

rise under a blazing sun at 5 a. m., break your fast and break up your camp, ride on pony-back for forty or fifty miles, and camp again in the evening under the same blazing sun, you will find it warm. That cheering luminary only goes to bed for two hours in the twenty-four in Iceland during the height of the summer, but he makes up for his dissipation by doing exactly the opposite during the winter. I found a towel rolled round my hat as necessary in Iceland as a kefiak in Syria.

On July 31, 1862, a party of travellers were meandering along the road leading to the Geysers from Thingvall. It consisted of nine persons and thirty-two ponies; half of which latter were off work, and trotting quietly along ahead enjoying the reflection that they had done their share of the day's work before noon. The rest were progressing, a few with ease, but most with difficulty, under their respective burdens. A cool evening succeeded a hot day, and when in sight of a small hill and the stony plateau in which the Geysers are formed, one of my companions and myself galloped forward, fearful of missing an eruption which might take place any moment.

It was a strange place. Imagine a tract of land of a few acres in extent totally devoid of vegetation, covered with petrified moss and twigs and siliceous *debris*: on one side to the north or north-east was a hill of volcanic structure, its rocks of every colour in the rainbow, its base one mass of variegated fragments. Far away on all sides for miles lay a beautiful grassy plain watered by rivers, and in the far distance east-ward the peak of Hecla stood out on the horizon with the faintest cloud overhanging it. On one side of the hill was a small farmer's hut, made of turf, very thick and very stuffy. The inhabitants stared stupidly at us on our arrival, and then took no further notice. We camped about one hundred yards to the west of the Great Geyser. Due north of us was another pool, boiling but not eruptive, to which we gave the name of "the kitchen," on account of the culinary purposes to which we put it.—West of us, about one hundred and fifty yards off, was the Strokr, a small eruptive spring; and still further off the Lesser Geysers. Here and there were little insignificant pools and steam vents, but none of them subject to

eruptions like the Great Geyser. I find it hard to give the dimensions of this wonderful spring from recollection, but I think the basin, which is partially smooth inside, is about twenty-five feet across from edge to edge, and in the centre is a hole about seven feet in diameter. The basin is always full of boiling water, intensely blue and transparent, except for a few hours subsequent to its sudden emptying by an eruption. When the sun begins to be less powerful towards evening, and during the nights which are sometimes quite chilly, the whole plateau where we encamped is covered with masses of steam. There is a kind of sulphurous taste and smell about it all, and the *debris* of former camps, and a few scraggy ravens hopping about and screeching, give it an unearthly appearance, something like the scene in Macbeth before the witches come on.

By nine o'clock, p. m., we had all settled down for the night, with our blankets over us and our heads on our saddles, six of us under a waggon tilt which served as a tent, covering a space about eight feet by five. After a considerable time spent in accommodating ourselves to our rather uncomfortable quarters, we managed to get to sleep, but our slumbers, however, were of short duration. Rumbling sounds under the ground and vast shocks as it were on the floor of our tent turned us all out half awake and half asleep to see the eruption. But it was always a false alarm, and in we turned again, grumbling. If this happened once that night it happened seven or eight times I verily believe, till we got so sick of going out that we said "the Geyser might go off by itself for all we cared; but turn out again till we had had a good snooze, no! we would not."

We had resolved to wait an unlimited time for an eruption, and not go away without seeing one, so it may be taken for granted that no one got up at 5 a. m., on August 1, 1862. When we did get up, we found it blazing hot, not a breath of wind blowing, and no apparent signs of an eruption. I rigged up an awning of towels and handkerchiefs, but to no purpose. I bathed in the river, but in vain, I could not get cool. The time hung heavily on our hands, so we sent our things to the wash, there being a first-rate open air laundry from the Geysers down to the river. Towards evening a breeze