

leagues round, during five months preceding the destruction of the capital. The 26th of March was a remarkably hot day. The air was calm, and the sky unclouded. It was Ascension-day, and a great portion of the population was assembled in the churches. Nothing seemed to presage the calamities of the day. At seven minutes after four in the afternoon the first shock was felt. It was sufficiently forcible to make the bells of the churches toll; and it lasted five or six seconds. During that interval the ground was in a continual undulating movement, and seemed to heave up like a boiling liquid. The danger was thought to be past, when a tremendous subterranean noise was heard, resembling the rolling of thunder, but louder and of longer continuance than that heard within the tropics in the time of storms. This noise preceded a perpendicular motion of three or four seconds, followed by an undulatory movement somewhat longer. The shocks were in opposite directions, proceeding from north to south, and from east to west. Nothing could resist the perpendicular movement and the transverse undulations. The town of Caracas was entirely overthrown, and between nine and ten thousand of the inhabitants were buried under the ruins of the houses and churches. The procession of Ascension-day had not yet begun to pass through the streets, but the crowd was so great within the churches that nearly three or four thousand persons were crushed by the fall of the roofs. The explosion was most violent towards the north, in that part of the town situated nearest the mountain of Avila and the Silla. The churches of la Trinidad and Alta Gracia, which were more than one hundred and fifty feet high, and the naves of which were supported by pillars of twelve or fifteen feet diameter, were reduced to a mass of ruins scarcely exceeding five or six feet in elevation. The sinking of the ruins has been so considerable that there now scarcely remain any vestiges of pillars or columns. The barracks, called el Cuartel de San Carlos, situated north of the church of la Trinidad, on the road from the custom-house of La Pastora, almost entirely disappeared. A regiment of troops of the line, under arms, and in readiness to join the procession, was, with the exception of a few men, buried beneath the ruins of the barracks. Nine-tenths of the fine city of