

sites for building. At 2 miles below the boat these fine ridges lie close to the river, and about 2 miles below the lagoons there is a range at least 200 feet high, which, from the information I gathered from the settlers, extends to the Norman, about 15 miles.

I cannot conclude without again expressing my firm belief—strengthened by the experience I have lately gained—that Carpentaria country must become a territory of the greatest importance, owing to the vast extent of fine available country which has proved itself singularly well adapted for sheep and cattle.

3. *Great Volcanic Eruption in Iceland, in August, 1867.* Extract of a Letter from Dr. HJALTELM to J. W. EVANS, Esq.

(Communicated by Sir R. I. MURCHISON, Bart., President.)

AT the end of August a most remarkable volcanic eruption took place in our island. Its story runs shortly thus :—

On the 29th of August, by somewhat misty weather, but tolerably hot, the temperature being about 13° of Celsius (55° 40' Fahr.), a tremendous sulphureous odour was found all over our little town. The barometer was about 29·4, and very little wind blew from the s.e. I immediately supposed that an eruption might be going on in the east volcanoes; and the next day showed that my prediction was quite right. In the evening heavy shots were heard beneath the mountain Esja, and a rolling, like thunder, was heard underground. On the 30th August, by clear weather, and a small breeze from the s.e., the same odour was felt all over the southern part of our country, and in the evening, at about 7 o'clock, a heavy fire was seen in s.e. to e. direction from hence. It was a white blue flame, like burning sulphur, and this lasted all night, and could be seen more than 100 miles out at sea. Lightning and rolling thunder were also heard in all our mountainous regions, but no earthquake was felt, neither here in Reykjarvik nor in the mountainous regions, so far as we know. At the same time as the eruption, with its tremendous flame, was seen here in our town, it was also seen in the northern part of our island; and seen from Myvatn it was directly in a south direction. A merchant vessel sailing at that time south of Portland saw the eruption in a north direction; and in the South Skaptafells Sysla grey white ashes fell on the grass. This remarkable eruption lasted only for three days, viz., the 29th, 30th, and 31st of August, but after that time only a whitish-grey cloud was seen in the same direction.

In the beginning we were here at a loss to find out the exact place of this tremendous but very curious eruption. Seen from hence it might be very near Stekla or Kandakampa, an old volcano which in former days, in 1449, poured out a very destructive lava-field; but it was by travellers soon found out that it could be in neither of those places. Now all people from the east part of this country agree in the opinion that this eruption must have been on the north side of Skaptár Jókull, and the same opinion is held by people coming from the north.

To tell the truth, this volcanic eruption was one of the most curious ones we have heard of. Its sudden appearance, without any earthquake, its enormous flames, which overlooked all the high mountains, its accompanying strong sulphureous odour, which was perceived, as far as we know, all over the island, make it one of the most extraordinary volcanic phenomena I have heard of. I was only able to collect some few grains of the small quantity of ashes which fell on the ground, and found it consisting of a little pumice-dust

and pure sulphur. Go and tell the excellent Sir Roderick Murchison about it, and I will, with great pleasure, give him the best description I can.

I must tell you another remarkable circumstance which I have observed this year; it is a considerable elevation in the temperature of the sea, and a great force in the Gulf Stream. The captain of the yacht *Marquis of Bute* told me that the Gulf current was running with unusual speed, and the same has been observed by our fishermen. The waters have, on account of this, during the spring tide, been extraordinarily high. It is most likely also due to this that we have this autumn enjoyed a very high temperature, for the most part between 8° (46° $4'$ Fahr.) and 12° (53° $6'$ Fahr.) of Celsius, and have as yet very little or no snow at the tops of our southern mountains.
