

crop of wild oats while they watch the sheep upon the foothills pick theirs (*avena fatua*), "comrades of the wolf and owl." One of the great *rancheros* told me that during one year he employed on his ranch a bishop's son, a banker, an editor, a civil engineer and a book-keeper; at least two of them being college alumni.

The brilliant and eccentric Lockwood, sometime an ornament of the San Francisco bar, once found congenial refuge for a brooding melancholy in the vagabondizing of a sequestered sheep-walk. At least one of the poets of Australia—a race among whom the monstrous custom of

suicide seems to be contagious—whiled away some of his heavy hours in the occupation made illustrious by "Jamie the poet."

I have seen following the sheep a bankrupt genius who was always carrying about with him and reading a quantity of poems and paragraphs clipped from the newspapers. "Alexander the Great," he said, "always carried with him a piece of good literature—Homer, to wit, laid nightly under his pillow. In my humble way, sir, I imitate his example; and to make sure that the literature shall be good, I write it myself."

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## A REINDEER HUNT IN ICELAND.

BY WILLIAM LEE HOWARD.



H, well, we will have to wait for our extra men and ponies, and that will be three or four days, so Doc. and I will take Gisli and try the reindeer region.

"We'll be back in three or four days."

These remarks took place in the visitor's room of an Icelandic hut situated on the banks of *Mývatn* (Midge Lake), in the northern part of the island. This room was the familiar Icelandic spare room, just off the dark, narrow burrow, which in this country answers for the entrance, store-room, dog kennels and workshop. It differed from all the other rooms in the house by having a board floor and a window, in which were stretched several pieces of translucent sealskin, through which the sun's rays fitfully penetrated. The walls and roof were of lava and sod, while a small whisky keg, with both ends out, answered for a chimney and ventilator. In this room, 12 by 18 feet, seated around a greasy deal table, were several young and prematurely bronzed men, representing several nationalities. All short, stout and thickly set; none of them very clean or freshly shaven. They were a small party of explorers and scientists, not to mention the jolly pair of "special correspondents" and artists, who

were hand and glove with a few ardent English sportsmen who had joined the party in order to partake of the advantages that a fully-equipped exploring expedition offered them, *viz.*, safe conduct, pleasant companions and the best native guides and interpreters. After a hard journey of two weeks from the capital, these Nimrods had reached their grounds, and here intended to spend some five weeks in pursuing their sport; while we were less fortunate, having as yet only reached the border, whence our severe and dangerous work was to be pushed straight across the unknown desert in the interior.

As it would take several days to rest, cut our luggage down to the smallest possible weight and size, make our pemmican, test our instruments, and wait for our dilatory natives, I concluded to go north and see if there were reindeer in that bleak and uninviting region, both as a matter of sport and information; hence the conversation quoted above.

That night we were all busy cleaning guns, overhauling rifles, repacking saddles, picking ponies to take with us, packing provisions, sorting ammunition and studying charts. Our good host and many of his neighbors, who had ridden miles to see the "crazy Englishmen," stood looking on in utter astonishment at our activity, not being able to understand how we could count our doings by time, and wondering why we would exert ourselves to do in one night what could be

done so easily by taking a week for it. Every little article of ours would be picked up several times by mine host and his friends, who would ask the most ludicrous questions and receive the answers with an extremely incredulous expression on their generally immobile features. In return for our kindness they would tell us the most startling stories regarding the terrors of the country we were about to penetrate. Mine host begged of us not to go, and tried to frighten us off by repeating the general belief of the existence of fertile valleys in the heart of these deserts, and of outlaws—Utilegumen—lurking in the lava crags; of the howling expanse of wilderness, and of ghosts, phantoms and Trolls, who at any moment might dismount you and spirit you away to their fiery domains below. While these oft-repeated stories among the peasants were being poured into our ears, we went on attending to our work of preparation,

simple method of exhibiting their little treasures, which we would find placed in some incongruous position in other parts of the hut for us to notice. I remember with what pride the eldest daughter, ably assisted by her mother, extracted from their treasure box a pair of embroidered ladies' unmentionables, made for a woman who must have had the build of a Titan, and placed them upon my saddle where I found them when going to get it before turning in.

Eight o'clock found us ready to start, but as the Doc. wanted a few hours' sleep, we gave him until two A. M. As it was in mid-summer, we had the sun practically up during the whole twenty-four hours. Awakening the Doc. at the appointed time, we were soon devouring (we never eat) our frugal breakfast. Doc. caught our



MY PONY AND I.



BROKEN DOWN LAVA HUT.

watched by our peasant friends as closely as a cat watches a mouse. Now and then confidential remarks were passed between the Icelanders and our guides, who, I am inclined to think, told them many a Munchausen story which would have put our correspondent of the *Daily Prodomos* to task if he tried to equal them. Our guides delighted in the self-glorification of telling them tremendous stories of our fabulous wealth, abilities, knowledge and plans. Now and then the young people of the household would come timidly into the room and ostentatiously take from an old Norse bureau some trifle of dress, ornament or book, holding it so as to be seen by all present, and looking very chagrined if no attention was paid to it, but at the same time attempting to appear very unconscious of anything that was going on around them. This is their

ponies, Gisli packed our boxes, while I sorted our provisions, which consisted of dried stock fish, pemmican, coffee and canned milk. It took us over two hours to get our packs properly adjusted so as to be secure, as one of the most tiresome and aggravating experiences one has traveling in Iceland is the continual breaking, falling or wetting of one's most precious impedimenta. We packed our ammunition and instruments upon our tallest pack-horse, our sleeping bags, provisions, etc., upon another, and took a spare riding pony apiece, as well as one for the luggage, so severe is the traveling here as to necessitate the changing of ponies every two hours.

Whistling to the dogs and shouting back some forgotten orders, we trotted down the deep and narrow path leading to the Volcano Krafla [pronounced Krabla], distant a day's ride.

We were going into a bleak and barren

district, where we should be obliged to pick our way across burning caldrons, boiling mud springs, hornitos, cones and craters with sundry outliers. Our first stage led up sulphurous hills, upon which our horses' hoofs would throw up solid balls of sickening sulphur, burning and terrifying our animals. Huge bowlders of solid sulphur, weighing several tons, were passed. Beyond, stretched hot sand deserts, which we must soon pass, and we could already see the bleaching skeletons of former adventurers shining in the sun. But this is not the place to describe this immense *sonfriere*. The scenery about the Red Sea is a fertile oasis compared with this burnt-out hell. Our first camp was in the midst of "little hell," where a blinding storm compelled us to halt, and we were soon surrounded by the mephitic vapors, without a blade of grass to be seen for our tired and hungry nags. A more desolate-looking place I have never seen. Possibly, like Don Quixote's market woman on the ass, it was susceptible of improvement under the influence of an ardent imagination; but all but the correspondent lacked the proper amount of imagination.

The noon of the second day found us at the northern base of Krafla, where we intended to locate our camp. To the north-east and west stretched the vast Icelandic desert, while away off in the south-east could be seen the much disputed Herdubried, looking like an inverted toy top, its apex appearing in a beautiful ermine mantle. Around us in all directions loomed up the volcanic mountains, tall, gaunt, black and weird. Here and there could be seen streams of lava from the old, rusty cones of Burnt Njial time down to the black, slow-moving one of to-day; each stream showing its incised course as plainly as the powerful and destructive glacial river Yokulsa, which we could discern in the east, tearing and roaring along, looking like a tarnished silver streak, until it reaches its falls—higher than any Europe can boast of—when it slowly but gradually sweeps everything before it, and carries its prey into the arms of the *pere arctique*.

We immediately turned in for a few hours sleep, as we should be obliged to start early in the afternoon to reach the feeding grounds of the reindeer. The camp was aroused at four P.M., and while discussing our dinner we settled upon the plans for the hunt.

We had noticed while ascending Krafla several freshly cast-off horns in a long, narrow gorge. It was decided that Doc should conceal himself at the entrance to this gorge and that Gisli should ascend to the summit of the mountain with a pair of binoculars and signal flag, and keep a sharp look for the deer; while I was to go to the north to find the remnants of a sheep hut which had existed before it was, with its once smiling acres, destroyed by Iceland's curse, volcanic activity.

We thought that possibly some few feet of the former pasture might still be remaining, in which case it would afford good feeding ground for our game. This proved to be true, for after an hour's ride, picking my way over yawning chasms, boiling springs and miniature volcanoes, I arrived at a broken-down lava and turf hut. The lava stream had swept by the entrance so close as to burn and char the wooden posts that made the door-way, but on either side lay several acres of rich grass, and, better still, fresh reindeer tracks and several discarded pair of horns, while just at the edge of the small lava stream, a small stream of water percolated through the spongy scoriae, forming a pool of fresh water.

It took me over an hour to dig my way into the hut, but I was well paid for my labors. On entering I found myself well hidden, with room enough inside to hide my small pony, and apertures enough in the walls to command all points of the compass, and with my powerful glass to keep a good look-out for Gisli upon the mountains, where he may—

"Toil and sweat, and yet be freezing cold."

Knowing that it would be useless to expect the deer for several hours, I opened my sleeping bag, took out my pipe and sat down to write up my notes. That done, I went out and brought in my pony, and then took up my vigil.

Now, a word or two concerning the existence of reindeer in Iceland.

Although several bears, arctic foxes, etc., are killed each year upon the island, none of them are indigenous to the island, but come over, either voluntarily or otherwise, from Greenland on the ice. The country is pre-eminently a volcanic one; too poor to support any animal in the interior, and the game which land from Greenland, soon becomes weak and hungry and falls an easy prey to the Icelander. I have seen several dead bears in the



ICELANDIC ARCHITECTURE.

lava fields, who had escaped the eye of the peasant on the coast, and wandering into the interior soon starved. The reindeer fare differently; they can run over the lava fields, and feed upon the moss, and the weedy, sedgy and spumy grass found around the sulphur fields. Moreover, they have never known any other existence, and have their own runs, confined to be sure, but until our arrival *never* molested by human beings. Some years ago a drove of reindeer were imported from Norway with the intention of domesticating them; but either through the carelessness of the natives or the cruel disadvantages of the island, it was thought that all died. But the last few years has proven that a few found a means of existence in the interior, and that vast *terra incognita* never being traveled over by the natives, the reindeer increased, until at present there are several hundreds in the northern desert. It is safe to predict that the rifle of the hunter and the ever-increasing volcanic forces will soon exterminate these few. Until three years ago, to tell a native that you had seen these reindeer was to put yourself on a level with a lunatic, in their estimation. Even now, there is not one native in two hundred who will believe that the reindeer exist; and in two years' residence upon the island, I never met with but three natives outside of my party who had ever seen the animals. Even these thought it was sure death to try and reach their country.

For three hours I sat in the hut keeping a close lookout down the ravine, as well as upon Gisli on the mountain. My watch began to be wearisome, and I was first contemplating moving further on to scour the country, when I noticed Gisli making frantic and absurd signs with his feet, hands and signal flag. What did he mean? He had proper instructions for signaling the approach of any game. Did he have an attack of that disease so prevalent in his country—epilepsy? What in the name of Thor is the trouble? I turned around and surveyed the country; not a sign of a living being could be seen. I turned around and leveled my lass at the mountains; Gisli was gone! What in the name of all that's volcanic does he mean by deserting his post? These thoughts passed through my mind as I stood wondering what to do. Then knowing that I could do nothing but wait, I sat down and turned my thoughts to what a scolding I would give Gisli when he came back. Still, I thought, upon second reflection, he may drive the deer, if such he has seen, towards the Doc. or, better still, towards me. Two hours more passed away, and I had given up all hopes of seeing the deer and was now only waiting for my comrades to come to the hut as agreed upon. I began to feel sleepy and uninterested, and gradually found myself reclining and going into a sleep.

Bang! whirr! whirr! patter! patter! patter! startled me from what must have

been a sound sleep. I sprang up, bumping my head against the turf roof of my hut in the fright, grabbed my rifle, and poked my head through the once window. What a grand sight I saw! Not fifty yards from me, on a high mass of lava, stood a magnificent gray buck, his extended nostrils panting, and his eyes gleaming with terror, while behind him were the trembling forms of his family. With excited and shaking hands I poked my rifle through the aperture, and had just sighted, when a human head appeared just to the right of the drove. With a cry of fright the leader of the drove made a magnificent spring and ran down the ravine. At that moment I fired, and—oh, thunder!—I missed him! I fired again instantly, and this time a young buck, just in the rear of the leader, stumbled, fell on his fore-legs, arose again, and rolled over dead. Before I had time to emerge from the hut the drove had disappeared down some of the numerous riffs and I had lost them. I ran over to where my trophy lay, and found that my bullet had entered the shoulder, crushed through the bone and touched the heart. I joyfully sat down, lighted my pipe, and blessed my good luck. And I had reason to do so, for this was the second reindeer known to have been shot in Iceland; and I had boasted before leaving the capital that I would bring one back if they existed there. In a few minutes the Doc. appeared; crest-fallen he certainly did look, and it was some time before I could get his story from him.

While attempting to reach his grounds he found that there were fresh tracks going around the other side of the mountain. He followed them for several hours, and discovered that the reindeer had a regular track running along the bottom of these tremendous riffs in the lava bed. He found the right one, through which ran a streamlet on the banks of which grew the small willow upon which the deer fed. After getting into the riff it grew deeper and deeper, until it was impossible for him to make any signs to the upper world, or to inform Gisli where the deer were. He hurried on, and must have gone some eight miles when the riff opened almost at the door of my hut. Here he caught sight of his game, and, too excited to wait for a good shot, he banged away at a pair of antlers. This was the shot that caused me to awake so hurriedly. "Had he seen Gisli?" "No; not since we left him at the base of the mountain." When I told him of the pantomime that I last saw Gisli attempting, he was rude enough to think it was a good joke, and heartily laughed over its recital.

After putting our game upon my pony we started for the mountain; Doc. to ascend to where we last saw Gisli; I to take the ponies and go around to the other side of the volcano. After reaching the point where Doc. should descend, I tied the ponies head to tail, shouldered my rifle, and went in search of Gisli. I had been searching for over an hour, shouting most of the time, before I met with any success. At last I heard a voice answer-



THE DOCTOR AND HIS MOUNT.

ing me, and following the direction from where it came, I discovered my man. He was sitting on the edge of a chasm, at the bottom of which lay a small deer, singing to himself, and when he discovered me he jumped up, and pointing down into the cleft of the rocks, shouted, "Me shoot him; me shoot him rapid; me in Reykjavik bring. See, he dead!" all of which was delivered in a rapid manner, mingled with expressions of joy in his own tongue. I first looked around for his gun, and, as I expected, it was nowhere to be found. He hadn't thought of a little matter like that. In fact, he was too excited to think of anything but the deer and what a hero he would be among his people. I soon saw from the position of the reindeer that he never could have shot it from where he stood, and the entrance to the riff was too great a distance for him to have come from. I soberly asked him how he shot the deer, and he proudly told me that the deer was running down the Gja (riff), that he fired at it and killed it instantly. I asked him where his gun was, and he actually had the brass to tell me that it was up on the mountain. I found the foot-prints of the deer right where we

stood, and asked him if the deer didn't come down this way. "Oh, yes I thousands of them go here; me shoot one!" "Where is the buck, Gisli?" "He no died; off go!" I thought it was wicked to ask him to lie any more, as I knew he would do enough of that when he reached his people. So I compelled him to return to my pony, which he did sorrowfully. On seeing my deer he regained his former glee, and grew almost frantic when he saw its grand proportions, and if my boxes only had had half the care on my journey that he took of that deer, I could safely have carried a crockery-shop with me.

Upon the return of Doc. I told him of the joke, and we explained it in this manner: Gisli had caught sight of a poor, lost fawn, hardly weaned, had dropped everything in his excitement, rushed down the mountain, and chased after it. The animal, frightened so as to lose its head, rushed headlong over the precipice. Gisli, forgetful of everything else, sat down and contemplated his trophy. I feel convinced that this latter-day Munchausen believes to-day that he has proven to us his art to shoot deer without a gun.

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### THE MAN IN THE MOON.

Do you remember the clouds in the sky,  
And the man in the moon peeping through,  
How he winked at a star with twinkling eye  
The night I was whispering to you?

The music and chorus of insect bands  
Chirping vespers to valley and hill,  
The soft, tender clasp of two trembling hands—  
Do they live in your memory still?

The summer has gone and the bat lies hid  
That was watching the moment of bliss,  
When you ask'd me to tell what it was Katy did,  
And I silenced your lips with a kiss.

The sad willow weeps, the oak sighs and grieves  
For the voices that then filled the air,  
And storms hurl a mountain of autumn dead leaves  
O'er my hopes, lying tomb'd in despair.

The man in the moon has gone to his rest,  
And our star sheds no twinkle of light;  
The clouds, like a pall, overshadow my breast,  
And my love-dream has ended in night.