

It is an opinion very generally prevalent on the coasts of Terra Firma, that earthquakes become more frequent when electric explosions have been during some years rare. It is supposed to have been observed, at Cumana and at Caracas, that the rains were less frequently attended with thunder from the year 1792; and the total destruction of Cumana in 1797, as well as the commotions felt in 1800, 1801, and 1802, at Maracaibo, Porto Cabello, and Caracas, have not failed to be attributed to an accumulation of electricity in the interior of the earth. Persons who have lived long in New Andalusia, or in the low regions of Peru, will admit that the period most to be dreaded for the frequency of earthquakes is the beginning of the rainy season, which, however, is also the season of thunder-storms. The atmosphere and the state of the surface of the globe seem to exercise an influence unknown to us on the changes which take place at great depths; and I am inclined to think that the connection which it is supposed has been traced between the absence of thunder-storms and the frequency of earthquakes, is rather a physical hypothesis framed by the half-learned of the country than the result of long experience. The coincidence of certain phenomena may be favoured by chance. The extraordinary commotions felt almost continually during the space of two years on the banks of the Mississippi and the Ohio, and which corresponded in 1812 with those of the valley of Caracas, were preceded at Louisiana by a year almost exempt from thunder-storms. The public mind was again struck with this phenomenon. We cannot be surprised that there should be in the native land of Franklin a great readiness to receive explanations founded on the theory of electricity.

The shock felt at Caracas in the month of December 1811, was the only one which preceded the terrible catastrophe of the 26th of March, 1812. The inhabitants of Terra Firma were alike ignorant of the agitations of the volcano in the island of St. Vincent, and of those felt in the basin of the Mississippi, where, on the 7th and 8th of February, 1812, the earth was day and night in perpetual oscillation. A great drought prevailed at this period in the province of Venezuela. Not a single drop of rain had fallen at Caracas or in the country to the distance of ninety