

CHAPTER XXI.

FOREST DEVASTATION.

NOTWITHSTANDING the great recuperative power manifested by Norwegian forests, of which mention has been made, they are, under the excessive drain made upon them in districts favourably situated for the prosecution of trade in timber, being greatly impoverished. Of this there are indications in more than one of the official reports mentioned, in connection with the information given in a previous chapter relative to the geographical distribution of different kinds of trees in Norway. Amongst these is a report on the condition of the forests in Romsdal county, which lies between the Dovrefjeld and the sea, along the coast to the south of Drontheim fiord, where the shore trends to the south-west, passing the town giving its name to the county. The report is by Johannes Schioetz, LL.B., Forest-Assistant, and was issued by the Forest Section of the Department of the interior in 1871.

In this it is reported in regard to the amount of forest in the County of Romsdal:—

‘Large forests cannot be expected in this county owing to the natural formation, which is mountainous, and greatly intersected by fiords; moreover, the narrow valleys are cultivated, and the mountain sides often nearly bare rock. The inhabitants are often in want of fuel: turf also being rare. Even in the lower districts the mountains rise above the forest line, and on the coast the inhabitants and sea-breezes have almost completely destroyed all the forests which existed there in earlier times. Only on the islands in Nordmore are there some important exceptions.

‘The forest line does not lie high, and depends not so much on temperature as on sheltered position. Among