

its ancient limits. Having reached the southern extremity, we obtained our first view of the lake, the light of which had attracted our attention the previous night. It was several hundred yards in circumference, and in the most sunken part of the cauldron. The lava was twenty feet below its banks, a liquid body, boiling, bubbling, and thrashing in great fury. Occasionally, it would become incrustated over, and then red streaks would shoot rapidly across its surface, leaving a momentary glimmer like that of meteors. In the centre, the lava was tossed high into the air, with a puffing spluttering roar of surf. Its colour was livid, much resembling clotted blood, of which the whole might be taken for an immense hell-brewed cauldron, and the unearthly noise for the moans of agonized spirits and the fiendish cries of their tormentors. The effect upon the imagination was powerful, and the reality horrible and hellish beyond description.—*Jrves' Scenes and Scenery in the Sandwich Islands.*

FAMILY CIRCLE.

THE PEASANT'S BRIDAL.

A NORWEGIAN LEGEND.

STORMMANNADAUEN, (the Black Death) had raged through Norway, and cut off more than two thirds of its population, and desolated whole extents of country, and large populous districts. In Uldevig's Valley, in Hardanger, a young peasant of the name of Halgrim, alone, of all the people who had died there, remained alive. He raised himself from the sick bed on which he lay, surrounded by the dead, and went out in order to seek for living people.

It was spring, and the larks sang loud in the blue clear air; the birch-wood clothed itself in tender green; the stream, with its melting snow drifts, wound down the mountains, singing on its way, but no plough furrowed the loosened earth, and from the heights was heard no wood horn calling the cattle at feeding time. It was still and dead in the habitation of man. Halgrim went from valley to valley, from cottage to cottage; everywhere death stared him in the face, and he recognized the corpses of early friends and acquaintances. Upon this, he began to believe that he was alone in the world, and despair seized on his soul, and he determined also to die. But as he was just about to throw himself down from a rock, his faithful dog sprang up to him, and lamented in the expressive language of anguish. Halgrim bent himself and stepping back from the brink of the abyss, he embraced his dog, his tears flowed, and despair withdrew from his softened heart. He began his wandering anew.—Touched off, he led him towards the parish of Graven, where he had first seen and won the love of Hildegunda.

It was evening, and the sun was setting as Halgrim descended into the valley, which was as still and dead as those through which he had wandered. Dark stood the fir trees in the black shadow of the rocky wall, and silently rolled on the river between the desolate banks. On the opposite side of the river a little wooded promontory shot out into the blue water, and upon the light green tops of the birch trees played the last rays of the sun.

Suddenly it seemed to Halgrim, as if a light smoke rose up from among the trees. But he trusted not his eyes; he started upon it breathlessly. He waited, however, hardly a second, when he saw a blue column curling slowly upwards in the peaceful evening air. With a cry of joy Halgrim darted forward, and waded through the stream, and soon stood on its opposite shore. Barking, whining, his dog ran onwards to the cottage whence the smoke ascended. Upon its hearth clearly burned the fire, and a young maiden stepped forward to the door—one cry of inexpressible joy, and Halgrim and Hildegunda lay in each other's arms!—Hildegunda was also the only living person in her valley after the terrible visit of the Black Death.

On the following day, after mutual agreement, they went to Church, and as there was no priest to marry them, and nobody to witness the plighting of their faith, they stepped along together to God's altar, and extended to each other a hand, whilst Halgrim said with a solemn voice, "In the name of God the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost?"

And God blessed the faith plighted in his name. From this happy pair descended generations who

peopled anew this region, and the names of Halgrim and Hildegunda are to this day in use among its inhabitants.

FAMILY PRAYER.

There is not on earth a scene more interesting than a family thus bending before the God of heaven;—a collection of dependent beings, with tender feelings, with lively sympathies, with common hopes, fears, joys, blending their bliss and their woes together, and presenting them all to the King of kings, and the Great Father of all the families of mankind. There is not on earth a man more to be venerated, or that will be more venerated, than the father who thus ministers at the family altar. No other man, like that father, so reaches all the sources of human action or so gently controls the powers, yielding, in their first years, and following the direction of his moulding hand, that are soon to control all that is tender and sacred in the interests of the church and state. No Solon or Lycurgus is laying the foundation of codes of laws so deep, or taking so fast a hold on all that is to affect the present or future destiny of man. We love, therefore, to look at such venerable locks, and to contemplate these ministers of God who stand between the rising generation—feeble, helpless, and exposed to a thousand perils—and the Eternal Parent of all. They stand between the past and the coming age, remnants of the one and lights to the other, bending the past with that which is to come; living lights of experience to guide the footsteps of the ignorant and erring; to illuminate the coming generation—to obtain for it blessings by counsel and prayer, and then to die. And if the earth contains, amid its desolation, one spot of green on which the eye of God reposes with pleasure, it is the collected group, with the eye of the father raised to heaven, and the voice of faith and prayer commending the little worshippers to the protecting care of Him who never slumbers nor sleeps.

The inimitable language of Burns, on this subject, is not fiction. In hundreds of families you might witness all that is pure and sublime in the scene contemplated by the Scottish bard:

They chant their artless notes in simple guise;
They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim;
Perhaps Dundee's wild warbling measures rise,
Or plaintive *Martyns*, worthy of the name;
Or noble *Elgin* bears the heavenward flame.
The sweetest far of *Scotia's* holy lays.
Compared with these Italian trills are tame;
The tickled ears no heart-felt rapture raise:
Nae union hae they with our Creator's praise.

The priest-like father reads the sacred page,
How *Abraham* was the friend of God on high;
Or *Moses* bade eternal warfare wage
With *Amalek's* ungracious progeny;
Or how the royal *David* did groaning lie
Beneath the stroke of Heaven's avenging ire;
Or *Job's* pathetic plaint, and wailing cry;
Or rapt *Ismael's* wild, seraphic fire;
Or other holy seers that tune the sacred lyre

Perhaps the Christian volume is the theme,
How guiltless blood for guilty man was shed;
How *He*, who bore in heaven the second name,
Had not on earth whereon to lay his head.
How his first followers and servant sped;
The precepts sage they wrote to many a land;
How he who lone in *Palmos* banished,
Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand;
And heard great *Babylon's* doom pronounced by
Heaven's command.

Then kneeling down to Heaven's Eternal King,
The saint, the father, and the husband prays;
Hope "springs exulting on triumphant wing,"
That thus they all shall meet in future days;
There ever bask in uncreated rays,
No more to sigh, or shed the bitter tear;
Together hymning their Creator's praise,
In such society yet still more dear;
While circling time moves round in an eternal
sphere.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE MOTHER'S ROCK.

HUMBOLDT, in his celebrated travels, tells us, that after he had left the abodes of civilization far behind, the winds of South America, he found, near the confluence of the Atabapo and the Rio Terni rivers, a high rock—called the "Mother's Rock."

The circumstances which gave this remarkable name to the rock were these:—

In 1793, a Roman Catholic missionary led his half-civilized Indians out on one of these hostile excursions, which they often made, to kidnap slaves for the Christians. They found a Guahaba woman in a solitary hut, with three children—two of whom were infants. The father, with the older children, had gone out to fish, and the mother in vain tried to fly with her babes. She was seized by these man-hunters, hurried into a boat, and carried away to a missionary station at San Fernando.

She was now far from her home; but she had left children there, who had gone with their father. She repeatedly took her three babes and tried to escape, but was as often seized, brought back, and most unmercifully beaten with whips.

At length the missionary determined to separate this mother from her three children; and for this purpose sent her in a boat up the Atabapo river, to the mission of the Rio Negro, at a station called Javita.

Seated in the bow of the boat, the mother knew not where she was going, or what fate awaited her. She was bound, solitary, and alone, in the bow of a long boat; but she judged, from the direction of the sun, that she was going away from her children. By a sudden effort, she broke her bonds, plunged into the river, swam to the left bank of the Atabapo, landed upon a rock. She was pursued, and at evening retaken, and brought back to the rock, where she was scourged till her blood reddened the rock—calling for her children! and the rock has ever since been called "The Mother's Rock." Her hands were then tied upon her back, still bleeding from the lashes of the manatee thongs of leather. She was then dragged to the mission at Javita, and thrown into a kind of stable. The night was profoundly dark, and it was in the midst of the rainy season. She was now full seventy-five miles from her three children, in a straight line. Between her and her children, lay forests never penetrated by human footsteps; swamps and morasses, and rivers, never crossed by man. But her children are at San Fernando—and what can quench a mother's love. Though her arms were wounded, she succeeded in binding her hands with her teeth, and in the morning she was not to be found! At the fourth rising sun—she had passed through the forest—swam the rivers, and, all bleeding and worn out, was seen hovering round the little cottage in which her babes were sleeping.

She was seized once more;—and before her wounds were healed, she was again torn from her children, and sent away to the mission on the Upper Orinoko river—where she drooped and shortly died, refusing all kinds of nourishment—died of a broken heart at being torn from her children! Such is the history of "The Mother's Rock."

ENTERPRISE OF THE JEWS.

THE Jews, in Queen Anne's time, made an offer to the Lord Godolphin, then Lord Treasurer, of £300,000, if the Government would allow them to purchase the town of Bedford, with leave of settling there entirely, and with full privileges of trade. They would have it a million, but Lord Godolphin would not favour such a proposition. He had no wish, he said, to offend two of the most powerful bodies in the nation, the clergy and the merchants. The first Jewish settlement in London was formed in duke's-place, Abgate, in the year 1650, or thereabout. The Jews would have failed in obtaining this, to them important favor, but for the hypocritical adroitness of Cromwell. They had offered £60,000 for leave to acquire a settlement in London. This was a sum after Cromwell's own heart, and he was anxious to close at once with the Jewish agents. This, however, he did not do until he had called together a deputation from the London Merchants, and the London clergy; he heard all their reason, applauded all, and abused the Jews. "But can you really be afraid?" he came in with, "that this mean, despised people should be able to prevail in trade and credit over the merchants of England, the noblest and most esteemed merchants of the whole world?" This had the desired effect: the clergy despised the scattered remnant, and the city merchants began to think the Jewish traders beneath their notice. The deputation closed, and Cromwell was at liberty to grant what he desired to the Jews.—*Fraser's Magazine.*