Thursday, July 13th. On board-ship "Diana" off the coast of Rangárvala-sýsla, Iceland.

I have seen Iceland at last: I awoke from a dream of the Grange; which by the way was like some house at Queen’s Gate, to glare furiously at Magnússon who was clutching my arm and saying something, which as my senses gathered I found out to be an invitation to come up on deck, as we were close off Pápey; which is an island inhabited by the Culdee monks before the Norse colonization began, and is at the south-east corner of Iceland. It was about 3 a.m. when I went up on deck for that great excitement, the first sight of a new land. The morning was grey still, and cloudy out to sea, but though the sun had not yet shone over the mountains on the east into the firth at whose mouth we were, yet patches of it lay upon the high peaks south-west of where we were: on our left was a dark brown ragged rocky island, Pápey, and many small skerries about it, and beyond that we saw the mainland, a terrible shore indeed: a great mass of dark grey mountains worked into pyramids and shelves, looking as if they had been built and half-ruined; they were striped with snow high up, and wreaths of cloud dragged across them here and there, and above them were two peaks and a jagged ridge of pure white snow: we were far enough presently to look into Berufirth, and to see the great pyramid of Búlandstindr which stands a little way down the west side of the firth close by the sea. The sea was perfectly calm, and was clear of mist right up to the shore, and then dense clouds hid the low shore, but rose no higher than the mountains’ feet: and as I looked the sun overtopped the east hills and the great pyramid grew red halfway down, and the lower clouds began to clear away: the east side of the firth which was clearer of them showed the regular Icelandic hillside: a great slip of black shale and sand, striped with the green of the pastures, that gradually sloped into a wide grass-grown flat between hill and sea, on which

Not "a little way down," because Búlandstindr stands out at the very extremity of the western side of Berufirth. E.M.
East firths of Iceland we could see the home-meads of several steads: we rounded a low ragged headland presently and were in the firth and off a narrow bight, at the end of which was the trading-station of Djúpivogur (Deepbay): half a dozen wooden roofs, a flag-staff and two schooners lying at anchor. There we waited while the boat was lowered, pulled ashore with the passengers, and came back again; during which the clouds on the west side cleared off the low shore and we could see a line of rocks and skerries cut from the shore, low green slopes behind them, and then the mountain feet; looking up the firth, which was all sunlighted now, the great peaks lowered till they seemed to run into the same black, green-striped hillsides as on the east side; as we turned to leave the firth, where we only stayed about half an hour, the clouds were coming up from the sea, and all out that way was very black but the sun yet shone over our heads; we were soon out of the firth again, and going with a fair wind along the coast, about ten miles from it at first: the sky darkened overhead, but there was a streak of blue sky over the land, and the sun was bright on the desolate-looking heap of strangely shaped mountains. There is really a large tract of country between the sea and these, but being quite flat you cannot see it, and the mountains look as if they rose straight out of the sea: they are all dark grey, turning into indigo in the distance under the half cloudy sky; but here and there the top of a conical peak will be burned red with the fire, or a snow-covered peak will rise up: at last we see the first of the great glaciers that looks as if it were running into the sea, and soon there is nothing but black peaks sticking up out of the glacier-sea: this is the sides of the Vatna-Jökul, an ice-tract as big as Yorkshire; beyond this again we come to a great conical mass of black rock and ice which is the Óræfa Jökul, the highest mountain in Iceland: the only way I had any idea of its size was from the fact of our being so long off it without its seeming to change in shape at all: on the western flank of it Magnusson pointed out to me a small river-like glacier, and then a grey peak in front of it: the grey peak is Swine-
fell, under which dwelt Flosi the Burner; a little further west a jagged ridge marks the whereabouts of Hall of the Side: a most dreary region all this seems, but the pastures of course and whatever might soften it are all hidden from this distance: a most dreary place, yet it was hereabouts that the first settler came, for on ahead there lies now a low shelf of rock between Jokul and sea, and that is Ingolf's Head, where Ingolf first sat down in the autumn of 874.¹

The wind got up and the sky got overcast as we were rounding the Oræfa, and soon it begins to rain (a little before noon) and the wind still freshening, the sea is soon running very high, the wind however is right astern and the ship making very good way and so we don't feel it much: moreover the east wind is not a cold one in Iceland, and I have felt colder on the Channel on a July night: the worst of it was what between the drift and the rain, and that we are now keeping further from shore, we almost or quite lose sight of land for a long time,² till near 9 p.m. when we are off Portland, which is a pierced rock a little way from the shore which a ship can sail under: this we cannot see now for the mist, but the rain leaves off now and the clouds lift, and there is a wonderful fiery and green sunset, so stormy-looking! over Eyjafell, the great ice-topped mountain which is at the eastern end of the Njala country. It is long before we can see the colour of the glacier on it because of the mist suffused with sunlight that is cast over everything, but at last about ten o'clock the sun draws behind the mountains, leaving them cold and grey against a long strip of orange that does not change any more till the dawn.

Now we see the Westman Islands a long way ahead: they lie just opposite to Njal's house at Berghorsknoll: as they get nearer we can see them like the broken-down walls of castles in the sea: it is about one o'clock when we come up

¹ 870 was the date of Ingolf's landing. He settled down at Reykjavik 874. E.M.
² MS. reads "not till near 9 p.m." Ed.
Westman Isles alongside of the only inhabited one of them (four hundred people live there); we lie-to off the trading-station where there is a pretty good haven; the wall-like rocks run into green slopes about here, which end in an old crater at the south-west corner of the island. We fire a signal gun here, and wait to see if they will send a boat for their mail (five letters & Magnússon's Lilja), but having no answer we steam round to a bay on the other side of the island where there is less sea, and lie-to there, rolling prodigiously: and there after long looking through glasses we see their signal flag run up, and presently make out their boat coming: it was all over in a moment when they did come; hardly a dozen words between them, and then back they went, poor fellows! in their walnut-shell of a boat, seven men, five letters and Lilja. We had a long look at their rocks while we were waiting: they were not unlike the rocks as we left the Faroes, but not so high, and were full of caves that had each a little grey strand before them. Then we hoisted sail again, turned west, and were off and I went to bed, thoroughly tired with the long dreamlike day: but before I left the bridge I looked north and saw a crimson spot spreading over the orange in the sky, and that was the dawn.