

**Our Foreign Letter.****ACROSS NORWAY ON A BICYCLE.**

(By our Holiday Correspondent.)

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After reaching Husum, which is a nice station, we followed the turbulent river for another nine and a half miles, when

one comes to Blaaflat. The road is slightly downhill all the way, with a few small inclines, and the scenery, before opening out into a broad fertile valley, is of the most romantic description.

Blaafat is a good station on the left hand side of the road. After partaking of light refreshments, we ran the remaining seven miles to Laerdal, in a very short time, as the way through the valley is quite level and good going. We arrived in time for an excellent supper. This brought us to the end of what is generally spoken of as the Valders and Filefjeld route. This route may be summed up as teeming with interest throughout its everchanging scenery. Although Lindstrom's is the largest and most luxurious hotel in Laerdal, my companion took me to Kvammes, which is a smaller hotel, but most comfortable, and the enterprising proprietor is all kindness and attention.

The town has about 800 inhabitants, and is constantly busy, as it is the means of communication between the overland route just traversed and the west coast. Tourists, unavoidably detained here, have plenty to occupy a few hours by viewing the glaciers and fjord from the top of the mountain close by. During the night rain fell, and it was dull and cool in the morning, but it brightened up as the day advanced. My companion bade me good-bye as I boarded the s.s. "Fjalir" at the early hour of seven o'clock for Gudvangen. I was very sorry to lose him. On a previous occasion I visited the beautiful western Fjords with their lovely waterfalls and wonderfully grand store of attractions, and considered I had seen Norway, but it is impossible to properly appreciate the varied charms of the country without touring also in the interior. The travelling arrangements, the accommodation and food provided are excellent, and the prices charged are really extraordinarily moderate. The change of diet and the invigorating highland air alone are worth the money spent in relaxation from work. We were four hours steaming to Gudvangen. The majority

of the passengers crowded the fore part of the vessel, so as not to miss any of the beautiful scenery which, as the Naerofjord is entered, is most enchanting. The mountains rise almost perpendicularly out of the water to the height of from 4,000 to 5,000 feet, on both sides of the fjord, and waterfalls continually leap from above, combining, with the gorgeous colouring of all round, a picturesqueness not otherwise to be obtained. The situation of Gudvangen on the Naerofjord is superb, and, as the steamer drew up alongside the wharf, there was not so much as a ripple on its glassy surface. The small village res.s between the silent perpendicular mountains, which so encompass it that the sun's rays never reach it in the winter. At this season of the year and in the spring, avalanches sweep down from the peaks above with fearful velocity into the river and fjord below. After partaking of a cup of coffee at the Vikingvang hotel café, built grotto-like across two huge boulders, I mounted my machine once more for Stalheim, which is seven and a half miles away, through the Naerodal gorge. The run is slightly uphill along a fair road, between lofty mountains, through the tracks of tremendous avalanches, and at the foot of many a waterfall, the whole scene being one of solemnly grand impressiveness.

At the end of this run the foot of the famous Stalheim cleft is reached. It is a beautiful piece of road, wonderfully engineered in bold zigzags and ascended by sixteen windings to a height of 1,200 feet. When nearing the top two fine waterfalls are seen, the Sivlefos on the right and the Stalheimsfos on the left, each having a fall of about 600 feet. As each zigzag is rounded there opens out alternately a view of each of these—a view that under other circumstances would alone be sufficient to make the cliff renowned for its beauty, even without the mighty cleft. The whole ascent must be walked, as the ponies can do no more than draw the empty conveyances. On the summit of this road stands the excellent and popular Stalheim Hotel. It is a building that would attract attention anywhere, and has here adapted itself to the requirements of a modern hotel, commanding, as it does, the whole of the Naerodal gorge below. From its balconies the view can hardly be equalled anywhere in the world. The blunted cone of the Jordalsnut (3,600 feet) is seen on the one side, and the Koldafjeld on the other; and other mountains whose names few ask about, for Nature's own grandeur suffices. One feels overwhelmed.

I remained the night at the Stalheim Hotel in comparative luxury. Some idea of this hotel may be gathered from the fact that it contains 185 bedrooms, with 290 beds, besides a dining room

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