

Tuesday, August 1st. In the bonder's house at Grimstunga.

**W**E did, did we! I was roused from sweet sleep by Magnússon, who came to tell me that two hours before the ground had been covered with snow, and that it was sleeting, raining and blowing: I confess I felt strongly inclined to suggest lying there till the weather changed, for it was warm under the blankets: but it might not be: there was little pasture there for the horses on the oasis there, and they had had but a sorry bite for the last two nights; so it was undoubtedly necessary to hurry on to the fertile Vatnsdale, the nearest stead of which, Grimstunga,<sup>1</sup> was seven or eight hours off: so I groaned and got up and went out into the bitterest morning, the wind NW and plenty of it and of rain; Magnússon and I made a desperate attempt at a fire, and failed of course; the guides were standing by the horses, who stood with tails turned to the wind and heads hanging down, shaking again with the cold; well, we decamped and packed, and walked up and down eating our breakfast of cold mutton bones and cold water, and chaffing each other the while to keep up our spirits, and so, after a

<sup>1</sup> Grimstunga is the homestead at which the young Gunnlaug the Wormtongue gave the first proof of his prowess. See his Saga, chap. v. E.M.

sloppy half-hour, to horse, and away into the very teeth of **The**  
it. I don't like to confess to being a milksop: but true it is **haversack**  
that it beat me: may I mention that I had a stomach-ache to  
begin with as some excuse: and for the rest, if it was bad in  
our camp, it was much worse out of it, seeing that the camp-  
ing-stead was sheltered by a low hill; as we rode now we could  
not see a rod in front of us, the rain, or hail, or sleet, for it was  
now one, now the other of these, did not fall, we could see no  
drops, but it was driven in a level sheet into our faces, so that  
one had to shut one eye altogether, and flap one's hat over  
the other. Magnússon and Evans stood it out best, working  
hard at driving the horses; Faulkner, worried by his short  
sight, and I by my milksopishness, tailed; I was fortunately  
mounted on Falki, who was very swift and surefooted, and  
so got on somehow; but I did at last in the early part of the  
day fairly go to sleep as I rode, and fall to dreaming of people  
at home: from which I was woke up by a halt, and Magnússon  
coming to me and telling me that my little haversack was  
missing: now in the said haversack I had the notes of this  
present journal; pipe, spare spectacles, drawing materials (if  
they were any use) and other things I particularly didn't want  
to lose, so I hope to be forgiven if I confess that I lost my  
temper, and threatened to kill Eyvindr, to whom I had given  
it at Búðará: he, poor fellow, answered not, but caught an  
empty horse, and set off through the storm (we had ridden  
then some three hours) to look for it, and on we went. Though  
of course I grew colder & colder, my stomach bettered some-  
what after this excitement, but the wind scarcely lulled all day;  
we went on without changing horses; rested for some five  
minutes in a little cleft where we didn't feel the storm quite  
as much: met two men and a woman coming from Grimstun-  
ga, and envied them for having their backs turned to the  
wind: I suppose the country was something like that of yes-  
terday, but of course we could see but little of it: the road was  
not bad and quite obvious, so we made good way: I stopped  
by a considerable stream to drink after we had ridden some  
hours, and felt a thrill of pride as a traveller, and a strange

Water-  
dale

sensation, as I noted and cried out that it was running north: all other streams we had seen in Iceland having had their course south or south-west. This stream we crossed twice, and a little after we came to the brow of a steep slope over which we looked into a very deep narrow valley, cleft down from the wilderness by a biggish stream and trending nearly due north. Going down the very steep slope into this valley one of the laden horses quarrelled with his crupper, and flung up his heels so lustily that we all thought he would go head over heels down the hill, and despite our discomfort, we laughed consumedly, it looked so odd. About here, when all the others were getting to their worst, I began to revive, which I am glad of, for I got an impression of a very wonderful country. We crossed the valley and the river, and slowly wound up the other side, and so followed it towards Waterdale; the country we were riding over was high upland-looking ground with no indication of this terrible gorge till one was quite on the edge of it; it grew very narrow as we went on, and the cliffs very steep and not less than six hundred feet high, I should think; the bottom of it was filled but for a few narrow grassy slopes going down from the cliffs, with a deep green river: huge buttresses ran into it here and there nearly stopping it at times, and making a place that could seldom see the sun: this is the next dale to Forsæludalr, Shady-dale, of the Gretla, and they say is just like it, so there you have no unworthy background to Glám the Thrall and his hauntings. As we rode on we had to cross a narrow ravine going down at right angles into the main gorge, with a stream thundering down it; we rode round the very verge of it amidst a cloud of spray from the waterfall, and a most dreadful place it looked down there where the two waters met: so on for about half an hour, till at last the narrow gorge widened into the head of Water-dale, that looked all green and fertile to us after the waste, its slopes going up on every side to the long wall of mountain that hedged it in: it was all full of mist and drifting rain, and the wind blew up from it like knives: but down below we could see the handsome stead of Grims-

tunga lying in its ample tún, and a new-built wooden church beside it, and a sweet sight it was to us: we rode swiftly down to the stead, and soon had three or four men about and were bidden in; and as we sat quite out of the wind and rain in the clean parlour, drinking coffee and brandy, and began to feel that we had feet and hands again, I felt such happiness as I suppose I shan't feel again till I ride from Búðará to Grims-tunga under similar circumstances. I should think we sat for about an hour thawing ourselves in our wet clothes, and talking to the bonder, a jolly-looking *fat* old man, his son Thorstein, a bright good-tempered young one, and Dr Skaptason, who is to be our next host, and lives further down the valley at Hnausar: then we unpacked the boxes and dried ourselves and were, O so comfortable and were shown to two little rooms, handy enough for our needs, and with real beds in them: then, going out, I found Eyvindr just come back with my bag which he had duly found at the camp: I shook hands and thanked him with effusion and hope he will forget my threat of this morning: then the goodman gives us supper of Icelandic matters and we all got to bed in comfort: I wondering, I must allow, whether we should all be cripples with rheumatism for the rest of our lives.

Grims-  
tunga