

when she went stravauging among sic' a crew. What could have tempted any woman, not an eligible candidate for Bedlam, to visit an outlandish place like that?

THE DOCTOR.—Probably because it *was* outlandish! She tells us in her preface: "Iceland was a country where I hoped to behold nature, under an aspect entirely new and peculiar."

THE SQUIREN.—By the curling tongs, and tooth-brush of Venus, the fair sex are the same all the world over! *Novelty* is the fuel which gets up their steam! A new print, a new silk, a new trinket, or a new country have each and all their peculiar attractions for the "sweetness of our existence!" Bless them!

THE MAJOR.—I should opine, that if Mrs. Pfeiffer be a woman of sense and observation, her volume would be replete with interest. Iceland is to the million very much a *terra incognita*.

THE DOCTOR.—You will not be disappointed by a perusal of the book under consideration. Bating her locomotive *furor*, Madam, I see, possesses no small modicum of mother-wit, and uses both her eyes and her brains to substantial purpose. For myself, at least I can testify that her journal has given me a more definite and distinct idea of the physical and moral features of Iceland than I previously could boast.

THE LAIRD.—Let the honest woman speak for herself, Doctor, an' it please you! Let's hear what she's got to say!

THE DOCTOR.—Here follows Mrs. Pfeiffer's description of Havenford, the first spot of Iceland upon which she placed foot:—

The wooden houses, occupied by the merchants or their factors, are of a single story, with five or six windows in front; a low flight of steps leads to an entrance, in the centre of the building, which opens into a vestibule, with two doors communicating with the rooms to the right and left. In the rear is the kitchen, and the courtyard is beyond. Such a house contains four or five rooms on the ground floor, and a few small chambers under the roof.

The arrangements are entirely European; the furniture, a great deal of which is mahogany, is all brought from Copenhagen, as well as the mirrors, and the cast-iron stoves. Handsome rugs are spread in front of the sofas, neat curtains hang before the windows; the whitewashed walls are ornamented with English engravings, and china, silver, cut-glass, &c., are displayed upon the chests or corner-tables. The rooms are scented with roses, mignonette, and pinks, and I even saw one piano-forte here. Any person who should suddenly be set down in a house like this, without having made the journey, would be sure to imagine himself in some town on the continent of Europe, and not in that distant region of poverty and barrenness, the island of Iceland. I found the habitations of the easy classes in Reikjavick, and the other places I visited in this country, exactly similar to those in Havenford. I next entered some of the huts, which I found to be decidedly more Icelandic. They are small and low, built of

lava blocks, filled in with earth, the whole sodded over with grass, and they might easily be mistaken for natural elevations in the ground, if the wooden chimneys, the low doors, and almost imperceptible windows, did not betray that they were tenanted by human beings. A dark and narrow passage, not more than four feet high, leads on one hand to the dwelling-room, and on the other to the store-room, where the provisions are kept, which is also used in winter to stable the cows and sheep. The fire place is generally at the end of this passage, which is purposely built so low in order to exclude the cold. The walls and floors of these huts are not boarded; the dwelling-rooms are barely large enough to sleep in, and perhaps to turn round; the whole furniture consists of the bedsteads, with a very scanty supply of bedding, a small table, and a few chests; the latter are used for seats as well as the beds. Poles are fastened in the walls to which clothes, shoes and stockings, and other things of that kind are suspended; and a little shelf, with a few books on it, is generally found in each hut. No stoves are needed in these crowded rooms, which are sufficiently heated by the warmth of their numerous inmates.

There are also poles in the fireplaces to hang up the wet clothing and dry the fish. The smoke often spreads itself over the room and finds its way very slowly out of the air-holes. There is no wood for fuel in the whole island. The rich import it from Norway and Denmark, and the poor burn turf, to which they often add fish-bones or fat, and a most offensive smoke proceeds from this disgusting offal.

On entering one of these hovels, it is impossible to say which is the worst, the suffocating smoke of the passage, or the stifling air of the inner room, poisoned with the perspiration and uncleanness of so many persons. I am persuaded that the horrible eruptions so common among the Icelanders, are more to be attributed to their unparalleled filthiness than to the climate or their peculiar food.

In my distant travels throughout the country, I found the huts of the peasantry every where equally dirty and miserable. Of course I do not mean to say there were no exceptions, for even here a few rich peasants can well afford to live in greater comfort, according to their means and inclinations. But to my notion, we should judge of the habits of a people by the mass, and not by the few, as many travellers are in the habit of doing; and very rare indeed were the examples of cleanliness which I saw.

Havenford is surrounded by a most beautiful and picturesque field of lava, which at first swells to a gentle eminence, then sinks again, and finally stretches in one wide plain to the neighboring hills. The different masses, black and bare, arise in the most varied shapes, to the height of ten or fifteen feet, assume the figures of walls, pillars, grottoes and excavations, over which large level pieces will often make a natural bridge; the whole formed by blocks of congealed lava, which in some places are covered to their summits with grass and moss, presenting that delusive appearance of stunted trees which I saw from the ship. The horses, sheep, and cows scramble about in these fields, industriously seeking out every small green spot; and I myself was never weary with scam-