

bling; I could not sufficiently admire and wonder at this fearfully beautiful picture of desolation.

THE SQUIREEN.—What does she say about the people generally? I mean as to their appearance?

THE DOCTOR.—Listen:—

The natives of Iceland are of medium height and strength. Their hair is light, and not unfrequently of a reddish shade, and their eyes are blue. The men are generally ugly, the women rather less so, and among the young girls I occasionally saw quite a pleasing face. It is a very uncommon thing for either sex to attain the age of seventy or eighty years. They have a great many children, but the proportion of those who live to grow up is very small; of the numbers who are born to them few survive the first year; which is not surprising when it is considered that the mothers do not nurse their infants, who are brought up on the most unwholesome kind of food. After their first year they seem to be strong and healthy, though their cheeks are apt to be of a singularly bright red, as if they were always covered with a rash. Whether this be owing to the effect of the keen air, or in consequence of their wretched diet I am not able to decide.

THE LAND.—Ha'e they any Doctors, think ye, in that out-o'-the-way corner of creation?

THE DOCTOR.—Yes, and Parsons, too; but according to our authoress these learned professions stand rather at a low discount in the land office! She says:—

The most laborious among the salaried offices in this country are those of the physicians and the clergy. Their circuits are very extensive, particularly the physicians, who are often sent for from a distance of twenty or thirty German miles. And when it is taken into consideration how often they are exposed to the fearful tempests of an Iceland winter, which lasts six or eight months of the year, it must be confessed that their lot is not an enviable one, and it is only wonderful that any one should be willing to accept the post.

When the doctor is called for in winter, the country people present themselves with shovels and pickaxes to clear the road for him, and always come provided with several horses, as he is frequently obliged to change from one exhausted animal to another, during his long rides through the fog and darkness, the snow-drifts and storms; life and death often hanging on his speed the while. Sometimes he returns to his own fire-side quite worn out with the cold and exposure, and has barely time to recruit from his fatigues before another summons arrives, and he must tear himself again from his family to face new dangers, before he has had time to relate the perils of his former expedition. When he is sent for by sea the risk is still greater on that stormy element.

The salary of the physicians is by no means in proportion to their services, but that of the priests is still less so. Some of the benefices are only worth from two to eight florins a year, and the richest of them does not produce more than two hundred florins. The government provides a house for the priests, often no better than a peasant's hut, a small pasture-ground, and a few heads of cattle; and they are also entitled to a share of the hay,

sheep's wool, fish, &c., of their parishioners. But most of the clergy are so poor that they and their families are dressed in the usual garb of the peasantry, from which it is difficult to distinguish them. The wife attends to the cattle, and milks the cows and sheep, assisted by her maid, while the priest goes into the field and mows with the aid of his man. His whole intercourse is naturally confined to the poorer classes, and therein consists that patriarchal simplicity of life and manners which has been lauded by so many travellers. I should like to know if any of them would be willing to try it?

Besides all his other labors, the same priest has often three or four districts under his charge, which are sometimes at a distance of several miles from his residence. He is expected to visit them all in turn, so as to hold divine service in each district once in every few weeks. The priest, however, is not compelled to brave all weathers like the physician, and whenever Sunday proves a very stormy day he dispenses with his visitations, as it would be impossible for his scattered congregations to assemble.

The post of Sysselmann (answering to our bailiff of a circle), is the most desirable of all, for this officer has a good salary and very little to do; in many places he has a right to all the waifs, which is a privilege of some importance on account of the wood drifted from the American continent.

THE SQUIREEN.—Confound these bailiffs! Go where you like, gentry of this description always contrive to get their bread buttered on both sides! In Iceland, as in poor old Ireland, they live upon the fat of the land. Bad cess to them say I!

THE MAJOR.—Like the peripatetic Pfeiffer, I confess a weakness for novelty, and perchance may take Iceland as my next vacation ramble. Pray does she give a fellow an inkling touching the mode of travelling in these same regions?

THE DOCTOR.—She does; but the picture which she draws is by no means a very flattering one.

The best season for a journey is from the middle of June to the end of August at the latest; before that period, the streams are so much swollen by the melted snows that it is very dangerous to ford them; and many patches of deep snow, still untouched by the sun, and covering deep pits and heaps of lava, lie in the traveller's way. Here the danger is equally great; the horses sink in at every step, and there is reason to be thankful if the whole soft covering does not give way at once. On the other hand, the heavy storms and rains often begin in September, and flurries of snow are to be expected at any time during that month.

The traveller should carry his own provisions, and should have in addition a tent, a cooking apparatus, a pillow, some blankets and warm clothing, all of which are indispensable to his comfort. Most of these articles were too expensive in my case, and I was not provided with any of them; but I was exposed, in consequence, to terrible privations and fatigues, and was often obliged to ride an incredible distance before I could reach a night's