

great position which she would one day be called upon to fill.

When the death of the Emperor William I., followed so quickly by that of the Emperor Frederick, called the young Kaiser Wilhelm from comparative obscurity to the most prominent position in Europe, it was with a sigh that the Empress relinquished the simple pleasures which had made her life so happy.

Since then she has been unable, as heretofore, to be always with her children, and this has been a great trial to her; but her other duties are paramount, and when the Emperor

is in Berlin, she spends nearly every morning with him, helping him with his correspondence.

The few weeks which she has lately spent with her sons at Felixstowe have been an unmixed pleasure to her Majesty, for nothing delights her more than simple pleasures shared with her children. The Empress is extremely charitable, and is always ready to help any deserving person. She is the patroness of several charitable institutions, and encourages the fine arts wherever she may be.

She has won all German hearts by her marvellous tact, which comes from true good-

ness of heart, her thoughtfulness for others, and by her unselfish consideration for all those about her. From north and south only praise is heard of the German Empress, for her pure, deep love for her husband and children; her strong religious feeling appeals to the sympathies and hearts of all German women; and her vocation in life is certainly to show her people what a wife and mother ought to be. The Emperor, in a speech which he made last year, fully described the Empress Augusta Victoria when he said, "She is a pearl among women."

DEAR LADY DISDAIN;

OR,

VIA AMORIS.

SONNET.



E seldom know how love—true love—begins;  
To some is given the power of loving much  
At outset of acquaintance; though to such  
Ignitic suitors bliss of wooing spins  
But all too quick. 'Tis he who waits and wins,  
Beginning slow with Cupid's bow as crutch,  
And honeyed dalliance, will at dual touch  
Like dove ascend above! O Heaven-born twins!

But there are those begin as enemies,  
With length of tongue, show fight or proud disdain;  
But when at last the *débris* of the pain  
Is swept away—a heart all brilliant is  
Discovered in true light; and O! I wis  
That many worse there are than such campaign!

C. P.

## A VISIT TO A PEACEFUL TOWN.

BY THE COUNTESS OF MEATH.

WE had anchored early in the morning at Molde. Does anyone mentally ejaculate, "I never heard of such a place?" Nor, to my knowledge, had I, dear readers, to tell the honest truth, a short while since; and yet on a large map of Norway, hanging up before me, the name of Molde is written in big letters. In this country of glorious wilds, with rugged mountains, thundering waterfalls, and vast glaciers, with but a thinly-scattered population, Molde is a place of no little importance. Does it not boast of several hotels, of many shops, and of a few villas where wealthy Norwegians spend the summer season? And do not large steamers sometimes put in at its peaceful port? On the previous day to that on which we arrived at the little town we had been witnesses of scenery which in its magnificence defies description. At one spot, the so-called "Seven Sisters' Fall," that number of rivulets are to be seen discharging their waters over a sheer precipice, and forming a beautiful snowy veil of foaming water over the face of the sombre rock. Close to the waterfalls, and perched, as we should think, in a most dangerous position, is a little farmhouse, for the Norwegians are a brave, hardy race, very industrious, and they are content to live in unpromising and almost inaccessible places, some of them so precipitous that it is said they have to tether their children as well as their animals for fear of some dreadful accident befalling them. It is curious to note how, amongst the brown rocks, the eye is sometimes caught by a patch of brightest green. This means that the hard-working

peasants have contrived to fertilise some spot a little more available for cultivation than that around it, and that by dint of patience and perseverance they have managed, with the help of the fish which are to be caught in the fjords, to get just sufficient land into cultivation to live upon—not, it is true, luxuriously, but very little seems to content these frugal people. The character of the scenery about Molde was completely different from that which we had just witnessed. Nature, as we saw her on the previous day, was indeed beautiful, but grandeur and solemnity were the characteristics; whilst when we woke up next morning and looked out on the scene, it was one of beauty too—of a smiling, peaceful kind. Grassy meadows were to be seen richly gemmed with flowers, shady trees, well-clothed hills. The passengers on board our vessel, *The Chimborazo*, once breakfast was over, were all impatient to go on shore, and we ourselves followed some of the more eager sight-seers. Having been travelling



A NORWEGIAN GIRL.



about in such wild regions, it was a matter of surprise to us to find that the little town possessed as many shops, though it is true that if all were put together they would not have formed a very long street in a town of any size. Still there were tempting things to be bought. Close to the landing-place was a shop full of beautiful furs—Molde's proximity to Arctic regions renders it possible to obtain abundance of valuable skins—silver ornaments, photographs, etc. We found our way up the winding street to a church which stands on rising ground. Surrounding it is a churchyard. Most of those who have been here buried lie without even a stone to tell the passer-by the name of him or her who is departed; but the graves were not by any means neglected, and there were flowers to show that the hand of love had been caring for the grass-grown graves of those who were peacefully at rest. The church was closed, but ere long the key was brought, and we entered for the first time a Norwegian place of worship. Like the houses in these parts, it was mostly built of wood, and a bright, high-roofed, cheerful building it was. There was none of the "dim, religious light" to be found here, as in most of our English cathedrals and churches, but the feeling of solemnity was not lacking in this simpler and less ornate ecclesiastical pile, and we had the feeling that true, steadfast hearts were in this spot raised in worship—for the Norwegians, by all accounts, are a devout people, and their religion seems to be carried into practice. Their honesty is proverbial, whilst kindness and simplicity are marked characteristics in Norway. "You may spoil these people, but you cannot better them," said one of our party, an enthusiastic admirer of Norway and its inhabitants, talking of the invasion of the Britisher to these shores. I am afraid there is too much truth in the remark. We are evidently, unconsciously, doing a certain amount of harm, in destroying the honest straightforwardness and independence of these people. Already the children in some places seem inclined to earn money in lazy fashion; and if the tradespeople, in the future, discontinue their habit of marking everything with plain figures, and turning a deaf ear to bargainiers, it will, to a great extent, lie at the door of English purchasers, accustomed to haggle over the exorbitant prices asked by sellers in countries where the sum first named is not the only one likely to be accepted. But we were speaking about the church. In this sacred building, over the altar, is a fine painting by an artist said to be a native of the town of Molde. It represents the angel appearing to the women at Our Lord's empty sepulchre. Underneath are written in Norwegian tongue, the words, "He is not here: He is risen." The figure of the celestial visitant, as well as the faces of the startled women, are wonderfully well depicted. From the church we wandered up a road which led us past another little graveyard. Here we noticed a row of tiny little graves by themselves, evidently those of children who, for a brief space only, gladdened the hearts of fond parents by their merry prattle. Soon after we came to a villa residence, the owner of which seemed to take much pride in his garden, which was better kept than most we had seen. A laburnum tree was one mass of glorious yellow blossom. Our path then lay through a pretty wood, a public resort, rich with lovely ferns and wild flowers, and then became very steep ere we reached the top of the knoll, where a summer-house has been placed. The view across the

fjord of a splendid range of sun-capped mountains could be seen and fully appreciated. It was a glorious panorama, and by means of an ingenious contrivance the visitor could ascertain the names of the various mountain peaks which were visible from this spot. On our way down to the town we passed a woman busily knitting beside a perambulator with closed curtains. A lady, evidently a baby-fancier, drew them on one side, and was rewarded by a perfect picture. A plump, rosy, golden-haired infant of about one year, lay fast asleep, the image of health and innocence. Our attention was drawn towards it, and great was the delight of the mother to see by our faces, how much her child was being admired. The expression of innocence and simplicity is not only to be looked for amongst children in this country; it is also a characteristic of the faces of the younger women. How often the appearance of a lovely maiden in other countries, is spoiled by self-consciousness and conceit! In Norway, if the fair-haired girls are not as a rule strictly handsome, yet there is apt to be a charm of expression arising from the pure simple-mindedness of these maidens, and I stopped to buy a photo of two of them dressed in picturesque peasant costume, not only because I wanted to have a representation of the dress, but because, even in the photo, the expression of which I spoke was not lacking in the faces of the young girls. We returned to our ship—our temporary home—for refreshment and rest, and then again landed in Molde. This time we took a drive. The carriages in Norway are peculiar to the country. Some are constructed to hold but one person. They are called "carrioles," and are very light vehicles for the ponies to draw, and said to be most comfortable. The traveller either drives himself or leaves the reins to be guided by a young boy, who squats or stands in a tiny seat at the back. The so-called "Stolkjærre," one of which we engaged, is a less picturesque vehicle. It is designed to carry two persons, and, like the "carriole," is mounted on two wheels, with a small seat for a boy at the back. The Norwegian ponies are capital beasts; they are not unlike their owners, steady, long-suffering, and free from vice. Ours was a pony of the colour which is common amongst them—a deep cream, with brown mane and tail: the former is kept cropped. The Norwegians do not harass their beasts with over-much harness. Bearing-reins are almost unknown, and blinkers are only conspicuous by their absence. Our little animal amused us, for there was no need to whip him up when his pace became too slow; we had only to hold out the whip at a certain angle. His quick unblinking eye was sure to catch sight of it, and his trot was marvellously quickened for a short while, but soon to be slackened again, until we again tried the same experiment, with a similar happy result. The journey he had to take was no fatiguing one—sometimes these ponies will travel twenty to thirty miles a day without showing any outward signs of distress—he had but to take us a short distance along a road beautifully shaded from the hot sun by sheltering trees. We drove by the side of the fjord, which is really an arm of the sea, but has all the appearance of an inland lake. On our return we allowed ourselves to be tempted into the purchase of some mats made of the skins of white foxes. Our friend Reynard, with his red-brown fur, pointed nose, and bushy tail, is also to be found in Norway, but some are much larger than ours.

There was considerable excitement on board

our vessel that evening because a boat-race was rowed by the ship's crew. The winners came off with flying colours, and were greatly cheered by the passengers, because, notwithstanding the fact that they broke an oar during the contest, they yet came off triumphant. When the race was over a dance was got up on board, the young people swinging round to the gay strains of music performed by our excellent band. Many of the inhabitants of Molde rowed out to take a nearer view of the vessel, and they watched the dancers with much interest. There was one boat containing four men to which our attention was drawn. At a place like Molde one might be inclined to imagine that but little of the sorrows and sufferings, to which poor human nature is subjected, would be experienced. Such is not the case. Norway is the only country in Europe afflicted with the terrible disease of leprosy, and Molde is one of the cities where a hospital, for the benefit of those who suffer from it, has been established. In the boat to which I allude were four of the inmates of this institution. One had his face greatly disfigured by this malady, two others leant back listlessly, whilst only the fourth seemed quite equal to the exertion of rowing. That afternoon the hospital had been visited by two or three of the passengers belonging to our vessel, and they brought back a very pitiful account of what they had seen. The disease seems to be regarded as incurable, and, consequently, whether it attacks those who are very young or those more advanced in life, the same fatal results must be anticipated. The visitors were shown a young boy who was so slightly attacked by the awful malady that there was scarcely any visible sign of its presence except a small spot on the arm and a mark under the eyelid; but slight though the indications were, they were considered sufficient to stamp the poor lad as a victim and an outcast from the rest of the world. He may now only associate with lepers. Leprosy, it is said, is greatly diminishing in Norway, owing to the fact that those suffering from it must nowadays either enter a hospital built for them or else be isolated from their fellows in the house where they dwell. The disease is held to be produced by poor living and by fish forming too great an article of diet. The districts round Molde are beautiful, but the land is poor, and hence the inhabitants are insufficiently nourished, and leprosy is far too frequently found. Consequently, even in smiling, peaceful Molde there may be many a heavy heart bearing perchance an almost overwhelming burden of suffering patiently and heroically, in hopes of some day laying down that burden and receiving the crown of glory. The nights in Norway are very, very long, and it is difficult, without consulting a watch of an evening, to know how soon midnight approaches. It was growing somewhat late when the poor leprosy men departed and rowed their boat in the direction of the hospital. The young people on board our vessel were still dancing away merrily as they did so, and forming an example of how joy and sorrow stand close together, and how one man's heart is full of mirth and frolic when another's is heavy with care. Dear reader, in our journey through this world let us remember that we will come in contact with many sufferers—some perhaps will be very close at hand—and may it be our blessed privilege to soothe and solace them, and to seek for happiness not merely in selfish indulgence, but in the greater joy of being a helper and comforter to many.

