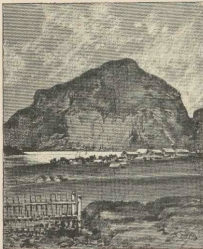


lands, is slowly, very slowly, but surely, rising from out the azure main. One of these caves was the lair of a certain Hrútr, a famous semi-viking, semi-troll, whose slaves disposed of him as Hjörleif's did of their lord. The upper cavern is draped with ferns. A few occurred at Hafrafell and Núpstathr, but they are not too frequent here. Beyond are several pretty fosses. One of these, the Drifanti, much more like the Staubbach than is the Skógar, which has somewhat thoughtlessly been compared with the Swiss fall, hangs down a cliff several hundred feet in height, the drifting plaything of the winds. It acts as a barometer to the boatmen of the



HEIMAËY AND HEIMAKLETTE.

another 'Ireland's Eye,' or Isle. Heimaey, the largest, has a little town of some five or six hundred inhabitants, fishermen and fowlers. The Fulmar petrels and the puffins are the mainstay of the islanders; the eggs and flesh are eaten, although the smell is almost unendurable, and permeates the eater and his home; the part uneaten is used to cook the rest, for the dried bodies of the oily birds eke out the scanty stock of fuel. Travellers used to say that not a single child born here survived for many weeks, but hospitals have now been built, and purer air and better food have brought a welcome change.

Before us now opens out the delta of the Markarfljót, or Marches flood,

Vestmannaeyjar, who cross to the mainland readily enough if the pendent foss be fairly steady, but hesitate when they see it driven in spray before the blast. A little further is the Seljalands, a double fall of greater bulk, behind which one may creep; and I heard of yet another, the Gljufrafoss, which is said to fall at once over three sides of some secluded cleft. To the left lies a partly upheaved mountain mass, whose summits peep out of the ocean, like a group of inquisitive mermaids. Storm-lashed and cloud-capped, shoreless and lonely are most of them, but dotting the cliffs are myriads and myriads of sea-birds. Known, for short, as the 'Westmans,' one especially reminds us of homelands, for surely 'Erlendsey' must be but