

ART. V.—“THE LAND OF THE MIDNIGHT SUN.”¹

FROM the last days of May to the end of July, in the northern part of a beautiful country, the sun shines night and day. During this period of continuous daylight the stars are never seen; the moon appears pale, and sheds no light upon the earth. Summer is short, giving just time enough for the wild flowers to grow, to bloom, and to fade away, and barely time for the husbandman to collect his harvest, which, however, is sometimes nipped by a summer frost. A few weeks after the midnight sun has passed, the hours of sunshine shorten rapidly, and by the middle of August the air becomes chilly, and the nights colder; although during the day the sun is warm. Then the grass turns yellow, the leaves change their colour, and wither and fall; the swallows, and other migrating birds, fly towards the south; twilight comes once more; the stars, one by one, make their appearance, shining brightly in the pale-blue sky; the moon shows itself again as the queen of night, and lights and cheers the long and dark days of the Scandinavian winter. The time comes at last when the sun disappears entirely from sight; the heavens appear in a blaze of light and glory, and the stars and the moon pale before the aurora borealis.

So writes Mr. du Chaillu in the introduction to the well-written and very attractive work before us. Of his sailing towards the midnight sun an interesting account is given; and many tourists, as they read these pleasing pages, may be tempted to make the expedition, and see for themselves.

Haparanda, the most northerly town in Sweden, is the place to which tourists sail in order to see the sun at midnight: and during the summer months comfortable steamers leave Stockholm weekly for that part of Sweden, stopping at different points. By taking one of these boats, about the middle of June, the tourist can make a short and pleasant trip; he can observe the coast scenery, and enjoy the sight of the midnight sun without any exertion. The passage lasts about three days.

Mr. du Chaillu describes his trip as follows:—

I left for the North, just as the sun had risen, gilding with its rays every hill. The steamer passed Waxholm, which guards the approaches

¹ “The Land of the Midnight Sun: Summer and Winter Journeys in Sweden, Norway, Lapland, and Northern Finland. With Descriptions of the Inner Life of the People, their Manners and Customs, the Primitive Antiquities,” &c. By Paul B. du Chaillu, Author of “Explorations in Equatorial Africa,” “A Journey to Ashango Land,” &c. 2 vols. With Map and 235 Illustrations. London: John Murray. 1881.

to Stockholm. . . . Island after island came into view, and gradually the scenery became wilder, and the shore more barren; the coast grew bleak; fir-trees, often wide apart, covered the rocky islands; occasionally a windmill or a fisherman's house being visible, or a few cows, belonging to some little farmer, grazing near the water. After a sail of four hours we came abreast of Arholma. Further on we . . . entered the Gulf of Bothnia, and then gradually lost sight of land. Our steamer was heavily laden, and ploughed its way at the rate of about ten miles an hour. The sea lay with its surface like that of a mirror; the winds came off the Swedish shore, from forests of pine and fir, and fragrant meadows. . . . We sailed in a straight line, keeping away from the numerous islands along the coast. . . . Our steamer did not have many first-class passengers, owing probably to the few places at which we were to stop, and the fear of being detained by ice. All were polite to each other, and especially so to me. The deck passengers were numerous. To observe them on board either Norwegian or Swedish steamers was to me always a source of pleasure, for one sees in them the peculiarities of peasant life. . . . There is a genial kindness and innocent fun in their manners which are very pleasant to see. . . . They were evidently bent on travelling in the cheapest way, paying only for their passage, and carrying their food in wooden or birch-bark boxes. Their fare consisted of salt raw herring, butter, cheese, &c. &c., and black coarse soft bread. They had another kind called Stångakor, if anything darker than Knäckebröd, but of such a hardness as to render it very difficult to eat, and which, like the latter, is kept for months strung upon poles passing through a hole in the centre. Now and then old friends or new-made acquaintances treated each other with a bottle of beer at the bar, or oftener with a glass of bränvin, which they draw from a bottle carefully packed in their chests, or safely put in their side-pockets. When the time came to go to sleep the sight was ludicrous; they had to find room and beds the best way they could in the midst of boxes, casks, and miscellaneous merchandise. . . .

The cabin had good accommodation, and was heated by steam; everything was clean. Our state-rooms were exceedingly comfortable; in the saloon there was a good piano. I did not wonder that everything was so tidy, for all the servants on board of Swedish steamers on the Baltic, including the cooks, are females, and are under the supervision of a stewardess, who is general overseer. . . . The dining-room was on deck. . . . Meals were not included in the price charged for passage. The cooking was good, the service excellent, and the tariff of charges very moderate. . . .

After a trip of thirty-two hours from Stockholm, continues
Mr. du Chaillu—

We sailed between the mainland and a group of islands, of which the most important is Holmön, opposite the pretty little town of Umeå, but at quite a distance from the coast. Here we met a considerable number of large ice-floes, driven from the Finnish coast towards the Swedish

shore. The winter of 1870-1871 had been exceptionally severe, and the fields of ice were met till the latter days of June.

The weather was cool, and overcoats were very comfortable on deck; the little wind we had came from the north. There were still many large fields of rotten ice, and when it blew over them, the thermometer would fall to 42° or 43° ; then rise in a few minutes to 50° or 51° ; and at night it would remain at 44° or 46° .

Numerous boats, especially built for the hunting of seals in the Baltic or Bothnia, were seen in different directions. . . . The coast was low and monotonous, and covered with firs, pines and birches.

As the steamer approached the station, where a wooden wharf has been built, farmhouses, hamlets and saw-mills came in sight. . . . Though so early in the season that the Bothnia was not free from ice, a large number of sailing-vessels had already come to take cargoes of timber. . . . It was a great charm to one to gather, at twelve o'clock at night, in the midst of broad daylight, sweet violets, . . . and to hear, perchance, the notes of the cuckoo. The air was so invigorating, the scene so novel, that I hardly ever felt sleepy.

On land it was much warmer, the rays of the sun being so powerful that the heat at noon sometimes reached 70° in the shade. Vegetation was making rapid strides; the pine and fir had already sent out new shoots four inches long. . . .

As our boat arrived at one of the chief places, the whole population appeared to be on the wharf to greet us. Our arrival with them was a great event.

As our voyage drew to a close, writes M. du Chaillu, the twilight had disappeared, and between the setting and rising of the sun hardly one hour elapsed. At Strömsund, our last point of destination before reaching Haparanda, the steamer remained several hours:—

The doctor of the village was at home, and received me most kindly; he told me that the winter had been very cold, the thermometer falling to 40° or 45° below zero; and there was still snow on the ground on the 2nd of June. But now, in the gardens, the pease were about two inches above the surface of the ground, and would be fit for the table at the end of August or the beginning of September. The polished pine floor of his house was so clean and white that I was almost afraid to walk upon it.

A sail of a few hours brings one to the mouth of the Torne river; but on account of the shoals and shallowness of the water, a small steamer takes the passengers to the town, a few miles higher up. Haparanda is the same latitude as the most northern part of Iceland. The population, about one thousand, are mostly Finlanders. The sun rises on the 21st of June at 12.10 A.M., and sets at 11.37 P.M. From the 22nd to the 25th of June the traveller may enjoy the sight of the midnight sun from Avasaxa, a hill 680 ft. high, and about 35 miles distant; and

should he be a few days later, by driving north on the high road, he may still have the opportunity of seeing it.¹

The journey from Haparanda to the Arctic Sea, according to our author, is extremely interesting. The country is inhabited by Finns, who are cultivators of the soil. The Laplanders roam over the land with their herds of reindeer:—

Haparanda is quite a thriving place, with many large and well-painted houses; it has several stores, and is a sort of commercial depôt for the population further north, its exports being chiefly timber and tar. It has risen to its present dimensions since the cession of Finland by Sweden to Russia. Formerly the seat of commerce was on the island of Jorneo, lying almost opposite. It has two churches; a high-school, where students can prepare themselves to enter one of the universities, or where French, English, German, and the dead languages are taught; and public schools for primary education; it also has a newspaper.

This is the last telegraphic station in the north of Sweden, whence messages can be sent to any part of the world. The telegraph operators are all educated men, who have passed a rigid examination, and are required to understand English, German, and French. The same regulations are also enforced in Norway. The postal-telegraph system has always existed in both countries, and the tariff of charges is uniform, whether the distance is short or long.

There is a good hotel, where the rooms are comfortable and the fare excellent; indeed, there are very few towns between Stockholm and this point where you can be so well entertained. The size of the landlord, and that of his good and pleasant wife, spoke well for the food and the climate of the country.

The news of my arrival was soon spread over the little town. The judge, clergyman, custom-house officers, schoolmaster, postmaster, banker, and others, came to the hotel to see me, and they all welcomed me to Haparanda. Though living in the remote north, they had all the politeness of their countrymen of the more populous districts of the south.

"When I told those good people," says our author, "that I intended to go north as far as I could by land, they seemed somewhat astonished. When they heard I wanted to cross to the Polar sea, 'There are difficulties,' they said; 'the people do not speak the Swedish language; after a while there is no road; the country is wild and sparsely populated; how will you be able to eat their food?' 'The food,' I answered, 'does not trouble me in the least; I can eat anything.'" When they saw he was

¹ The great charm of travelling in Scandinavia is by the relay stations. The conveyance given to the traveller is a cart called *käzza*, drawn by a single horse; a light vehicle, generally without springs. Most of the stations are farms, and at all of them food and lodging can be had; in remote or unfrequented districts the fare is very poor.

resolved to go on, they took a great interest in his undertaking: an excellent guide was got, a tall Finlander, who had lived in California for a time, and could speak a little English.

"The afternoon of my departure," says Mr. du Chaillu, "the yard of the hotel presented an unusually animated appearance:—

The judge, the custom-house officers, the banker, and other newly-made friends, had assembled to drink to my health, and to the success of my journey. Speeches were made, and a last admonition was given to my guide, Josefsson, to take good care of me. As my horse started all raised their hats and gave three cheers. I returned them, and with a crack of the whip, started My wiry animal paced with a very rapid gait The weather was delightful, the atmosphere dry and bracing, the thermometer marking during the day 68° to 70°. Late in the evening I stopped at a post-station, where the family spoke Swedish Several persons from this district had emigrated to the United States. The farm was about twenty miles from the arctic circle. The disappearance of the sun below the horizon was short, and the sunset very brilliant. The sunrise, which followed a short time afterwards, was indescribably beautiful.

During the night of broad daylight several carts entered the yard.¹ After a breakfast of smoked reindeer meat, butter, cheese, and hard bread, and an excellent cup of coffee, I left the station."

Journeying further, Mr. du Chaillu suffered much from mosquitoes:—

In these latitudes the snow has hardly melted when the mosquitoes appear in cloudless multitudes, and the people have no rest night or day. They had already appeared, and their numbers increased daily; they became more voracious, and their sting more painful; in wooded

¹ "How strange to those living in more southern latitudes are those evening and morning twilights, which merge insensibly into each other! To travel in a country where there is no night—no stars to be seen; where the moon gives no light, and, going further north, where the sun shines continuously day after day! The stranger, at first, does not know when to go to bed and when to rise; but the people know the hours of rest by their clocks and watches, and by looking at the sun.

"I fell into a deep sleep, and when I awoke the sun shone brightly; but this was no sign of a late hour, as it was only three A.M. I slept again; and when I awoke everything was so still in the house that I took another nap; when I awoke for the third time I found that my watch had stopped; then, going into the next room, I saw by the clock there that it was one o'clock P.M. The family laughed, for they had kept quiet for fear of disturbing me."

In his Introduction our Author indulges in glowing language. He writes:—"Scandinavia, often have I wandered over thy snow-clad mountains, hills, and valleys, over thy frozen lakes and rivers, seeming to hear, as the reindeer—swift carriers of the North—flew onward, a voice whispering to me, 'Thou hast been in many countries where there is no winter, and where flowers bloom all the year; but hast thou ever seen such glorious nights as these?' And I silently answered, 'Never, never!'"

districts they are a perfect plague in the months of July and until the middle of August, after which a gnat appears. This bites very hard during the day, but at night leaves one in peace, for it never enters the houses. Last of all comes a species of sand-fly, which also is very disagreeable. I was surprised, at a turn of the road, to see a black cloud apparently composed of minute flies. It was a swarm of mosquitoes so thick that it was impossible to see anything beyond. I was hurrying the horse through it, when the animal suddenly stopped, and then I saw three men working on the road who had previously been invisible. This seems incredible, but such are the facts. Josefsson laughed, and observed, "We have a saying here, that when a traveller comes he writes his name in a bed of mosquitoes, and when he comes back the following year he sees it again."

From Pajala, the journey northwards may be continued in two ways: by ascending the Torne, or by crossing a narrow tract of land opposite Pajala, and going up the Muonio River. The Muonio is the better route. There are regular boat stations, which supply lodgings and food. The fare is regulated by law, so much for each boatman:—

The shores were lined with forests of firs, mingled with birch. The sound of the rushing water in the rapids was very pleasant to hear. Even though so far north, the cuckoo was heard; flocks of ducks flew away at our approach. . . . Further up its banks are skirted with meadows, from which a good deal of hay is obtained. The forests were carpeted with long reindeer moss of a greenish-white colour. . . . This 5th of July was the warmest day I had met here, the temperature at 7 o'clock A.M. being 67° in the shade, and 109° in the sun. The houses built of fir-logs were low; they were far from clean, and the clothing of the people was dirty. I preferred a bench to the bed.

Aitijärvi, a station of refuge, far away from any other human habitation, in one of the bleakest and coldest districts of Northern Europe, seemed to our author a very lonely place. The house, however, was comfortable and clean. Two cows and a few sheep were all the stock on the premises, the reindeer being in the pasturing ground. The Norwegian Government pay the old people a stated sum yearly for keeping the place.

At Autzi, Mr. du Chaillu, with kind forethought, sent his guide, Josefsson, back home: two guides were here provided. In the second week of July, at the end of the water-journey, he began to climb steep birch-clad banks, and reached gradually an undulating plateau. The mercury fell to 45°. Coming to a tract of snow, the faces of his Lapps brightened; they rolled on the snow, and washed their hands and faces in it.

At Bosekop, at the head of the Alten fjord, our traveller received a hospitable greeting. Bosekop is composed of scattered farms, with a church, a school, several stores, and a comfortable inn. There is a small society of educated people; and he was

made welcome in every family he visited.¹ Not very far from Bosekop is a copper-mine: the manager, an Englishman, had been here forty-three years; the miners were Finlanders.

Even here, says Mr. du Chaillu, Englishmen come to fish; "The Duke of Roxburgh, who holds the Alten river to himself, leaves his estates every year to enjoy the pleasure of sleeping in a log-house, catching salmon, and being eaten up by mosquitoes. The people speak of him with respect and love, and praised his kind heart and genial manners."

The usual way of going farther north is by taking the weekly steamer from Bosekop to Hammerfest. Hammerfest (70° 40') is said to be the most northern town in the world:—

I was surprised to see in so high a latitude such a thrifty, commercial town, there being more than fifty vessels, chiefly schooners, lying at anchor; English, Russian, Norwegian, Swedish, and German flags were represented. Two steamers were ready to leave. There was an English vessel unloading coal, and a Russian vessel from Archangel discharging flour in sacks. Others were taking cargoes of salted or dry codfish, cod-liver oil, &c.

Boats, lighters, and little fishing-craft lay at the wooden wharves, near or upon which the warehouses were built; the port is sheltered, and shipping rides in safety. The town has a population of about 2,500 inhabitants. Wandering through the streets or along the wharves, one sees Russian captains, with their long beards; fishermen and sailors; Finlanders and Norwegians dressed in the most approved style of fashionable cities, for the crinolines, chignon, and "stove-pipe" hat had made their way here.

The stranger is disagreeably affected by the fishy odour which pervades the town, for the inhabitants manufacture cod-liver oil, chiefly of the brown sort; and the smell and smoke are by no means pleasant; but, as one of the leading merchants observed, the smoke that brings money is never unpleasant. A considerable number of cows are kept, which are fed on fish, reindeer-moss, and hay.

The port is never closed by ice, for the Gulf Stream laves the bleak and desolate coast, which, at certain seasons of the year, swarms with fish; if there were no fishing there would be no Hammerfest. Its geographical position is excellent; it is in direct telegraphic communication with Christiania, and thence with the rest of the world; it has three newspapers, and a small hotel, which furnishes comfortable rooms at a fair scale.

All this northern part of the coast of Norway is accessible, both in summer and winter. Steamers come to Hammerfest

¹ A distinguished professor was staying here, and at one social gathering he, as the spokesman of the company, begged Mr. du Chaillu to tell them something about his travels in Africa. And, accordingly, at Bosekop, in 70° of north latitude, he delivered a lecture on the equatorial regions of Africa, and the gorilla. His books had been translated into Norwegian; but he found that not a few of the cultured Scandinavians had read them in English.

from Christiania, the voyage lasting a fortnight; there is also a semi-monthly line of Norwegian steamers from Hamburg, and tourists generally make their passage in these boats, which are better.

On the 21st of July Mr. du Chaillu set out, in a small steamer, for Gjøesver; and from this place he took a boat to visit the North Cape. Two of the men he left in the boat, and with the other three he made the ascent of the bold promontory—a huge mass of mica-schist rising, dark and majestically from the sea, 980 feet above the level. Before him, as far as the eye could reach, was the deep-blue Arctic Sea, disappearing in the northern horizon: it was as quiet as the wind, which hardly breathed upon it:—

Where'er I gazed, I beheld nature, bleak, dreary, desolate; grand, indeed, but sad . . . I thought of the winter season, and how terrific must be the tempests which then sweep over this cliff. . . .

Lower and lower the sun sank, and as the hour of midnight approached, it seemed to follow slowly the line of the horizon; and at that hour it shone beautifully over that lonely sea and dreary land. As it disappeared behind the clouds, I exclaimed, from the very brink of the precipice, "Farewell to thee, Midnight Sun!"

I now retraced my steps to where we had left our little boat. The men were watching for us; for it had begun to rain, and when we got back to Gjøesver, I was wet and chilly, and my feet were like ice. I was exhausted, for I had passed two-and-twenty hours without sleep; but to this day I have before me those dark, rugged cliffs, that dreary, silent landscape, and that serene midnight sun shining over all; and I still hear the sad murmur of the waves beating upon the lonely North Cape.

Thus Mr. du Chaillu concludes his narrative of the journey from Stockholm, by steamboat, and across country, to the North Cape. This brings the reader down to page 110 of the first volume.¹ In the remaining portion of the work appear narratives of a series of journeys in summer and winter through Scandinavia, during five years, with descriptions of the people, drawn from life, after closely observing their manners and customs, by participating in the home-life of all classes. Mr. du Chaillu's story is told in simple language; and his sketches, as a rule, are graphic and also informing. The work is, indeed, much more than a narrative of travel; and the general reader may now and then perhaps skip a page which is instructive rather than interesting; yet the descriptions of scenery are so good, the experiences of travel, whether pleasurable or otherwise, appear so

¹ The first volume has 440 pages. We have read the greater portion of the first volume; a hasty glance here and there into the second volume makes us think it quite as interesting as the first, which is saying a great deal.

real, and the narrative is so brisk and bright, that one is carried along without the slightest sense of fatigue. Mr. du Chaillu was received with kindness by all classes of people, in whatever part of the peninsula he travelled, and he saw every type of social life. His sketches of the farmers are particularly pleasing; and he found, we gladly notice, that in the most primitive of the people, as elsewhere, religious feeling was strong. In one remote valley, *e.g.*, "To bring up their children in the fear of the Lord," we read, "is one of the chief aims of the parents:" at the parsonage, a lady showed "much interest in Missionary work." The pleasures of the rural population are simple; and in no part of the world is "sweet home" a more potent preservative for good.¹

We have only to add that these handsome volumes are well printed, in large clear type on good paper: the illustrations are numerous and charming: there is an admirable map.

Reviews.

At Home in Fiji. By C. F. GORDON CUMMING. William Blackwood & Sons. 1881.

WE have read this work with great interest. Few books of modern travel have afforded us more entire satisfaction. The authoress has had the advantage of nearly two years' residence among the people whose habits and character she describes, and has made good use of her time and materials. There is scarcely anything omitted in her narrative. The scenery, the vegetable and animal products of the country, the condition of the settlers and the natives, the labours of the Missionaries, and their results, are all minutely given, in a lively and graphic manner. It is with the last-mentioned subject (the most interesting of all to the Christian reader), that we shall chiefly concern ourselves, our space being somewhat limited. It is refreshing to find such a subject treated as the authoress treats it; for in reading modern books of travels, our feelings are too often hurt by covert sneers, either at religion in general, or at the work of Missions in particular. And even when the writer abstains from language of this sort, he too often treats the labours of Missionaries as a matter of quite subordinate interest. It seems to us, however, that it would be rather difficult for any author to do this who undertook to give a faithful description of the state of society in the Fiji

¹ The chapters which bring before us life among the Lapps are full of interest. We regret we have not space for quotations which we had marked. Mr. du Chaillu found the Lapps very kind-hearted; their life in summer, during which they have to follow the reindeer day and night, is a very hard one. They welcomed him everywhere, giving him freely of their best. The height of the men ranged from 4 ft. 5 in. to 5 ft. Every Laplander knows his own reindeer by a special mark on the ears. The famous Lapp "shoe-grass" is indispensable in the winter: dried, worn in the shoes, it has the peculiarity of retaining heat.