

A canopy of ashy cloud darkened over the island for a whole twelvemonth, and eruptions of ashes, pumice, and lava destroyed thousands of acres of fertile pasturage. The showers were carried as far as the Shetlands and the Orkneys: impalpable volcanic dust even contaminated the atmosphere of England and Holland.

The damage inflicted upon Iceland was terrible—not by the eruptions so much as by the poisonous vapours, which induced a murrain among the cattle and a contagious disease among men. Of human beings 9000 perished ; besides 28,000

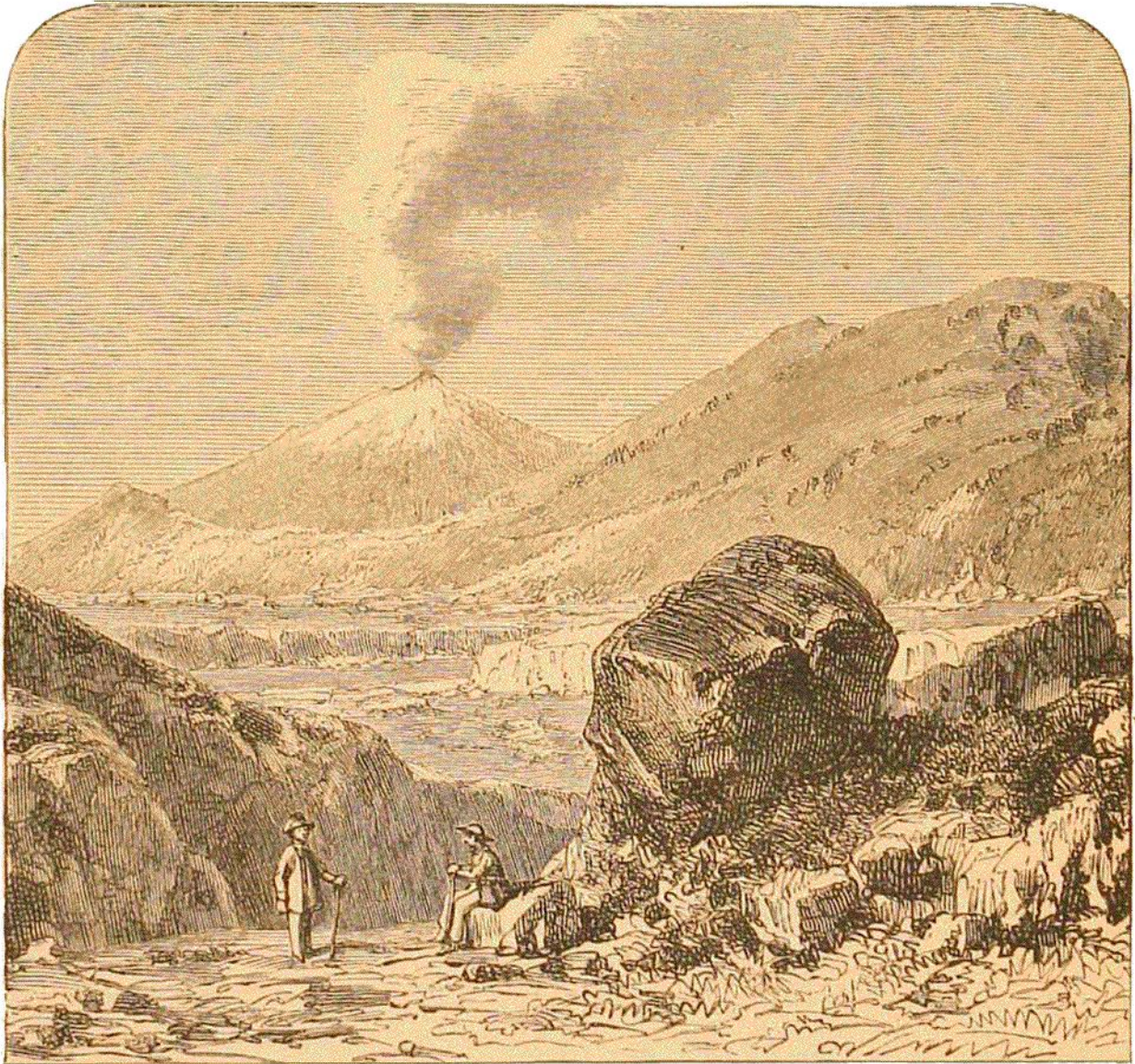


FIG. 147.—THE VOLCANO OF HERLA, IN ICELAND.

horses, 11,000 cattle, and 190,000 sheep. A more moderate computation, however, reduces the number of human deaths to 1300, and of cattle to about 156,000.

A month previous to this formidable catastrophe, a submarine eruption took place at about eight miles south-west of Cape Reykiavers, which covered the sea with pumice-stones and ashes for a distance of one hundred and eighty miles. An island issued from the waters, which measured a mile in circumference, and was taken possession of by the King of Denmark under the name of *Ny-Oë* (or New Islet). However, in less than a twelvemonth it returned to the depths of ocean, and the place where it had been was only marked by a dangerous reef.