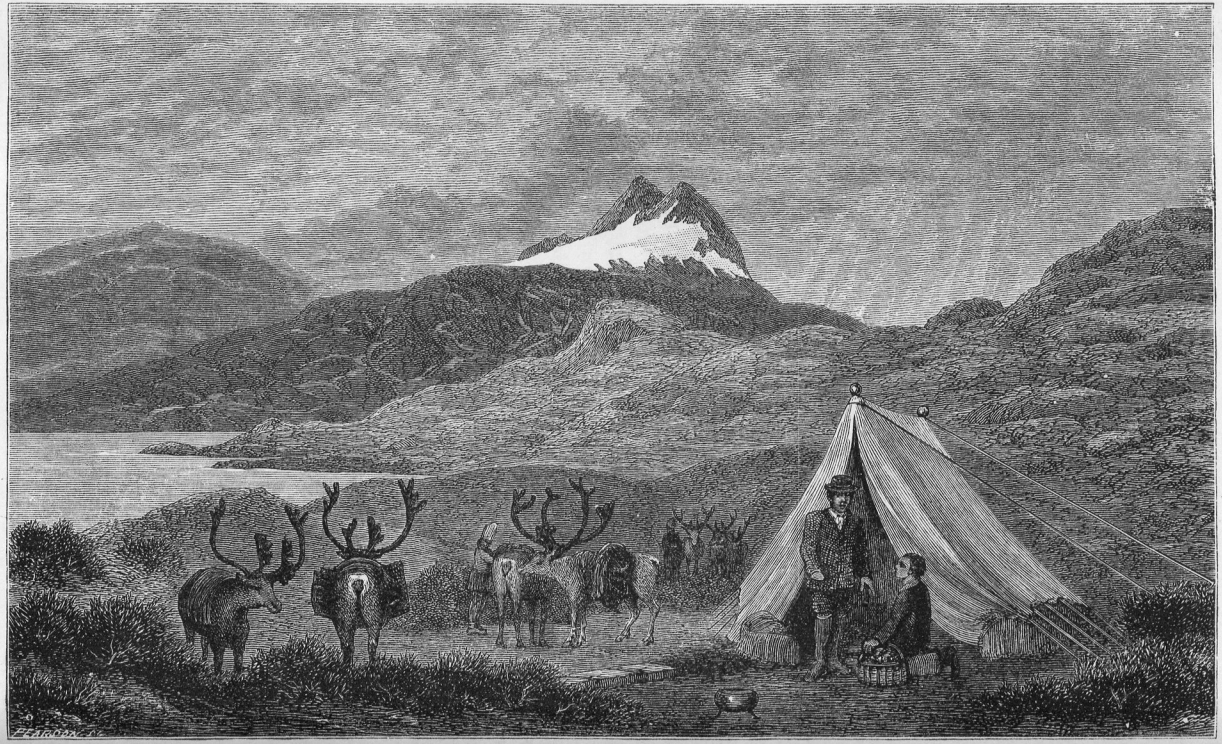

CAMP BY THE PIESKA JAUR.

THE

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ACROSS LAPLAND. By W. E. HALL. Read before the Alpine Club, March 2, 1875.

ONE morning in August 1873 I was landed at a bit of beach on the Skjerstad Fjord from the little steamer which plies once a-week between Bodö and Salidalen.*

My tolk, Charles, went to some distant houses for a boat and men to carry me further, and I sat down to wait with my baggage and my dog. It was the first time that Sailor, as the latter personage is called, had ever been out of England, and besides being very much puzzled with the bigness of the world, I am sorry to say he had from time to time told me with much frankness that he did not care for foreign travel. He had run very many miles, he had seen none of the sport which had been promised to him, and he had discovered by sad personal experience that one English dog is not always better than three foreign dogs in a rough and tumble. Sailor clearly did not like the look of things that morning, so, after carefully sniffing the tent and the provision boxes for a few minutes, he came up to me, laid his nose on my knee, looked wistfully in my face, gave a deprecatory wag of his tail, and said, in a language which I declare I understand to perfection, 'Tell me candidly, have you any idea why we are here, and where we are going?' So I answered, 'My dear dog, you know as well as I do why we are here. Have I not promised you glorious days with Lappish ducks; have I not even said that if you behave very well and range very close, you may sweep the Fjelds for ryper with me? We are here to tap a new sporting country, where birds lie as thick as lemmings in a lemming year, and where the sound of a gun has never been

* In any good atlas Bodö will be found. It lies on the west coast of Norway, nearly opposite and on a level with the head of the Gulf of Bothnia.

heard. But as to where we are going, that is quite another matter; if you had only understood Norwegian, you would have found out that you know as much as I do.' The fact is that on the beach in the Skjerstad Fjord I was more vague in my notion as to how to get into Sweden than I was when I left England. At Throndhjem everyone swore that there was a char road across the mountains, and steamers on the lakes beyond; at Bodö, that it was impossible to get across at all, that there was neither track, nor man, nor beast to carry luggage. An ex-inspector of forests of the very neighbourhood said that the lucky possessor of three horses lived at the upper end of Salidalen, and that from his house I could go across country in any direction; and, finally, an actual inspector of forests told me that two of the three horses were dead, and that alive or dead they would be equally useful for my purpose, for that no horse can travel on the Fjelds. He had given me a letter addressed to Johannesen of Stormoen, the one man in the whole country side who had relations with the Lapps. If anyone could, he would be able to pass me over; but there are not many Lapps who frequent the Norwegian frontier, the few that might be about were most likely already on the move from their high summer quarters near Sulitelma, and it might be hard to get at them. In the multitude of counsellors there may perhaps be wisdom, but in the multitude of informants there is nothing but doubt.

It was a pleasant row of four hours up two lakes, the Nedre and Ovre Vande, which wound rather like broad rivers than lakes between high hills, deeply cut with ravines, through which higher mountains showed their crests. The scenery, without wanting strength, was brighter and more gentle than is usual in Norway. The slopes were densely clothed with birch woods, but bare masses of rock broke freely through, and here and there slabby cliffs jutted out in bold headlands, and plunged three and four hundred feet sheer into the water. Late in the evening I reached Stormoen, the firman of the great official was read with reverence, the family moved into the hay chalet, a heap of fresh sheepskins was spread on the floor, and I was left in the softest and oiliest of beds to pleasant dreams of an unending train of Lapps, whose number was perhaps suggested to me by the force of the odours with which I was surrounded. The morning, alas, brought its usual correction to enthusiastic dreams. A stationary Lapp was caught and brought in during the day, whose nomade brother-in-law was supposed to be within reach. The latter was accordingly sent for, but it took two days to find him, and when he in turn was brought in, it

appeared that his deer were still loose on the hills, and that he could not promise that they should be at the starting place, some fifteen miles further on, for another four days; finally, he was a man of religion, this Lapp, and for no earthly inducement would he peril his soul by travelling, or by laying a burden on his equivalent of an ox or an ass, on Sunday; so that I found myself condemned to eight days of profitless waiting. It is unpleasant to be stopped on the road to doing a definite thing which one has set before oneself, and I should, no doubt, have been bored in any case by my arrest at Stormoen; but Stormoen is a place which cultivates the art of boring to a high degree. I tried the river, but my daintiest flies failed to move a single fish, and my temper was not improved by the useful but ignominious success of Johannesen's son, who bobbed with worms in a fat stagnant pool; of ryper it seemed that there were none, and a ramble to the top of the most promising neighbouring hill on the only day which was not drowned in incessant rain revealed, with glimpses of a grand Fjeld region further on, a flat snow plateau entirely destitute of interest, as the most attractive neighbouring object. I settled to move therefore; and yet I was sorry to leave Stormoen and its kindly and simple folk. I never met with scrupulous honesty and quiet dignity enshrined in a handsomer face and frame than distinguished Johannesen himself. The sons and daughter were amusing in their quaint wonder at every civilised proceeding; but they had their father's character in them, and if they stood in a circle attentively watching me at meal time, or if the daughter, seeing me through the window in the act of putting on my stockings, rushed in with undisguised delight and examined my legs as she might those of a new and somewhat peculiar animal, still they none of them became ridiculous. If I cared to live in a state of nature—in other words, in dirt, in darkness, and in an atmosphere accumulated and thickened by successive generations, I could wish for no better companions than the Johannesens of Stormoen.

Stören's house upon the Lang Vand is the last habitation on the Norwegian side. It was there that I was to meet the Lapps and their reindeer, and thither therefore I next went. At first the track rose and fell along a sort of ledge on the side of a birch-sprinkled valley, the river cutting its way through a gorge below, the mountains rising barely into bluffs on either side, and the snows of Sulitelma glistening in front. At the end of five or six miles it abruptly stopped at the foot of a cliff on the edge of the river, whence a boat was some-

times rowed, but more often, from the force of the stream, had to be towed by men wading or scrambling over the rocks, into the Lang Vand, the broad waters of which, mirroring thick forests and hills three thousand feet high, burst suddenly upon my view with exceeding loveliness. My row of ten miles was enlivened by trailing for trout, and though we of course went much too fast for serious fishing, I caught several about 4 lbs. weight, and I have no doubt that if the Lang Vand were properly fished, very good sport of its kind might be got in it. As I have mentioned sport, let me finish with it at once so far as the Norwegian side is concerned. Trout, as I have said, are in the river and the lakes; but salmon cannot run up higher than the Ovre Vand, and there is not enough fishing water to make it worth while to try for them; there seem to be very few ducks on the lakes, and when I was in the country there were none; the extent of ryper ground is not great, and on the best of which Stören could tell me I only saw two coveys of ryper and two of ptarmigan in the course of a long and hard day.

The days of my sojourn at Stören's house were again days of impatience. It did not rain much, but Sulitelma, which was close at hand, was masked almost to its foot in driving clouds. It was useless to think of exploring it, and it was easy to get tired of wandering over glacier ground rock and birch scrub, when the distant views were hidden and the scrub was empty of birds. My impatience was the more intense that the days I had lost were very precious to me. I was tied by a definite engagement in Norway, and already most of the time which I had hoped to devote to Sulitelma had slipped from my grasp, and I had to choose between an entire sacrifice either of the mountains or of the shooting which I expected in Lapland.

At last the happy Monday arrived. On Saturday evening two weazened little devils had dropped out of the mists, clad in indigo blue coats and green waistcoats, their legs swaddled in deer skin straps, and their heads crowned with strange blue caps, in shape like nothing in the world but an Orissan temple, and so vast in size that they almost brought their wearers up to the shoulders of an ordinary man. One of these small people was my conscientious friend, a person of weight among the Lapps, of nobility so great that he was obliged to forego the national luxury of theft, the owner of several thousand deer, the possessor of dollars in bags, the greatest millionaire of his race. He really was a very decent little man, but ludicrously swollen with a sense of his own importance, and sadly exacting towards his friend and brother-in-law, who

cringed to the great Hansen with all the humble arts of a civilised snob. With them came eight reindeer, linked with ropes of their brothers' skins; and from early dawn on Monday morning the work was begun of adjusting my luggage on the backs of the animals. This was no easy matter. For though Olaus Magnus describes reindeer as being 'bestia tricornis de genere cervorum, sed longe procerior, robustior, ac velocior;' and in some old editions of his history there is a woodcut of a man riding upon a horned monster fully fourteen hands high, and with 'cornua velut quercinarum arborum ramos,' the actual reindeer of Lapland is both small and weak, unable to carry even a Lapp upon his back. Yet the description and the drawing in Olaus do not seem to have been founded on a myth, for, according to Colonel Yule, the Tunguses in Siberia mount reindeer to the present day; and he quotes a modern traveller who himself rode them for a long distance in going to Okhotsk, and who mentions that the Siberian deer are larger and finer animals than those of Lapland. The latter cannot well carry more than from 35 to 40 lbs., and even with this light weight they need a long rest in the middle of the day. To travel with much or with heavy luggage in Lapland is therefore a matter of serious difficulty. My tent, for example, was so inconveniently heavy that although the poles were carried separately, it had always to be shifted to a fresh animal at the mid-day halt. The Lapps say that the deer cannot carry weights on their backs. Whether this be the case or not, it is the Lapp custom to sling all burdens in bags of skins or in birch-bark baskets from a pair of crossed sticks which are fixed on the top of a sheep-skin pad girthed upon the animal. Of course it would be useless to attempt to persuade a semi-savage to alter his traditional habits; and of course, therefore, as my baggage was not divided into accurately balanced parcels of equal weight, it was necessary to redistribute it. In the bad weather which dogged my journey, neither provisions, nor ammunition, nor clothes were much the better for an exposure in birch baskets to which the pots and pans, which constitute the major part of a Lapp's household goods, are perfectly indifferent. Let me therefore recommend anyone who may intend to make a journey with reindeer to provide himself with a sufficiency of light and strong waterproof bags, to render him independent both of birch baskets which let all wet through, and of skin bags which are sure to be dirty, and which become very unsavoury in rain.

In starting from Stören's house there is not much choice of route. A considerable stream, fresh from a cataract, dashes

into the lake within a couple of hundred yards on one side; and half a mile off on the other a second strong torrent brings down the waters of the Lommi Jaur in a series of falls and rapids. When therefore the baggage was at last packed we mounted the sharp ascent of the Fjeld straight behind the house, and then crossing its brow took our own line along the banks of the Lommi Jaur. A more dreary country it would be impossible to imagine. No life of bird or plant, nothing but bare slabs of glacier-rounded rock, the spaces between which were filled with stones and snow; a cold grey lake, the waters of which were crisped with a biting wind; and, beyond, more slopes of utter barrenness, wreathed in driving mists, from which snow fields and peaks half showed themselves from time to time. For there was Sulitelma, 'the mountain of the festival,' the sacred mountain of the Lapps, to which they yearly came on a stated day, before their conversion to Christianity, to make propitiatory offerings to its spirit. Its western peak, rising out of glaciers to a height of about 3,250 feet above the Lommi Jaur, must be a fine object from the opposite side of the lake, the face of which it almost overhangs, but I caught only a single glimpse of its crest, and of the nature and aspect of the mountain on this side as on all others I can only form a guess from very insufficient observation. Later in the day we forded a short stream which connects the two limbs of the Lommi Jaur, and, mounting the Lairo Fjäll beyond, I suddenly found myself close to a vast glacier, which stretched in a great semicircle before me, and, dipping to the east, ended, as I afterwards found, at a height of about 2,300 feet above the sea. Both on its eastern and western sides the high plateau, out of which the actual peaks of Sulitelma rise, is clothed with large glaciers, but the Salo Jegna, as that towards the south-east is called, is much the most important of them all. It is probably from six to seven miles long, and from two to three miles broad. The western, north-western, and eastern peaks of Sulitelma appear to surround its upper basin, and perhaps it may also be touched by the remaining or northern summit. According to Hahr's map, the highest of these reaches 6,276 English feet, and perhaps this measurement may give the results of the late ordnance survey; but the only measurement which, so far as I am aware, were made before the Swedish survey was effected were those of Herr Wahlenberg in 1807, and these give about 5,510, 5,610, 5,900, and 5,880 feet respectively for the different peaks in the order in which I have mentioned them. Herr Wahlenberg spent the whole summer in making observations, mainly on temperature and vegetation,

in the neighbourhood of Sulitelma, and the heights given by him are the mean of the results of various triangulations based on barometrical determinations of the lower levels. He succeeded in reaching the top of the southernmost peak, which appears to be slightly lower than the western summit, and does not seem to have encountered any serious difficulties, but he says nothing from which it can be inferred whether the remaining summits are of like character and equal ease.

While I was on the Lairo Fjäll the mists kept high enough to afford me a fitful view of the base of crags surrounding the Salo Jegna, but as we dropped towards its foot the clouds descended with us, and I was only able in nearing the end of the glacier to see along it for about half a mile. Judging from so much as I did see, and from the dim view of the whole which I had from the Lairo Fjäll, I should think that it would be absolutely free from difficulty through its whole length.

We had intended to ford the river—the Lairojokk—which issues from the glacier, and to camp for the night on the far side; but it was found to be so much swollen that the Lapps declared it to be dangerous to attempt to cross, and we turned down stream towards the Pieska Jaur, a large lake into which the river flows a few miles below. On its banks there is a patch of ground covered with dwarf willow—salix lanata, I believe,—which, except another patch not far of, where we originally intended to camp, is the only place for two days' march where woody plants, or indeed any plants bigger than small rushes, can be found. The willow forms a scrub about two feet high.

That night the wind howled and the clouds lowered, but rain fortunately still held off, and the cold was sharp enough to lessen somewhat the volume of the river. It remained, however, disagreeably high, and as the reindeer could not swim over laden, and the stream was too strong to allow a man to cross alone, the time and labour which was required to pass over the baggage was excessive. It was all unpacked, and taken over in small lots by strings of three men, the middle one carrying, the other two, who were tied to him, steadying him, and keeping themselves firm with the tent poles. Finally, the deer were swum over, helped with long straps to which they were tied. The passage took three hours in all, and the coldness of the water made it eminently unpleasant; but nobody was carried away except Sailor, who, though a very strong swimmer, could not make shore till he had been borne into slacker water near the lake.

Hardly was the crossing finished when rain began to fall,

and for the rest of the day all distant views, and very often everything more than a few yards away, was blotted from the sight. A long marshy flat, a stony valley with some grass in it, the passage of another river, the Voddevijokk, neither deep nor rapid, a wearisome ascent over shale mixed with snow and ice to a col about 3,800 feet high, under tremendous precipices which form the southern sides of Kjabbok and the Fiero Fjäll, and finally a descent towards the valley of the Tarrejokk, filled up the remainder of the day. We had pushed on as fast as the loitering pace of the deer would allow, in order, if possible, to get out of a long marshy valley before dark. But in spite of our best efforts the moment came first when further progress was barred by the darkness. A knob of ground was chosen where some rock came near to the surface; it was difficult to fix the tent securely, but at least the soil, though soaked, was better than the mixture of reeds and water into which one stepped on every side within a few yards. There was no scrub, and therefore no fire; nor indeed could a fire have been lit or kept alive in the pouring rain. Perhaps a Sybarite might have thought that things were not strictly comfortable; and the softness of our slimy bed was at any rate not luxury enough to make us disregard the probability that the Tarrejokk might be too swollen to be forded. Camp was struck early, and the unwilling deer were urged at their fastest pace down the valley, which rapidly changed its character, and, ceasing to be a swamp, plunged in steep scrub-covered slopes into the larger valley of the Tarrejokk. The river, though rising rapidly, was not yet impassable, and on the further side a heaven-provided cave afforded us the opportunity of a fire. If there had been an immediate prospect of better weather it would have been tempting to have remained in shelter till it came, and then to have reached Qvickjock by the snowy Niutov and Belloviti Fjälls, exploring them on the way; but the long delay at Stormoen and the Lang Vand had told seriously on the provisions, they had now almost given out, and the Lapps thought that the rain was more likely than not to last, so I determined to push on by the shortest route to Qvickjock.

The whole of that day's march lay through birch forests of exquisite beauty. Secular trees, gnarled and huge for their kind, grew out of an undergrowth of the larger willow herb, already turned to its autumn crimson, which joined with the rotten branches of departed birches and moss-covered boulders to form the floor of the woods. But beauty may be dissociated from convenience, as modern upholsterers are intent upon teaching us, and there were times in which one's patience was sorely tried, when six out of the eight deer were entangled in

the branches, or when for the third time in an hour a halt was called to replace a burden and mend the broken straps. A march of fourteen hours brought us at dusk to a spot only four hours distant from Qvickjock, which I consequently reached early on the following day. A place which has a church and a station, and which has received the tourist's consecration of mention in Murray, can stand in no need of my humbler pen. Here, then, I shall stop with a word of warning as to sport, and a word of suggestion to anyone who may be inclined to explore—under happier conditions of weather I trust—the glaciers of Sulitelma and its neighbouring Fjelds.

Some recent books, upon which I believe Murray relies, represent Lapland as a sportsman's paradise. Ever, during the eighty or ninety miles of boat-journey from Jockmock to Qvickjock, is his gun to be ready in hand for the swarms of duck which cumber the lakes; at the latter place he need only stroll up hill for an hour to reach a Fjeld in which he ought to 'secure fifty ptarmigan and willow-grouse (Hjerpe) to his own gun in the day;' 'strange birds abound,' and 'the lakes and rivers teem with fish of large size.' For myself I will only say that I saw exactly eighteen ducks in the hundred and forty miles or so between Qvickjock and the sea, and that on the Fjäll where I ought to have shot fifty head I *saw* only eleven of all sorts. But better evidence than my short experience can provide, of the strange exaggerations which have found currency as to the sporting merits of the Lule Lappmark, is offered by that of an old and excellent sportsman, with whom I foregathered on my way down to Luleå. He had spent six weeks at and near Qvickjock; he had not only thoroughly tried the Fjälls close to it, but had camped at several places a few miles off, so as to search all the best-looking country in the neighbourhood. He had nowhere found a fair head of birds; and when, after he had gained a full local knowledge, three Englishmen came up to Qvickjock, the maximum bag made by the four, on the best grounds which he had discovered, amounted to eighteen brace; this bag, moreover, could not, he thought, be repeated. They were all good or fair shots and accounted sooner or later for most of the birds that they saw. He had also seen very few duck, and as the lakes are entirely free from rushes and marshy edges, it was extremely difficult to get near those which he had seen.

The existence of good fishing is less mythical. Salmon run up far beyond the falls of Jockmock, by which they are supposed to be stopped; and my acquaintance whom I have already mentioned caught 260 lbs. in two days at Parkijaur, in a reach of water not more than three to four hundred yards

long, the fish running from eight to twelve lbs. It was poor sport, however. The salmon would take nothing but small fish, trailed with spinning tackle. At Edefors, where the river first becomes fishable, they will take the spoon, but to judge from our indifferent success during a run of fish, which yielded a very fair number of captures to the permanent traps erected in the rapids, the salmon are somewhat careless of it or of the phantom, and the fly they absolutely reject. Large grayling are, however, plentiful; and a few miles above Qvickjock the Tarrejokk contains char which run up to eight pounds in weight, and afford excellent sport. Large bursting, a fish which I have not seen, but which I believe to be a sort of lake trout, are also plentiful in the Tarre Jaur. The wilder Fjelds, which I crossed in coming from Norway, are absolutely destitute of game; and it is worth while to remember that according to Herr Wahlenberg, char, which inhabit the lakes and streams up to a level five or six hundred feet higher than that attained by any other fish, cease to be found at an elevation of about 2,300 feet.

I think I have said enough to show that though it is worth while to take one's rod and perhaps one's gun to Lapland, it is not worth while to go there for the simple purpose of shooting and fishing. But I think, too, that a few weeks might be spent very pleasantly in exploring the glaciers which exist, not only on Sulitelma itself, but on a wide extent of high land in its neighbourhood. Partly from what I saw and heard, and partly from the work of Herr Wahlenberg, which I regret to have only lately become acquainted with, I would venture to suggest the following itinerary. Starting from the head of Sörfolden, a Fjord lying immediately to the north of Bodö, and accessible by a weekly steamer, the glacier plateau of Tulpajegna should be passed to the Virih Jaur, which would be skirted to its southern point, where a river drains into it from the northern side of Sulitelma, and from the apparently large glaciers of Almajalosjegna, a mountain about 5,550 feet in height. When these glaciers had been explored, the Fjelds which separate the waters falling into the Virih Jaur from those which feed the Pieska Jaur might be skirted on their northern side, and Qvickjock be reached by the Belloviti Fjälls and the valley of the Kamajokk. As soon as Qvickjock is passed the scenery becomes monotonous and uninteresting, the hills sink, and endless lakes spread between flat pine-clad shores; the best fishing also and the best shooting, such as it is, lie around Qvickjock; it would, therefore, be useless to go further in the direction of civilisation. The return journey might be made

along the track which I followed, and Sulitelma be ascended from my camping-place on the Pieska Jaur.

One final word of caution let me still give. Do not go too early in the year; for 'summer comes slowly up that way.' On July 12, Herr Wahlenberg found the Lommi Jaur still frozen over with its winter's ice, and clothed besides with snow an ell in depth. The climate is much less severe on the eastern than on the western side, and the different zones of vegetation climb as a rule a thousand feet higher in Lapland than in Norway. But the country from which the larger glaciers would be explored is fairly represented by the bleak shores of the lifeless lake which reflects the snows of Sulitelma.

Ascent of Myrdals Jökull. By W. L. Watts.

ONE of the principal parts of my programme during my visit to Iceland this year was the investigation of Myrdals Jökull and its crater Kötlugia.

Myrdals Jökull, with Godalands, Merker, and Eyjafjalla Jökulls, comprise the chief southern mountain section of Iceland. They are, doubtless, all of volcanic origin, although the greater part of the evidence of the force which called them into being is buried beneath a deep covering of ice and snow. With one exception, the only crater of this mountain series that has been in eruption during historical times is the huge lateral crater of Myrdals Jökull, viz., Kötlugia. This volcano has been in eruption fifteen times since the year 900. It is, as Mr. Poulet Scroope says, 'a baranco crater of extraordinary dimensions.'

This volcano has devastated the whole tract of land known as Myrdalssandr; it is essentially paroxysmal, and Kötlugia is but a breached lateral crater of Myrdals Jökull, the breach being first formed, in all probability, during 'the eruption of Myrdals Jökull in 1580, when the mountain is reported to have been rent asunder.' Its last outburst was in 1860.

One great peculiarity in connection with this volcano is that it has never been known to emit lava, all the known eruptions producing but large floods of scalding water and sand, while from mountains in close proximity have flowed some of the largest lava streams in the known world.

Upon the adjacent hills, however, I found traces of ancient lava flows, and upon the glacier itself many fragments of lava; thus proving conclusively that these mountains must at one time have been no exception to other volcanoes around