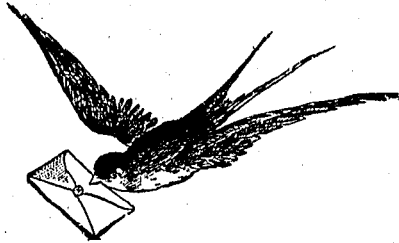


## Our Foreign Letter.

ACROSS NORWAY ON A BICYCLE.

(By our Holiday Correspondent.)

(Continued from page 255.)



The main road then continues in splendid condition beside the waters of Lake Vangsmjoes, and is quite level for seven miles.

It then, for the remaining three miles to Stogst ad, inclines gradually whilst skirting the lesser Strandefjord lake, and crossing the river, the station is reached. Stogstad is sixteen miles in all from Oilo, and a more enjoyable run could hardly be imagined. It is at the foot of the Filefjeld (Fjeld, mountain) and Jotun mountains. The hotel is a good, comfortable house to stay at. There is both fishing and shooting to be obtained in the neighbourhood.

We remained for over an hour for tea before preparing for the seven miles up-hill (1,500ft.) to Nystuen, the end of our day's ride, but, for this ascent, we engaged Stolkjaerres, one for ourselves and the other for our bicycles. Unless one cares for the walk, it is always advisable to do this, as the bicycle can be used very little. The beautiful view, as the hardy Norwegian ponies slowly but surely took us to our destination, increased in a most imposing manner; that of the Jotun mountains on the right being very fine. This is entirely a new road, successfully constructed on the east side of the valley, and when one looks upon the many switchback hills of the old one it is not to be wondered that a great effort was made to avoid them. Upon reaching Nystuen, which is over 3,000ft. above the level of the sea and on the plateau of the Filefjeld, we were greeted with open arms by the pleasant proprietor of the hotel. We revelled in, and enjoyed to the full, the bracing, dry, and clear weather of summer, when fires had not yet commenced at this height. The situation in winter is bleak and dreary, but tourists there at that time of the year soon glow with genuine warmth after taking the many forms of exercise provided. Many enjoy the winter in Norway quite as much as the summer. There is nothing raw about the cold. It is crisp and invigorating. Under these conditions, and with abundant opportunity for indulging in sports of various kinds the season is delightful. Good wraps, of course, are most essential. The night spent at Nystuen was most comfortable. The food is of the best and the

charges are moderate. In the morning, before breakfast, we took a short walk up the hill to least upon some of the wildest and grandest scenery anywhere to be found on this route. There is good trout fishing to be obtained in the lake in front of the hotel, the fish themselves being noted for their excellent flavour. I must say, I regretted having to leave Nystuen so early as nine o'clock in the morning, but this was a necessity, as we were obliged to catch the steamer at Laerdal the next morning for Gudvangen.

As we started off to accomplish the forty-two miles to Laerdal along the Filefjeld road, the sun shone in a cloudless sky, merely tempering the freshness of the morning air. Having breakfasted well, and with a first-rate new road in front of us, we naturally felt very fit. The first station reached is Maristuen, which is just ten and a half miles distant. At the outset, the road slightly declines, then it is somewhat hilly, but the hills are delightful riding, as one is no sooner down the one—with plenty of speed on—than the summit of the other is reached. This frequently occurs. There is a little walking to be done, but it is hardly worth mentioning. Then there is a steep descent to the hotel, but it is unnecessary to dismount, provided the brake has not suffered in any way. My brake seemed as though it was good enough for anything. I certainly had already given it a severe testing. All along the road followed the windings of the river, and snow was to be seen here and there upon the mountains, making the picture more perfect. It is only by travelling across Norway by wheel or in car that it is possible to become acquainted with the many customs of the country. Here, for instance, before reaching Maristuen, we met with several rude huts which lie close to the road. They are inhabited in the summer months by simple, good-natured people caring for their herds of goats. We visited one of these, and inside sat upon an unupholstered bench, with the earth as flooring for our feet, and drank fresh goats' milk, handed to us by a really beautiful woman, whose face was quite madonna-like. She was the mother of several children, the elder of whom assisted, with two other Norwegian women, in milking the goats and making cheeses. We sat there for fully half an hour, making ourselves understood by means of an English-Norwegian phrase-book. We purchased some of the home product. It was, indeed, making oneself at home in the land, and quite a change from the fascinating influence which such a romantic country exercises over those minds susceptible to its varied charms. Maristuen's hotel and sanatorium has accommodation for eighty visitors, and is a first-class establishment. The post-office and telephone are both within the building. The landlord speaks English well, and,

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