

age of fairy tales could not be passed, and there was nothing impossible in the whole world.

"Was she like this?" she asked at length.

"As like as two peas," said Mrs. Piggott. "And now I come to think of it, you're the very image of her—and that's where you got your ruffle head," she added, pointing to the brown curls of the miniature.

The latter part of this speech checked the words of admiration on Venetia's lips, and sent a thrill of satisfaction through her whole frame. If she was like this portrait, Mrs. Piggott might be as contemptuous of her untidy locks as she pleased. She looked from the

portrait to her own reflection in the cracked mirror; certainly her hair and eyes, and her fair rosy complexion, were one and all like those of the grandmother there represented.

This portrait, valueless to everyone else, was priceless to Venetia. She hung it below the little bookshelves, where her eye was sure to rest upon it when she raised it from her book as she sat by the little table, and for long after its discovery she lived in a world in which no one grew old, where even the grandmothers were young and beautiful.

Mrs. Piggott had volunteered no information about this wonderful grandmother, and the girl was too shy to ask questions on a subject which interested

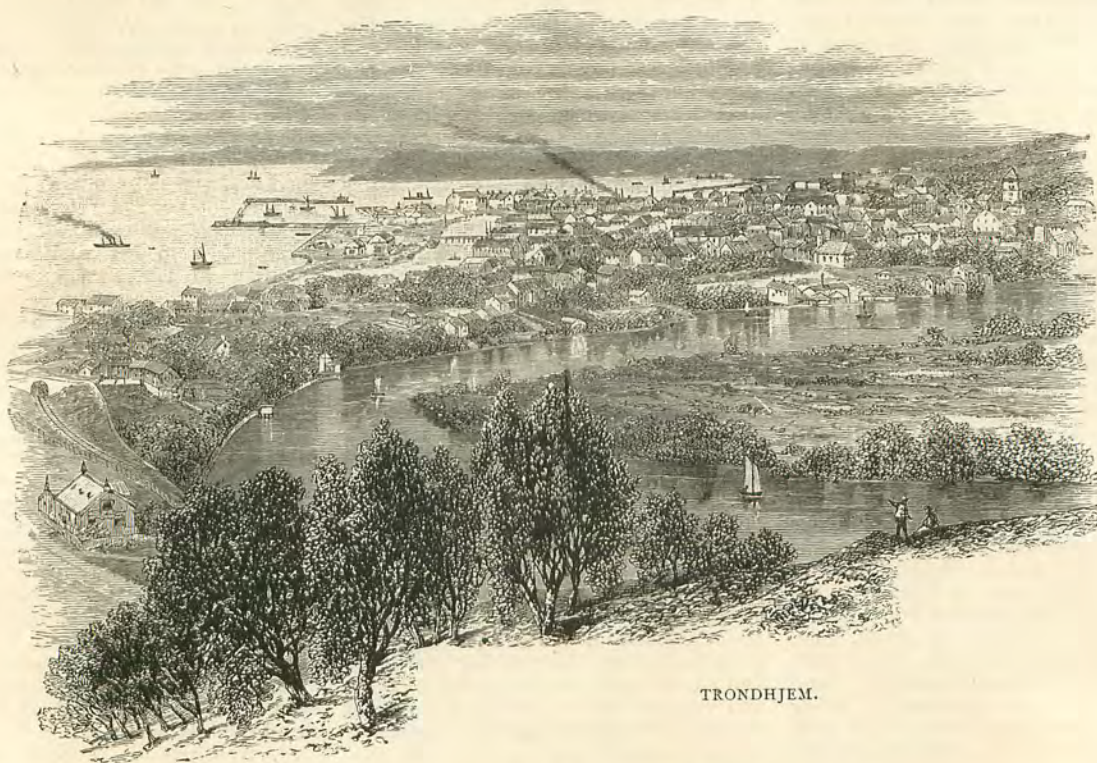
her so deeply; and it was not till some years later that she learned how, in being left to the care or neglect of Christopher Aitkin, Lucile Turner had only repeated that which her mother had done when she abandoned Lucile herself without taking any thought of her future fate.

But Venetia was happy in her ignorance, and the portrait was carefully cherished by the granddaughter, who, fortunate in having inherited the Italian woman's beauty, was even more fortunate in possessing a nature in which there was no resemblance to that of the selfish, cold-hearted woman to whom she was so nearly related.

(To be continued.)

IN THE NORDLAND.

By THOMAS B. WILLSON, M.A., Author of the "Handy Guide to Norway."



TRONDHJEM.

MANY of my readers have lingered with pleasure over that charming little story—now an old one—by Harriett Martineau, called *Feats on the Fjord*, in which she tells of the beauties of the far-distant north, and the exciting adventures of Rolf and Oddo in the recesses of the Salten Fjord. Now although we are not to take too literally all that she tells us there—for she had never, I believe, been in Norway herself—yet there are few more picturesque little tales of that northern land than the one I have mentioned, and if the reader does not know the story it will repay the reading. Let me then tell something about that region, and the equally or more interesting Lofoten Islands, with their strange and fantastic forms, which look so very weird when lit up by a midnight sun.

We—for there were four of us—made Bodø

our headquarters for a while. We had enjoyed our well nigh two days' sail from Trondhjem in the most perfect of weather, which showed all the wonders and the beauty of that strange coast to perfection. The great ice-field of Svartisen, so often wrapped in cloud, unveiled itself as we sailed along; the wild and lonely Trænen Islands rose like pyramids far out to sea. We had had the excitement of witnessing the little town of Björn on fire, and of going several miles out of our course to offer shelter and conveyance to the homeless people—which offer, however, was not accepted very largely, and at last we dropped anchor at Bodø, having first had a view across the broad Vest Fjord, of the most southern of the Lofotens.

Bodø itself is not a very interesting spot: one "long unlovely street," with a few short ones

at right angles, a new church, and some shops constitute the whole of it. But the views around are very fine. Seaward you have the Vest Fjord, with the large island of Landegö near at hand, and the Lofotens about twenty miles distant. Inland—the town is built on a peninsula—you have the fine mountain-ranges of the interior covered with snow, the group of which Sulitjelma is the highest point; and further south the magnificent range of the Børsvatnstinder. Much of this region is quite unexplored at present; roads are few, and tourists still fewer. Occasionally some make their way to Sulitjelma, to reach which a beautiful chain of lakes has to be traversed; but the interior all along this wondrous coast is still more or less an unknown land.

The Salten Fjord, which lies behind Bodø,

is remarkable for the famous Saltstrømmen, the most powerful of all the Norwegian "ströms," or rapids, caused by the tide. This can be seen twice a day, when the waters of the tide make their way back again from the Skjærstad Fjord, as the inner part of the Salten Fjord is called. Two small islands block up the entrance to this fjord, and in the narrow passages between these and the mainland, the water rushes with terrific force, and presents a very striking scene. No steamer can pass at this time, so that if you want to see it in its force, you must take up a position on the land close by. This place has been visited by the present King of Norway, Oscar II., and an obelisk marks the spot from which the best view can be obtained. The Emperor of Germany went to the same place a few weeks after we were there. We passed up through these narrows on one of our visits to the Salten Fjord; but at that time of course the water was only running with the rapidity of a fairly swift river, and the steamer quickly passed it and reached the open Skjærstad Fjord. We had intended making the ascent of Sulitjelma, but as we had to leave one of our party behind us at Bodö, we were not able to go the whole way.

We landed, however, at a place called Fineid, and made our way for some distance along the lowest of the chain of lakes, over which you have to journey to reach the base of Sulitjelma. It was quite delightful and wonderful to see the richness of the vegetation in the far north. The lakeside was all clothed with trees—birch and alder, and the grass and wild flowers in abundance made it more like the English lakes than a spot in the same latitude as Greenland.

A few days after this we made another excursion to the Saltström by a route preferable to going all the way by steamer. First we had a drive of about ten miles, passing the interesting old church of Bodö, with its great parsonage, or "præstegaard," where they once entertained Louis Philippe, and where the walls of the rooms are covered with very strange and grotesque paintings; on

to a spot called Kvalvaag, where after a short time we succeeded in getting a boat with a sail, and two "hardy Norsemen," to take us across the wide stretch of fjord which separated us from Ström. It was a most glorious day, and the snow-clad peaks of the Børsvatns-tinder, with their several glaciers, glittered in the sun. There was a fresh breeze blowing when we started, and we made good way; but about half-way across we found the wind and tide met, and the result was that we began to ship water at a very alarming rate, and had to bale it out with all speed, lest this should be the last of our "Feats on the Fjord." However, we escaped with nothing more than a partial ducking, and were none the worse after we had a good walk on shore. Unfortunately, however, the Saltström did not show itself to advantage on this occasion, as the tide was a very low one, and we had to content ourselves with imagining what it would be like. Going back to Kvalvaag we had another rough crossing, but reached shore without mishap.

Before we crossed to the Lofotens we made one or two attempts to photograph the midnight sun. His solar majesty, however, was rather coy of showing himself at the right moment, and although he was not below the horizon all the time we were in the Nordland, it was but seldom that we had an unclouded midnight. However, our photographer was not easily daunted, and one evening about 11 P.M. he and I left Bodö and climbed up



GROUP TAKEN AT MIDNIGHT.

the hill, which lies to the north-west of the town, overlooking the Vest Fjord. When we gained the top we found it blowing rather hard, but the sky was fairly free from cloud except just where the sun was, partly behind the island of Landegö. The camera was got ready and we waited anxiously for the sun to emerge. We were much afraid that the island would obscure our view, as it rises about 2,000 feet from the sea, but, to our great delight, about five minutes before midnight the sun emerged from the bank of cloud in its full and wondrous glory—the glory of a summer



THE RAFTSUND.

sunset, which lit up the mountains and island with a golden light. It was blowing so hard that we had to hold on to the legs of the camera to keep it steady while the necessary exposure was given. Then we waited, watching the sun, and soon we could trace the upward movement, which told us another day had begun. It is something marvellous in what a short space (a few minutes) the change of light takes place, from sunset to sunrise, from the deep red of the setting sun, to the golden rays of the dawn. I have always thought this one of the most beautiful effects produced by this phenomenon. In itself there is nothing so very peculiar in the appearance of the sun at midnight, except for the quiet which reigns around. It is little more than an ordinary sunset effect, and those very highly-coloured representations of the scene which one often meets with, exist partly in the imagination, or under certain rare atmospheric conditions not generally met with.

We contrived, notwithstanding the difficulty of keeping the camera steady, to use three or four plates in our attempt to take this view of the midnight sun, but unfortunately, as we found afterwards, the results obtained were not very satisfactory. With respect to photography at midnight in Norway, I may say that, as far as I can learn, some most beautiful photographs can be taken at that time; I am not alluding to the pictures of the sun itself, but to views taken at midnight. It seems, from pictures which I have seen, that it is a time specially adapted to photography. The light is diffused, and the absence of strongly-marked contrasts of light and shade is very favourable to photography. Our photographer took some very beautiful views both at Bodø and Svolvær at midnight, with only an ordinary exposure of a few seconds; and not only in this "land of the midnight sun," but even much further south, on the Dovre Fjeld, I have seen some taken at midnight, which are remarkable for the beauty and clearness of all the details of the picture.

From Bodø we crossed the wide Vest Fjord to Svolvær, an important place in the Lofotens. The time we were there, however, was not the busy season. It is in the early months of the year that the Lofotens are full of fishermen from all parts of Norway. Then it is that the great harvest of the sea is reaped, and millions upon millions of cod fish are caught and dried, for exportation to the Mediterranean. Svolvær consists of a number of wooden houses built on small islands, backed by precipitous mountains—the Svolværsjøre almost overhanging a part of the little town. On this mountain is a very curious pinnacle of rock resembling a gigantic stack of chimneys, and quite unclimbable. All over the place are the wooden huts erected for the fishermen during the fishing season. They are little more than long sheds with berths along the sides, where the men sleep. These huts may be counted by the dozen in Svolvær and other important fishing stations, such as Henningsvær. Without them it would of course be quite impossible to accommodate half of those who come for the fishing. The entire population of the Lofoten group is only about 20,000, while there are usually about 25,000 fishermen assembled in the spring-time.

We enjoyed our stay at Svolvær exceedingly, and our photographer was busy securing many beautiful pictures of the islands and their inhabitants. Not far from Svolvær is Kabelvaag, and it is connected with it by

one of the few roads on Lofoten. We walked there one day, and a very interesting walk it is. The road runs along the sea amid huge boulders, which have fallen from the mountain sides, skirting some lovely bays, and then creeping between narrow walls of rock. On the way we met with an interesting object. Fastened to a mighty boulder was a thick iron box which hung from a staple. It was within easy reach of the passers-by. In the lid of the box were two slits like those in a collecting-box, and under one the words, in Norwegian, "Will you give an øre for missions to the heathen?" and under the other—"Will you give an øre for the poor seamen's widows and their little ones?" What an excellent combination! The dangers of the winter fishery are many, and often there are poor widows and little ones to lament the loss of the breadwinner; but the other appeal was none the less appropriate, for we were in the parish where that noblehearted missionary, Hans Egede, was pastor for about eleven years—from 1707 to 1718—before he began the arduous work of the evangelisation of the Eskimo of Greenland.

A short distance further on we came to the church of Vaagen, a very plain wooden building, which replaces an ancient church which stood on the same site. Around the gallery are pictures of the various pastors who, in former days, had charge of the parish. The oldest dates from 1559—a very curious one, painted on panel. Among the others we found one of Hans Egede. Except for these pictures, there was not much of interest in the church, and as works of art they were by no means remarkable.

During our stay at Svolvær we visited one of the industries for which the Lofotens are noted. The Norwegians are a thrifty race, and do not allow any part of their harvest of the sea to go to waste; and so, when cod are caught to be dried for the southern markets, their livers are duly transformed into that useful but unpleasant oil, so familiar in this country, and then it might be thought that the cod had done its fair share in providing for the wants of man. But it is not so. In preparing the dried *stokfisk*, or *klippfisk*, for exportation, the head is first cut off. Now the head of a cod is no small part of the fish: so these heads are all collected and dried, and when dried are ground to a powder, which is extensively used as guano. The oldest of the factories where the heads are so treated is at Svolvær, and we paid it a visit one morning. On reaching the *Fabrik* we saw vast sheds with their heaps of these fishy remains. The odour is not at all as bad as might be imagined, as of course the heads, before being brought there by the fishermen, are first dried in the sun; still, there is a very unmistakable smell about them. The manager of the factory was very kind, and showed us all these treasures. He told us at that time (and the sheds were not quite full) they calculated they had in stock about six and a quarter million of cods' heads waiting to be ground down. By his kindness we were allowed to see the whole process. The heads are first roughly ground, so as to bring them to a kind of powder; then this powder is thoroughly dried on hot plates of metal, and then ground down to a fine powder. I have said the smell was not at all trying when passing the sheds where the heads are stored; but it is a very different thing in the house where they are dried after being crushed. There the smell is something to remember for a long time, and to this may be added the dust of dried cods' heads, which is

flying about, and gets into the nose and down the throat, so that for a day or so afterwards you cannot fail to be reminded of your visit to the factory. Still, notwithstanding this drawback, it is interesting to see the way in which all parts of this fish are turned to account. In other places, I believe the heads are pounded up with a kind of seaweed, and given to the cows during the winter. I am not over fastidious, but I think I should prefer not to drink the milk of cows accustomed to such a diet.

One more excursion in the Lofotens I may mention here, because it is one of very singular beauty, even in that wonderful land. It was to the Troid Fjord. This fjord is a narrow inlet of the Raftsund, which is so well known, and is visited now several times a week by the tourist steamers; but the Troid Fjord is so narrow that no large steamer can well turn in it, and so it has hitherto escaped with less notice than it deserves. We were able to charter a small steamer which lies at Svolvær for this excursion, as in the summer-time she has but little to do, though very busy during the fishing season. The Troid Fjord is about two hours' sail from Svolvær, through delightful scenery the whole way. The only important place passed is Brettesnæs, a picture of which can be seen in every railway-station in London—indeed, we might say in England—in a pictorial advertisement of what in Norway is called "Tran." The reader can easily guess what that is. Soon after leaving Brettesnæs we came into the Raftsund, with its wonderful mountain-peaks and glaciers. A short way up this "sund," the entrance partly hidden by a small island, is the Troid Fjord. This inlet is, I think, not more than a mile long, but it would be hard to find in Europe such a bit of water and mountain scenery as is to be seen there in such a small space. On the right hand is a terrific wall of rock (polished and made bare by frequent avalanches), which must rise some 2,000 feet right out of the water. It is one of the most imposing of the many walls of bare rock I have seen in Norway, and which, even in Nordland, where rock scenery is unexampled, is almost unique. At the head of the little fjord is a magnificent group of jagged peaks, with five small glaciers among them, and the invariable glacier torrent rushing down to the calm waters of the little bay. Up to now the Troid Fjord has enjoyed its splendour almost unknown; but alas! like so many other places, this must not be expected to last; and some of the tourist steamers, later in the summer than we were there, made their way in for the first time; and now this quiet little spot, where nature, so grand and lovely, showed herself to but a few, will become as well known as Torghatten or the North Cape.

But I must say no more about this strange and wonderful Nordland. Time and space alike would fail to tell one half of its wonders. Much of it remains to be explored, and it will be long before it can be overrun. Vast districts of unrivalled grandeur exist on all sides. Magnificent mountain-ranges, with glaciers of great extent and beauty, are yet wholly unknown, like the Oxtinderne in Helgeland, and many other ranges and ice-fields further north. But it is not unlikely that if the marvellous development which is going on in the south-west of Norway spreads much further, then these names, like many others a few years ago almost unknown, may become to tourists household words, and the Nordland, in spite of its distance from England, become the playground of the north.

