

elderly gentleman, the father of Mr Stephenson's lady. At the time of our visit to Indreholm, two nephews of the Chief Justice likewise formed a part of the family establishment, to whose education Mr Stephenson appears to have paid a good deal of attention.

During the three days we remained at Indreholm, we experienced the utmost hospitality and attention. Our residence here was interesting, as giving us some view of the habits and modes of life among the Icelanders of the highest class. We made a very minute examination of every part of the house; penetrating, under the guidance and authority of Mr Stephenson, even into the bed-chambers of the females of the family. While viewing these apartments, the ladies brought us various little articles of their own manufacture, in which considerable ingenuity was displayed, though not much elegance. They consisted principally of rude flower-work in coloured worsted. The extent of the house, as was before noticed, is very considerable. At a little distance is a water-mill, which is turned by the water of a small stream striking against a horizontal wheel. The dairy and other offices are detached from the house. Behind these buildings is a small smithy, where, at the time we visited it, we found the smiths busied in preparing scythes. The fuel is charcoal, made of birch-wood; great quantities of which, though the shrubs are very small, grow on the western bank of the Huitaa, and in some parts of the Borgarfjord Syssel. The making of charcoal is not the least important employment of the Icelanders during the summer. Every farmer has a smithy; and almost every man in the country knows how to shoe a horse; even the son and heir of the Chief Justice of Iceland having been seen thus occupied.

On going to bed, each night, during our stay at Indre-

holm, a cup or bason, full of milk and water, was set down at the bedside; a custom we had before observed at Kieblivik, but here for the first time in the house of an Icelander.

Indreholm is, on the whole, a very pleasant place; and is so situate as to command a fine view of the Faxè Fiord, and of the mountains of the Guldbringè and Kiosar Sysseis. Did the climate permit the cultivation of corn, or the growth of trees, it might become a very beautiful residence. The pastures immediately round the place are very good, and adorned by a profusion of the *Statice armeria*. Adjoining the house are two small gardens, well inclosed with walls of turf, in which cabbages, turnips, and sometimes potatoes, are cultivated with success, for the use of the family. At a short distance from the shore is a small island, crossing over to which, at low water, we saw vast multitudes of Eider-ducks, for whose convenience, rows of little apartments are constructed of stones, in different directions across the island. About forty pounds weight of Eider-down are annually obtained from this spot.

Mr Stephenson has considerable property in this part of the country, as well as in other more remote districts of Iceland. In his own hands he holds lands sufficient for supporting twenty-five cows and three hundred sheep. He has lately brought over from Norway some fine-woolled sheep of the Spanish breed, which seem likely to thrive well in the island. Connected with his property at Indreholm, there is a large fishing establishment, comprehending about twenty boats of different sizes, the use of which is given to the people coming from the interior of the country, on the terms formerly described.

The last day of our stay at Indreholm was occupied in the ascent of the mountain of Akkrefell; a labour of no small

difficulty and hazard, from the excessive steepness of the face of rock which we had to climb; but one for which we were fully recompensed by the important mineralogical facts occurring to our observation, which will elsewhere be spoken of at length. The view from the pinnacle of the mountain, which seems almost to hang over the plain below, was extensive and interesting, comprehending a very considerable part of the south-western district of Iceland. We descended at another part of the mountain, but with even more risk than had attended our ascent. Availing ourselves of the conveyance by sea from Indreholm to Reikiavik, we left the specimens we had collected here, and in the preceding part of our journey, under the care of Mr Stephenson, being desirous of reserving our baggage-horses for further duties of the same kind.

On the 21st of June we left Indreholm, accompanied by Mr Stephenson and one of his nephews. The Chief Justice was, on this occasion, dressed in blue trowsers and a short jacket of the same colour, the stuff coarse and warm. On the top of his saddle was buckled a pillow of blue plush, stuffed with Eider-down. We retraced our steps for about four miles, and then turning to the left, crossed the bogs towards Leira, the abode of Mr Scheving, Sysselman of Borgarfjord, who is married to a sister of Mr Stephenson. This place was formerly the residence of the latter; and the house was built by him. Externally, it is somewhat out of repair; but the interior, and especially the sitting-room, displayed more decoration than is usual in the houses of Iceland. The cornices were formed of wood, coloured red, and carved with some degree of neatness; and the chairs covered with leather painted and gilded. Near the house there is a church, superior in accommodation to most of the edifices of the kind we

met with ; and having a gallery, which is by no means common in the country churches of Iceland. The lady of Sysseman Scheving is a tall, and rather handsome woman. She was habited in the common dress of Icelandic females of the higher class, except that the head-dress was merely a cap of blue cloth, with a tassel hanging from the top. At supper, we had a dish set before us, made of the Iceland Lichen (*Cetraria Islandica*.) which we had hitherto scarcely ever seen employed by the inhabitants of the country. The Lichen, chopped small, is boiled in three or four successive portions of water, to take off its natural bitterness, and then for an hour or two in milk. When cold, this preparation has somewhat of the form of a jelly, which is eaten with milk or cream, and makes a very palatable dish.

On our arrival at Leira, we had observed, in a causeway leading to the house, a fragment of stone, appearing to be an incrustation, or deposit from water, and containing numerous vegetable petrifications. Upon inquiry, we found that there was a hot spring at the distance of about a mile from the Sysseman's house. After supper, we set off, by the light of an Icelandic midnight, to visit this spring, being guided to it by Mr Stephenson and his nephew. We found the water, which had a temperature of 138° , issuing from two or three small holes in the rock, and running into a stream which flows near the spot. A small cavity which has been formed so as to receive the hot water, is occasionally employed as a bath. Near the springs, we observed a considerable extent of surface covered with curious petrifications, evidently formed by deposition from some more ancient hot springs, which have now disappeared. Our walk was finished a little before 12 o'clock at night. Though the sky was cloudy and lowering, and a high range of mountains limited the ho-

rizon towards the north, yet the light was such as, even within the house, to be sufficient for the perusal of the smallest type, without difficulty or inconvenience.

We left Leira next morning; and the Sysselman attended us for some miles. We visited in our way the only printing-office now in Iceland, which is close to Leira, in a small and miserable wooden building, situate in the midst of a bog. This establishment is at present kept up by the literary society, of which Mr Stephenson is at the head. He has the sole management of the press; and few other people now give it employment; none liking to submit their works to a censor who is reckoned too severe, but perhaps without much reason. This state of the press is, however, extremely injurious to the literature of Iceland. Two men are engaged in the printing-office: they have a press of the common construction, and make their own ink of oil and lamp-black. There are eight founts of types; six Gothic, and two Roman; with a few Greek characters. We found a small collection of books, which had been printed within the last few years, and remained here for sale. We purchased several of these, among which was Pope's *Essay on Man*, translated into Icelandic verse. During the last winter, the printing-office, with all its contents, was very nearly swept away by a flood; and, at the present time, the building is in a state of wretched repair.

Leaving the plain of Leira, we began the ascent of the Eastern Skards-heidè, or mountain-road. Part of this range of mountains, which divides the Borgarfjord Syssel into two portions, is extremely lofty and precipitous; and the pass through it is very grand. The ascent of the road is long, and it certainly attains a height of not less than a thousand feet: the mountains on each side of the pass, however, have a much greater elevation, and some of them were still almost

entirely covered with snow. In making this ascent, we overtook several cavalcades of horses, returning from various parts of the coast, loaded with dried fish, the winter stock of the farmers to whom they belonged. The Icelandic peasants who were guiding these cavalcades, addressed us in the language of salutation as we passed them ; this being the invariable custom in every part of the island. In some of the parties, we observed as many as ten or twelve horses, each bearing its respective burthen of fish.

Just as we had gained the highest part of the mountain-pass, we saw rain approaching, and had only time to cast our eyes over the wide and extensive valley of the Huitaa, or White River, which now lay beneath us, bounded on each side by a magnificent range of hills ; and the view terminated towards the north, by mountains entirely covered with snow. The stream of the Huitaa, and of other smaller rivers winding over the broad expanse of the valley, and meeting the eye at intervals, added much to the pleasing features of the landscape.

Not far from the place where we began to descend, we observed a lofty and very remarkable mountain, called Honn, on our right hand. It is a complete four-sided pyramid, composed of regular beds of rock, piled one above another, and diminishing to a point ; and forming the steps, as it were, of a huge staircase. When near the bottom of the hill, we went a little out of the road to examine some hot springs. We found the water gushing from several holes in different parts of the side of the hill. Its temperature was from 100° to 132°. It is pure ; no incrustation being formed by it, nor has it any peculiar taste. A little farther down, we had to cross a deep and rapid river, which comes tumbling from the rocks above, forming some very fine cascades.

After several tedious turnings and windings through bogs, which we crossed not without considerable difficulty and danger, we arrived at Huaneyrè, the abode of Amtmand Stephenson, brother of the Chief Justice, and governor of the western province of Iceland. The house of this gentleman stands upon an eminence in the great plain or valley of the Huitaa ; commanding, in front, a fine view of the arm of the sea called the Borgarfiord ; behind, a still more striking view of the Skards-heidè mountains, which we had lately passed. There is nothing particular in the appearance or construction of the habitation, or of the farm buildings attached to it. The only novelty to us was a small and rudely constructed wind-mill, used for grinding rye, which we were informed was the only edifice of the kind in Iceland.*

The rain was now heavy ; and we were glad to enter the house, where we were kindly received by the Amtmand's lady, the daughter of a country priest ; the Amtmand, with his eldest son, being absent on an official tour through part of his district.

While supper was preparing, we amused ourselves with some English books which we found in the library in the sitting room. Our evening repast consisted of veal and salmon. The salmon of the Borgarfiord rivers are particularly good ; indeed, were we implicitly to credit the inhabitants of this district, there is nothing in it but what is peculiarly excellent, and far surpassing any thing that is to be met with elsewhere in Iceland. The best fish, the best cows, the best sheep, the best horses, the best pasture, the best every thing, was to be found in the favoured region of the Borgarfiord Syssel, and more especially at Indreholm. Nor

* Since we left Iceland, Amtmand Stephenson has changed his abode to *Huitar-vellir*, a place which will soon be mentioned.

were these praises bestowed without some appearance of reason. Though the extensive pastures of Borgarfiord Syssel, and particularly those in the valley of the Huitaa, are mere morasses, yet they yield a large quantity of grass, and support vast numbers of cows, horses, and sheep. The farm which Amtmand Stephenson holds in his own hands, is reckoned the best in the island. He keeps upon it between thirty and forty horses, fifty cows, and two or three hundred sheep; and gets as much hay as suffices for the maintenance of this large stock during the long winters of Iceland. The district of Borgarfiord is likewise remarkable for the vast number of swans frequenting it, which are particularly numerous in the extensive marshes below Huaneyrè. On the morning after our arrival, we counted forty of them within a short distance of the house.

Our breakfast, at Huaneyrè, consisted of salmon, boiled sorrel, sweet cakes, excellent coffee, sago jelly, a large tureen full of rich cream, rye-bread, and biscuit. We had reason to expect to find here the perfection of Icelandic cookery; for the Amtmand's first wife was the authoress of a work on that art, which is held in great esteem, and of which we each treated ourselves with a copy from the Leira printing-office. This family, with respect to manners and domestic economy, was much the same as that at Indreholm.

After breakfast, we took our leave, still accompanied by the Chief Justice, who was resolved to attend us to the verge of the Borgarfiord Syssel. He conducted us for several miles through the bogs and swamps by which Huaneyrè is completely surrounded, till at last we got to the place called Huitar-vellir, where there is a ferry over the Huitaa. This river, which is one of the largest in Iceland, is here contracted in its channel by the rocks, which rise abruptly on

each side; but the stream is very deep and rapid. It is very properly named the White River, as it has very nearly the colour of milk and water, owing to the suspension of the finer particles of clay, washed down from the Jokuls among which it rises. A clergyman, Arnar Jonson, who is Provost of the Borgarfiord Syssel, lives at this place; and, while the people were employed in carrying our baggage over in a boat, and causing the horses to swim across the river, we went to his house and were treated with coffee. We here parted with our friend Mr Stephenson, who had shewn us at his house, and during our short journey with him, a degree of attention and kindness, for which he will always be entitled to our gratitude.

Having crossed the river, we were told that it would be necessary to send the boat up the stream, to carry us over another branch of it, which we had still to pass. We walked towards this second crossing-place, where, the baggage being taken off, our horses were driven over; the holes in the channel rendering it unsafe to have them tied together. The breadth of this part of the river was about two hundred yards; and it was not without considerable trouble that all got safely across. It now began to rain, which occasioned the rest of our day's journey to be very uncomfortable, as we had to pass through many swamps. The whole of the valley of the Huitaa may not improperly be called a vast morass. The western side of it, which we had now reached, belongs to the district called the Myrè Syssel; a name literally signifying the Syssel of Bogs. The southern part of this district, more especially, is so swampy that, during the summer, it is in general wholly impassable; though, in winter, it may occasionally be traversed upon the ice. We stopped for the night at a place called Svigna-skard, where we found

a farm-house inhabited by the widow of a Sysselman of Myrè, who died about a year before. The poor woman was blind; but her son and daughter, who managed the affairs of the house, paid us every attention. We here found a small room, which, though by no means elegant, nor remarkably clean, we requested and obtained leave to occupy. In this apartment we discovered several old books belonging to the late Sysselman, a few of which we purchased from the family.

We remained at Svigna-skard during the whole of the next day; the rain still continuing very heavy. It being Sunday, we saw some of the people setting out on horseback for their parish church, which was at the distance of a few miles. On leaving the house, they took off their hats, and, putting them before their faces, continued for some time in the act of prayer, while the horses went on.

We had for dinner here, a dish called *skier*, which is similar to one well known in Scotland by the name of Corstorphine cream, or *Hattit kit*. In Iceland, it is made by means of sour whey; in Scotland, by butter-milk, over which cream or milk is poured, and allowed to remain till it has become sour; when the whey is suffered to run off by removing a plug in the bottom of the vessel into which the materials were put.

In proceeding towards the interior of the country, more cleanliness appears in the domestic habits of the people. Fresh fish is here an article of greater scarcity; and the offences to the sight and smell, which are always found in habitations where this is the principal food, decrease in proportion as it is less used.

On Monday morning, the 25th, we rose at two o'clock, and commenced our journey a little after four. Two or three

hours were always occupied by our Icelandic guides in loading the horses, and making the other preparations for departure; though it is probable that an active Englishman would have accomplished the same business in a third part of the time. We were attended by a peasant from the neighbourhood, as a guide, on account of a thick fog, which obscured every thing around us. Our route lay along the course of a river, which came tumbling over a rocky channel from the mountains forming the western boundary of the valley of the Huitaa. We could not see further than fifty or sixty yards before us; but the rocky sides of the river being studded with birch shrubs, three or four feet in height, the scene was, upon the whole, a pleasing one. We had to cross the river occasionally; and found the current so strong, that it was with difficulty the horses could make their way across. The pass over these mountains, which are called the Western Skards-heidè, must be very grand in fair weather. Several small lakes appeared in the hollows between the hills, from which there issued large and rapid streams. The fog did not begin to clear away till we found ourselves amongst lava, and were beginning to descend. We had before observed slags scattered about the sides of the mountains; and were now in a hollow on the summit, bearing all the characters of the volcanic country we had seen in the Guldbringè Syssel. After winding amongst some steep and broken hills, we descended into a valley completely filled with lava, which, from its being in many places covered with soil, appeared to be very old. The rude and irregular rocky masses of which it is composed, are broken into every possible variety of form; and, in some places, being partially covered with moss, strikingly resemble the ruins of old castles or fortifications. We were informed that there is a great deal of lava amongst the

swamps towards the south, which has probably proceeded from the same source as the stream we now followed. At the opening from the mountains of the valley through which the lava has flowed, we saw a small group of cottages, called Hraundalur,* and a wide extended plain, stretching, on our left hand, towards the sea. From the rugged appearance of many parts of it, we easily credited the account we had received of much lava existing in this quarter.

We now skirted along the base of the mountains; and, after travelling a few miles, came to the opening of an extensive valley, the lower part of which is occupied by another great stream of lava, apparently about two miles in breadth. Having passed along the edge of this, by a very rough and dangerous path, we at length reached a place called Stadarhraun, where we found a small church, and the priest's house, situate on a small grassy spot, almost entirely environed by rugged masses of lava. The priest had just mounted his horse for the purpose of accompanying the Sysselman of Myrè, who was at this time travelling through his district. On observing us, he dismounted; and, after a little conversation with the Sysselman, who invited us to his house, the latter proceeded on his journey alone. The priest readily allowed us to take up our night's abode in the church; and provided us with plenty of boiled milk; with which, and a lamb we had purchased and roasted at Svigna-skard, we made up a tolerable dinner. The night became extremely cold, the wind being from the north. The sky was, however, remarkably clear; and, from the door of the church, we had a fine view of the Snæfell Jokul, which, from our nearer approach to it, now made a very magnificent appearance.

* Hraundalur, literally translated, signifies the *Lava Valley*; lava being called *Hraun* in the Icelandic language.

We were informed of the existence of a mineral water near this place, which the minister discovered, and which will be more particularly noticed in the chapter on mineralogy.

Not being able to procure a guide, the priest offered to accompany us as far as Kolbeinstadr; and we resumed our journey at seven in the morning. Our companion, who was a tall, awkward man, dressed in a very uncouth manner, exhibited a singular figure when mounted on his poney; and the effect was rather heightened by the ornamental trappings with which the animal itself was decorated. We passed through the lava by a winding and rugged path; and, as we went along, observed many conical hills, which were evidently of volcanic formation. One of these, on the west side of the valley, is remarkable. It stands alone; is about 300 feet high; and is composed of slags and sand, having a rocky, scorified looking mass at the top. On some parts of the lava, where sand and a little soil had accumulated, we observed birch shrubs growing more luxuriantly than any we had before seen. At the place where we descended and quitted the lava, it appeared to be the most considerable mass we had met with. Having crossed a deep and rapid stream which skirts it, we arrived at the foot of a lofty range of precipitous mountains; among the debris of which we found abundance of zeolite. On turning into the valley of Kolbeinstadr, which here is several miles in width, we observed it to be filled, like many other vallies in this district, partly with lava, and partly with bogs. In the flat towards the sea, we remarked a circular crater about sixty yards in diameter, surrounded by lava. Other appearances of the same kind occurred higher up the valley; and we saw likewise several conical hills resembling that just described, many of them of considerable height, and exhibiting a surface of a reddish brown colour, derived

from the loose volcanic scoriæ and sand of which they seem to be composed. Before us, in the striking precipices of the lofty mountain called Kolbeinstadr-Fialla, (or Fell), we saw some horizontal beds of rock beautifully arranged in columns. On the side of one of the mountains we were fortunate enough to find a full-blown specimen of the *Ranunculus Glacialis*; for which plant, Mr Hooker, when in Iceland, had looked in vain. We never afterwards met with it.

We arrived at Kolbeinstadr about one o'clock. There is a very decent church here, in which we dined; the good people of an adjoining farm-house bringing us abundance of milk. They remained in the church while we were engaged with our repast; and examined our appearance and dresses with the most minute attention. The priest of Stadarhraun, who had partaken in our meal, here took leave of us. We proceeded, under the direction of a peasant, towards Roudemelr, on the opposite side of the valley; crossing, in our way, a broad and rugged stream of lava, and traversing some very dangerous and unpleasant bogs. When very near the end of our journey, our guide and his horse suddenly sunk into the swamp, but soon scrambled out. After this warning, we deemed it prudent to dismount, and proceed on foot, leaving our horses to find their own way. The house and church at Roudemelr, are placed under the termination of a vast stream of lava, which here exposes a precipitous front of considerable height. The farmer, an old man, undertook to guide us to a spring of mineral water, which has been long known, and much celebrated, in Iceland; and which Mr Clausen had recommended us to visit. Winding round the base of one of the conical volcanic hills which are so numerous in this valley, we came to the spring, about two miles to the north of Roudemelr. It is called Öl-kilda, or the *ale-*

well. We saw two small cavities full of water, which was kept in constant and violent agitation by the escape of carbonic acid gas. On tasting it, we found it to possess a strong, but grateful degree of pungency, very much like that of soda water, after it has been exposed to the air for a few seconds. As water highly impregnated, as this is, with carbonic acid gas, has been known to produce some degree of intoxication, the name may have been derived from this circumstance. No water ran from the cavities, nor was there any other remarkable appearance in the vicinity of the spring. The temperature was 45°; precisely the same with that of an adjacent stream.

Near Roudemelr there is a very fine range of columns in a bed of rock, of which from fifteen to twenty feet are visible. In general, along the whole extent, which is about half a mile, the columns are very thick; many fragments which had fallen down, measuring five, and some six feet in diameter. How far they extended under the surface, could not be ascertained; but, from their thickness, it is probable that their length is very considerable. Some of them were detached several feet from the rock, and stood singly. The regularity of this rock formed a striking contrast to the ruggedness of the lava which has flowed near it.

We had already found so much advantage in the plan of sleeping in the churches as we proceeded on our journey, that we did not hesitate to avail ourselves of the same accommodation at Roudemelr, though we found the church here not in the very best condition. In almost all these edifices, there is a painting of the Lord's Supper above the altar, for the most part very wretched both in design and execution. There was a painting of this kind in the church at Roudemelr; and we saw chalked upon it the numbers and

order of the psalms to be sung during the service of the sabbath-day. These numbers are usually inscribed with chalk upon the walls or beams of the building. While we made the churches our places of nightly abode, our guides, though they had an Iceland tent with them, always slept in the adjoining farm-house or cottage; and appeared to be everywhere received by the inhabitants with great cordiality. In one of the apartments of the farm-house, we found two large barrels filled with the *Lichen Islandicus*, which was laid up for the use of the family during winter.

On the morning of the 27th, a very thick fog came on. Having breakfasted on curds brought from the farm-house, we were fortunate in being enabled to purchase three additional horses, which made the whole number in our cavalcade amount to fourteen. These were found necessary to the convenience of our journey; the mineralogical specimens, which formed a considerable proportion of the burthen, receiving every day some increase. One of our new horses was obtained for seven rixdollars; the other two for eight rixdollars each. We likewise exchanged a horse here with a country priest, who was travelling to the coast for fish, and had pitched his tent near the church during the night. This person was more miserable in his appearance than any one of his profession whom we had seen in Iceland; his habiliments being such as would scarcely have distinguished him from an English beggar of the lowest description.

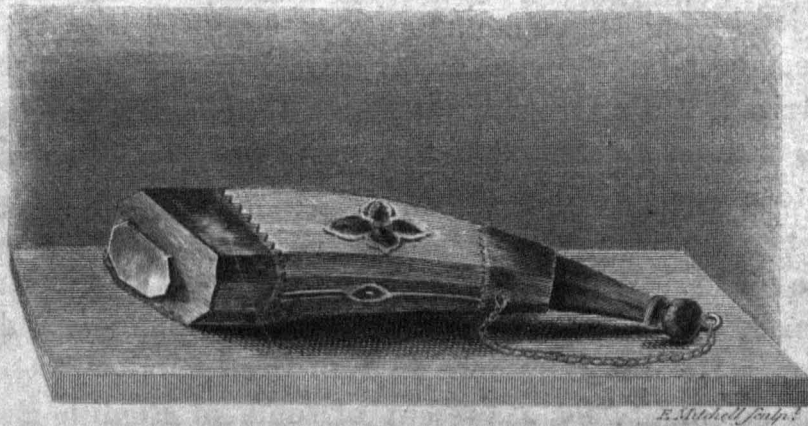
During the whole of our journey to Miklaholt, which was our next resting-place, the fog was so thick as to prevent our seeing the country through which we passed. This perhaps was not to be regretted, as we traversed, during the whole way, either lava, loose stones, or almost impassable bogs. Of all we had hitherto seen, the bogs here were the most for-

midable. The farmer of Roudemelr was our guide; but he was glad to procure the assistance of a peasant whom we took up at a house in the way. The horses were often in great danger from sinking into the swamp; and every step was made with apprehension. Some idea of the difficulties and danger of this stage may be formed, when it is stated, that we spent five hours in going eight miles on horseback. We saw, in the course of our day's journey, several Icelandic tents, pitched in green spots, where the horses employed in carrying goods could feed. The tents used by the natives of the country are made of woollen stuff, and formed like a marquise, but very small. They are supported by two poles and a rail, and stretched by means of small cords fastened by stones, or sometimes by wooden pegs. The baggage was heaped up round the outside of the tents which we passed in our way to Miklaholt. Some of the people were going for fish, and others returning with it from the coast. They had stopped on account of the weather, about which an Icelanders is much more apprehensive than his general habits would seem to indicate.

Miklaholt is situate on a small eminence, completely surrounded by morasses; and consists of a church, the priest's house, and a few cottages. The priest was not at home when we arrived, but soon made his appearance. His wife received us with every demonstration of kindness; and, shewing us into a small room, the furniture of which consisted of a bed, two tables, a bench, and a few boxes, prepared some coffee for us. When the husband, a tall, good looking man, returned, he displayed an equal degree of kindness and attention. He was extremely fond of snuff; and we returned his hospitality by a present of some of English manufacture. The Icelandic snuff-boxes are commonly made

of wood; but the better sort of people have them made of the tooth of the sea-horse, or walrus, and ornamented with silver. Their common shape is seen in the vignette, which is taken from one that was presented to us by Mr Simonson of Reikjavik. The snuff is put in at the bottom, and taken out at the smaller end, and laid on the back of the hand, from whence it is drawn into the nose. In windy weather, this end of the box is put into the nostril, and the snuff is poured out. The quantity of snuff taken by the Icelanders is very great, and it constitutes one of the most important of the few luxuries which they can be said to enjoy.

Early in the morning we began to prepare for our departure, and were, as usual, a little disturbed by the curiosity of the people, who crowded round us in the churchyard, and watched all our movements with the most minute attention. The minister, habited very much like an English sailor, undertook to guide us through the bogs. We were told that we should not find the way through them, on this side of Miklaholt, so bad as on the other, as there was a bridge constructed for the accommodation of passengers. This bridge we found to be no other than a narrow and deep ditch, with loose, sharp stones at the



SNUFF BOX

bottom, along which we passed in a string ; for if any of the horses had stepped but a few inches to the right or left, they would infallibly have sunk into the swamp. Having passed the bogs, we came to a stream, which we had to cross a dozen times at least, before we reached the sea-shore, which we gained by passing over a broad and deep ford. Being now upon tolerably firm sand, we put our poneys to the gallop, and soon got over two or three miles very pleasantly. The priest of Miklaholt, having seen us safe across some deep holes filled by the flowing tide, took his leave.

For the last three days, we had been travelling in the district called Hnappadals Syssel. About six miles to the west of Miklaholt, we entered Snæfell's Syssel, which forms the extremity of the peninsula, terminated by the Snæfell Jokul. The central part of this peninsula, for its whole length, is occupied by a lofty range of mountains, between which and the sea on the southern side, an extensive tract of flat land intervenes. Beyond Miklaholt we found this plain to narrow considerably, becoming not more than three or four miles in width. Some part of this extent is sandy, and appears to have been left by the sea. The greatest proportion, however, is boggy ; and the whole is covered with an abundance of fine grass, on which we saw numbers of cattle and sheep grazing. Here and there are small elevations, on one of which we found Stadarstad, a group of buildings, comprising a church ; the habitation of the minister, Mr Jonson, who is Provost of Snæfell's Syssel ; and a few detached cottages. The general appearance of this little hamlet had more the air of neatness and respectability, than any place we had seen since we left Indreholm ; and, on inquiring for the Provost, in order to deliver a letter of introduction from the Bishop, we were pleased to find that his appearance was in conformity with

the impressions which his dwelling had made upon us. He was a good looking man, apparently upwards of sixty years of age, dressed in a gown of coarse black cloth, and a cap of the same stuff. He received us with an air of politeness, which corresponded, as much as any thing we had hitherto seen in this country, with what we are accustomed to regard as the manner of a gentleman. We delivered the Bishop's letter, which came to us while at Indreholm, accompanied with the following epistle.

‘ *Dominum perillustrem nobilissimum Mackenzie*

‘ *Salvere jubet Geirus Vidalinus.*

‘ *Exigua hæc epistolia, ut datâ occasione, Præpositis*
 ‘ *Toparchiæ Borgarfiordensis, et Snæfellnæssensis tradantur*
 ‘ *enixè rogo, certe persuasus ut, me vel non rogante, quid-*
 ‘ *quid in eorum potestate situm est, lubentissimè servient, ad*
 ‘ *iter tuum facilitandum. Arnorur Jonæ tibi quæ in Borgar-*
 ‘ *fiordo visu digna sunt indicabit. Gudmundus verò Jonæ*
 ‘ *facilem tibi præbebit antiquum montis hujus incolam domi-*
 ‘ *num Bardum Snæfellsas,* cujus sine auspiciis mons Snæfell*
 ‘ *Jokul vix ac ne vix quidem superari potest.*’

The church at Stadarstad was the best we had seen, except that of Bessestad. It is constructed entirely of wood, and has a pretty large gallery. The weather had now become very serene, and in the evening we had a striking view of Snæfell Jokul, and the mountains stretching from it towards the east, the summits of which were still capped with snow. These rising immediately behind Stadarstad are very lofty,

* A sort of tutelar saint of the Snæfell Jokul.

and present a bold and precipitous front towards the sea. Our breakfast consisted of trout, tern eggs, and milk; and after finishing it, we spent some time in looking over the books in the Provost's house, a few of which we purchased. We found him to be an extremely intelligent man, and particularly well informed on every subject connected with the history and condition of his own country. He was formerly secretary to the late Bishop Finnsson at Skalholt, and recollected having seen Sir John Stanley there, when on his way to Mount Hekla.

Having arranged all our little affairs, the Provost left us for a while, and soon returned, so altered by his dress, that we hardly recognised him. He had on a decent black suit, with boots, and had decorated his head with a very respectable brown wig, and a hat. Altogether he looked much like a country clergyman of the Scotch church.

We took leave of his wife, who had been very attentive to us, and proceeded towards Buderstad, the next stage of our journey. The road for the greatest part of the way lay along the shore. About six miles from Stadarstad, we left the regular track, and proceeded towards the mountains (which now begin to approach nearer the sea), in order to visit a hot spring. We found it near a place called Lysiehoul. The water issues from the top of a mount about ten feet high, and fifty yards in diameter, entirely calcareous. The temperature of the spring was 96°, and the water had an acidulous taste. Not far from the mount, were great quantities of incrustations not calcareous, which had evidently been formed by some ancient springs. They were like those we had found at the hot springs of Leira. About half a mile from the spring, we came to a stream of lava that had flowed down the precipices above, and spread over the flat plain intervening

between the mountains and the sea. It did not differ in any respect from the many streams of lava we had seen before. Near Buderstad, we found another mineral water, the taste of which was similar to that of Lysiehouls : the temperature was 46°.

In approaching Buderstad, it was necessary for us to cross some small inlets of the sea ; and as the tide was flowing, and the creeks were of considerable depth, we did not accomplish this without much difficulty. Our friend, the Provost, however, brought us safely to the end of our day's journey at Buderstad, which place we found situate on the edge of lava, in the same manner as Havnefiord. This is one of the trading stations of Iceland ; and consists of a merchant's house, a large wooden storehouse, a church, and a considerable number of cottages. The house is constructed of bricks, which have been brought hither from Denmark. We were received by Mr Gudmundson, its inhabitant and the principal person of the place, with every demonstration of civility. He is a merchant, and has connections at Reikiavik, and at Copenhagen.

The war between England and Denmark has been severely felt by Mr Gudmundson. No vessel has come to Buderstad for three years past, previously to which time, one or two every year used regularly to visit this station. In consequence of this interruption of the intercourse, the inhabitants are in great want of corn, timber, and iron ; and the storehouses are every where full of the produce of the country, for which no proper market can be found.

The curiosity of the people manifested itself no where in such a degree as at this place. We could not move without being closely observed ; and when we applied our hammers to the lava, with the view of collecting specimens, it seemed

to excite no small surprise among the group of people who were watching our motions. But this changed to astonishment, when following us into the house, they saw us carefully wrapping our specimens in paper. Whether they thought us very wise or very foolish, we could not ascertain.

Provost Jonson took his leave in the evening, and returned to Stadarstad, having previously made us promise that we would write to him on our return to Britain. In Mr Gudmundson's house we passed the night tolerably well, being disturbed only by the crowing of a cock, which took up its lodging in the room where we had fixed our beds. We had a plentiful breakfast the next morning, of mutton, cheese, rye bread, and coffee, and departed highly pleased with the attention we had received.

Our next stage was to Stappen, farther along the coast towards the west. We found the lava of Buderstad, which it was necessary to cross in our way, far more rugged than any we had met with. Numerous rents and chasms of great depth presented themselves on every side; and it was with much difficulty and a considerable degree of danger that our horses got across by a winding path, in many places exceedingly steep and rough. On examining one of the caverns which occur in this lava, it appeared to have been formed in a manner similar to those we had seen in the Guldbringè Syssel. We penetrated into it about 40 yards upon the surface of the congealed snow, which forms its pavement.*

After much time spent in crossing this lava, which is here two or three miles in breadth, we at last reached the bay of

* Eghert Olafson particularly describes the Buda-hraun, or lava of Buderstad; and endeavours to account for the vast caves and fissures which appear in it, by supposing that the water of the sea obtained access to the lava, while yet in a heated state.

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Stappen. Here we found a large extent of flat sand forming the beach, upon which we halted, and measured a base, with the view of calculating the height of the Snæfell Jokul, from the foot of which mountain we were now not very far distant. The atmosphere being perfectly clear, we succeeded in taking angles, by a calculation from which we ascertained the height of the mountain to be 4,558 feet. We afterwards found that this estimate did not differ more than a few feet from the measurement of the Danish officers, who are now employed in surveying the coasts of Iceland. On the other hand, Eghert Olafson, one of the most eminent naturalists of Iceland in modern times, asserts that, by barometrical measurement, he found the height of the mountain to be not less than 7,000 feet; a calculation certainly differing widely from the truth,



SNÆFELL JOKUL.

The vignette of Snæfell Jokul was taken from the sands upon which we measured the base.

On leaving the beach, the road became more and more romantic. We ascended and descended by winding paths, and crept along the edge of high cliffs overhanging the sea, over which numerous streams were dashed into spray. At one place we crossed a rapid stream within a few feet of the precipice over which the water fell. Numerous flights of sea-birds rendered the scene still more lively. We found Stappen on the brow of a range of curiously columnar rocks, large insulated masses of which stood in the sea, in various singular forms. We had not expected to find the Jokul a volcanic mountain, but the observation we now made, of streams of lava having descended from it in various directions, left no doubt of this being the case.

Stappen, like Buderstad, is a trading station, and consists of a merchant's house, two or three storehouses, and a few cottages inhabited by fishermen. We were met at the door of the house by Madame Hialtalín, a Danish lady, whose husband, brother to our friend the priest at Saurbar, had been absent for some years. He had been taken prisoner on a voyage to Denmark, and had afterwards contrived to reach Norway; but, since his arrival in that country, he had not been heard of. The situation of his wife, and her family consisting of six children, was highly deserving of pity; and we had but a melancholy satisfaction in receiving the numerous marks of hospitality which they lavishly bestowed upon us. The manners of Madame Hialtalín were those of a lady, and appeared to us to the greatest advantage.* The house was perfectly

* We have since had the pleasure of learning, that Mr Hialtalín returned to Iceland the following summer.

clean, and the rooms neatly furnished. The principal bedroom was really a most refreshing sight to us, after the places of nightly abode to which we had for some time been accustomed. From the roof was suspended a small glass chandelier. There were three windows with festooned curtains of white muslin; a handsome canopy bed, with very neat cotton furniture, sheets white as snow, and, as usual, a heap of Eider-down upon it. From the window there was a fine view of the mountains; and the dashing of a little stream over its rocky bed beneath, produced a very pleasing sound. Nothing could exceed the gratification we derived from the good breeding and attention of our hostess and her family.

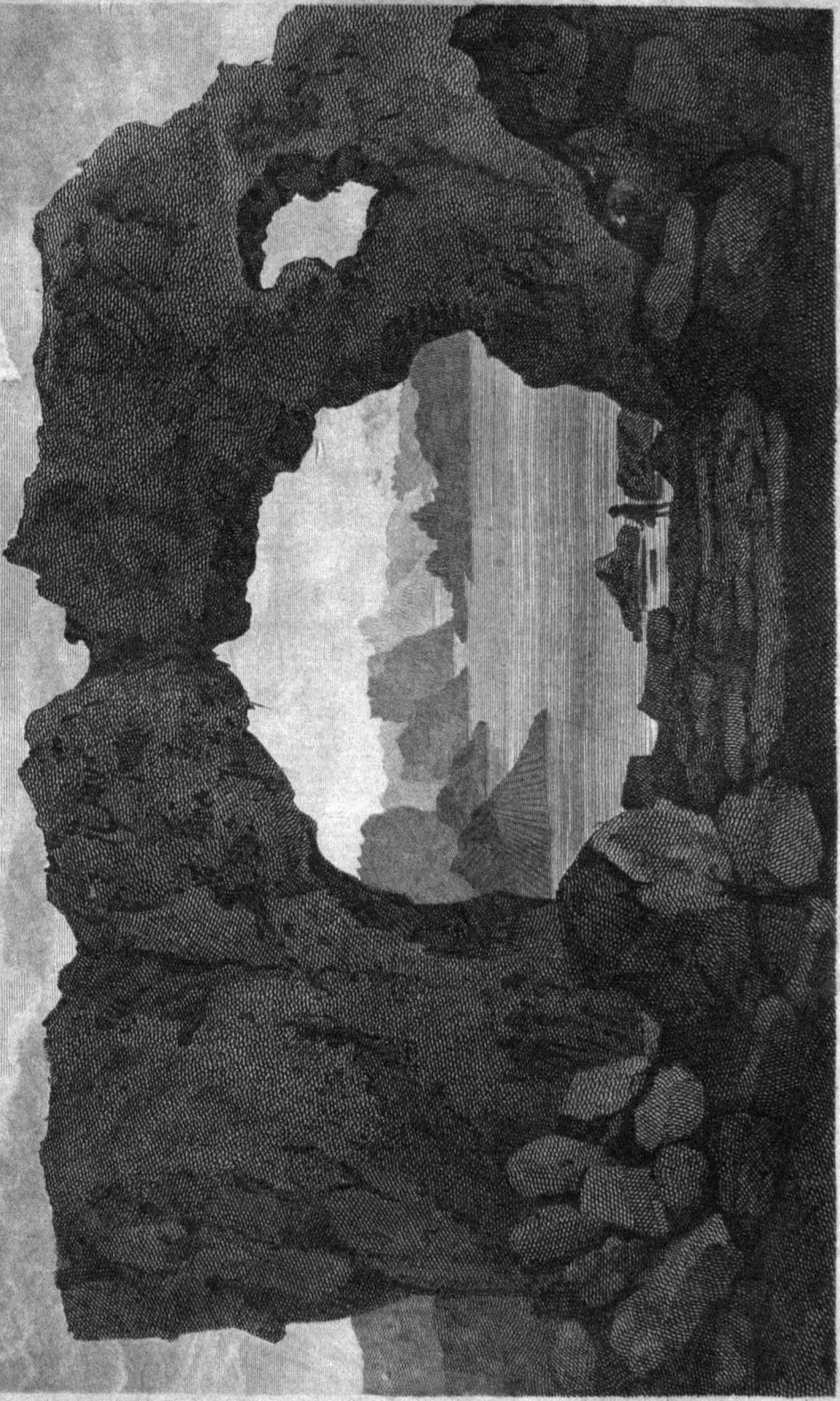
The coast in the neighbourhood of Stappen is very remarkable; presenting, for the extent of about two miles, striking and beautiful columnar appearances, both in the cliffs which form the shore, and in the numerous insulated rocks which appear at different distances from the land. The ranges of columns, which in general are about fifty feet high, and perfectly regular in their forms, are variously broken, in consequence of their exposure to the action of the sea. In some places large caves have been formed; and in two of these the light is admitted by fissures in the roof, producing a very singular and striking effect.

In general, the columns have a vertical position; but in different places they are disposed in bundles upon one another in all directions. In several instances they appear diverging from a centre; and they assume, in short, every form which such rocks can be imagined to take. About a mile and a half to the west of Stappen, there is a curious perforated rock, forming a detached arch of considerable magnitude, the view through which is singularly picturesque, comprehending in the foreground many of the insulated masses of colum-

Sketch of J. J. J.

Sketch of J. J. J.

NATURAL ARCH ON THE COAST NEAR STAPPEN





nar rock, and in the distance, the fine range of mountains, which stretches along the peninsula towards the east. On the whole, it is probable that a more curious range of cliffs is nowhere to be seen, both with respect to the picturesque appearance they present, and also from the interesting facts they afford to the attention of the geologist.

We proceeded along the coast, till interrupted by a broad and rugged stream of lava, the characters of which were different from any we had before surveyed. It originated in some part of the Snæfell Jokul, and had flowed into the sea; but we could not discover any way by which we might safely reach the place where it had met the water. The lavas of this district are very ancient; no eruptions having taken place, either from the Snæfell Jokul, or from any part of the adjacent range of mountains, since the island first became inhabited.

*Sketched by R. Bright**E. Mitchell sculp.*

CAVE AT STAPPEN.

We remained at Stappen nearly two days, occupied in the survey of the various interesting objects in its vicinity. On the second day of our stay here, we took a boat for the purpose of examining from the sea the columnar cliffs and caves already described, which in many points are thus seen more advantageously than they can be from the shore. We saw on the beach at Stappen several sharks that had been taken for the sake of the oil of the liver, and the skin: two or three of these fish were of very large size. In several parts of Iceland, particularly on the northern and north-western coasts, the shark fishery is a regular occupation. Strong hooks fastened to chains, and baited with muscles, &c. are anchored a little way out at sea, and the fish, when caught, are towed on shore. Of the skin, shoes are made; and some parts of the flesh are occasionally smoked, and used as food by the natives. It was long before we could prevail on Madame Hialtalin to procure us a little of this delicacy; but when it did make its appearance, our noses were assailed by so horrible an odour, that we were glad to have it removed as soon as possible.

It was our original design to have attempted the ascent of the Snæfell Jokul from the side of Stappen; but having been disappointed in this by the foggy state of the weather, we took leave of our kind hostess on the 2d July, and set out for Olafsvik, on the northern coast of Snæfell's Syssel, to visit Mr Clausen. On our leaving the house at Stappen, we were honoured by the display of the Danish flag, which was hoisted on the roof. We retraced our steps for a few miles, and then, by a pass called the Kamskard, began to ascend the mountains. There are different routes by which one can reach Olafsvik from Stappen. That round the coast, by the west side of the Jokul, is very dangerous, and we preferred the one we took, as being

the best and most secure. The ascent was long and fatiguing; but we were amply repaid for our labour, by a very fine mountain scene at the summit, and an extensive view towards the north of the great bay called Breidè-Fiord, with the mountains of the Dalè and Bardestrand Syssels in the remote distance. While descending, we came to a stream which fell over a precipice, forming an extremely fine cascade. The rocks above the channel of the stream were composed of very perfect columns, about sixty feet in height.

On reaching the shores of the Breidè-Fiord, we travelled two or three miles to the westward to Olafsvik, which place is situate on the side of a fine bay. It consists of the dwelling-houses of Mr Clausen and his factor, and about a dozen cottages scattered on the rising ground behind, which is bounded by grand precipices. The beach was covered with numerous piles of dried fish; and we found the warehouses quite full of the same article, for which lately no sufficient market has been found. We afterwards learned from Mr Clausen, that his stock at Olafsvik consisted of several hundred thousand fish, salted or dried; besides very large quantities of woollen goods, stockings, gloves, &c. manufactured in the country, and ready for exportation.

Mr Clausen, who had returned from Reikiavik by sea a short time before, received us with much kindness, and introduced us to his wife, a lady whose appearance and manners we found extremely pleasing. She is a native of Denmark, and came over to Iceland only two or three years ago.

The weather having now become more favourable, the ascent of the Snæfell Jokul was accomplished by my friends on the 3d of July; and I give the following narrative of the expedition in the words of Mr Bright.

‘ After a hesitation of an hour or two, on account of the

‘ doubtful appearance of the day, Mr Holland and myself, with
‘ our interpreter, and one of our guides, who was very desirous
‘ of accompanying us, put ourselves under the direction of a
‘ stout Iceland, who undertook to be our leader in the ascent
‘ of the Jokul. He, however, honestly confessed, that he had
‘ never been higher up the mountain than the verge of the
‘ perpetual snow, as the sheep never wandered beyond that
‘ limit; but this was also the case with the other inhabitants
‘ of the district. Every one of us provided himself with an
‘ Iceland walking staff, furnished with a long spike at the end;
‘ and, in case of need, we carried some pairs of large coarse
‘ worsted stockings of the country manufacture. We like-
‘ wise had our hammers and bags for specimens, a compass
‘ and thermometer, a bottle of brandy, with some rye-bread
‘ and cheese.

‘ Thus equipped, we set forward on our march; and hav-
‘ ing passed two or three cottages, whose inhabitants gazed
‘ with wonder at our expedition, we directed our course in
‘ nearly a straight line towards the margin of the snow. The
‘ nearer we approached it, vegetation became more and more
‘ scanty, and at length almost entirely disappeared. After
‘ walking at a steady pace for two hours, in which time we
‘ had gone about six miles, we came to the first snow, and
‘ prepared ourselves for the more arduous part of our enter-
‘ prize. The road being now alike new to all, we were as
‘ competent as our guides to the direction of our further
‘ course. The summits of all the surrounding mountains
‘ were covered with mist; but the Jokul was perfectly clear;
‘ and as the sun did not shine so bright as to dazzle our eyes
‘ with the reflection from the snow, we entertained good hopes
‘ of accomplishing our purpose. During the first hour the
‘ ascent was not very difficult, and the snow was sufficiently

‘ soft to yield to the pressure of our feet. After that time
‘ the acclivity was steeper, the snow became harder, and
‘ deep fissures appeared in it, which we were obliged to cross,
‘ or to avoid by going a considerable way round. These fis-
‘ sures presented a very beautiful spectacle; they were at
‘ least thirty or forty feet in depth, and though not in gene-
‘ ral above two or three feet wide, they admitted light enough
‘ to display the brilliancy of their white and rugged sides. As
‘ we ascended, the inferior mountains gradually diminished
‘ to the sight, and we beheld a complete zone of clouds
‘ encircling us, while the Jokul still remained clear and dis-
‘ tinct. From time to time the clouds, partially separating,
‘ formed most picturesque arches, through which we descried
‘ the distant sea, and still farther off, the mountains on the
‘ opposite side of the Breidè-Fiord, stretching northwards
‘ towards the most remote extremity of the island.

‘ In the progress of our ascent, we were obliged frequently
‘ to allow ourselves a temporary respite, by sitting down for
‘ a few minutes on the snow. About three o’clock, we ar-
‘ rived at a chasm, which threatened to put a complete stop
‘ to our progress. It was at least forty feet in depth, and
‘ nearly six feet wide; and the opposite side presented a face
‘ like a wall, being elevated several feet above the level of the
‘ surface on which we stood; besides which, from the falling
‘ in of the snow in the interior of the chasm, all the part on
‘ which we were standing was undermined, so that we were
‘ afraid to approach too near the brink lest it should give
‘ way. Determined, however, not to renounce the hope of
‘ passing this barrier, we followed its course till we found a
‘ place that encouraged the attempt. The opposite bank was
‘ here not above four feet high, and a mass of snow formed
‘ a bridge, a very insecure one indeed, across the chasm.

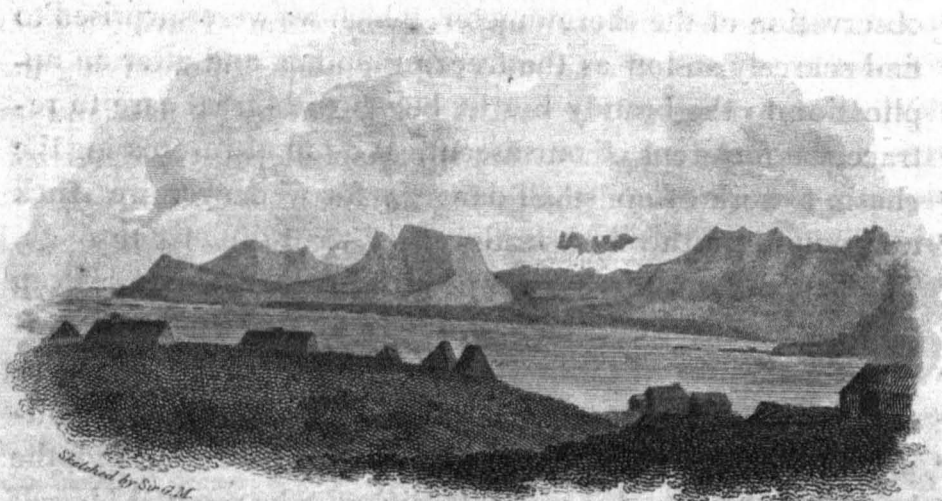
‘ Standing upon the brink, we cut with our poles three or four
‘ steps in the bank on the other side, and then, stepping as
‘ lightly as possible over the bridge, we passed one by one to
‘ the steps, which we ascended by the help of our poles. The
‘ snow on the opposite side became immediately so excessively
‘ steep, that it required our utmost efforts to prevent our
‘ sliding back to the edge of the precipice, in which case we
‘ should inevitably have been plunged into the chasm. This
‘ dangerous part of our ascent did not continue long; and
‘ we soon found ourselves on a tolerably level bank of snow,
‘ with a precipice on our right about 60 feet perpendicular;
‘ presenting an appearance as if the snow on the side of the
‘ mountain had slipped away, leaving behind it the part on
‘ which we stood. We were now on the summit of one of the
‘ three peaks of the mountain; that which is situated farthest
‘ to the east. We beheld immediately before us a fissure
‘ greatly more formidable in width and depth than any we
‘ had passed, and which, indeed, offered an insuperable ob-
‘ stacle to our further progress. The highest peak of the
‘ Jokul was still a hundred feet above us; and after looking
‘ at it sometime with the mortification of disappointment, and
‘ making some fruitless attempts to reach, at least, a bare ex-
‘ posed rock which stood in the middle of the fissure, we were
‘ obliged to give up all hope of advancing further.

‘ The peak of the Jokul we had now attained, is about
‘ 4,460 feet above the level of the sea. The extensive view
‘ which we might have obtained from this elevated point, was
‘ almost entirely intercepted by the great masses of cloud,
‘ which hung upon the sides of the mountain, and admitted
‘ only partial and indistinct views of the landscape beneath.
‘ It has been said by Eghert Olafson, and others, that from
‘ one part of the channel which lies between Iceland and

Greenland, the mountain of Snæfell Jokul may be seen on one side, and a lofty mountain in Greenland on the other. It is difficult to ascertain how far this is an accurate statement. The distance between the two countries at this place cannot be less than eighty or ninety leagues.

The clouds now began rapidly to accumulate, and were visibly rolling up the side of the mountain; we were therefore anxious to quit our present situation as speedily as possible, that we might repass the chasm before we were involved in mist. Our first object, however, was to examine the state of the magnetic needle, which Olafson in his travels asserts to be put into great agitation at the summit of this mountain, and no longer to retain its polarity. What may be the case a hundred feet higher, we cannot affirm; but at the point we reached, the needle was quite stationary, and, as far as we could judge, perfectly true. We then noted an observation of the thermometer, which we were surprised to find scarcely so low as the freezing point; and after an application to the brandy bottle, began with great care to retrace the footsteps of our ascent. We found re-crossing the chasm a work of no small danger; for whenever we stuck our poles into the snow bridge, they went directly through. The first person, therefore, who crossed, thrust his pole deep into the lower part of the wall, thus affording a point of support for the feet of those who followed; Mr Holland, however, who was the second in passing over, had, notwithstanding, a narrow escape, for his foot actually broke through the bridge of snow, and it was with difficulty he rescued himself from falling into the chasm beneath. We were scarcely all safe on the lower side of the chasm, when the mist surrounding us, made it extremely difficult to keep the tract by which we had ascended the mountain. When we came opposite

to a small bank which we had remarked in our ascent as being free from snow, we desired our guide to remain where he was, that we might not lose the path, while we went to examine that spot. We found the bank to be almost entirely composed of fragments of pumice and volcanic scorix. After our return to the former tract, we made the best of our way back to Olafsvik, which we reached at about a quarter past six, to the great surprise of every one; for we were scarcely expected till the following morning; such is the reverential awe inspired by the Jokul. None of our party seemed more gratified with the exploit than our guide, who having always been accustomed to look upon the Jokul as some invincible giant, greatly exulted in this victory over him; but we afterwards learned, that he found considerable difficulty in making his friends credit his narrative of the ascent.



OLAFSVIK

Engr. by E. M. Bell

‘ Thermometer at different stages.

At 11 o'clock on the shore	58° Fahren.
— 12 on the mountain	56°
— 1 verge of the snow	43°
— 2	42°
— 3	39°
— 3 17 min. at the highest point	34°
On the snow at the same time	32°.*

We remained three days with Mr Clausen at Olafsvik. During this time several persons came to us for medical advice; and we inoculated a great number with the vaccine virus. The nearest medical practitioner resides at Stikkesholm, about forty miles distant.

During our stay at Olafsvik the weather was remarkably clear and serene, and even oppressively warm. Having a good opportunity from the situation of the place, of observing the setting and rising of the sun, it was found by Mr Holland on the night of the 5th July, that it remained under the horizon exactly two hours and thirty-five minutes. Previously to setting, it hung for a long time on the verge of the horizon, and even at midnight it had sunk so little below, that the bright

* Professor Leslie, in the Appendix to the second edition of his *Elements of Geometry*, has given a theoretical Table of the height of the curve of congelation in different latitudes. In the latitude of the Snæfell Jokul, theory gives 2722 feet as the elevation of the curve. Sir J. T. Stanley, who reached the same summit of the Jokul as that described by Mr Bright, has obligingly informed me, that by barometrical observation, he found the verge of the snow to be 2734 feet above the level of the sea; which differs only 12 feet from the elevation given in Professor Leslie's Table; and shews how very near, in this instance, theory has approached to truth.

glow of the luminary was completely visible, and the light sufficient for the pursuance of the most minute occupation. We were at this time in latitude $64^{\circ} 58' N$.

While in Mr Clausen's house, we felt quite at ease. No obtrusive curiosity, no restraint, incommoded us in our pursuits; and our host, having taught himself English, was able, without the uncertain assistance of an interpreter, to give us much information relative both to the topography and commercial concerns of Iceland. He had only a collection of voyages, and a volume of Roderick Random, in English; most of his books in that language being at Copenhagen. He had travelled through several countries of Europe, and at this time talked of going to England, which purpose he has since accomplished.

In a walk which we took along the coast towards the west, on the last evening of our stay at Olafsvik, we saw a great number of seals, at several of which we fired, but without success. These animals are particularly numerous on the shores of the Breidè-Fiord.

We left the hospitable house of Mr Clausen on the 6th of July, and pursued our journey to Grunnefiord, having the intention of varying our returning route along the peninsula, by following the line of its northern coast. We deviated from the road about four miles from Olafsvik, to examine some rocks which formed a promontory overhanging the sea. These rocks were columnar, and covered with vast numbers of kittiwakes, which took wing on our approach, and almost darkened the air. We here saw two large sea eagles, which prey upon the water fowl, and are very destructive to the Eider-ducks. Whenever the eagles passed over the rock, the noise made by the kittiwakes stunned our ears. The columns forming this promontory are for the most part vertical, and

about sixty feet in height. Some of them, however, are contorted in a very striking manner. They presented some curious geological appearances, which will hereafter be noticed.

We now approached a place called Bulands-höfde, where the only means of advancing is by a path on the face of a precipice not less than a thousand feet high. To a considerable height, it is quite perpendicular above the sea, and the path was in many places obliterated by the falling of the rocks and gravel above it. A more difficult and dangerous track cannot well be conceived. We were greatly alarmed lest some of our horses should fall down; but they passed safely, having given remarkable proof of their steadiness and caution. This pass is totally stopped during winter by ice and snow; and there are several instances of people who have perished in the attempt to proceed along it.

All the way from Olafsvik to Grunnefiord, a distance of nearly twenty miles, the mountain scenery is very fine. The lofty precipices are varied in every form, and the summits of the mountains are broken into a thousand abrupt and singular shapes. Cataracts are seen foaming and dashing from the rocks, and nothing but wood is wanting to make this one of the most picturesque countries in the world.

There is one singular mountain not far from Grunnefiord, called Sukker-Toppen (Sugar loaf) in the charts, from its resemblance to a sugar loaf. Viewed from the east or west, the top appears tabular; but when surveyed from the north or south, it is seen as a cone ending in a sharp point. Thus it appears that the summit of the mountain is an exceedingly narrow ridge.

We found the merchant's house at Grunnefiord (Greenfrith) situate at the head of an arm of the sea of the same name, which is derived from the extensive green flat stretch-

ing from the sea towards the mountains. The merchant here, Mr Müller, was on the eve of departing from the place in order to settle at Reikiavik, and had got most of his goods and furniture on board a sloop which was lying at anchor in the bay. We were well received, and as well entertained as Mr Müller's present circumstances would admit. We slept very comfortably in a room in his house; and after the usual salutations had been evaded by some of the party, and submitted to by others, we proceeded the next morning towards Stikkesholm, which is about twenty-five miles distant. A day's journey of such a length was a serious undertaking, impeded as we were by a long cavalcade of baggage horses; and had any bogs been in the way, it would have been impossible to have travelled so far in one day.

Our route lay among mountains of a character similar to those we had passed. In a sort of cleft of prodigious magnitude, we saw a fall of water about 150 feet high, dashing over a rock, of a curious reticulated appearance from the veins which intersect it, and afterwards rushing violently under several arches of snow. The rock, and the whole surrounding scenery, were very magnificent.

We had now to cross a steep mountain, on the other side of which we met with a stream of lava, and the country beyond it appeared to be entirely volcanic. The path through this stream was much better than any we had seen in similar situations, and we found very little difficulty in crossing the lava, though it was fully as rugged as that at Buderstad. We observed several cones composed of slags; and the face of the mountain which we passed, after crossing the lava, was entirely covered with cinders.

Having at length come to a green spot, near a cottage, we stopped to refresh ourselves and our horses. The poor people

brought us some milk, which we were glad to drink, although we had recently witnessed a very disgusting instance of Icelandic uncleanness on a similar occasion. We made our rustic meal on the turf, our horses quietly grazing around us.

Crossing another stream of lava, near its termination on the shore, we entered a low country, leaving the mountains on our right hand. The indentations made by the sea obliged us to proceed in a very zigzag direction towards Stikkesholm, which is placed at the extremity of a small peninsula. Near the isthmus over which we passed in entering this peninsula, is a hamlet called Helgafell, or the Holy Hill, from its situation upon an eminence, with which certain superstitious ideas and usages were in ancient times connected. On this spot was established one of the earliest of those settlements which the Norwegian emigrants made upon the coasts of Iceland. While approaching Stikkesholm, we had several fine views of the Breidè-Fiord, which is here completely studded with small rocky islands. Their number is stated to be 150, and this does not seem to be an exaggeration of the fact. Many of these islands contain vast numbers of Eider-ducks. Stikkesholm is singularly situate close to the sea amidst abruptly precipitous rocks, some of them columnar.

The houses are large, and, as well as the storehouses and cottages, belong to Mr Thorlacius, a native of the country, and reputed the richest man in Iceland. He lives at a place called Bildal, in the district of Bardestrand. His factor Mr Benedictson, another merchant, and Mr Hialtalin a surgeon, (son to the venerable priest of Saurbar), occupy the houses at Stikkesholm. The latter gentleman studied at Copenhagen, and was about to settle in some town in Jutland about two years ago, when he was ordered to occupy a vacant medical situation in Iceland. The district allotted to him is very ex-

tensive, and his salary is only about L.12 per annum. The profits arising from his practice during the first year of his residence at Stikkesholm have not exceeded L.6, and on this pittance he must support a wife and family.

Before the war between England and Denmark, Stikkesholm was a place of considerable traffic. The fishery begins earlier than in the Faxè-Fiord, and is very productive. Only one vessel came hither during the last season, from Norway; and our entertainers were of opinion, that the connection intended to be established with England by the late proclamation, would not remove their distresses. Mr Hialtalin was in Copenhagen during the last attack upon that city, and his house, and the greatest part of his property had been destroyed by the bombardment. He shewed us an umbrella which had been broken by a shot while he was sleeping under it in a tent. It was not very agreeable to listen to these narratives, as we had nothing to say in vindication of the attack on Copenhagen. Mr Hialtalin also spoke of some bad usage he had met with from the captains of two English ships of war, while he was on his passage to Iceland. He and Mr Benedictson made many inquiries respecting the present state of Europe, and were greatly astonished when told of the marriage of Bonaparte.

We spent the following day, which was Sunday, in the house of Mr Benedictson, at Stikkesholm. During the early part of the day, all the occupations of the people were suspended, and many of them went to the neighbouring church at Helgafell; but, at six o'clock in the evening, the store-houses were again opened, and the inhabitants of the place, resuming their common dresses, went to work as usual. This is the case in every part of the country. The sabbath of the Icelanders, according to the ecclesiastical law of the island,

begins at six o'clock on Saturday evening, and terminates at the same hour on Sunday; after which time any occupation or amusement may proceed as on the ordinary week days. The females of the family at Stikkesholm, as in the other houses of the higher class of people which we had visited, did not sit at the table when we were eating our meals. We observed here, however, that the master of the house always saluted his lady, when himself rising from the table; a practice which had not occurred to our notice before.

On our arrival at, and departure from Stikkesholm, we were as usual honoured by the display of the Danish flag. On the 9th, we left the place, accompanied by Mr Hialtalin, who rode with us to the mountain of Drapuhlid, about six miles to the south of Stikkesholm. This mountain, from the previous accounts we had received of it, we had been led to consider as something very remarkable in a mineralogical point of view, and in these expectations we were by no means disappointed. Mr Hialtalin remained at the foot of the mountain while we were examining it; and, on our return, we found the Sysselman of the district with him. This officer had heard of our arrival at Stikkesholm, and came to deliver a message from the Amtmand Stephenson, requesting that we would take his house in our way in returning to Reikiavik.

We observed a stream of lava that had descended from the mountains behind Drapuhlid, had divided, and run down each side of a ridge which connects this mountain with those to the south.

On a small grassy spot at the foot of the mountain, we packed up the specimens we had procured; and enjoyed a draught of excellent milk, brought to us in a wooden vessel from an adjoining cottage. Of this repast the Sysselman and Mr Hialtalin partook with us, the whole party sitting on the

grass. Having taken leave of these gentlemen, we pursued our journey to Narfeyrè, situate on the east side of the Alpta-Fiord; an arm of the sea which runs up several miles into the country, and is bounded on each side by lofty and magnificent mountains. We had to make a large circuit towards the head of the Fiord, and should have had a longer journey, had not the tide luckily been out; so that we were enabled to cross the mud, by the help of a guide whom we took with us from the cottage near Drapuhlid. We found a very good church at Narfeyrè, and took up our quarters for the night in it. On examining the loft of the building, we saw lying on a chest a mass which we were told was human fat that had been taken out of a grave. It appeared, however, to be the muscular substance converted into the saponaceous matter so much resembling spermaceti, a change effected by water. This is reckoned a very precious article as a medicine, and is frequently used by the Icelanders in pulmonary complaints.

Before our departure from Narfeyrè, we went into the farm-house adjoining the church, to see the mode of weaving commonly employed in Iceland. The whole process is awkward and laborious. The threads for the woof hang perpendicularly, being stretched by stones tied to them on a wooden frame. No shuttle is used; but a thread is passed across the woof by the hand, and is stretched by rubbing a little piece of wood upon the threads. A portion of the rib of a whale, nicely polished, and shaped somewhat like a broad sword, is then introduced between the threads, and with this the warp is struck forcibly. In this way, a woman can weave a yard of stuff in a day. The stuff we saw in this loom, was composed of red and yellow threads, and was intended for a bed-cover. These articles are exchanged for fish; and the value of three yards is reckoned to be somewhat less than two dollars.

Having procured a guide, we set out for Snoksdalr, the next stage of our journey. The wind blew sharply from the north-east, and the day was the coldest we had yet experienced. The country through which our route lay, was for the most part low, and totally uninteresting. Not far from Narfeyrè, there was a considerable track covered with small birch shrubs. Excepting the hamlet called Breidabolstadr, where there is a church and a solitary cottage, no human habitation appeared to enliven the dreary scene. We kept along the shore of the Fiord, and after a tedious and unpleasant ride of about twenty-four miles, reached Snoksdalr at eight o'clock in the evening, where we found a good farmhouse and a small church. The latter did not differ materially from those we had already seen, except in having a different subject for the altar-piece, which was the stoning of St Stephen. On each side of the altar was a large chair, in the bottom of which were kept the habiliments of the priest. There were two dresses; one of them of a red stuff, having a large cross embroidered in white, on each side of the robe. The other was made of a sort of crimson velvet or plush, the crosses being formed of silver lace. Over the door-way to the altar was a curious group of male figures carved in wood, which appeared as if intended to represent Christ disputing with the doctors.

Snoksdalr formed the limit of our northern journey. It is situate at a short distance from the extremity of the Breidè-Fiord, on the brow of a hill, and in a very exposed situation, but in the midst of plenty of grass. We took up our abode in the church, while the inhabitants of the adjoining house cheerfully supplied us with curds and milk, upon which supply we now entirely depended, our stock of biscuit being nearly exhausted. We remained here during the whole of the 11th,

in order that the horses might recruit their strength, for a long and fatiguing day's journey which they were next to encounter. About Snoksdalr the country begins again to be mountainous, and towards the north and east nothing is to be seen but long ranges of dreary hills stretching across the narrow isthmus, which here separates the Breidè-Fiord from the sea on the northern shores of Iceland. The breadth of this isthmus, from Snoksdalr to the nearest inlet on the northern coast, does not exceed forty miles. The cold north-east wind continued to blow, and to render our abode here by no means comfortable. The church too was in bad repair, and exceedingly damp; and at no time, during the day we passed in it, did the thermometer stand above 45° , even in the building. The latitude of Snoksdalr is about $65^{\circ} 5'$.

At five o'clock on the morning of the 12th, we recommenced our journey. After crossing a rugged hill behind Snoksdalr, we entered an extensive valley, well clothed with grass, and studded with a number of cottages, to each of which a portion of the pasture belongs. We were told that there were about thirty such divisions in the valley, and that the greater part of the land in it is kept for pasture, no hay being made excepting round the farm-houses. From the number of such valleys contained in this district, the Dalè Syssel, in which we were now travelling, derives its name.

From this valley, which is called Middalur, we passed into another, which gradually contracted for two or three miles, till we got to the foot of a steep and lofty ridge of mountains, called Brautarbrekkar. The ascent of this was long and laborious; but we were gratified, on arriving at the top, with a view of some fine mountains, stretching towards the south as far as the Western Skards-heidè. The descent into the valley, on the south side, was very rapid. Having advanced a little way

into the valley, we dismounted, and took our breakfast by the side of a small stream. This done, the sun shining full upon us, we stretched ourselves upon the grass, and slept for an hour very comfortably, though snow lay not a hundred feet above. A lofty and singular mountain, called Baula, forms the eastern side of the valley; the direction of which is nearly north and south. After proceeding along it for some miles, we turned to the north-east, round Baula, which bears a striking resemblance to the mountain of Drapuhlid near Stikkesholm. We were now in the valley of the Norderaa, a considerable river, which we crossed several times before reaching the farm-house called Huam, where our day's journey terminated.

We were now on the border of the low country, through the centre of which the Huitaa flows. Having passed the night in the church at Huam, we recommenced our journey the following morning, attended by the farmer, who very readily undertook the office of guide. He was an oddly shaped, merry, and active little man, mounted on a miserable horse, which, by dint of constant kicking, he made to move forwards at a great rate. After crossing several rocky ridges, we descended into the valley of the Huitaa, ten or twelve miles above the place where we had formerly crossed this river. In our way we passed through some birch wood, which was the tallest we had yet met with, the trees, in general, being from six to ten feet high.

We stopped at Sidumule, the abode of Mr Otteson, Syselman of the Myrè and Hnappadals Sysseis. This gentleman, whom we had already seen for a few moments at Stad-arhraun, from his answers to the various questions we proposed to him, seemed to be fully master of the duties of his office; in which, however, he had been only a short time

installed. In his library we found Danish translations of Sir Charles Grandison, of Addison's Cato, and other English works. If we might judge from the appearance of Mr Otteson's dairy, in which we saw twenty-four large dishes full of milk, his farm, and his management of it, must be very good.

Having been informed by Mr Otteson that we could not get across the river Huitaa at this place, without great risk of wetting our baggage, we were under the necessity of altering our plans; and instead of crossing directly to Reikholt, we resolved to return to Huaneyrè, and from thence visit the hot springs near the former place. Mr Otteson was going to Huaneyrè, and offered to be our guide. The banks of the river, almost the whole way, were swampy, and we had to wind through the bogs in various directions, which rendered our journey tedious and very disagreeable. We examined a hot spring on the western bank of the river, but found nothing remarkable about it. The temperature was 165°.

About eight miles from Sidumulè, we crossed the Huitaa at a place where it was very broad, and so deep that the water reached our saddles. The singular colour of the water in this river was formerly mentioned. The stream, in general, is about one hundred yards broad, and very rapid. The left bank we found to be as boggy as the other; but, under Mr Otteson's direction, who was very skilful in selecting the best route across these swamps, we got rapidly forward. On arriving at Huitar-vellir, the place where we had before crossed the river, we found that the hay harvest was just begun, several peasants being engaged in cutting the grass around the priest's house. Here we were informed that Amtmand Stephenson had gone to Reikiavik, which to us was a piece of bad news, as we had relied upon the use of his horses to go to Reikholt next day. But our usual good fortune did