsions it died. Its huge body became petrified, and I have seen it on the face of a dark cliff near Sylte, where it is called St. Olaf's Slange. Sceptical geologists call it 'a vein of white quartz,' but then we all know that they do not understand it.

Another legend, which ended tragically, is interesting to those who know the scenes which lie several miles apart on the shores of the Hjörund.

A witch living in a wild ghyll on the east side of the fjord was wooed by a misshapen Jotun dwarf, called the Raamand, whose home was the Raamands Gjæl, a couple of miles south of Sæbö. On one occasion the witch went up to see her lover, and was so much impressed by his ugliness that she spat at him, and by so doing, turned him into stone, and having forgotten her broomstick, she rowed homewards in a boat. On her arrival at Molaup she shoved off the boat, jumped ashore, and stamped with indignation on the rock. The boat went with a bang across the fjord, where it made a hole in the cliff and then sank. It can still be seen below the clear waters, and, oddly enough, the place has been for ages the best fishing-ground in the fjord. A few years ago an English yacht struck this submerged boat, and the ignorant skipper said it was a rock. I have seen the petrified Raamand myself with a frozen tear on the rock below him. The view, from the Raamands ghyll, of Slogen and neighbouring mountains rising so grandly out of the fjord is one of the most beautiful I have ever seen. Other corroborations of the truth of this story are to be seen at Molaup, where the witch's footprint is still to be seen, and also in the ghyll above, where occasionally, even from Standal, smoke can be seen issuing from the witch's cauldron accompanied by noises like artillery. There are vain scoffers who talk of avalanches and stone-falls, but these have never been up the ghyll to search for the truth.

Our Standal friend pointed out to us a massive, broad-topped

mountain where, long long ago, a Troid erected a huge funeral pyre which he set on fire, and to which all the serpents of Söndmöre were irresistibly attracted and lured to their doom. The last was a very huge snake, an aristocratic serpent. It crept three times slowly round the fire, then gave a horrible shriek and leapt into the middle of the flames.

Many other myths and legends were told to us at Standal: one related to Gunhilde gjæl, another to Innerste gjæl, but I will leave them for others to record.

Snow avalanches on a large scale fall in many places in Söndmöre every year, and occasionally have caused a heavy death-roll. Such notably was one which fell from a mountain not far from the Raamands gjæl on a Sunday morning many years ago and overwhelmed three boat-loads of worshippers on their way to the church at Sæbö. In the year 1679 there was a very destructive avalanche which killed 130 persons. Another, in Næbbedal, carried away a house and all its inhabitants.

There is a cave in Söndmöre which, nowadays, has lost its ancient reputation. Bishop Pontoppidan says: 'At Herroe, in Sundmoer, I heard much talk, from the common people, of a cavern called Dolsteen, and, as they are apt to magnify all such things by their own imaginations, they conceit that it reaches under the sea, all along to Scotland.'

The stolid Söndmöre folk possess an unquenchable thirst for general knowledge, and all honour to them; but when Mohn and I first visited Sökkelven and the Hjørundfjord, we did find occasionally that there were limits even to the joy of being personally interviewed. Tourists were then unknown, and strangers were suspicious characters.

On one occasion when we had crossed the grand pass, the Brunstadskar, we arrived late in the evening at a hamlet at the head of smiling Sökkelven, longing for supper and clean beds. Every person we spoke to began with exactly the same catechising formula, which was as follows:—

'Fremmede karer?'	Strangers?
'Kar er de fra?'	Where are you from?
'Ka er dit navn?'	What is your name?
'Skal de til byen?'	Are you going to the town, i.e. Aalesund?

When they heard I was 'fra England,' the fifth question was invariably 'Er du fra London?'

Then we were asked if the Government had sent us? If we

were prospecting for minerals? If we were fishery inspectors, and had not our ice-axes something to do with this profession? Surely we were not tax-gatherers! Had we anything to sell, and, if so, had we samples in our knapsacks? Were we painters? And all the while we were only hungry mountaineers longing for a bowl of milk, a crust of barley bread, and a hard bed to follow. At



*Vien in Söhelven*

first, when we had answered the questions, we meekly asked ours in turn, but at last we became expert and took the wind out of their sails by giving the answers before they had time to put the questions. Finally an old couple took us in. We had a similar experience at Standal on the western shores of Hjörund, where eight farmers in turn declined the responsibility of housing such unusual visitors, and, but for the kind intervention of the artist, Herr Normann, would have taken our 'lodging on the cold ground.'

This, too, was not from inhospitable motives, as I have on many an occasion enjoyed the hospitality of Söndmöre folk. We merely could not make the natives understand that we were travelling for pleasure. They all thought that we were spying out the land, and that we should tell the Government to raise their taxes. This was a most natural supposition. Why should we come to see such wild scenes and sterile mountains? When we ventured to express our admiration of the weird-looking mountain forms, the usual reply was 'Fjeldene er stygge'—The mountains are ugly—or to them unproductive.

Every posting station in Norway possesses a governmental book called a *Skyds bog*, in which each traveller passing through is expected to write his name, and to state his requirements, whether of a boat or a horse, as well as his destination. By an examination of this book one can see how many travellers have passed through in a given period, as well as their names. At Standal we only found five names between the years 1853 and 1876.

The costume of Söndmöre is distinctive, though not so picturesque as in some other districts. The girls wear little flat and black plate-like caps, white bodices, and skirts of blue wadmél. Men wear woollen caps.

The scenery of Söndmöre abounds in variety and rich contrasts. There are peaceful valleys with fertile farms and lovely birch groves, where are lovely foregrounds and a richness and delicacy of colouring, whose beauty cannot be surpassed in any glen of a similar size in Europe.

There is a gentle beauty as at Sökkelven and Volden; and though there are scores of grisly mountains, there are lovely hills as well.

A well-known British artist, who paints principally mountain pictures, says in a letter to me: 'Söndmöre is a jewel and no mistake. . . . Norangsdal pleases me more than the Nærödal or Romsdal, being quite as grand—gränder, I think—and infinitely more picturesque.'

The high lateral glens, such as Hjortedal, Brunstaddal, Mulskreddal or Vartdal, always remind me of the corries of the Coolins in Skye. Indeed, this is not surprising, as in each case the mountains consist principally of gabbro. Each of these beautiful mountain regions comes under the influence of the Gulf Stream, whose warm waters are absorbed by the air, and given back in refreshing showers which paint the mountain-sides with a beauty unknown in central Europe.



As for the fjords, all I can say is that, much though I love Lyngen, Kjosén, and other sea-lochs whose beauty and grandeur beggar description, I consider the Hjörund to be the grandest and the Sökkely the most beautiful fjord in Norway.

What shall I say about Aalesund, fishy Aalesund, and the lovely view at sunset? Are not the lines of that mountain island just across the harbour very nearly perfection? Yes. But there is a still more lovely island within the Arctic Circle—the Fuglö. See the latter under the weird rosy light of the midnight sun, when the whole fjord foreground is flooded with soft purples, greens and blues, as I have often done, and do not hope to see anything more beautiful in this world, as if you do, you will be disappointed.

The Geirangerfjord should be seen from a small boat, and not from the deck of a steamer. Not only can it be seen, but it can be felt as well. In the Geiranger, dreary water dungeon though it be, all is gigantic, representative of Thor rather than of Balder, and better expressed by the Norse word *storartet* than by any English word which I can call to mind. The *flaæer* or ledge farms are very interesting, though they are terrible places.

At Skaggeflaa one can see the ladders up which a calf or lamb can be carried, but which, when grown up, can only be brought down salted or smoked. A foal had once been taken up there, and had to remain. I fear his work would not pay for his keep. Formerly, it is said that when the farmer saw the tax-gatherer's boat on the fjord, he drew up the top ladder, and when the representative of the law arrived, he was greeted with chaff and smiles, which had to take the place of hard cash. A few years ago a man built a new farm-house near the entrance to the Geirangerfjord on one of these ledges directly in the track of the snow avalanches which fell from a gap in the mountain wall behind, and the house had two or three very narrow escapes from destruction. The farmer noticed that the ground immediately at the base of the cliff was always free of the snow which shot out beyond, so he removed his house to this place of safety, and now in spring he can look out from his windows and see the snow torrent falling from several hundred feet above his head and striking the place which first his temerity had dictated as a suitable place for his farm-house. A flat country, it appears to me, has, after all, some advantages of its own.

An hour or two in the Geirangerfjord gives me a great feeling of oppression, and I have invariably been glad to get away from such a gloomy dungeon to some place where the scenery may be termed pretty rather than grand. Söholt, for example, is a great



Sunset from Aalsvold.

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relief after the Geiranger, so also are most places on the Hjørundfjord, though the word 'pretty' is hardly a suitable adjective to use in connection with the latter.

Many of the natives of Söndmöre are devoted admirers of its grand scenery. They have a *Turist Forening*, whose headquarters are at Aalesund, and this club has already done much to open up the wildest glens and to cut paths through otherwise almost impenetrable brushwood to lead to some useful mountain pass. Notably such are the paths from Bjerke to the Tysse vand and that up the Skyldstad brække, which are a great boon to mountaineers, as I have good cause to know.

I need hardly say that in Herr Kristoffer Randers, Söndmöre possesses an ideal writer of a guide-book. His *Söndmöre*, which has already seen its second edition, is in every sense admirable. Enthusiasm and an artistic appreciation of the natural beauties of the district are noticeable on every page, yet it is all true. The illustrations are excellent. Before long this book will be translated into English, and I wish I could recommend that it should be now.

Herr Randers is a poet as well, and a poem of ten verses written by him, called 'Rule Britannia,' which appeared in a leading Christiania paper in January 1900, dark days for us in England, made many a true Briton long to shake warmly by the hand the Norse poet, whose generous feelings towards our nation and country prompted him to publish such verses of appreciation and sympathy, at a time when most continental Europeans and their friends, the 'Little Englanders' at home, were, apparently, not over anxious for our success in South Africa. I am glad to say that I know a good many Norsemen whose opinions on this question coincide with those of Herr Randers.

Amongst other books relating to Söndmöre is one written in 1766 by Hans Ström, which is a mine of information, but there are only a few copies in existence.

## CHAPTER XXXII

FIBELSTADHAUGEN; A BEAR HUNT; THE BEAR WINS THE DAY AS USUAL; A SHOOTING-MATCH; PASSES OVER THE FJELD; TWO ASCENTS OF KVITEGGEN.

'Beneath the mountain's lofty frowning brow,  
Ere aught of perilous ascent you meet,  
A meed of mildest charms delays the unlabouring feet.'

COLERIDGE.

## FIBELSTADHAUGEN

## A BEAR HUNT

It is a strange fact that though the eastern part of Söndmøre, including the marvellous but gloomy cañon of Geiranger, has been well known to tourists for over thirty years, the western portion, which contains the so-called 'Söndmøre Alps' and the two most beautiful fjords in Norway, one of which is now visited by every tourist steamer which goes north of Sogn, was, to all intents and purposes, practically unknown until Emanuel Mohn and I traversed some of the wilder glens in the year 1876, which Mohn recorded in the *Nor. Tur. For. Aarbog*.

It is true that Horningdalsrokkén, an outlier from the rest, but a very fine peak too, was climbed in the year 1866 by Captain Campbell,<sup>1</sup> but this mountain pioneer apparently never visited the Hjörund, so missed seeing the grandest mountains. It is also equally true that even to-day Horningdalsrokkén offers a grand field for exploration to mountaineers in search of adventure, which apparently has attracted no notice whatever.

The lovely valleys of Bondal, Norangsdal and Velledal, and the pass of Kviven, were known to a few choice spirits, and now and then some tourists admired the spires of the Hjörund and the horns of Sökkelv from the top of the little hill above Aalesund; but, thinking that 'distance lends enchantment to the view,' they were content, and went to the gloomy Geiranger or the sombre Romsdal, instead of to Bjerke, bonny Bjerke of the birch-trees, or to

<sup>1</sup> *Alpine Journal*, vol. iv. p. 28, where there is a good illustration.





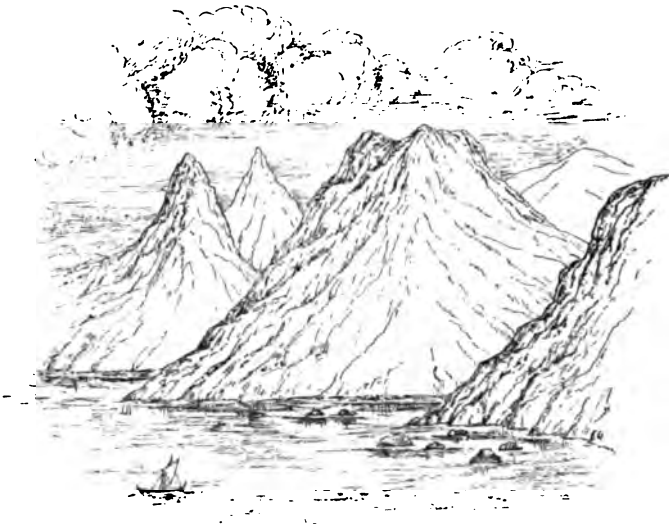






smiling Sæbø, or breezy Fibelstadhaugen. Well! Bjerke always reminds me of hunger, and Romsdal of comfort and plenty.

My first view of the 'Söndmöre Alps' was in the year 1872, when, steaming along the coast between Stadt and Aalesund in the Vartdals fjord, I noticed, through a strange V-shaped notch in a near range, a fine jagged mountain which I sketched and afterwards discovered to be the Kjölaastind or Gluggentind, whose first ascent I made four years later. In 1874, on two occasions I saw the Hjörund peaks in the far distance, and in the following year, when my sister and I were driving from Faleide to Hellesylt, I well remember seeing a milestone where the road branched off



VIEW OF KJÖLAASTIND FROM SEA

to the Næbbedal. On this stone was engraved 'Til Hjörendfjord,' which at that time might have been truthfully interpreted—To grand scenery, discomfort, and starvation. We felt then that a fjord with a name like that must be worth a visit, and I have often regretted that we did not pay it a hasty visit.

There is nothing mawkish or sentimental about the name Hjörund, or Hjörend, nor was there, I take it, in the character of the woman after whom this fjord was named. In the fourteenth century the 'Black Death' overshadowed the Hjörund fjord. Only one woman remained alive. Her name was Hjörund. Eventually a portion of this region was repeopled by Scotchmen, and many of their characteristics still remain.

Mohn had made a flying visit through Söndmöre in 1875, so it

was most natural that he and I should go there in 1876, after our successful campaign in Jotunheim.

After crossing the Kamphammer pass in a storm to Sundal, we made our way by the fertile farms of Flo-in-Stryn over the mountains to Hellesylt, arriving early one morning at Fibelstadhaugen.

Instead of the usual Norse stolidity, we found briskness and excitement. Revenge was the motive power. Had not Bamsen killed three cows in as many days, and was he not at that moment looking from his hiding-place in the copse above greedily down on the herds now collected about the farms? Yes!

'He has been seen this very morning.'

'He shall be slain this very day, and his hide shall be stripped from off his back to-morrow.'

All the able-bodied population of Næbbedal, men, women, and children, were assembled, and all the arsenals and military stores in the neighbourhood had been ransacked and emptied to such an extent that, in case the sea-board of Söndmöre had been suddenly invaded by a foreign foe, no adequate defence could have been made. In fact, all the available rifles, to the number of four, had been hunted up, as well as a miscellaneous assortment of guns, cows' horns, *lure* or wooden horns seven or eight feet in length, whistles, shouting boys and barking dogs. The plan of campaign was already arranged, a commander appointed, food and drink had been served to strengthen the muscles and to nerve the spirits, and all awaited the order to proceed.

Mohn and I of course volunteered to join in the hunt, and being well armed with ice-axes, our services were accepted. As there were not sufficient men or rifles to form a '*ring skal*,' an ever-contracting ring, a '*driv jagt*,' or a drive along the mountain-side, was to be the plan of operation.

I offered to accompany the drivers, thinking that there were too few for the large amount of ground to be driven, but Ole Peder, the general, said there were plenty, that Bamsen would certainly be seen, and could not escape altogether, and that we had better go with him and see the sport. The drivers were to begin in the woods just below Kviteggen and to drive through the broad belt of birch-covered screes about two or three miles west, to some open ground below a high gap or pass in the mountain wall, over which it was taken for granted that Bruin would make his way. The rifles were to be posted where they could cover the open ground.

After an hour's walk and climb, we reached the selected battle-

field. The rifles were loaded solemnly, rags were wrapped over the muzzles and nipples, and strict silence was enjoined. Four posts were chosen some sixty or seventy yards apart. Ole, with Mohn and myself, were at the second from the top, well hidden on a crag. Just above the top man a sheer precipice rose out of the scree, which would prevent the bear, when alarmed, from going higher up the mountain, and it was assumed that he would avoid civilisation and be certain to take to the mountains.

We kept as still as statues, and as quiet as mice, as 'a bear has the strength of ten men and the wisdom of twelve.' After a time we heard the drivers far away under Kviteggen. Then Ole whispered to me:

'Would you like to shoot the bear?'

'Yes, very much, but I have no rifle.'

'You can have this if you like; I have shot two or three bears before. But are you a sure man?'

'No man is sure, but I can shoot as well as most people.'

After a good many instructions, he handed me his rifle, a sort of Remington, saying:

'He will be here directly and he won't walk, but will come at a gallop. If he comes up there, you must let the top man fire first, and must then run up and shoot as he goes away; if he comes straight towards us, wait till he passes that bush. He is certain to come, and he is a very big animal, and will be very angry when he comes.'

Down came the pitiless, wind-driven rain; cloud-wreaths clung to the mountain-sides, but did not hide their wild, frost-riven ridges. Fibelstadhaugen, standing as it does on the watershed between the fjords of Hjörund and Sunelven, looked very lovely and fertile 1200 feet below us. On the mountain wall opposite, Ole pointed out where he had shot a bear which then fell a good 2000 feet to the valley below.

An avalanche once fell down a gully in this wall and carried away a house, killing several people.

'There—— He'll be here directly. Are you quite steady?'

'See, there he is,' said one.

'No, it's a bush.'

Nearer and nearer came the drivers; louder and louder their discordant noises. The excitement increased momentarily.

'Why doesn't he come?'

After having waited three hours in the wet, we saw two men running down the road far below who made signs which we interpreted to mean that Bamsen had been seen and was coming.

The top man went a little higher up and towards the drivers. Then we heard a couple of shots in the direction he had taken. A bush moves and then another. 'He comes. Be ready. He comes.'

Yes, he did come, but *he* was a man. One by one each driver appeared on the edge of a rock a quarter of a mile away, and we realised that Bruin had given *some one* the slip. The drivers said that we were to blame, but *we* knew otherwise.

We all turned down to the valley, where we met a lame man who said:

'I saw him several times during the drive, at first not far below the ice avalanche débris. He walked slowly along and then sat down on his tail and laughed at the drivers. He was in no hurry, but quietly walked down the hillside, and is now below the *Stor hammer*.'<sup>1</sup>

The drivers, on the other hand, had not seen the bear, and they had finished their drive at the top of the crag. I suggested a second drive, and volunteered to be one of the drivers, but all were tired and wanted to give it up. However, I became eloquent in bad Norse; Ole came to my side, and it was agreed that we should try again after having a meal. Cream porridge was made for Mohn and me, the woman who made it having a baby strapped like a knapsack on her back. Each stir of the spoon caused a spasmodic howl.

The riflemen went to their posts, and in the course of time eight men and I approached the *Stor hammer*. We shouted and yelled, and shook the wet bushes till we could get no wetter. We crossed little ravines, and now and then were startled by a woodcock or a ptarmigan, and at last reached Bamsen's fortress, which was practically unassailable. Rocks of immense size, covered with thick moss, were piled one upon another and formed hundreds of little caverns. Rotten tree trunks were squandered everywhere; between them were living trees; some, beaten down by winter snow, grew out horizontally. But where is Bamsen? Here! There! Anywhere you like, but shout as we will, he makes no sign. He knows better.

When we arrived at the farm again, the word '*sild*' was on every one's lips. The herring were in the Hjörundfjord, the hunt must be abandoned, and all must go a-fishing. On four other occasions in the same district, I have known this mystic word '*sild*' to arouse the whole population.

<sup>1</sup> A hammer is a crag jutting out from a mountain-side, and has almost invariably below it enormous blocks of fallen rocks. The hammer in this case was very large, hence the name *Stor*—great hammer.

Before leaving, one of the sportsmen suggested a shooting-match for the four riflemen. A square board was set up in a field and the sport began. One of the rifles was a relic of the tragic Sinclair expedition of the year 1612. It had been converted from a flint-lock to carry a percussion-cap, but still it was one of the old Scotch rifles, very long and very heavy, but very business-like.

Ole fired first and made a good shot. Then came the Sinclair, but it would not go off. Number three then came, but it missed fire. A little coaxing by putting powder on the nipple and in the cap led to a discharge. Number four's rifle went off all right, but the bullet went wide. Then came the Sinclair again. Cap after cap was tried, the nipple was cleared out and filled with powder time after time. Neither gentle persuasion nor ordinary force would avail. At last a bright-eyed lad ran into the house, returning in a few minutes with a red-hot poker. The situation was saved, the Sinclair's bullet split the board. *N.B.* We had no red-hot poker with us on the mountain-side.

This was my first day in the mountaineer's Söndmøre, and a very memorable day it was too. Since then I have often revisited Fibelstadhaugen. There is now a cosy little inn at the farm which, oddly enough, is run on alternate years by Ole and a widow. As this inn is on the watershed and 1214 feet above sea-level, it is a very healthy and bracing place, and it has the advantage of enjoying in fine weather the golden sunshine all the live-long day. The mountain forms are very wild, and there are, in addition to the well-known names of the higher peaks, some singular local names for the lower mountains. I believe there is not a Middagshorn or a prominent mountain over which the sun shines at midday, but there is a Nonshorn, the word *non* in that district meaning 3 P.M., at which time there is one of the many little meals. There is also a Moeraftesnæbbe, or a six o'clock in the evening mountain.

The beauties and weird grandeur of Næbbedal and Norangsdal are now as well known as they were unknown twenty years ago. By slow degrees pedestrians are beginning to realise that there are several most beautiful and yet easy mountain passes to be made from Fibelstadhaugen. I have had the pleasure of introducing three of these to the tourist world.<sup>1</sup> One to Rjerke by Kvitelvedal, a wild valley where the bulls of the district take their summer's run, brings the walkers to the Tusvand, a glorious lake overshadowed by Horningdalsrokken and a snowy range to the west. At the outlet are many strange giants' cauldrons well

<sup>1</sup> *Alpine Journal*, vol. xiv. p. 509.

worth a visit. The descent is made alongside the Tysse fos (Fairies' waterfall).<sup>1</sup> The second pretty snow pass, that of Urbakken, 5840 feet, which leads to the farm Lere on the Hjørund fjord, was made by my wife, and sister and brother-in-law and myself. The views on the way were magnificent. We were told at the farm where we drank some coffee, that not only were we the first foreigners who had visited their little valley, but that no Norse strangers had ever been there. A third pass, that of the Viddalskar,<sup>2</sup> was made from the hamlet of Viddal, and the descent down glaciated slabs of rock into Norangsdal was both difficult and dangerous. A better line could have been taken had we started from Fibelstadhaugen.

#### ASCENTS OF KVITEGGEN

A glance at the *Amtskart* will show at once how well situated this little mountain inn is for making mountain expeditions. Ole Peder Haugen was one of the first to realise this, but though adventurous enough in other ways, he preferred that the mountain pioneering should be done by deputy, and not by himself in person. Hence, when Vigdal and I arrived, apparently out of the clouds, but into bright sunshine at Ole's farm, one day in 1881, he pointed up to Kvittegggen and told us that we ought to climb it. Though we had failed that very day on Staven, that remarkable mountain which rises like a wall of 5000 feet out of the most contracted part of Norangsdal, Ole was most anxious that we should succeed on the Söndmöre giant Kvittegggen—the white ridge—on the following day. The mountain had once been climbed many years before by the Ordnance surveyors, accompanied by Ole's grandfather. The ascent had been made by a very long and circuitous route which did not commend itself to us. We attacked it by the broad gap above the house, and then turned up near a well-marked gully which comes down the gap. Though we could have traversed out of the gully, we foolishly kept straight up and found it to be remarkably difficult. Finally we emerged on to the top snow-field through an arch of rock. We descended quickly by glissades and a snow-gully overlooking an icy tarn, and by so doing reached the farm in sixty-five minutes from the summit.

Of late years the ascent of this mountain has become the fashion, and it has almost invariably been made by the route

<sup>1</sup> *Alpine Journal*, vol. xii. p. 267.

<sup>2</sup> *Nor. Tur. For. Aarvog* for 1881, p. 109.

which we took on the ascent, with the exception that a traverse was made to the west. Iron rings have been driven in here and there, but not where they are most needed. This route, which I descended in 1900, is bad, dangerous, and has nothing whatever to commend it. The rock is loose and friable, and wholly unsuitable for climbing. I pointed this out in the *Nor. Tur. For. Aarbog* for 1881, and have done so again in that of 1901 in greater detail.

As I showed the safe, easy, and most interesting route to Lars Haugen in 1900, there is now no reason why tourists who wish to ascend the highest mountain in Söndmöre should risk their lives by following the route of the iron rings.

#### THE ASCENT OF KVITEGGEN BY THE NORTH-EAST RIDGE

In the Alps, as well as in Norway, the tendency has always been to climb mountains from the back. The reason is obvious, it is generally the easiest way. Up to a few years ago, few, if any, ever dreamt of climbing the Aiguille de la Za direct from Arolla until Miss Richardson and Émile Rey showed the way. The Zermatt Breithorn will naturally be generally ascended from the St. Théodule, but it is strange that one grand ridge, in full view of the thousands of tourists who go to the Gorner Grat every year, and which some of us have believed for over twenty years to be feasible, should only have been climbed for the first time a few years ago.

Even now, several well-known mountains in the Alps offer the laurels of victory on entirely new and perfectly legitimate routes to the first well-organised party who will attempt their ascent in good weather and under favourable conditions.

In Norway, naturally, the choice is still greater. I have often twitted men for their slavish adherence to old routes when better ones stared them in the face. However, they may now fairly have the laugh of me in connection with Kvittegg.

I had frequently been to Fibelstadhaugen, and had looked up at the mountain hundreds of times. Often had I watched the avalanches falling from the snout of the little glacier which nestles in its lap, but had never realised that one of the grandest climbs in Söndmöre lay close at hand and in full view. However, one morning in September 1899, I was setting off with my wife and a family party for a fishing picnic, and on looking up at Kvittegg I suddenly discovered the mountaineering potentialities of the north-east ridge.

I studied it closely through my glass from many points of view during the day, with the result that it was arranged that my



two nephews, Aldred and Erik Todd, Lars Haugen, and I should attempt the ascent the following day.

A heavy snowstorm during the night entirely put all thoughts of serious climbing out of the question for the rest of the year. It was a great disappointment, as, in case of our success, it would have been a companion climb to one which we had made a few days earlier on the steep face of Slogen.

We kept our own counsel and reserved it for the next year. However, medical exams. prevented one of the Todds from sharing in the fun, whilst his brother responded to the call to arms, and went to serve his Queen and country in South Africa.

As the expedition was too good to leave to be snapped up by any chance adventurer who might happen to pass by that way, another party was arranged.

Early one morning in the following July, Messrs. G. P. Baker, H. Priestman, and I, accompanied by Lars Haugen, set out over the dewy meadows, and in little over an hour we reached the foot of the rock ridge which was to lead us to joyous victory or to ignominious defeat.

We knew that there were three crucial places, one below a saddle on the ridge, another just above the saddle, and the third within 200 feet of the summit.

Lars led most pluckily over smooth slabs and bosses of rock, up gruesome chimneys, where he was glad of a shoulder to stand upon, and we, of a pull. He took us along narrow and pleasant ridges with a wild glacier far below us on our left, and a bird's-eye view of goats grazing a thousand feet below us on our right. Up, and ever upward. Lars never faltered. Not he indeed! Did he not know that his pretty young wife was watching him step by step through a telescope? Ah! There was the spirit of the Vikings in him too. He was on his mettle, and it was well for us that we had so good a man with us, as we had only left England three and a half days earlier and were out of training. Steeper and narrower grew the ridge, and down came the mists, cold and clammy, and then the rain.

'Halloa! What's that?' A notch in the ridge twenty feet deep, and an overhanging wall beyond, seemed formidable enough.

'Now we are beaten.'

'No, not yet.'

'There's another big crag above; this is not the top wall.'

'Yes it is; we are not 150 feet from the top now. Lars, can you climb up that crack if I lift you up?'

'I don't know, but I'll try.'

I got into the notch whilst my companions, behind and above me, held the rope taut as Lars stood on my shoulders and then climbed brilliantly round a projecting rock into the crack in the face of the crag.

As Lars said it was all loose and that he could not hold on long, we told him to run no risks but to come down. Easier said than done. One poor hold for the right hand and a half-inch ledge for the right foot are not much to hold on by when the body has to be swung round an aggressive corner, which projects a foot beyond the perpendicular, but Lars never hesitated; he knew he could do it, and he had the happy knack of inspiring us with a confidence in his powers which was most refreshing. Still, we were glad enough when he stood on my shoulders again, and nimbly stepped on the rocks behind.



THE TOP TOWER OF KVITEGGEN

Another route was examined, but it lacked a hold in the one place where it was absolutely necessary to have one. On our right, some fifty feet below the notch, was a ledge which ran along the face of a horrid precipice. It could be reached. Would it lead anywhere? All said 'No.'

'Hark away back' is now the cry. 'No, not down those horrid rocks. We must try to turn the tower to the left.'

Helter-skelter down we go just below the wall of crags. We try to pierce the mist, and now and then see a line of grinning hobgoblins. No, they are only rocks. 'Let us try here.' 'No, let us go down by the ridge.' A rift in the cloud curtain reveals a broad ledge. What else there is we do not know.

We hoist Lars on to a shelf. He pulls us up. Then we make an awkward traverse along a narrow and sloping ledge where we hardly know whether to creep or to walk. There is a blank wall above it and another below. Then we come to a high chimney.

'Ah! Here's the rub. Will it go?'

By back and knees, elbows and feet, up we go, and are well held by Lars the trusty, Lars the bold.

'What's that white thing in the mist up there?'

'The cornice; the Kvit egg—the white ridge.'

'We've won. We've won. Hurrah! Hurrah!'

We hasten over some bosses of rock and are soon under a cornice, and are reminded of Ben Nevis in spring. An easy way appears, and we have no need to resort to driving a tunnel up through the snow or even to making a semi-spiral staircase, and in five minutes more we are at the cairn on the northern summit of Kvittegen.

We look over the edge and see, not eighty feet below us, the top of the crag which had balked and nearly beaten us. We had been seven hours and twenty minutes from the inn, 4475 feet below us, having had 2600 feet of first-rate rock-climbing, which occupied us about six hours.

We ought to have glissaded down to the gap by which Vigdal and I descended in 1881, but unwisely took the usual and rather dangerous route which I have already condemned.

A brace of ptarmigan interested us very much by feigning lameness to draw our attention away from their chicks, as our grouse do at home.

Whilst the photographers improved the shining hours, Lars and I hurried down to the farm, where I left him with his happy and proud young wife, and a few minutes later I was rattling down the valley in a cariole bent on luring some fish out of a lake with my rod. My reward was fifteen trout.

Thus ended one of the best sporting days I have ever had the good luck to enjoy. I fully believe that before the lapse of many years this expedition will become a great favourite. In all probability too the top tower itself will be climbed, but it will be well for it to be taken the first time from above, so that the loose rocks may be safely tumbled down.

There are other fine climbs which can be made from Fibelstadhaugen, some of which have not yet been attempted. If you doubt this, my advice is, go and see, and remember that it is just possible you cannot see everything from the King's Highway.

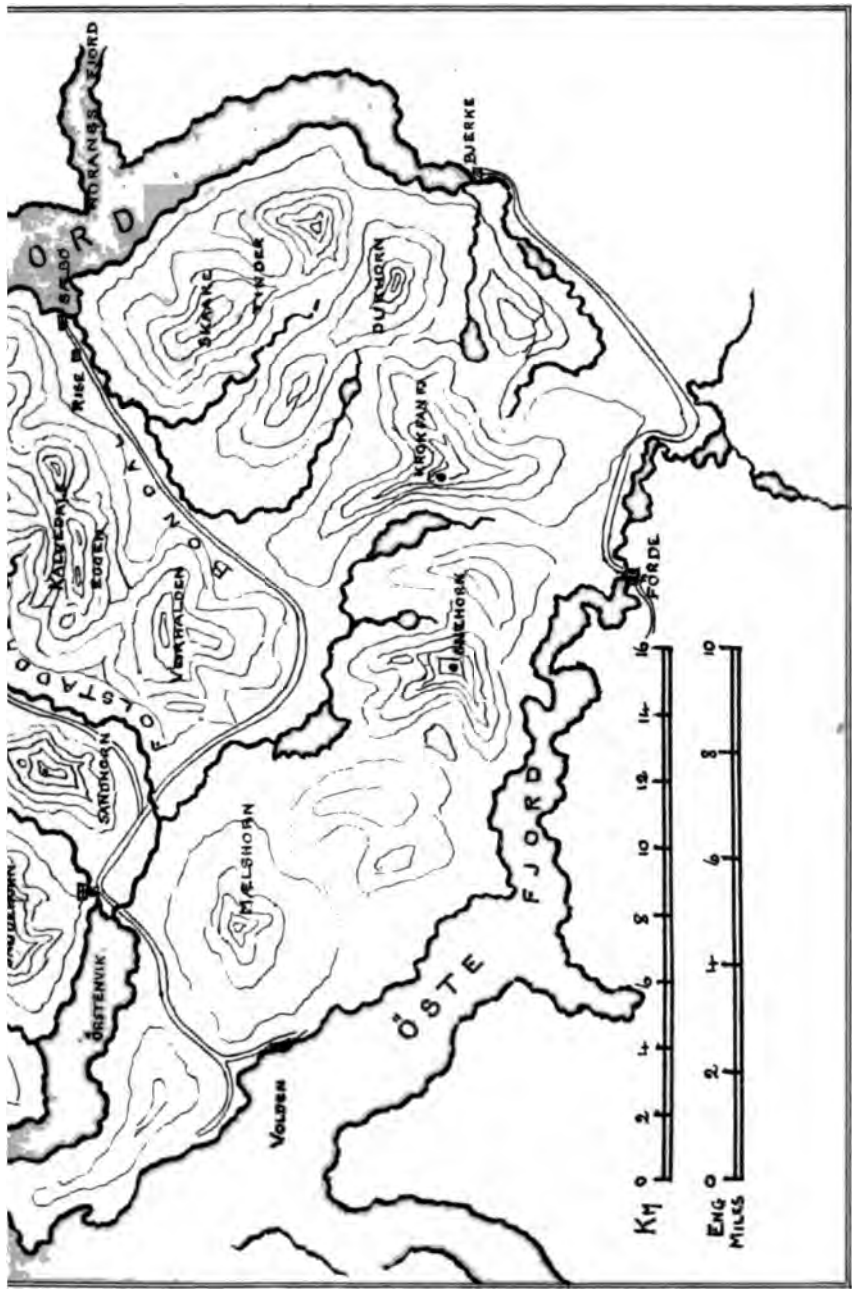


*Kjilantind and Setertind, seen across the Hjørundfjord.*









SØNDMØRE WEST





## CHAPTER XXXIII

THE FIRST ASCENTS OF THE KJÖLAASTIND OR GLUGGENTIND, AND  
FIRST HUMAN ASCENT OF THE MIENDALSTIND

'Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour.  
For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow; but woe to him that is alone  
when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up.'

ECCLESIASTES iv. 9, 10.

## WEST OF THE HJÖRUND FJORD

## THE FIRST ASCENT OF THE KJÖLAASTIND OR THE GLUGGENTIND

SOME of my most delightful memories of Norse travel centre round a walk which Emanuel Mohn and I took one lovely evening in August 1876, through the Folstaddal from Ørstenvik to Standal. The especial loveliness of this valley was then enhanced by a glorious sunset, which gilded the towers of Kjölaastind as they stood proudly out of the light and iridescent clouds which draped the ridges.

The outline of the mountain recalled a huge Gothic cathedral with hundreds of pinnacles, which were revealed to us by the fleecy clouds which, entering the innermost recesses of the mountain, caused their dark and eccentric forms to stand out in bold relief against the light background. On each side of Kjölaastind, but cut off from it by deep and dark glens, were lower mountains of jagged outline, with blue glaciers almost rivalling their loftier neighbour in wildness, though not in beauty.

The height of the mountain, towering as it did far above our heads, seemed to be enormous. Indeed, Kjölaastind at all times shows that it is the monarch of Western Söndmöre, as well as the grandest mountain of the whole Söndmöre Alps, and yet it is only 4800 feet above the fjord. A foreground of birch woods, green meadows enamelled with lilies, gentians, pyrolas, saxifrages, and parnassus, fields of rye and barley and a picturesque farm-house, combined to make this a most striking and beautiful mountain view.

About eleven miles from Ørstenvik we reached the top of the little pass, 873 feet in height, from which there is a short and steep descent to the Hjörund fjord at Standal. A little below the pass

are the twelve sæter *sæle* belonging to the twelve farms of Standal. The view of Kjölaastind, or the Gluggentind as we must now call it, from the sæter is very grand, and the *glugge*, or peephole, is easily seen. The view of the fjord below, whose calm and unruffled surface reflected the glowing sunset colours, was superb. I must say no more about this scene.

The time at our disposal hardly allowed us to devote a day on the Gluggentind, and it was arranged that we should take a boat the following day to Bjerke. However, when we got out of our beds of hay we were told that there was too much wind to allow of any boating on the fjord. 'It is an ill wind that blows nobody



Kjölaastind.

any good,' and I could not call this 'an ill wind,' but thought on the contrary :

'There's nothing like a fresh'ning breeze  
To gladden heart and mind.'

After persuading an active young man to accompany me, at 7.30 we set off blithely for the hills, and after mounting a bilberry bank followed a little corrie which led us into a natural chalice, partly filled by a fan-shaped glacier—the Blaa bræ. The rim of this glacier for some 250° consisted of a fringe of fantastic rock pinnacles, the highest of which was the culminating point of Western Söndmöre.

We saw at a glance that the route to the summit lay up the glacier, and that the best way on to this glacier was up the base of the south-east ridge. We hurried along over the noisy torrent, and then skirted the inside of the ridge. At a height of 3240

feet we reached the ice, but as it was hopeless to try to get on it there, we followed the rock ridge for a couple of hundred feet until further progress by that means appeared to be impossible. We then looked to the glacier but received little encouragement. A tongue of ice some twenty-five yards in length, tilted at an angle of 50°, led to a promising ice terrace. The tongue in some places was like a knife edge; on one side there was a deep blue crevasse, and on the other, where the ice had shrunk from the heated rocks, there was a deep black gap about eight feet in width, the bottom of which was invisible.

Experienced mountaineers well understand these places, and usually enjoy the time spent in overcoming their difficulties. I frankly confess that I did not then appreciate the fun as I should now call it, but knowing that it would have to be crossed or that we should have to record a failure, I cut off the crest of ice, making pretty big steps, and when half-way over I stopped to throw the rope to my companion. To my surprise I found that he had climbed up the ridge above me by some steep but easy, natural steps, which we had not at first noticed. He could not, however, go any farther, nor could he get on to the glacier, except at the place where I had done.

Nothing that I could say would induce him to try the icy highway, so I said I would go on alone, which I knew at the time to be the reverse of wise.

Across the icy tongue, I made my way through a maze of crevasses to a steep ice-fall near the middle of the glacier where the ice was covered with hard snow. I was much handicapped by the fact that my boots, which had been re-soled in Aalesund, had no nails, and I could not with safety climb up the place which I had picked out for the purpose. Again I went near the southern rock rim, and after a great amount of step-cutting in the bare ice, by hand, foot, and axe, I struggled over a very horrible 150 feet to the névé, where it was easy going.

I could still see my companion below, a very pinnacle himself amongst the many on the ridge. Unfortunately, clouds had gathered round the higher peaks, but as I knew that the highest point rose nearly out of the highest part of the glacier, I plodded carefully upwards. At all conspicuous points I hacked away heaps of frozen snow and left other marks to guide me on my return.

In due course I entered cloudland, and cannot say that I enjoyed the delights of solitude. Near the top of the glacier there were many crevasses, and I saw before me an arc of weird turrets and pinnacles, some visibly connected, others springing

singly out of the snow. Between them there were embrasures, and then space profound. The rocks composing the segment were narrow, though some spires stood 100 to 200 feet above the snow. The top of the glacier, which I reached a few minutes before noon, is in the south-west corner, where the pinnacles are the wildest and highest. Most of them, seen through the mist, seemed to be colossal and perfectly inaccessible until I got close to them, when I saw that, though steep, the strata of the gabbro rock formed natural steps.

I chose what I then conceived to be the highest pinnacle.



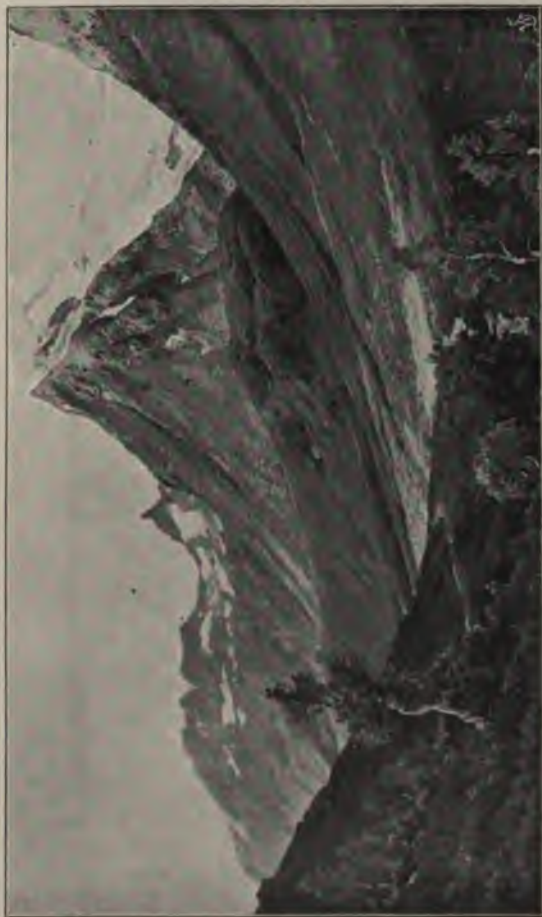
*On the Eastern arête of Gluggentind.*

This consisted of two principal parallel spikes which projected at a steep angle many feet into the air, and overhung a ghastly precipice. I swarmed up the higher as up a tree, and left a little stone at the top. Even in calm weather one could not find standing-room on such a sharp point. Now there was a furious north wind. I descended to the axilla of the two spikes, and had a look around. Below was what seemed like a bottomless pit, full of surging clouds. Beyond the abyss, but far away down, I could now and then see the pinnacles of the ridge in which is the *glugge*. These seemed

like boats floating on a cloud-sea, which now and then engulfed them, and threw them high and dry again.

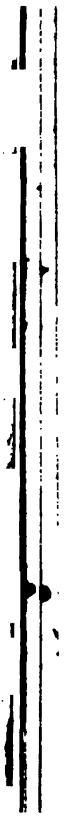
<sup>1</sup> The mists boil up around the glaciers ; clouds  
Rise curling fast beneath me.<sup>2</sup>

I turned to another embrasure facing west, where, though I could not see them, are three beautiful pyramidal mountains. After building one or two little cairns, I prepared to descend.



*Kyjlaastind or Gluggentind.*

*To face page 372.*



Just then I saw a tower to the east, which had before been invisible, and it was apparently a little higher than the point I had climbed. I soon reached it, and though it was steep, the strata were so good, dipping towards the south, in which direction I had to climb, that I climbed it without much difficulty.

The rock on Kjölaastind, the first mountain I ever climbed in Söndmöre, is typical of most peaks in the Söndmöre Alps. The strata dip almost invariably towards the south, so that, as a rule, but like most rules not without exceptions, the steep crags on the crests are easy to climb from north to south, but more difficult the reverse way.

The wind was terribly strong, and the cold had become intense. To linger longer on this wild crest would have been madness, and yet close to me I saw another tower about equal in height to that on which I stood. It may be a few feet lower or it may be a foot higher. I do not know for certain, but I think for all that that I made to all intents and purposes the first ascent of the mountain.

I found my marks on the glacier of very great service, and sped along merrily until the steep ice was reached, where very great care had to be exercised.

On my arrival at Standal I received a warm welcome and hearty congratulations.

Kjölaastind was not again ascended until the year 1880, when two students, Herr Kjelberg and Herr Hovden, with the owner of the farm Kjöölaas, reached the summit. Some years later another so-called 'first ascent' of the mountain was made. Will there be yet one more?

From what I have gathered from men who have since made the ascent, it is pretty clear that my peak was the summit.

The mountain can be climbed fairly easily from the west and north, but whether the southern buttress affords a route to the top has yet to be proved.

At the farm of Kjöölaas, fair quarters are obtainable, and many grand rock-climbs may be made from there. Mr. Patchell has made the best ascents; but there is still much good new work to be done amongst this most fascinating group of aiguilles.

Writing about the Kjöölaastind, Herr Randers says: 'Kjölaastind is undoubtedly the grandest and most characteristic mountain in Söndmöre. . . . There is none which stands so like a monarch, and whose drapery is so rich—none which stands out in so imposing and stately a manner. Travellers coming from the north see it from the deck of a steamer as a sharp triangle, black on



one side, white on another. As seen through Masdalskloven it is a fantastic revelation. Wherever it is seen it stands aloft with might and majesty, and holds its head above all others.'

I shall not attempt to defend the practice of solitary climbing. On the contrary, I condemn it severely. Still, I state my belief that most of my Alpine friends would have done as I did under similar conditions.<sup>1</sup>

My bed of hay, and the rough fare at Standal, were very welcome in the evening, and I have long wished to revisit this pretty hamlet.

#### THE FIRST HUMAN ASCENT OF THE MIENDALSTIND

' "This is no first ascent," they cry.  
At least not ours—we cannot lie,  
This gallant climb, this noble fight  
Was first accomplished by *en gjeit*.'

A. B. S. TODD.

No one can deny that Söndmöre, like the island of Skye, owes its richness and delicacy of colouring to the heavy rainfall and warm Gulf Stream breezes. The weather has rarely treated me well on the Hjörund fjord. Still, I have often had superb days on its mountains; but I have been beaten on many a projected new expedition by the relentless pitter patter of the rain. Many a time, too, when I have been involved in dense clouds in some high ridge, there has been a sudden break in these clouds, and the result has been that I have had a view through the break, worth going to Norway to see.

In the summer of 1899 we had a large family party at Öie. The rain had not spared us, and though we were staying at a comfortable hotel, where a few years earlier it would not have been an easy matter for us to get a crust of bread, we began at least to wish for sunshine. One afternoon we were all attracted by the grandeur of a mountain with a deeply notched ridge, rising out of a belt of clouds, which we saw beyond Saksa. This we were told was the Miendalstind. The heavy clouds gradually sailed away northwards, but left some of a lighter character, which played at hide-and-seek behind two pretty little aiguilles on its eastern face.

Oddly enough, this mountain had, up to this time, entirely escaped the notice of mountaineers, probably because the Glug-

<sup>1</sup> The two verses from Ecclesiastes which I quote at the head of this chapter strongly support this condemnation of solitary climbing.

gentind and other loftier neighbours had diverted their attention. Now we suddenly realised that it was a mountain which nature intended to be ascended, and that its position guaranteed a glorious view on a fine day.

Next morning, Dr. Richards, Sivert Urke as a porter, and I made our first stage in the climb by steamboat to Sæbö in bright sunshine. Passing through the fertile glebe farm, a cattle-track led us through fragrant birch-woods to a wild amphitheatre, overshadowed by needles of rock of the true Söndmöre character. The crest of an ancient moraine led to hard snows, good rocks, and to a gap east of the highest peak. Over the gap, we gained the steep névé at the head of the wild glacier, whose séracs fall over crags, and roll almost into the sea itself. After climbing up some 300 feet of hard snow, we struck the rocks, which led us directly up to one of the two rival tops of the mountain. A narrow ridge, about twenty-five yards in length, took us to what may be considered as the successful rival.

To our joy we found no cairn to commemorate a previous ascent. The actual top consisted of two narrow and pointed slabs of gabbro which stood on end about six feet high and eighteen inches apart. As one was nearly two feet lower than the other, cairn-building was a difficulty. Sivert's trade is that of a shoemaker and not of a stone-mason. However, with timely help and encouragement, in due time a goodly cairn was raised.

During the process, to our horror we discovered a skeleton in a hollow only a few feet below the top.

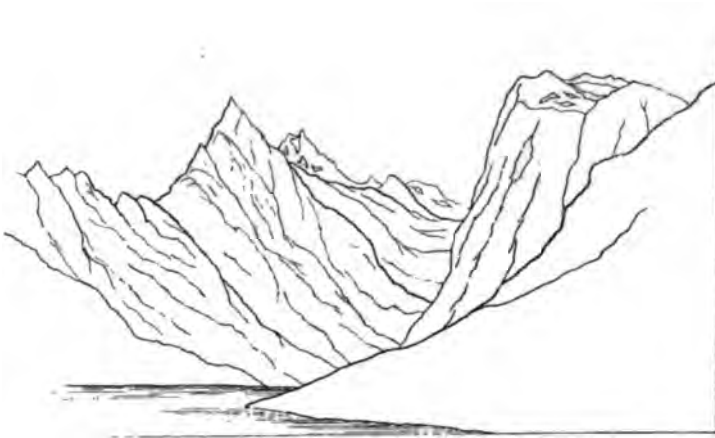
'Who has preceded us, and why are his bones bleaching here?' was the unexpressed thought of us all. An examination revealed that the honour and glory of the first ascent belonged to—a goat. Poor fellow! did he lack the courage necessary to descend by the way he had come up, and after exhausting the sparse vegetation which grew near the summit, did he lie down and die a lonesome death? Was he driven up step by step and ledge by ledge by a glutton, that fierce enemy to many a quadruped in Norway? Who knows what mental torment he may have endured? The secret is lost on that weird mountain.

Three ridges meet at the top, and the view was inexpressibly grand, being a worthy rival of that from the monarch Slogen himself. Higher praise I cannot give. Never did the Hjörund fjord look more beautiful, and never did Slogen look more stately than in the bright sunshine of this grand August day. The Gluggentind, so close at hand, and an almost endless perspective

of serrated ridges were magnificent, and the fertile Bonddal below seemed to blend the view into one harmonious whole.

The ascent of Miendalstind is most enjoyable. There is not a dull yard the whole way, good glissades add to the interest when coming down, and I most strongly recommend it to all who are good walkers, more or less accustomed to mountaineering, and to whom the ascent of Slogen is somewhat too arduous an undertaking.

On our return to Øie, my nephew, Mr. Aldred Todd, who unfortunately was not able to join in the ascent, commemorated it by some stirring verses, which may be found in *The Yorkshire Ramblers' Club Journal*, No. 2, the title of which is 'Miendalstind: the First and Second Ascents.'



SLOGEN AND THE SMÖRSKREDTINDER.

## CHAPTER XXXIV

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL MOUNTAIN IN NORWAY, SLOGEN, FIRST  
ASCENDED BY JON KLOK AND HIS BROTHER

*'The wise and active conquer difficulties,  
By daring to attempt.'*

ROWE.

### SLOGEN AND THE SMÖRSKREDTINDER

FOR many years I have expressed the opinion that Slogen is the most beautiful mountain in all Norway, and that the view from a little above the parsonage house at Sæbø, in which Slogen is seen to rise with grand, almost shoreless, precipices, from the end of the Norangs fjord, and to terminate in a sharp pyramid, has no rival in Norway, or possibly in any other land. In this view, the Smörskredtinder are seen over the left shoulder of Slogen, and very grand they look too. The Brækketind and Gjeithörner, with their serrated ridges, stand out boldly above the wooded Saksa, and the beauty of the skyline of these peaks is enhanced by contrast with the dark and forbidding battered wall of Staalberg, which, rising nearly 5000 feet out of the waves, forms so grand a portal at the mouth of the Norangs fjord.

On a lovely day in August 1884 my wife, and sister and brother-in-law, and I crossed the high pass of Urbakken from Fibelstadhaugen to Lere, whence we took a boat to Sæbø. From the pass we saw the top 2000 feet of Slogen, a pyramid so sharp that I have rarely, if ever, seen its equal, either amongst the Chamouni

aiguilles or in the Dolomites. Naturally I had often previously been attracted by Slogen, but had been as often repelled by bad weather. Now, of course, in brilliant sunshine the mountain may be said to have fascinated us all. Arrived at Sæbø, we made our way to the Lensmand's house at Rise, where I heard for the first time that Slogen had been ascended a few years previously by Jon Klok and his brother, who lived at a sunny farmstead in Urkedal, almost under the shadow of the great mountain.

The following day was Sunday, and as Jon Klok came to church at Sæbø, we arranged that he should guide my brother-in-law and myself up Slogen on the Monday.

How cold it was as we were rowed over the fjord at daybreak! How clearly the ragged outlines of the peaks stood out against the sky! How dark were the shadows, and how unusually communicative were the rowers! Yes; they pointed out the cave of St. Olaf, the Raamands gjæl, and the hole through the jagged ridge of the Skaaretinder, nor did they neglect the usual Söndmöre catechism, beginning with 'Fremmede karer.'

The sun was well up when we reached Klok. How delicious was the scent of the swathes of new-mown hay still laden with dew!<sup>1</sup>

The way we took is still the best, the easiest, and the most beautiful, but it is rarely followed. A sæter path led us nearly to the head of Langesæterdal. Then we turned up easy rocks which took us to the well-known snow-field which is so prominent a feature in the view of Slogen from the road to Norangsdal.

Step by step, steeper and steeper, up we went, mostly on the snow. At last we found the broad ridge to be narrowing, and had a little interesting rock-climbing.

'There is the cairn. Klok, I'm glad you climbed your own mountain first.'

Never had we seen so lovely and varied a view before. From Lodals Kaupe to the Vœngetinder, from the broad Atlantic to the snowy wastes of Justedal, all was beautiful.

Almost within a stone's-throw, but 5210 feet below us, were the blue waters of the Norangs fjord. Beyond this little fjord and its parent, the Hjörund, was a long and wide perspective of jagged crests whose crowning glory was the Kjölaastind. Did not the rich green valleys, with their cosy farm-houses, help to harmonise

<sup>1</sup> Jon Klok is a very go-ahead and ingenious man. In 1899 I was in Urkedal and saw a wire ropeway, by which the milk is taken from the farm of Klok on the hill to a public dairy below to be made into butter for the English market. The empty cans travel back in the same manner.



*The Mouth of the Norange Fjord across the Hjørund, with Slogen, the Smøråkrutindar, and the Sealberg.*

*To face page 378.*



the whole? Of course they did. I have sent many a mountain lover to the top of Slogen. None have been disappointed.

As the day was still young, and this was, at best, only a second ascent, we turned our eyes towards the Smörskredtinder and thirsted for further adventure. Jon Klok was as keen as we were.

Once over the rocks, we set off on a wild glissade. The snow was perfect and the angle just steep enough to ensure great speed and absolute safety. The snow carried us very nearly down to the pass of Skylstadbrække about half the height of Slogen. It is very rarely that so good and long a glissade can be had in the Alps.

When I had crossed the Skylstadbrække with Mohn in 1876, I had been much impressed with the beauty of a steep snow pass over the range of the Smörskredtinder, just under the sharp-cut northern precipice. This pass now seemed to beckon us to come so strongly that we felt almost unable to refuse the invitation, though it was quite evident that the south face of the mountain was climbable.

Steep screens led us to a broad snow gully up which we made a zigzag course. The last two hundred feet the snow was very hard, and steps had to be cut with ice-axes.

Arrived at the skar, we turned to the rocks of the Smörskredtinder. They were high. They were nearly perpendicular. There were large slabs and little hold. We did not persevere. Probably if we had done so, we should have been beaten and have lost our peak; at any rate, we left it severely alone.<sup>1</sup>

Descending a few hundred feet on a little glacier, we found a broad gully up which we had much interesting rock-climbing, which brought us in due time to the lower of the two summits which form the true Smörskredtinder, and straight above the skar which we had crossed.

A small cairn was hastily raised, and we hurried along a saddle to the south-western or highest peak.

Loud were our hurrahs, and many were the rocks which we threw over the gaunt precipices. Most new ascents are commemorated in this manner. The height is 5241 feet, or thirty-one feet more than that of Slogen. The view is of course grand, but not comparable with that from Slogen.

A steep ridge, running from the top down to the woods of

<sup>1</sup> This grand ascent was made in 1899 by Messrs. C. W. Patchell and A. B. S. Todd. 'A steep and difficult climb of one and a half hours led to the first cairn. The work at two or three points was distinctly sensational, but the rocks were generally sound.'—*Alpine Journal*, vol. xx. p. 47.



## NORWAY

the Skylstadbrække, afforded a new and good line of ascent to a party in 1901.<sup>1</sup>

As daylight was beginning to fade, we built a cairn and descended carefully down steep gullies on the south face, and low down had again some excellent glissades.

It is said, and has been said for years, that there is a path the whole way through the woods below the Skylstadbrække. Shall I contradict it? No. I will only say that I have struggled manfully through these woods four times and that I have never heard of any man who found and followed the path throughout. A good track is much needed here, as the pass connects, or should connect, two fertile valleys.

At Øie we could then get nothing to eat. We hired a boat and boatmen, and were rowed across to Sæbø, where we ended a long, successful, and most pleasant expedition of twenty-one hours, including two and a half hours on the fjord.

<sup>1</sup> *Alpine Journal*, vol. xx. p. 540.



*Crogs on Sierras,*

*To face page 38a.*



## CHAPTER XXXV

THE WRITER SAYS THAT 'SLOGEN OFFERS ONE ROUTE, AND ONE ONLY'; A FEW YEARS LATER HE DISBELIEVES THIS STATEMENT, AND SUGGESTS ANOTHER WAY TO CLIMBERS; VIGDAL TRIES IT, BUT HAS NOT TIME TO FINISH THE CLIMB; WE MEET VIGDAL AND ARE ENCOURAGED TO ATTEMPT THE ASCENT; A DIFFICULT ROCK-CLIMB; THE OLD MAN AND THE MONKEY; WE FOLLOW THE ADVICE OF THE FORMER AND ARE SUCCESSFUL; NOTES ON OTHER CLIMBS IN SÖNDMÖRE

'Yea, man and birds are fain of climbing high.'

*King Henry VI.: Part II. Act II.*

## SLOGEN : AN OLD FRIEND WITH A NEW FACE

MANY an unpalatable meal have I shared with friends in Norway, such as of dusty *fladbröd*, leathery *speget kjød*, stringy bacon from the sides of a greyhound-like pig, cold stale porridge with sour milk, half-baked bread, and such-like food, but more often have I enjoyed excellent and wholesome farm-house fare.

A few years ago another dish presented itself. I had to eat my own words and make a good meal of them too.

In recording the second ascent of Slogen, I was so much impressed with the general appearance of inaccessibility which the mountain presents, save by the well-known long steep snow stripe, that the following sentence found its way most naturally in the account.

'Slogen offers one route, and one only, up a steep snow-slope, which affords a very long glissade on the descent; everywhere else are impracticable precipices.'<sup>1</sup>

In fact, a cursory glance at the grisly crags of the mountain when seen from Øie may certainly be said to repel rather than to invite experiments on that side; whilst the sheer-cut precipice which faces the gentle Klokseggen, looks most forbidding.

In spite of this, for at least a dozen years, I have felt that it

<sup>1</sup> *Alpine Journal*, vol. xii. p. 267.

was desirable to discover a more sporting route to the summit than that first followed by the intrepid Jon Klok, and after many a reconnaissance from most points of the compass, I came to the conclusion that a way ought to be, and could be, found, up from Klokseggen, and that my dictum of inaccessibility, like those made by other persons about other mountains, should be disproved.

For some years I had no opportunity of trying this route, as I was climbing in the Alps and in other districts of Norway. However, I did the next best thing—I suggested the expedition to at least half-a-dozen different mountaineering parties who climbed in Søndmøre during this period, and who asked me to recommend some good climbs to them. Apparently they thought I was joking about Slogen, at any rate they never made the attempt. In one party there was an English Cabinet minister—a *rara avis* among climbers. In this case I barely suggested the sporting route. It would have been unseemly for me to have done more. Indeed, it has been suggested to me that in his case, as well as in that of another gentleman well known to the political world, who ascended Slogen at my advice, I had sinister motives in recommending the ascent of the mountain at all, as my political creed is the reverse of that held by these two distinguished politicians.

Years rolled by, and in 1899 we had a family party at Øie. Shortly before our arrival, the dauntless Johannes Vigdal, who had been coached by Mr. Patchell, boldly attacked the problem and led two Englishmen up the steep gully which descends from the gap under the great wall of Slogen directly above the pier at Øie. The severity of the climb is proved by the fact that the party 'left the fjord at a large boulder about 100 yards from the pier at Øie, at 7 A.M. The col was reached at 6 P.M., and the descent was made to about 200 feet in the same gully when they traversed out on the right hand side, reaching the ridge running west from the summit, and thence dropping into the Langesæterdal, arriving at Urke at 1.30 A.M.'<sup>1</sup>

Soon after this adventure, I met Vigdal, and gathered from him that they had considerable difficulty in crossing smooth rock slabs into the gully at the head of the waterfall, that for six long weary hours they steadily and perseveringly cut steps in the hard steep snow, and that, though fatigue and want of time debarred them from making further experiments, Vigdal confirmed my opinion that a zigzag way might probably be found which would lead from

<sup>1</sup> *Nor. Tur. For. Aarbog* for 1900, p. 80.

the skar to the top of Slogen. Apart from the difficulties of this route, the danger of falling stones is so great that it will be well to be avoided in the future.

To our great regret, Mr. Patchell was suddenly called home to England, but the gap in our party was filled by Mr. Hastings, who joined us just in time to share in the proposed expedition, after having endured much stormy weather in Arctic Norway, and at the head of Ranen fjord.

How few among the hundreds of luxurious tourists who nowadays enter the Norangs fjord can realise what it is to struggle step by step, up, through, over, and under the thick scrub with



Slogen - from Vellesæterhorn

which the skirts of Slogen are trimmed? Not one. Nor is there one among them who can picture the beauty of the view presented to us when after a three and a half hours' scramble we emerged out of the woods on to the moss-covered rocks of the Jente skar, or Girls' pass. A great Hamburg steamer and a score of busy boats which were flitting to and from the shore added much to the interest of the view.

The Jente skar, 2950 feet in height, is the second gap in the mountain from the wall of Slogen. It had been crossed by Mr. Patchell and Vigdal, and it forms the shortest connecting link between the sæters of Langesæterdal and Øie.

Our party consisted of Messrs. Hastings, Aldred and Erik

Todd, the joyous Sivert Urke, who carried our provisions, and myself.

We skirted the hillside above the Langesæterdal until at 12.25, at the height of 3550 feet, we reached a fan of hard snow below the mouth of a gully, directly above the outlet of the little tarn Lisvatn.

To his intense disappointment and our regret we sent Sivert home over the Skylstadbrække pass, as four men were quite enough for what we expected to prove a very severe climb.

The gully which we knew would lead to the great skar was a steep, square-walled trap dyke which reminded us of various ghylls in the Cumberland fells.

Step-cutting was resorted to at once, but when the ghyll was reached, the leader cut down into a gap between the northern wall and the deep snow. This saved much step-cutting. At the top of the gap, a pretty rock pitch was reached, and then a natural spiral rock staircase which gave excellent climbing. The staircase unexpectedly came to a dead end, so a descent was made to a steep snow crest at the top of the rock pitch. This worked well for a while and was followed by another pitch. From the top of this, a snow-slope between two rock walls led us up to a blank perpendicular wall some sixty feet high. At first sight we almost feared that we were beaten. Fortunately, Nature is very kindly disposed, and if she blocks one route she usually provides another. It was so in this case. On the left hand and close to the block, there was a narrow chimney or crack. True, it was straight up, but it was a place where back, knees, and elbows could do good service.

No time was wasted; two of the party took off the rope so as to give additional length to the leader, and gave him the support of knees and broad shoulders to be trodden upon by his hobnailed Alpine boots, after passing which supports, the wriggling began. About thirty feet up the chimney, a little ledge struck off from it along the face of the south wall of the ghyll, and inclined gently upwards. The ledge was about forty feet in length and two hand-breadths in width, and offered the only possible solution to a difficult problem. Fortunately, the few handholds were good, though small. Oddly enough, a second ledge, very similar to the first, but inclined upwards in the reverse direction, almost joined the other like the letter < in a recumbent position tired of standing on its point. This led back towards the sixty-foot wall. As on its forerunner, the rocks were sound, and it formed a comparatively easy, though a decidedly sensational traverse. From



*Snow gully on Slogen and contorted rock stratification.*





this ledge a steep and rather nasty chimney, some ten feet in height, gave access to the top of the wall, and the pitch was turned.

An eighty-foot rope was just, and only just, long enough to play the remaining three men up the rock.

The fun in the ghyll was not yet over, as steep snow and small rock pitches did their little best to oppose us, but at 2.15 we suddenly emerged out of the darkness and cold into bright, warm, and invigorating sunshine in the gap under the mighty wall of Slogen, whose summit almost overhung us, as it did the top of the ghyll by which Vigdal had ascended to the skar. This skar is 4400 feet above the blue fjord into which we could almost have thrown a stone.

We were well pleased with ourselves ; we had had an excellent climb, with much uncertainty as to the result. The slabs of rock were covered with four or five inches of springy reindeer moss which invited repose. We did not fall asleep, but we should have been guilty of base ingratitude had we remained there one minute less than an hour and a quarter.

Seldom have I seen a more forbidding mountain wall than that of Slogen, and our chances of success seemed small indeed. It reminded Hastings and myself of the grim wall of the Petit Dru when first seen from the ridge. We found, however, that in case of defeat, an easier route led from the great gap to the Jente skar than the ghyll which we had ascended, and that by using it we could gain the shores of the fjord without much difficulty.

The only possible way for us was to follow the suspicion of a ridge which led towards a portion of the rock face north of the overhanging crags. However, it seemed that we should be cut off from this face by a deep, square-walled ghyll, which lay parallel to that by which we had ascended, and which furrowed the mountain-side up to its very highest point, the last few hundred feet being quite perpendicular.

Provided that we should be able to cross this ghyll, we should then have to traverse the mountain wall diagonally to its steep eastern ridge. This ridge is typical of Söndmöre. It is gashed, jagged, and guarded by petrified trolls and other uncanny forms. One resembles an old man who is gazing intently up to the summit. Another is like a monkey, which, with far outstretched hand, points towards Klokseggen and away from the peak. Is it a warning to us to turn back ? No, surely not, as age and experience look, if they do not point, upwards. The monkey is jealous,

and does not want us to succeed. We look upon it as a good omen, and determine to try and win the goal.

We put on the rope again and look into the ghyll. Horrible!

'What is there above?'

'We'll soon see.'

Good but steep rocks on our ridge led us merrily onward.

'All right! Come along you boys.'

For a short space the walls of the ghyll are flattened out on the face. In fact, just there, there is no ghyll at all, but instead, easy and broad ledges which are carpeted with yellow saxifrages and green moss. Beyond these ledges the leader climbs a dozen feet up a little gully, but is obliged to return. A steep chimney in a corner is no doubt the best place for us. It is what cragsmen call a pretty climb, where most of the muscles are brought into play, but it is very awkward for those who carry rucksacks. The chimney leads us to a gap in a subsidiary ridge. The leader asks for a back, and with this excellent step he gets up an awkward rock. The last man, having no friendly back available, has to be hauled up.

We are soon forced off this ridge and make a traverse on the north-west face. There is still a fascinating uncertainty about the result. We may yet be turned back. We go through a sort of letter-box which reminds us of one on the Grépon, and to our surprise we see below us the long snow-field by which the ascent is usually made.

In time we pass the man and the monkey. Huge crags they are too. Success is now certain. We keep faithfully to the ridge and climb a high tower of rock up to the very cairn itself, though it is true that we could easily gain the snow-field and turn these towers.

'Hurrah! Hurrah! We've won. We've won.'

It is 4.55, and we have only been an hour and twenty-five minutes from the gap 900 feet just below us. Was there ever such a view? Go and see for yourself, and realise, perhaps for the first time, the real beauty of the fjords as they lie mapped out before your eyes, and see how grandly the perspective of jagged mountain ranges carries your eyes to the broad Atlantic beyond. See too a richness and a delicacy of colouring unknown in central Europe.

Let us stop here. Why should we come down again?

'Det er de kneisende, svimlende, blinkende tinder i Söndmöres alpeland.'

Söndmöre has endowed me with many other happy reminiscences of adventure on jagged mountain ridges, in wild ghylls, on blue glaciers, in fine weather, but oftener in foul, and last, but not least, in wave-tossed boats on surging seas. The disagreeable features have all been mellowed by the distance of time, and nothing but pleasure is now left to memory.

Of some of these experiences I possess copious notes, which could easily be developed into long chapters, warranted to bore the most omnivorous Alpine reader. I will spare him, as I have by now realised that, to the general reader, the description of one ascent is uncommonly like that of another.

It is true that notices of most new ascents in Söndmöre have appeared in one or other of the numerous publications devoted to mountaineering and climbing, which nowadays crowd out better literature from the shelves of mountaineers, but which fortunately, so far, have escaped the publicity of the railway bookstall.

Still I feel that I must briefly refer to some of the most interesting of these expeditions, otherwise I should do an injustice to this fascinating Alpine playground.

One of the prettiest little glacier passes is the Hjortedal skar between Grodaas and Bjerke.<sup>1</sup> This I made with Vigdal in 1881. We climbed two of the Lauedalstinder from the pass, to which we returned. The scenery is magnificent. This group of mountains, which contains interesting glaciers, has since been explored by Mr. Waring and friends.

Vigdal and I also crossed the mountains at the head of Mulskreddal between Hellesylt and Sökkelv, a very fine walk.<sup>2</sup>

The ascent of the Brekketind, the culminating point of the Gjeithorn range, gave Hastings and myself excellent glacier work and difficult rocks in 1889, whilst the Brekketinds skar and the southern Brunstad Horn provided plenty of fun and good glacier practice to a merry party of us in 1899.<sup>3</sup>

Amongst the most notable expeditions made by other persons are the following :—

Store Gjeithorn,<sup>4</sup> 'a difficult rock-climb,' and the Vellesæter skar, a fine glacier pass, both made by Messrs. C. and E. Hopkinson with Lars Janssen; Raana, so called from its resemblance to the square-sail of a boat, was first climbed by Mr. Hastings alone.

<sup>1</sup> *Nor. Tur. For. Aarbog* for 1881, p. 109.

<sup>2</sup> *Alpine Journal*, vol. xiv. p. 509.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. xix. p. 608.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. xiv. p. 162.

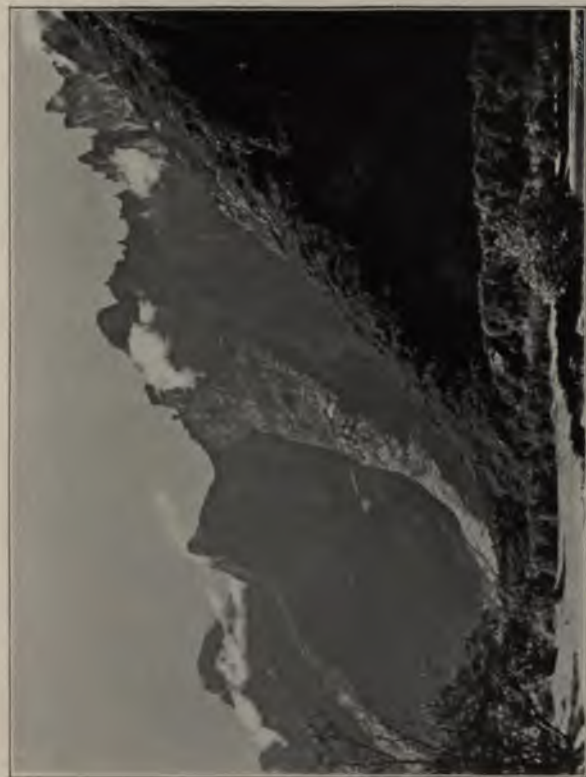
A few years ago this mountain was ascended by a new route by Mr. Oppenheim and his party, a fine expedition, the description of which formed the *pièce de résistance* to a book<sup>1</sup> on mountaineering in the peninsula between the Hjörund and Sökkelv fjords. The Vellesæterhorn was climbed by Mr. Priestman and friends.

The above are all on the east side of the Hjörund. Some of the finest climbing, however, has been made by Mr. Patchell and friends on the west of this romantic fjord. Generally they had headquarters at Kjölaas, a comfortable farm-house under the shadow of Kjölaastind; from here they climbed the Romedalshorn.

During the time when these pages were in the printer's hands an ascent of Slogen was made direct from the steamboat pier by Messrs. Raeburn and Ling. Apparently the route taken was a little to the east of Vigdal's gully, and it proved to be a climb of nearly 5000 feet of difficult rock.

Few districts in Norway, or anywhere else for that matter, can show, in so small a compass, such weird glens, corries and wild peaks as in the peninsula which is bounded by the Hjörund, Vartdal and Sökkelv fjords, and the Folestaddal. It is an ideal tract for any hardy pedestrian, and this fact has of late years been fully recognised by the Aalesund folk, who now thoroughly appreciate the grandeur and beauty of this remarkable terrain, and who are steadily and perseveringly reducing, year after year, the number of unclimbed and formerly considered unclimbable, fantastic aiguilles whose summits they see gilded with the setting sun when they take their evening stroll up the Aalesundsaxel, where it is good to take leave of the Söndmöre Alps.

<sup>1</sup> *New Climbs in Norway.* E. C. Oppenheim.



*The Tredtitinder.*

*To face page 388.*



## CHAPTER XXXVI

THE VALLEY OF THE RAUMA AND AAK ; THE ASCENT OF THE HIGHEST VÆNGETIND ; THE ROMSDALSHORN CLIMBED BY A LADY ; THE VÆNGETINDER REVISITED AND THE ASCENT OF THE SECOND HIGHEST PEAK ; A GRAND GLACIER PASS ; A HERD OF REINDEER ; THE DISCOVERY AND FIRST ASCENT OF MJÖLNIR ; A DIFFICULT BERGSCHRUND AND THE NORSEMAN'S PRIDE ; HOSPITALITY AT NEDRE DALE ; ATTEMPT ON THE GREAT TROLDTIND AND VICTORY FOR THE MOUNTAIN ; A NEW PASS

'I am the God Thor,  
I am the War God,  
I am the Thunderer !  
Here in my Northland,  
My fastness and fortress,  
Reign I forever !

Here amid icebergs  
Rule I the nations ;  
This is my hammer,  
Mjölfnir the mighty,  
Giants and sorcerers  
Cannot withstand it !'

OLAF TRYGGVESSÖN'S SAGA.

LONGFELLOW'S *Tales of a Wayside Inn*.

## THE MOUNTAINS OF ROMSDAL

THE VÆNGETINDER, ROMSDALSHORN, MJÖLNIR AND THE TROLDTINDER

MOST early travellers in Norway gravitated sooner or later to the Romsdal—the dale of the Rauma—and in the books which they wrote on their return, the descriptions of this deep, narrow, and truth to say, rather gloomy, valley, were usually heavily laden with laudatory adjectives. This is not surprising, as the scenery is very grand and abounds in rich contrasts.

Lady Di Beauclerk, whose book<sup>1</sup> introduced Aak to Englishmen, says : 'Since then we have seen higher mountains, and what is said to be finer scenery ; but Aak will always be to me the

<sup>1</sup> *A Summer and Winter in Norway*.



pearl of Norway, and the gem of my imagination. No description can do it justice.'

The view of the Horn and Troldtinder draped with iridescent evening mists, once seen from the lawn at Aak, can never be forgotten. There is a quiet pastoral beauty consisting of green fields and woods in the foreground which forms a delightful contrast to the large river and rugged mountains which tower so grandly above the valley.

In addition to the valley of the Rauma, Romsdal gives its name to an *amt* or province, which has figured conspicuously and creditably in ancient Norse history, and the descendants of the Vikings now living in this region still retain much of the courtliness of manner, the independence of character, and general tone of robust manliness which usually characterise those possessed of the blue blood of ancient lineage.

Norse mountaineers are, I hope, proud of their Romsdalshorn; indeed, they ought to be, as upon this grand rock a daring deed was done by their countrymen before the days of Alpine Clubs.

The tale is this. In the year 1832 a blacksmith, Kristen Smed, and another young fellow, Hans Bjærmeland, after drinking freely, dared each other to climb the Horn, and 'by alternately pushing and pulling,' succeeded in reaching the top. The thought of the descent, however, was so fearful that they remained for two days on the summit, when hunger forced them down. During their stay they erected a huge cairn on the end nearest **Aak**.

Two years later, Lieutenant Breton, R.N., came to **Romsdal** and wished to make the ascent, but as he could get neither of the two heroes of the Horn nor any one else to accompany him, he was obliged to leave it alone.

As time rolled on, people began to doubt the blacksmith's story, and the cairn, which is visible even from **Veblungnes**, was said to be merely an isolated crag on the little plateau which forms the summit.

I had my first view of the Horn from the deck of a steamer at **Molde** in 1872, as most tourists have. In 1875 my sister and I stayed some time at **Aak**, which was then an inn, as was the case on several subsequent visits which I have made there. This most delightful estate was bought some years ago by **Mr. H. O. Wills**, whose hospitality I have since had the pleasure of enjoying.

One day my sister and I climbed the **Middagshoug** and went some way towards the great **Troldtind**. From this point we could see nearly the whole of the **Vængetinder** and beyond them the grand mountain **Mjöl nir**, a sketch of which I made at the



*The Romisdals Horn.*



time.<sup>1</sup> Naturally enough, the notion of attempting the ascent of the Romsdalshorn from the high Alpine valley, the Vøengedal, also suggested itself to our minds.

We looked long and carefully through a glass at the cairn on the Horn, and had no doubts about the truth of the blacksmith's story.

By a strange coincidence, three English Alpine climbers arrived at Aak the following day, and we soon arranged a combined attack upon the Horn. Two of the party had been on the shoulder the previous year with a local guide whom we engaged to guide us to the head of Vøengedal. To cut this story short, the weather became bad; the three climbers were obliged to leave, and my sister and I also left, very foolishly as it turned out, as the weather became good directly afterwards; thus none of us measured our steel against the proud old mountain.

One day late in August 1881, Vigdal and I arrived at Aak more or less flushed with the importance which we attached to recent mountaineering successes elsewhere. Herr Carl Hall with two guides was then storming the crags of the Romdalshorn with laudable perseverance and persistency after several recent failures.

As we thought it hardly sportsmanlike to follow Hall's party, and by watching them probably pick up a knowledge of the mountain which they had acquired during many hours of hard labour, we decided to try to ascend the highest Vøngetind first. By this means we thought it probable that from the superior height of the latter mountain we might discover the weak places in the armour of the Horn which we hoped to attack the following day.

The grandeur of the Vøngetinder was so fully recognised by Lieutenant Breton in 1834, that a sketch of this jagged range forms a frontispiece in his book, *Scandinavian Sketches*. The gallant lieutenant went hunting after four bears 'among débris at the foot of the "Vinges Tindene," and came upon the traces of Bruin,' but, like others of us, he saw no more. Breton says that two of the peaks 'are supposed by the peasantry to have been once a bride and bridegroom, who were crossing the mountain with their cortège. Beelzebub, who happened to be roaming there at the same time, taking umbrage at the hilarity of these good people, changed them into these two strange peaks, and their companions into the remainder.'

In most districts of Norway where there are mountains with serrated ridges, the term *Brudedefølge*, or wedding-procession, is given to the wildest ridge. The Troldtinder peaks, across the

<sup>1</sup> See illustration on page 405.

Romsdal and very near the Vœngetinder, bear this singular appellation.

Almost parallel to the deep valley of Romsdal on the north-east side is the short, steep, and in the main, high valley, Vœngedal; one half of it is beautifully wooded, the other is guarded by grisly mountain forms, the Vœngetinder on the east, and Romsdalshorn, almost at the head, on the south-west side. The total length of this glen is barely five miles.

A little tarn below the Vœngetinder reflects on its glassy surface the forms of the two principal peaks.

The proper way to approach both the Vœngetinder and Horn itself is by way of the Vœngedal, to the bottom of which one can drive from Aak, Veblungsnæs, or Næs. Strange to say I never realised this until 1884, when I saw it on the *Amtskart*.

#### THE VœNGETINDER

Well supplied with tinned meats and other food, Vigdal and I left the slumbering tourists at Aak on August 24th in brilliant weather, when the sun was gilding the higher mountain-tops. Our climb began at once up the steep crags behind the house through a forest of pines, birch, and juniper, a horrible maze.

After four hours' climb we reached the high ridge separating the Vœngedal from the Romsdal.

We were now face to face with the Vœngetinder, then unexplored and unmapped. There are two principal peaks in the chain, separated from one another by a deep chasm.<sup>1</sup> At first sight we were at a loss to know which was the higher, as each seemed to claim its supremacy, but after a careful study, we concluded in favour of the northern and sharpest peak, so we resolved to try it. On the south side there appeared to be but little hope of success.

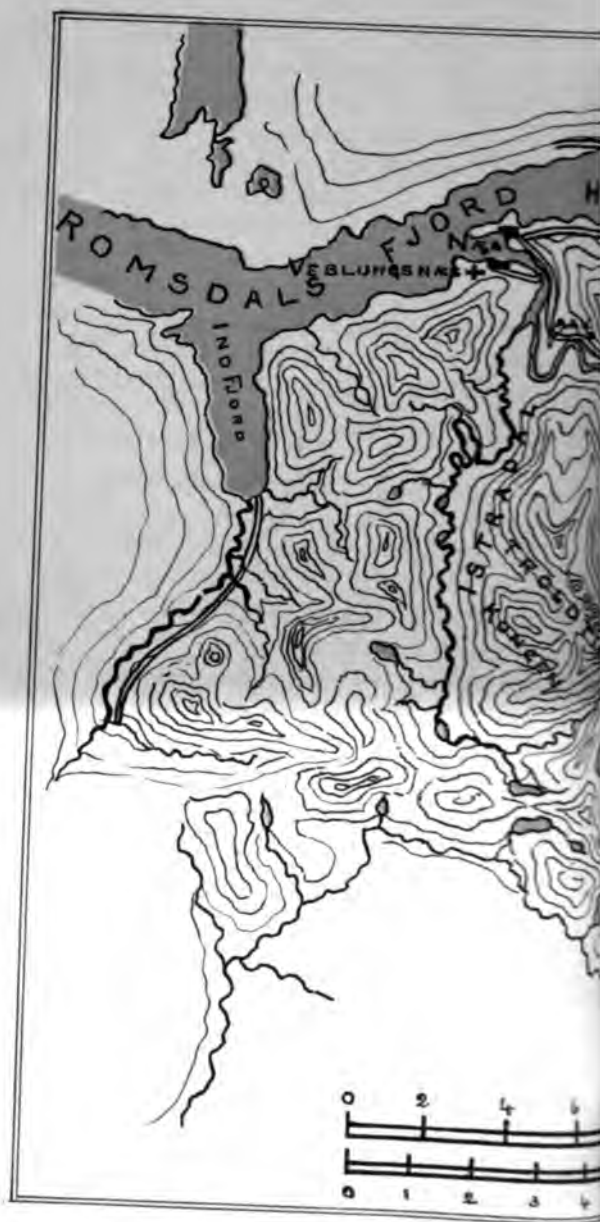
Between the two peaks is a long steep snow gully, perhaps 3000 feet in height, and a prominent feature in the view of the whole range when seen from the fjord. We did not like the look of this gully, as snow, some four days old, lay peppered on the crags and threatened avalanches, so we determined to try to make the ascent from the back, or up the north-east ridge.

The view over fjord, forest, and fjeld was very grand, and there was great richness and variety of blues, greens, greys, and browns, while the blackness of the sheer precipice of the Troldtind capped with glittering snow, contrasted well with the meadows and woods in valleys below.

We ran and glissaded down into Vœngedal, and after fording

<sup>1</sup> See illustration, p. 405.

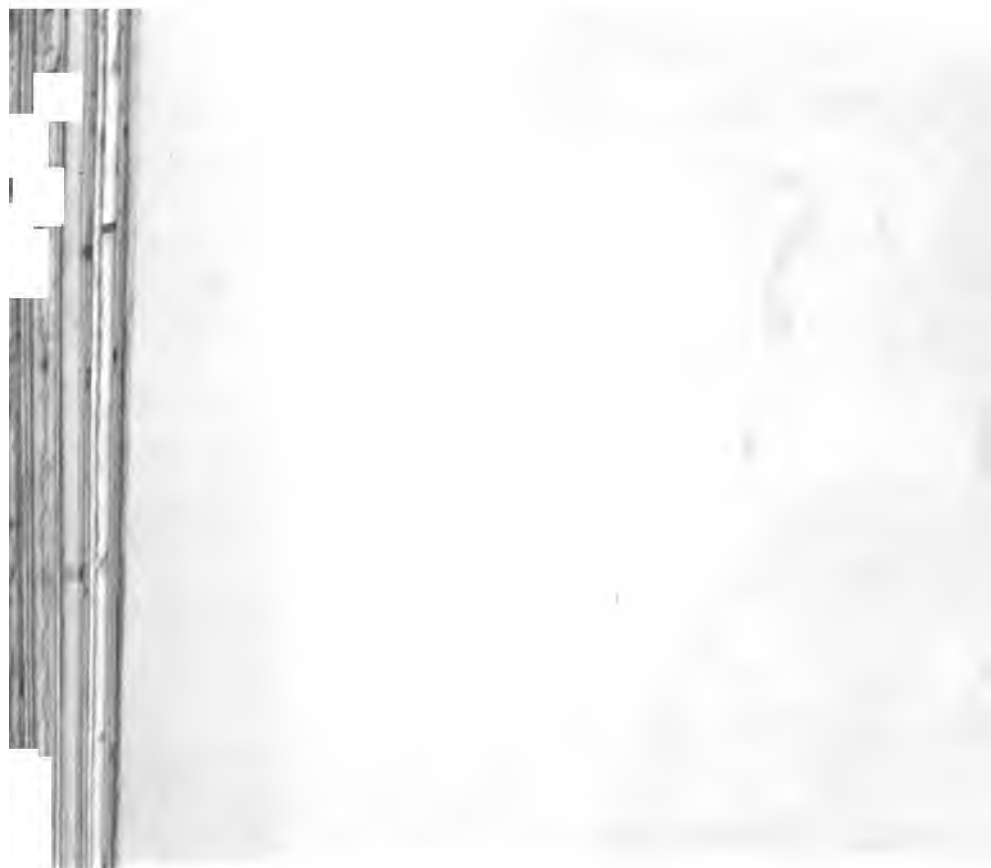




MAP N° IX.







the river began to climb again. At noon we crossed a small frozen tarn and then mounted a steep snow gully which brought us to a high glacier, the Vængetindsbræ, and at one o'clock we had our first view of the back of the mountain, which from here looked uninviting enough. We could easily have reached the north-east ridge about 800 feet below the summit, but it was so deeply notched that we saw little chance there.<sup>1</sup>

A bay of the glacier ran up into the heart of the mountain, but was topped by a huge perpendicular crag. To the right of this was a gully, whence came a well-marked avalanche track, which clearly said 'nay.' To the left, or south-east, from a corner of the bay, a narrow couloir led up to a notch on the southern ridge, which might, or might not, be rounded. This couloir looked very steep and sloped two ways, down to the glacier, and also in the same plane as the ridge; and there were, as is often the case in Norway, two bergschrunds intervening, one between the glacier and the glacier bay, which was apparently cut off from the former by a line of rocks, and a second at the base of the couloir. The new snow was not sufficiently consolidated to be trifled with, so, for the time being, we gave up the notion of ascending this peak, and thought we would try the second one.

A descent of about 150 feet on the glacier brought us to the edge of a rock escarpment which, apparently, entirely cut off our glacier<sup>2</sup> from a still finer one which descends from the second highest Vængetind. Not being provided with parachutes we abandoned the notion of this peak too. During the few minutes which we spent in peering through rifts of the clouds, we learnt a great deal. The knowledge which was then acquired was put to practical use a few years later.

We then harked away back. Vigdal, as usual, ready for anything that might turn up, said he was willing to try the steep couloir, but we both thought the chances of success were small. We made straight for the schrund, and a hungry-looking fellow he was too. The far side was a wall of black rock glittering with icicles; above the rock was a wall of hard snow; in some places eight feet thick, and sloping from the schrund, while in others it was twenty feet and overhanging. We examined several places and at last chose one where the schrund was partially choked up with snow. Vigdal paid out all the rope, whilst I cut my way cautiously down. I had to test the snow bridges continually, and

<sup>1</sup> This route is the one which is now usually followed by climbers.

<sup>2</sup> In the accompanying view, p. 394, this high glacier appears as a long white line on the highest peak.



W. J. ... Müller

did not half like the dark and uncanny view below. Then I got to a ledge on the rock, which seemed to lead up to a hollow in the glacier above, whilst Vigdal came below. The ledge was about thirty feet long and trended upwards; at first it was two feet wide, but it soon narrowed down to one foot, and then to six inches. This would have sufficed but for the fact that the snow wall above overhung, and step-cutting in it was too dangerous an operation to be undertaken. The crevasse just below was wide open, the depth was—anything from 50 to 500 feet—and the place altogether was one which two men ought not to have ventured into. We soon saw that it was impossible for us to win our way here. A cat might have done it, but a chamois could not. We were glad to get safely back on the glacier again.

One place alone remained to be tried—to our extreme right. We had not wished to go there, as even if we did succeed in crossing the schrund, we should have to cross a track of the avalanches, which the yawning schrund was quite capable of devouring. However, we made for the place and got over it easily. Hurrying over the avalanche track we were soon in the glacier bay, which was steep enough to be interesting, whilst the snow was soft enough to be tiring. A quarter of an hour's trudge brought us to the second bergschrund, at the foot of the couloir. We had some comical manoeuvring to get over it, as we sank nearly up to our waists in snow, and had to beat down the upper lip with our axes to make it secure.

Now our real work began. On our right was a line of high crags, running like the couloir up to the ridge. The snow sloped abominably two ways at about an equal angle each way. I won't say what the angle was, because I don't know, but it was steeper than the last steep bit on the Moming pass. We thought there was just a sufficient margin of safety, though none to spare. I made Vigdal go first, as it was not a place to allow a novice to go behind and be out of sight; and very well he went too, though at that time he had not the proficiency in snow-craft which he attained a few years later. In one place a thickness of six inches of snow lay on ice-glazed rock, and even when we scraped the snow away it was not easy to go on; there, and in fact generally, only one moved at a time. Two friends and I were turned back on just such a place as this close to the top of the north ridge of the Grand Cornier above Zinal, a few weeks before this route was first made. Vigdal worked his way slowly upwards, and after some good snow, we came to a small gully running diagonally across the couloir where water from

above had trickled down and had frozen. Across the gully was a wave of powdery snow whose crest was frozen. Some jagged teeth of rock protruded through the snow some fifty yards below; and beyond, the crags were too steep for snow to rest on, all warnings to be cautious. Vigdal had a capital English axe, and managed to climb up the wave very well, though it was difficult. I was firmly anchored. Once on the wave, we kept to its crest as it turned and followed the line of crags most encouragingly. Then came some snow in a dangerous condition, and ready to come away as an avalanche any moment. We were quite prepared to surrender to a hard fate, and to leave the mountains for others, when we discovered that there was creeping room between the snow wreath and the crags. It was a hard climb, but we passed the dangerous snow, and after some fifty feet exceptionally steep, where, after his wont, Vigdal broke into English and said, 'Now we are going very quickly upstairs,' we came to the ridge and a notch which we feared from below. Hurrah! This couloir turned like a serpent round the peak, and we felt that we were victors. Near the top we had twenty minutes' good rock-climbing, where each helped the other. This bit was rendered difficult by ice on the rocks.

At 4.20 we reached the top; a rock about the size of a piano-stool perched on one the size of a cottage piano, which was itself perched on a cliff overhanging towards the north-west. I asked Vigdal to mount the top first, as he had not been on a really good peak before, but he did not like it, and asked me to show him the way. However, I insisted on his mounting it first, and he did so, while I held him firm with a doubled rope.

Clouds robbed us of much of the view, a great disappointment. Still, we did have one fleeting view of Mjölfnir ennobled by a diaphanous cloud-setting.

We stopped three-quarters of an hour on the summit and commemorated our ascent in the usual way. Descending, it took us an hour and ten minutes to get to the highest bergschrund, as the couloir required great care, and generally we had to go with our faces to the mountain, or backwards downhill.

Glissades and a mad run, for we were both young and in superb health and training, brought us quickly down.

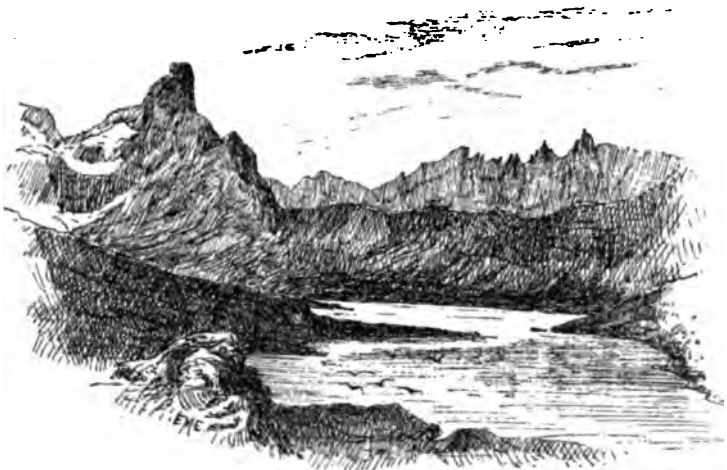
At 8.20, in the dusk, we reached the Vøengedal sæter, and were soon luxuriating in wholesome sæter produce and coffee which would put to shame the dreggy fluid going by the name of coffee which one usually gets in an English country inn. Our hostess was the most determined tub, pail, and kettle washer I have

ever seen; but even she at last ended her labours and went to another hut, when Vigdal and I soon slept the sleep which we mountaineers deserve so well.

The next day was wet, but we walked up the glen, and though it was not a day for climbing, we reconnoitred the Romsdalshorn sufficiently to satisfy ourselves as to the line to be followed in an attempt upon the mountain. Hall and his guides were then on one of the buttresses, though we did not see them. They met with a snowstorm and very wild weather, which naturally drove them away, and I had the pleasure of meeting the Danish mountaineer in the evening at Aak, when we had much interesting conversation.

Vigdal and I climbed down to the valley from the broad gap on the north side of the horn. By sheer good luck we found the one rather intricate line which leads below, a toilsome, troublesome climb down steep crags and through rain-wetted birch-trees.

Bad weather drove us away. We had, however, hardly reached the uplands about Stueflaaten when fine weather came again. Though we had great successes in Jotunheim, we missed the Horn. Hall's patience was, however, rewarded and deservedly so, and on August 31st he had the good fortune to reach the blacksmith's cairn and to prove for all time the truth of the story told by the two heroes of the Horn.



THE ROMSDALSHORN AND TARN FROM VÖENGEDAL. THE TROLDTINDER ARE SEEN OVER A RIDGE ON THE RIGHT

### THE ROMSDALSHORN

A fortnight after Hall's achievement, a farmer named Ole Kolflot, who had some years earlier made an unsuccessful attempt,

succeeded in reaching the summit quite alone. He was, however, an exceptionally good rock-climber.

In the years 1882 and 1883 no one climbed the Horn. In 1884, an Englishman, Mr. Tribe, made the first English ascent, and a few weeks later my wife, her brother and sister and I had the good fortune to arrive in the Romsdal in perfect summer weather. In the evening, the cloud-wreathed Horn gave us an invitation which mountain lovers can readily believe was irresistible. It was soon arranged that my wife, my brother-in-law and I, with Erik Norahagen—a Romsdal guide—should attempt the ascent the following day.

I quote the following from my wife's diary:—

*August 15th.*—At about 2 A.M. we started from Hotel Aak. It was fine and quite warm as we drove down the valley. At Næs we turned to the east along the shore of the Isfjord. There were mists on the mountains which gradually rose: in front of us was the Gjuratind, which looked splendid with the white mists rolling over it, and Venus was shining beautiful and bright above, but soon waned as a rosy tinge appeared in the north-east. At Heen we turned off to the south and drove over a frightful road for about two miles; it was like going along the dry bed of a river. We then got out and sent the carioles by a boy back to Aak, and had a steep but easy walk up the Vøngedal, on the path leading to the Vønge sæter.

'We were now facing the Romsdalshorn, and had a grand view of the Vøngetinder on the left, which have a long, marvellously serrated ridge between the peaks. On our right was a ridge, which is a spur of the Horn (Lille fjeld), over which we saw the weird, needle-like peaks of the Troldtinder on the other side of Romsdal. The ground was now covered with birch and bilberries and fine pine-trees in groups. About 4 A.M. we came to a beautiful little lake, from which there is a long flat walk to the foot of the Horn. We breakfasted on the shore of a little tarn, where we left the photographic things, heavier food, coats etc. under a large rock.

'We began our arduous ascent at seven o'clock. The lower part of the mountain was covered with crags, which are smooth and slippery from glacial action, and there were very few ledges for foothold, or for clinging to by the hands, which makes it difficult most of the way. The rock was very firm. Far up on the mountain is a great yellow patch, caused, it is thought, by a tremendous avalanche having carried away an immense piece of rock. This place served as a landmark, and when we were just

underneath it, we wound off to the left, and then climbed up a deep gully, which reaches almost to the top of the mountain. There was a good deal of old snow here, but we were on rocks most of the time. There was one very difficult bit just at the top of the gully, and an iron ring, fixed in the rock, has to be used by the first person going up, and the last of the party coming down, to fasten the rope by. From the top of the gully we could see the river Rauma winding about far away below, and the last bit of the ascent, only ten minutes, is on that side of the mountain which overlooks the Romsdal. The last piece was up great slabs of detached rock. Here, and all over the top, the Horn was covered with reindeer moss and *Ranunculus glacialis*, some of which we brought away. We got to the top at 10.15 and found no snow there.

‘The view was splendid; it was sunny and clear, and we could see Molde over the fjord, and the open sea beyond. On our left were the Troldtinder, and below us a wonderful map-like view of the Romsdal. The Rauma rushed, just a mile beneath us, the colour a marvellously deep blue—though when below it appears so intense a green. On the other side was a wild medley of snow and rock, with Mjólnir towering wildly above it; beyond that were snowy highlands, where herds of reindeer roam about.

‘We began our descent at 11.20. This was a very slow, tedious process, requiring great patience I thought, and it was nearly four hours after leaving that we unroped beside the little tarn. Coming down is much more tiring than going up, as one gets more shaken, and when it is a case of coming carefully every yard for several hours, much of the time in a sitting position, one becomes very stiff. My gloves were soon in shreds, and then my hands got rather sore, and a skirt is a sad hindrance at such times, forming one of the chief drawbacks a woman has to contend with in climbing.

‘After a long rest and a good meal by the tarn, into which we threw countless stones, we continued our way, having plenty of hard work before us. It had become rather cloudy and dull, and much colder. We crossed the ridge of the Lille fjeld, as we returned straight down into the Romsdal. We had a very horrible scramble of about 2000 feet through thick birch-woods, with ferns in some places growing several feet high, the stems of which were very slippery when trodden down. It felt very suffocating in the wood, after being in the mountain air for so long, and it was anything but straightforward work, as we had to keep deviating, first to the right and then to the left, to



avoid great smooth precipices of rock, which look frightful from below.

'When at last we got to the bottom we felt very stiff and had one and a half miles to walk along the dusty road to Aak. Erik's farm was just across the river, and he rushed down to wave to his wife, who must have felt very thankful to see him, as he said she had wept the day before, when he announced that he was going up the Horn with us.

'Aak was reached about nine, and we were heartily congratulated by every one, and I especially, as being the first lady to have made the ascent. Landmark had hoisted his Sunday flags at each side of the gate. They had eagerly watched us with a telescope in the morning, and had distinctly seen us standing on the cairns at the top of the Horn.'

#### THE VØENGETINDER REVISITED

Several summers' suns had stolen away the snows of winter from the Vøengetinder ridges before I had an opportunity of revisiting this jagged range; but at last, in 1884, my brother-in-law, Wm. Ecroyd, Erik Norahagen and I found ourselves one evening at the Vøengedal's sæter.

Bright and still fresh reminiscences of the next day often come before me now. Yes. We were up with the lark, or rather let us say at milking time. It is easy to be virtuous, and to get up early from a hard bed. What a jolly scramble we had—up, up, up the long snow gully, to the great skar<sup>1</sup> between two great Vøengetinder! A long climb this!

From this skar what a revelation was presented to us, for the first time too, of the especial grandeur and isolation of Mjølne and the deep glacier basins between it and the Vøengetinder!

Three almost parallel glaciers cling to the skirts of the Vøengetinder. They are all out of sight of the Romsdal tourist. All flow eastwards, and each of the two upper glaciers so completely fills its own glacier basin that there are several lateral overflows on to the glacier immediately below. The highest, or Vøengetinderbræ, which Vigdal and I ascended in 1881, has indeed an outlet round the highest peak, towards the Vøengedal, north.

We found that there is a way down from this glacier to the Midt bræ, which in our haste we failed to discover in 1881.

After a pleasant scramble along a rough ridge, we reached the top of the second peak, until then unpolluted by the hob

<sup>1</sup> The gully and skar are well shown in the illustration on page 405, and the skar in that on page 394.

nailed boot, and not decorated by any cairn. A delightful state in which to find a mountain-top!

What a temptation to linger long on those sun-warmed rocks, and to enjoy to the full so grand and varied a view of rugged



MJÖLNIR FROM THE VÆNGETINDER SKAR

mountains, fine glaciers, green valleys, blue fjords, and of the open sea itself beyond Molde! Yes, but we had pledged ourselves to join the ladies of our party that same evening at Ormeim, and did not yet even know whether we could cross the mountains direct,

or should have to return to the Vængedal, and gain the rolling uplands by the broad skar at its head. We did, however, spend some time at the top, and looked down on the Romsdalshorn, which we had ascended a few days before. Erik pointed out several of the Troldtinder, which he had ascended with Hall, and then the Gjuratind—a fine sharp peak overlooking the Eikisdalsvand, which he wished us to attack with him,<sup>1</sup> and in turn I showed Erik the route by which Vigdal and I had climbed the highest Vøngetind.

But time pressed. A convenient rock chimney led us to the top corner of the middle glacier, Midt bræ,<sup>2</sup> and we glissaded down it until numerous crevasses made us slacken our pace to cross narrow bridges, to walk along sharp edges of névé, and generally to enjoy ourselves. We soon reached the edge of a high rock escarpment below which flowed in cold majesty the finest glacier in Romsdal, the Mjöltnir's bræ. Vigorously, though vainly, we tried to force a way down a gully, but the rocks were as smooth as the bald pate of a parish beadle. There is a gully much like this on the Zermatt side of the Mischabel Joch, which has tempted more parties than one to try to descend by it from the upper to the lower glacier, and I believe that the gully has always won the day. Further down we found what I believe to be the only place by which a descent is possible, and after a good climb we reached the Mjöltnir's bræ. As the two upper glaciers end on the top of high precipices, where I have seen many avalanches, a direct route to either from Kvandal—a fine valley, headed by Mjöltnir—is positively forbidden. It is almost certain, too, that there is only one way by which the Mjöltnir's bræ can be reached safely from below.

We toiled rather heavily laden up the steep glacier and below the grand crags which form the rock escarpment. We struggled through deep snow which fortunately closed the mouth of a bergschrund, one moving at a time while the two others were firmly anchored. How steep it was above the schrund! How carefully we went! How delighted we were to reach our pass and to escape from this wonderful cirque! This pass is the southern of two little gaps in the ridge which connects Mjöltnir to the Vøngetinder. We raised our second cairn here, and gave the pass the name of Mjöltnir's Skar.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This lovely mountain was climbed the following year by Mr. W. J. Napier, with Erik Norahagen and Mattias Soggemoen, and afforded them a good though short rock-climb.—*Nor. Tur. For. Aarbog* for 1885, p. 31.

<sup>2</sup> See illustration on p. 394.

<sup>3</sup> See the view of Mjöltnir from the Vøngetinder Skar, where the pass can be seen to the right of the mountain.

How we raced down the Rensdyr bræ and nearly ran into the middle of a herd of reindeer too! How beautiful and full of life they looked as they galloped away over the high fjeld!

We descended to Marsten in Romsdal by a rough, steep, scree-filled gully, appropriately called Skomageren's Skar—The Shoemaker's Pass. The difficulties of this descent were considerable, and were caused by the presence of immense quantities of ripe wild raspberries, strawberries, and bilberries, which a stern sense of duty impelled us to stop and pick. I thought these screes were bad to beat, but at that time I had not been to the Dolomites.

How we did enjoy the drive up to Ormeim that lovely evening! How cosy was the little inn, and what a warm welcome we had from the ladies of our party! This expedition was a first-rate one from every point of view. There was a substantial charm of uncertainty as to the result. We were exploring the unknown. It was a day for the gods. May I have many such another!

#### THE ASCENT OF MJÖLNIR

*From a joint-paper written by Mr. CHARLES HOPKINSON and W. C. S., and read by the former before the 'Alpine Club,' on April 10th, 1888.*

'Short shaft hath the hammer of conquering Thor.'

*Frühjof's Saga.*

(Translated by Rev. W. L. BLACKLEY.)

The partial exploration and crossing of the Gjegalund glaciers having been accomplished, our party, consisting of Hopkinson, Slingsby, and Lars Janssen, proceeded to Romsdal, with the intention of attempting the ascent of Mjöltnir. Mr. Wills's hospitality at Aak afforded us a most advantageous base for the attack.

Two main valleys descend from the higher mountain lands to the head of the Isfjord; Grövdal, the larger of the two, is about eight miles long, and leads to a pass to the famed Eikisdal, and to the fine sharp peak, the Gjuratind. The other valley, Erstadal, coming from the south-east, has two southern branches, Vængedal and Kvandal; the former is headed by the Romsdalshorn, and the latter by Mjöltnir, whilst between them stands the range of the Vængetinder.

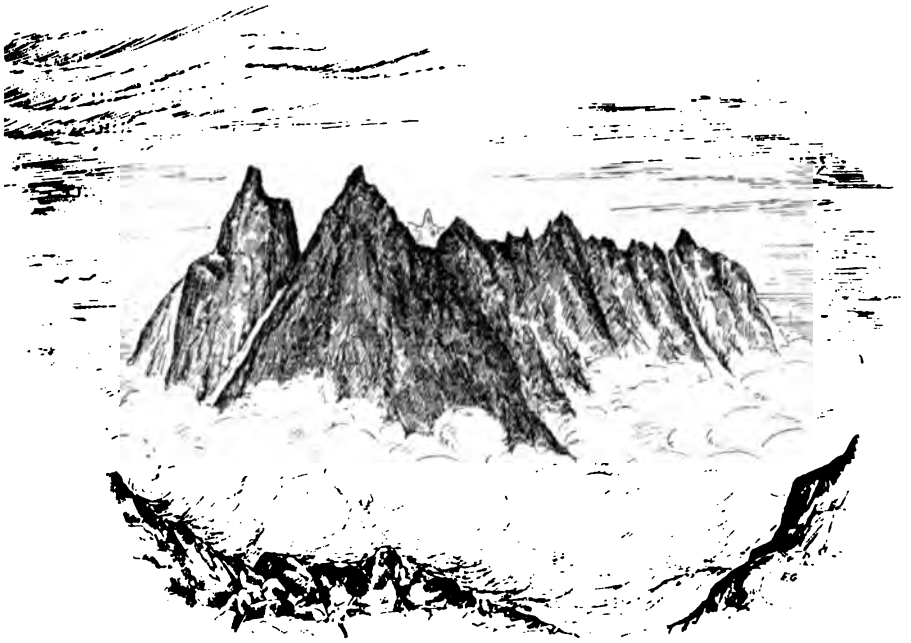
Mr. Wills drove us up to Nedre Dale, which is the nearest farm to Mjöltnir, but only about 200 feet above sea-level.<sup>1</sup> Ivar

<sup>1</sup> Herr Dale, who is part proprietor of Mundal's Hotel at Fjærland, is Ivar's brother.

Olsen Dale, the owner, and his wife and daughter were most hospitable, and seemed to be glad to see us, and to put us up for the night, as well as to have a good talk about the world at large. They have a cosy house, situated on a sunny knoll, facing Kvandal, but just out of sight of Mjöltnir. Everything was nice and clean, and the juniper sprays scattered here and there in the corners lent a pleasant fragrance to the rooms. The Dales were much interested in our preparations, and thought that our axes and rope were fishing implements. This was not to be wondered at, as the herring had just been in the fjord, and every man, woman, and child, as well as the sea-gulls, had been thinking of nothing else but fish for some days, and possibly had herring on the brain. As might be expected, the good folks had no name for Mjöltnir, but spoke of it and other peaks as the Kvandals Fjelde, in the same way as we might speak of Great Gable and Kirk Fell as the Wasdale Fells. Of course we must except a rounded mountain mass which happened to lie due south of Dale, and which we might have guessed rightly to be named the Middags Fjeld.

After Mr. Wills had left, we took a short walk up Erstadal in order to study our route for the morrow. This is a beautiful valley, and its foreground possesses a richness of colouring and quiet pastoral beauty, which form the most pleasing contrast to the fantastic aiguilles, solemn snow-fields, savage glens, and dark precipices of Mjöltnir, and the Vœngetinder. We lingered long, and whilst intending to look principally at the mountains, our eyes were often recalled to the valley by the fitting about of the familiar water-ouzels and wagtails from stone to stone in the beck, or by some lovely and familiar flower, as the meadow-sweet, comarum, or pyrola. After watching the rosy tints come and go from each great peak, the dusky shades of evening set in and sent us reluctantly to bed. We had seen sufficient of the mountain, including the eastern face, the only one not seen before by Slingsby, to lead us to feel sure that at least a first-rate climb awaited us, and that it was quite probable that we might suffer defeat.

Slingsby has written the following account of his discovery of Mjöltnir, and description of the mountain and its surroundings.



*Mjólnir and Vængetinder  
from Star of Troldtinder*

#### ‘THE DISCOVERY OF MJÖLNIR’

One fine day in July 1875, my sister and I climbed a spur of the Troldtinder opposite Aak in order to study the Romsdalshorn. We were particularly delighted with the Vængetinder, the lower portion being partly masked by the intervening wall of Romsdal. Over a shoulder of this range we saw a remarkably fine aiguille, which I sketched at the time. This was my first view of Mjólnir, which then possessed no distinctive name. Years after, when I got near the mountain, I saw near the top a strange rock tooth rising out of the narrow ridge. This bears a striking resemblance to a clumsy hammer, and naturally suggested the name for the mountain, as Mjólnir was the hammer which the war-god Thor wielded to such good purpose when fighting against the Jotuns and Trolds of long ago. Indeed, it is most suitable that Mjólnir should be found in a district where there are so many petrified Trolds standing on the mountain ridges in hideous array, so as to be handy in case they should be reawakened to life.

My second view of the mountain was a fleeting one from the top of the highest Vængetind in 1881.

In 1884 my wife, Mr. Wm. Ecroyd, Erik Norahagen, and

I saw Mjöltnir in profile from the top of the Romsdalshorn. A few days later, Ecroyd, Erik, and I saw the mountain in all its glory from the very best points of view, quite near too, and on two sides as well.

Mjöltnir rises with terrible and utterly impracticable precipices some three thousand feet immediately out of the Mjöltnir glacier. These precipices terminate in a crescent-shaped crest, of which the convex side faces Kvandal, north-east, and the concave side, the weird Svartvand and the Rensdyr bræ on the south-west. The crest is extremely narrow and nearly a mile in length; it is highest in the centre, and forms a broken skyline of sharp pinnacles like the Söndmøre Alps.

A steep buttress or blunt ridge rises out of the head of Kvandal, between the Mjöltnir's bræ and the Kvandal's glacier, which latter lies east of Mjöltnir. This buttress, and the roots of the horns of the crescent, give a triangular base to the mountain. The buttress eventually becomes merged in the north and east faces. The eastern face, which I saw at first in profile, consists of a dark mural precipice, a very savage contrast to the glittering snows of the Kvandal's bræ just below it. Above are some steep ridges and miniature gullies which vanish near the top.

The only place that seemed to offer even a ghost of a chance of success to climbers on the Kvandal side was up this blunt ridge, and then—somewhere. But where is somewhere? Both horns of the crescent are probably impracticable.

In 1884, our party reconnoitred the crags on the south side most critically, and agreed that the lower portion was possible, but that the way would be intricate. As to the upper part, it was delightfully obscure. It was, however, as plain as daylight that the rock-climbing on this side would be much shorter than on the other, and it was quite evident that the ascent of Mjöltnir would prove to be a difficult one, and we much regretted that fate would not then allow us the time to try our luck upon so noble a mountain.—W. C. S.

#### THE FIRST ASCENT OF MJÖLTNIR.

Next morning, September 12th, we set off at 4.50 down the dewy meadows and across the sparkling trout stream, and after a gentle ascent through a pine forest, where the bilberry leaves were bronzed by the autumnal sunshine, we gained the open and flat ground of Kvandal. At 6.40 we reached the old moss-covered moraine of the Kvandal's bræ, and crossed it to a spur north-east

of this glacier, in order to avoid an ice-fall. Here we halted to make a further study of our peak and of the Mjölñir glacier, down which we might wish to return, and to enjoy the glorious views of the Vœngetinder.

We soon started again, and crossed the Kvandal's glacier diagonally towards a gully which descends from the buttress. The snow was hard and steep, and after we had crossed it we said, 'We ought to have roped.' As we neared the gully it began to look very bad, and we abandoned the idea of trying it, on account of the fear of falling stones, so turned to the right a little below it. It was then 8.15, and we had made about 3000 feet. Here our rock-climbing began in earnest, and at once hands had to do their share of the work as well as feet. After mounting 350 feet, we were fairly on the buttress, with a glacier on each side. We crossed over the top of the gully which we had aimed at, and which looked very savage bristling with icicles. We put the rope on, and found our axes and Lars's knapsack to be fearful nuisances. At first the climb was of the true arête character, our backs being now to the north, now to the east, and now midway between the two. After about 1000 feet, the rocks became steeper and steeper, and the buttress merged in the two rock faces, of which the northern was nearly sheer, and without a pretence at either hand- or foot-hold, like a Wetterhorn precipice, whilst, though the lower part of the eastern was perpendicular, it was partly broken above.

Lars led us in good style, and as we rose in height, so also the spirits of all rose in sympathy. We had to follow a series of narrow ledges, all of which sloped downwards towards the mural precipices rising out of Kvandal's bræ.

Then came some narrow chimneys, where one of us had often to 'make a back,' as if for leap-frog, so as to give Lars a step, and where we were hoisted by him in return. In one awkward corner some moss happened to grow profusely; this was extremely slippery, and a thin sprinkling of snow did not mend matters. Fortunately, the rocks were not much glazed. If they had been, we should have been defeated.

After some really glorious climbing, which will long live in our memories, we reached a grim gap in a vicious ridge, and found that we were looking down into the hollow of the crescent. Turning to the right of a high crag with great care, and after crossing over one distinct peak, several minor points, and a long and narrow and jagged arête, which will vie with any in the Alps, we reached the summit at 11.23. As it was much too



sharp to form a good seat, we climbed down into a notch for our lunch.<sup>1</sup>

The near view, especially of the Vængetinder, was very impressive, but, for the most part, the mountains in sight were the ordinary hog-backed, lichen-covered fjelde, fit for reindeer rather than mountaineers; still, we could see in the distance many mountains which will, sometime, give capital work for climbers.<sup>2</sup>

After building a small and insecure cairn and having a snack of food, we thought of the return, and did not at all relish the notion of descending by the way we had come. The character of the climb was much like that met with on the north face of the Ober Gablehorn, but was much steeper, longer, and finer altogether.

We looked down on the south-west side, and as Slingsby had observed the previous year that the lower portion was practicable, we agreed to attempt the descent on this side, and thus to add more variety to our climb. At 12.45 we left the top, and worked towards our left, down jagged rocks which afforded good hold. These soon gave place to smooth, steep, and firm rocks with little hold. Down these we climbed carefully, one at a time, into a shallow gully, just under the gap, which we had first reached on the crest, and found ourselves on the top of an impassable precipice. We were cut off from a promising chimney just below the south ridge by a crag whose smooth surfaces had quite an old-fashioned drawing-room table polish about them. To the right also our way was apparently cut off by another sheer precipice. Carefully exhausting the possibilities before accepting defeat, we were fortunate enough to find a steep gully a few feet above us, which led down to a broad ledge invisible from above. We climbed very carefully down to this ledge, and traversed the cliff to the right. This brought us to a small sun-warmed basin of rock, a pleasant contrast to the icy ledges of our ascent. From this point we made rapid progress, finding a good traverse to the right whenever the direct ascent became barred by precipices, and climbing into and out of one gully after another.

At three o'clock we reached the Rensdyr bræ, and after half an hour's trudge through soft snow we sat down on the warm rocks on the Mjöl'nir's Skar. This pass, already described, has two little

<sup>1</sup> See view of Mjöl'nir from the Vængetinder Skar, p. 401. The ascent was made by the rocks on the extreme left hand, the descent by the Mjöl'nir Skar on the right of the picture.

<sup>2</sup> This has proved to be the case. Herr Hall has climbed some of those in the west, whilst various Englishmen have ascended the Eikiadal peaks on the east.

gaps. The first party took the most southerly one; we made a mistake, as it afterwards proved, and hit the northern gap. From here we had a capital view of our peak in profile, including the hammer itself, a pinnacle about 150 feet high, with an overhanging top much resembling the Napes' Needle on Great Gable in Cumberland.

Hopkinson and Lars took a run up the most southern tooth of the Vængetinder, in order to have a good near view of the Romsdalshorn, whilst Slingsby made a sketch.

At 4.15 we began to descend. As is the case with many a



Thor's hammer. Mjólnir

pass in the Alps, the top 300 feet were prodigiously steep. Our way was limited to a narrow serpentine band of snow underneath a high wall of rock on the left, as on the right hand there was a cliff below us crowned by a small cornice. Several protruding teeth showed us that the rock had but a scanty covering of snow, and that, though the snow was in capital condition, great care would be needed. After about 150 feet had been descended, the band came to an abrupt end on the top of a high crag. Here we had to make an awkward traverse upon soft and treacherous snow below a smooth boss of rock. Fortunately, there was good anchorage on each side of the boss; had this not been the case, we should have returned to the southern gap, though it would

have cost us a good hour's work. Beyond the boss, we kept on the level, with cliffs above and below us. This brought us to within two ropes' length of a tongue of the glacier, and here we again began to descend. At first there were fifty feet of snow as steep as one ever cares to meet with. Then came bare granite. We all came down a little. Then, whilst Lars and Hopkinson anchored firmly, Slingsby was lowered a little in order to look at the bergschrund below, and then was slowly let down on to a mass of snow, which had bared the granite and filled the jaws of the schrund, there very narrow, but doubtless also very deep. Luckily the snow was tolerably firm, though an ice axe could be poked through it. After a little gentle beating down, the bridge was consolidated, and Hopkinson came down. Whilst one of us was anchored below the lower lip of the schrund, the other held up two axes as a step for Lars, whose turn had now come. However, with perhaps laudable pride, he persisted in trying to climb down the rocks, about twelve feet high, alone, where climbing was impossible. Down he tumbled, and there was a medley of men, axes, and rope. We all had a good laugh and then looked down into the black depths of the crevasse a few feet away. We had been exactly an hour from the top of the pass, and had lost no time whatever.

The waning light bade us hurry, and after threading our way through a maze of crevasses, and passing the gully down which Slingsby, Ecroyd, and Erik had descended the previous year, we escaped from the glacier by scrambling down a long gully over which the wall which separates the two lower glaciers overhung. There were many stiff places, and our excitement was maintained to the very last by the uncertainty of our being able to force a passage. In one place, we were very nearly beaten. By climbing our best and quickest, we reached the final snow-slopes below the Midt bræ, and here we raced down, and were fairly clear of the glacier and in the valley at seven o'clock.

A lively trot through Kvandal brought us, at times varying from 8 to 8.30, to Dale again.

Fru Dale was most kind and attentive to us, and an admiring audience thronged round Lars, who modestly told of our adventures. Ivar Dale was much disappointed when told that we were going to drive to Aak that evening, and expressed a wish that we should make him another visit, which Hopkinson has already done.

Mjölmir is by far the finest peak in the Romsdal group, and it presents more varied and stiffer climbing than the Horn or the Vøengetinder. Earlier in the summer, difficulties such as we en-

countered on the Mjölñir glacier would doubtless be less, but it is quite possible that an additional amount of snow might increase the severity of the rocks.

It is a great, but a very unusual, luxury to be able to start direct for so fine a peak from such cosy quarters as Nedre Dale, and to return in the evening to lovely pastoral scenery. When we say that Mjölñir is barely 6000 feet high, that we went very quickly, only making two long halts, and were out between fifteen and sixteen hours, it proves the work to have been really good.

Since our expedition, Mjölñir has frequently been ascended, and slight variations have been made on the side of the Kvandals bræ. Some parties have contented themselves with the short south-west face, reaching it, either by way of the Vøengedal over a low pass between the Horn and the Vøengetinder, or direct from Romsdal by a steep and fatiguing hunters' pass. These latter cannot be called sporting expeditions. Undoubtedly, Nedre Dale is the best and the proper place to start from and return to, and our route is the finest, the most interesting, varied, and beautiful which has yet been taken. In fact, no ascent of Mjölñir can be considered to be quite satisfactory unless the Mjölñir glacier be traversed either on the ascent or descent of the mountain.

#### THE TROLDTINDER

Few travellers who drive along the valley under the shadow of the Troltdinder realise that the summits of these weird peaks, called the *Brudefølge* by the natives, are considerably over 5000 feet above the river Rauma. Still fewer are aware that on the south-western side these peaks are supported by a series of wild buttresses which are fringed with teeth which rise steeply out of a high and almost unknown lateral valley.

The most northerly peak was climbed in 1870 by Mr. Bromley Davenport. In 1879, Hopkinson and some friends attempted to climb the Stor Troltdind from the little glacier which is so well seen from the fjord, but an impracticable bergschrund defeated them. In 1882, Hall, with two guides, climbed this peak and two others from the high lateral valley, and had a magnificent expedition. Other points were climbed by the brothers Speyer and other men.

In 1875 I had been up to the little glacier which lies in a basin above the Middagshaug, but only on a reconnoitring expedition. Above this glacier is a high rampart of rocks, and the Stor

Troldtind at one corner. This rampart is broken by two deep notches, clearly seen from Næs. From the higher notch, which is just below the great Trold, a snow-ghyll comes down to the glacier. Having heard what an excellent climb Hall had had on his ascent of this great Trold from the back, it was most natural that Hopkinson, Lars, and I should wish to try it by way of the glacier, the snow-ghyll, and the gap.

Three days after our ascent of Mjöltnir we found ourselves at the bergschrund at the foot of the ghyll, which had been impassable in 1879. Now it was closed up, and we began to climb the steep snow gully under Hopkinson's leadership. It was a strange place, a very steep and deeply cut groove about 850 feet high, about twelve feet wide, and with a high and perpendicular wall on each side. Our only anxiety arose from a fear of avalanches, as a fierce wind blew blinding mists of fine-grained snow-crystals in our faces and down our necks. However, the snow in the ghyll was good, and the snow mists only came down from the peak above. It was a laborious undertaking for the leader, and very chilly for Lars, who began to feel ill half-way up. When we reached the gap, a 'windy gap' if ever there were one, we dug a hole in the snow for Lars to shelter in, whilst we gave him some *aqua vita*, which soon restored him. This is one of the remarkably few occasions when I have known a drop of spirits to be really of great service on a mountain expedition, and, to my mind, it is a sufficient justification of the belief held by most mountaineers that, though cognac should be looked upon almost like poison, there are times when it is invaluable. This was one of them.

It is only fair, however, that I should give a sop—not a drop—to the teetotaller, and say that, on several occasions, the party of which for the time being I was a member, has failed on some grand expedition solely because some one has taken a nip of brandy to give him a fillip when he felt tired, and that when the inevitable reaction came on he was too limp and lazy to proceed further.

As the weather was now atrocious, we agreed to descend by the opposite side and to make a pass instead of to climb a peak. The Great Trold was just above us, and very wicked he looked too. The rocks at the back are most fantastic, and some five-and-twenty jagged columns tower up in melancholy array, thoroughly according with the name of the range. Our descent was very interesting, though made in a snowstorm and drenching rain.

The great Troldtind has since been climbed several times by our projected route, and it is an expedition which can be strongly

recommended to any good and well-equipped party in fine weather, but now and then it will happen that the bergschrund will say distinctly, 'No further.'

But this matters little; one may start for a climb in a steam-boat, a rowing-boat, or a cariole, as the case may be. Surely, too, the good old roving days of carrying one's goods and chattels on one's back 'over the hills and far away' have not yet been abandoned! Though—for manifest reasons—I hate making myself into a beast of burden nowadays, yet I dearly love to cross a mountain; over the top by preference, but, if that course be not feasible, then over one of its spurs.

The reader will see it is pretty evident that there is some good climbing in Romsdal, which combines both rock and snow. To put the matter into a nutshell: There is the quality, but not the quantity. If, however, any one should be tempted to select some place on the fjord or in the valley as a general climbing centre, he will be mistaken.

The 'centrist' undoubtedly, if well placed, climbs more mountains and has more comfort and luxuries than the rover, but the latter has more fun, variety, and pleasure in general.



VIEW OF THE TROLDTINDER, KALSKRAATIND, VENGETINDER, AND MJÖLNIR,  
FROM DIGERVARDEN—SOUTH

## CHAPTER XXXVII

' Round the shore where loud Lofoden  
Whirls to death the roaring whale,  
Round the hall where Runic Odin  
Howls his war-song to the gale.'

CAMPBELL'S *Ode to Winter*.

## ARCTIC NORWAY

FOR many years mountaineers have believed that in Arctic Norway much first-rate climbing might be found. So far back as the year 1851, Professor Forbes wished to explore a glacier on the peninsula of Lyngen, but had no opportunity of doing so. A few years ago the German Emperor and Dr. von Gussfeldt were so fascinated by the weird peaks of Lyngen, that they engaged the services of Émile Rey of Courmayeur, at that time one of the three best guides in Europe, for the following year. However, political or other reasons prevented the fulfilment of this dream of the Imperial mind, and, in consequence, the regiments of rock Trolds which guard the many mountain crests were denied the honour of an imperial review.

Since then Mr. Hastings initiated serious mountaineering in Lyngen by his ascent of Jøeggevarre, the Mont Blanc of the north, and he has now had four campaigns there. Mrs. A. Le Blond, with the two Swiss guides, Joseph Imboden and his son, have also scored well there too. Mr. W. P. Haskett-Smith and I joined Mr. Hastings in his second campaign, and it proved to be one of the very best and most enjoyable holidays I have ever had. I refer my readers to a paper which I read on the subject before the Alpine Club, and which is to be found in *The Alpine Journal*, vol. xix.

I will merely say now that, in the mountains of Lyngen, Nature has developed her wildest and most eerie forms, and that from the climbing point of view, the best of Jotunheim, the best of the Justedalsbræ, the best of the Söndmöre Alps, and the best of Romsdal have in these far northern latitudes worthy rivals.

What delightful memories we have stored away of our camp life on the shores of the Jægervand, and of the brilliance and beauty of colouring when at midnight we saw the sun's disk roll-



*Storind and Jergersand*

*To face page 114*





ing or gliding over the subtle lines of that most beautiful island—the Fuglö!

However I must not allow the attractiveness of this theme to tempt me further, but will leave others to write in detail about the charms of climbing in Lyngen.

There is no rose without a thorn. But let us forget the musical mosquito, and the blood-thirsty klegg.

The first serious climb on the flame-coloured peaks of the Lofoten Islands was that of the Trolldind above the icy Trolldjordvatn, which was made in 1890 by an English lady, Miss Jeffrey. The next campaign was organised by Mr. Priestman, whose paper on the subject can be found in *The Alpine Journal*, vol. xix., as well as an excellent view of the Trolldind. A third was undertaken by a strong party in 1901, and the paper read on it by Professor Collie before the Alpine Club shows that the weird granite peaks of Lofoten afford rock-climbing of quite as difficult a character as the aiguilles of Chamouni. This is much to say of mountaineers of such comparatively low stature, but I believe it to be quite true, though I have only seen the mountains from the deck of a steamer.

The regions of Frostisen, Sulitelma, and Svartisen, all within the Arctic Circle, and now, thanks to the admirable coasting steamboat service, easily reached, will even now well repay the visit of mountaineers, but, apparently, the Oxtinder, just outside the Circle, are a disappointing range of mountains.

The gallant French scientist and explorer, H. Charles Rabot, has introduced us by his book, *Au Cap Nord*, to much hitherto unknown grand mountain scenery in Arctic Norway and Sweden, including the snow-crowned, glacier-girt Kebnekaisse. Still, I cannot think that they can be so grand or so beautiful as the mountains of Lyngen which bathe their feet in the green waters of Lyngen, Ulfsfjord, Kjosen, and Sorfjord.

There is much to tempt the mountaineer to the far north. There he will see some of the best which nature can offer in the form of ice, snow, and rock scenery, and what is probably the most weirdly beautiful coast in the world.

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Whilst the above was in press, two others and I have had a month's mountaineering in Lofoten under Professor Collie's leadership, and I feel sure that the preceding paragraph is strictly true. In addition to most pleasant reminiscences of other grand expeditions, the memory of three glorious days on the rugged rocks of Rulten will always be recalled by us with intense pleasure and satisfaction.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII

FARVEL; NOTES ON GUIDES AND GUIDING; INVITATION OF THE  
MOUNTAINS TO MOUNTAINEERS

'Let us be grateful to writers for what is left in the inkstand;  
When to leave off is an art only attained by the few.'

LONGFELLOW.

ALL who are worthy of being termed mountaineers, in contradistinction to climbing acrobats, find that, year by year, their love of mountains increases, and so too in like manner does their respect and veneration. They feel more and more, as they gain experience, that the sport of mountaineering—the finest sport in the world—is to be treated seriously, and that no trifling must be indulged in. They will not deny the fact that with this sport, as well as with all other noble sports, there is a certain little element of danger; but, at the same time they assert with equal truth that, with forethought, prudence, and by putting into practice certain well-established maxims, these risks can be reduced to a minimum.<sup>1</sup>

In Norway, probably the greatest mountaineering danger is that of climbing with so-called guides, or with inexperienced amateurs, who have no nails in their boots. To obviate this, it is well, and indeed quite necessary, to take a good supply of clinkers and other mountain nails, as well as Mummery screws, as there are none to be obtained in Norway, and to insist that each member on a mountain expedition has at least a score of rough nails in each boot.

In some places, the peasants use broad-soled, rounded shoes of soft leather, which are called *snau-kopper* ('snau' meaning quick, or nimble-footed, and 'kopper' meaning cups). These afford a wonderful grip on the smooth glaciated rocks of the deep valleys, but they are useless for general mountaineering.

Up to a few years ago, there were barely a dozen really capable

<sup>1</sup> Much of this chapter appeared in Norse in the *Nor. Tur. For. Aarbog* for the year 1902.

mountain guides throughout the whole length and breadth of Norway. The number is not great now, but every year some stalwart young fellows are added to the list, and are gradually gaining experience.

There are hundreds of peasants 'born the wild northern hills among,' who have toddled literally out of their cradles on to the rocks, and who are surefooted and fearless before they learn their ABC. The best of them become excellent cragsmen, and they are in great request when a crag-fast goat or a sheep has to be rescued. These men are capital porters, though they seldom carry so much as their Swiss brethren. Many would make excellent guides if they had the opportunity of accompanying good leaders, but this is seldom their lot. As they are self-reliant by nature and habit, they rarely understand or appreciate the need of combined climbing; nor do they understand glacier work. However, owing to their general ability in the sport of running on *ski*, the Norse peasantry have a practical knowledge of the condition of snow which their class in other lands does not usually possess. *Ski-running* has taught them to discriminate between safe and dangerous snow, and they know at a glance whether it is firmly planted on the mountain-side, or whether it may slip away as an avalanche.

Though probably many will deny the statement, I may say that, speaking generally, the Norse peasantry are more strongly built, and are more intelligent and better educated than the peasantry in Switzerland, Savoy, or northern Italy, and for that reason they are the better material for becoming guides. In the Alps, it is comparatively rare to find a guide who can read a map correctly. In Norway, on the other hand, I have invariably found the young fellows whom I have had with me on the mountains in one capacity or another, to take an intelligent interest in the *Amtskarter*.

Occasionally, deep-seated prejudices are shown by the young would-be Norse guide, which are difficult to eradicate. His picturesque superstition, on the other hand, I grieve to say, is vanishing only too quickly.

Few Norsemen have acquired real snow-craft such as is understood and practised in the Bernese Oberland. The reason is this. The Oberland guide usually has been, and perhaps still is, a chamois hunter; if he will succeed, he must scale the lower precipices of mountains like the Jungfrau or Wetterhorn; when he sees his game or finds fresh spoor, he has at times to cross some chaotic ice-fall, to go, in fact, wherever his quarry may lead him,

often too into places where in cool blood he would never dream of venturing. Chamois-stalking undoubtedly often makes him the fearless and self-reliant mountaineer that we find him.

In Norway, on the other hand, a man who is actually afraid of venturing on a steep glacier may, and often does, become an excellent bear and reindeer hunter. This is also the case with the chamois hunters in Austria and Bavaria.

It is, however, only fair to the bear and the reindeer to add that the former is an excellent rock-climber, and will, if the necessity should arise, cross any glacier almost as well as a chamois, and that the latter takes readily to the ice; also, that I have on several occasions met with exceedingly difficult climbing on rock and ice when reindeer-stalking or bear-hunting. This, however, arose from the fact that I chose the wildest haunts of both animals, and possibly preferred to enjoy the grand scenery into which I was led, to taking the lives of the noble animals which led me. Let the scoffer go into Knuts Hullet or to the foot of Midt Maradal.

The question of selecting a good mountain guide in Norway is almost as difficult as it is nowadays in Chamouni. There are some capital fellows in certain districts, where the demand has created the supply, and these men have generally been coached by Englishmen; but there are few who—like dear old Lars Janssen, whose age alone forbids him to climb, or Johannes Vigdal, who still goes vigorously—take a sufficiently comprehensive view of mountaineering in general, to make it worth the while of their employers to take them away from their own district.

In a few years the case will be different. The sport of mountaineering is by slow degrees becoming popular in Norway, and the number of foreign climbers who go there is increasing rapidly.

On every mountain expedition there must be a responsible and an experienced leader whose word should be unquestioned. His ice-axe must be looked upon for the time being as the sceptre of an emperor. Divided responsibility leads to failure and perhaps also to disaster. True, the leader may be changed by agreement during the day, and this is often done, but with the change must go the responsibility.

Hence it is necessary that the leader, whether he be a professional guide or an amateur, should be a capable man, wise and discerning about the weather, cool and courageous. He must be a man of resource, a born pathfinder, able to read the face of the mountain in front of him, as the page of a book. He must remember too what he reads, so as to be able to make use of his knowledge on a future occasion. He must be a fearless

and a brilliant rock-climber, but must know exactly how far he can with safety trust the powers with which he is endowed. He must understand the true value of the rope and the use of hitching it safely, whilst his party are following him. He must see that each member is properly roped, and that the rope is sound. In time of danger, he must keep perfectly cool, and at all times be wise and prudent. He must have, as the greatest mountaineers always have had, the happy knack of inspiring his companions with confidence in his powers as a leader. He must, and will, be anxious for success, but, if he be a really good leader, he will have the courage, the true moral courage, to order a retreat, when from his experience he knows that to advance will be probably to 'tempt providence' or to 'court disaster.' The weak guide, on the other hand, will probably not possess this greater courage, and will push on. Scores of Alpine accidents have happened in this manner.

According to the Duke of Wellington, 'a good general is one that knows when to retreat and has the courage to do it.' All mountaineers would do well to engrave this, metaphorically, on the handles of their ice-axes.

Carlyle says, 'Experience does take dreadfully high school wages, but he teaches like no other.' This is very true with respect to mountaineering.

During my first five campaigns, I never met a Norseman who had acquired real snow-craft, though I climbed with many good cragsmen. Since then I have generally been able to find a man or two who would take to glaciers as a duck takes to water. Still, many a time, I have been obliged to climb with comparative novices if I would climb at all, and by doing so have probably acquired much mountaineering knowledge and experience, which otherwise would not have been attained. One learns to appreciate the difficulties which fall to the lot of an Alpine guide, if one has to act as a guide oneself, to carry a rucksack and two axes, and to help the man below with the rope at the same time; to watch one's companions like a cat watching a mouse, to hold the one extra taut when one sees him likely to slip out of the step in the steep snow, and to see at the same time that the other has his rope hitched properly round his axe. I maintain, without fear of contradiction, the theory that more practical mountaineering knowledge can be acquired by leading a novice and a third man up a mountain such as the Ober Gabelhorn, or even the Wellen Kuppe, than by traversing the Matterhorn in the company of two first-rate guides. However, though I have climbed without guides

for many years both in the Alps and in Norway, I wish it clearly to be understood that I do not for one moment advocate the practice of guideless climbing until at least four seasons' apprenticeship have been served under the leadership of masters of the craft, and even then, in nineteen cases out of twenty, I think it would be infinitely the wiser course to continue to mountaineer with good guides. To recommend any one to climb without guides is to incur a responsibility which I for one have every intention of avoiding. Unfortunately, nowadays, in the great mountaineering centres in the Alps, such as Chamouni and Zermatt, owing to a pernicious system of trades-unionism and other causes, the supply of good guides does not keep pace with the demand, and the young climber is in a fix to know what to do. Here I must leave him.

It is true that my mountaineering knowledge was acquired without the help of guides, but it is equally true that the *only* reason for this was because at that period, though there were many good cragsmen in Norway where I wished to climb, there was no one in the country who really understood snow-craft, that highest and most interesting branch of the art of mountaineering, and hence, there were no good mountain guides. Had there been even *one*, I should undoubtedly have become his disciple.

A year or two before my first visit to Norway, my father gave me a copy of *Scrambles in the Alps*, which I read and re-read each time with a greater and more absorbing interest, as so many mountaineers have done, and I here state my indebtedness to Mr. Whymper for having, by means of his book, fostered my natural inclination to climb mountains, and for having, at least theoretically taught me a considerable amount of snow-craft, which proved in the absence of guides, to be of the greatest possible service.

On two occasions I completed the first ascent of a difficult mountain alone, and feel certain that under similar circumstances most of my Alpine friends would have done the same, and that they would also agree with me in saying that the stupid practice of solitary climbing cannot be too severely condemned. I have also crossed scores of snow-covered glaciers in company of only one companion, solely because we could not get a third man. On another occasion I got a third man, and was benighted in consequence. However, I am, and always have been, a staunch supporter of the old-fashioned mountaineers' creed, that on a snow-covered glacier no party ought to consist of less than three members. There are however, I regret to say, some excellent climbers who aver that a party of two can traverse the snows in perfect safety by using

a light double rope, and that in case one of them should fall into a crevasse, he could be liberated by the combined efforts of his companion and himself. I do not believe this for a moment, and have had many a strong argument on the subject. Of course, no one ought to fall into a crevasse, *i.e.* out of sight, and as a matter of fact, such an accident very rarely happens; but when it does, it is serious enough, and it is exceedingly difficult to extricate the man from his icy prison.

Nowadays there is no excuse for slipshod ways, as mountaineering is popular in Norway; there are a few good guides and porters to be obtained in most centres, and as many English mountaineers are ready to go out in the holiday months, a genial companion can generally be found.

The sons and daughters of the grand old northland have every reason to be proud of their native country, and of their race. Surely too, we, whose 'forelders,' barely ten centuries ago, were Norsemen, can share to some extent in this most worthy and justifiable pride?

The mountains of Norway—probably the oldest in Europe—invite us all. Let us go then and learn amongst them the wholesome lessons which Nature never withholds from those who really love her. The musician, the artist and the poet will get inspiration amongst the purple, cloud-wreathed mountains. The philosopher and the politician will learn something of the sense of proportion. The schoolmaster, with the experience of the man, will for the time become the frolicsome boy again. The hard-headed business man will forget his worries and his money-bags, and will become imbued, for a time at least, with a wholesome air of romance.

No man, however callous he may be by nature, can be much amongst the high mountains without gaining strength of character as well as physical strength. King David knew this when he wrote Psalm cxxi.: 'I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.'

Go then to the mountains for all that is best worth having in life. Learn again in the mountain solitudes the lessons which you learned on your mother's knee, and perhaps have forgotten in the bustle of this noisy world. You will form friendships amidst the storm or sunshine, heat or cold, hard toil or well-earned ease, keen pleasure or danger and anxiety, on the mountains, which are stronger, more abiding, and more reliable than those formed in the city or on the plain.

There are in Norway many virgin mountains yet to conquer.



Woo them, as they deserve to be wooed, with an intense love and with a wholesome respect. Remember, when you are on the mountains, the friends at home. Be bold, but take no unwarrantable risks. Forget not the truth of the maxim, 'Discretion is the better part of valour.' Be boldest of all in your determination to turn back when, from your experience, you feel quite sure that to advance would be to court danger.

The high mountains are the natural playground of those who are endowed with health and strength. They are the resting-places for the weary. Then away to the mountains, away, away, and glean more health and strength of mind and body to enable you to combat the difficulties of life, and to lay up a rich store of happy memories from which you can always draw, yet can never exhaust.

Yes, go and worship in 'these great cathedrals of the earth, with their gates of rock, pavements of cloud, choirs of stream and stone, altars of snow, and vaults of purple traversed by the continual stars.'

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