

wounds, instruments of surgery, medicines, every object of the most urgent necessity, was buried in the ruins. Everything, even food, was wanting; and for the space of several days water became scarce in the interior of the city. The commotion had rent the pipes of the fountains; and the falling in of the earth had choaked up the springs that supplied them. To procure water it was necessary to go down to the river Guayra, which was considerably swelled; and even when the water was obtained vessels for conveying it were wanting.

There was a duty to be fulfilled to the dead, enjoined at once by piety and the dread of infection. It being impossible to inter so many thousand bodies, half-buried under the ruins, commissioners were appointed to burn them: and for this purpose funeral piles were erected between the heaps of ruins. This ceremony lasted several days. Amidst so many public calamities, the people devoted themselves to those religious duties which they thought best fitted to appease the wrath of heaven. Some, assembling in processions, sang funeral hymns; others, in a state of distraction, made their confessions aloud in the streets. In Caracas was then repeated what had been remarked in the province of Quito, after the tremendous earthquake of 1797; a number of marriages were contracted between persons who had neglected for many years to sanction their union by the sacerdotal benediction. Children found parents, by whom they had never till then been acknowledged; restitutions were promised by persons who had never been accused of fraud; and families who had long been at enmity were drawn together by the tie of common calamity. But if this feeling seemed to calm the passions of some, and open the heart to pity, it had a contrary effect on others, rendering them more rigorous and inhuman. In great calamities vulgar minds evince less of goodness than of energy. Misfortune acts in the same manner as the pursuits of literature and the study of nature; the happy influence of which is felt only by a few, giving more ardour to sentiment, more elevation to the thoughts, and increased benevolence to the disposition.

Shocks as violent as those which in about the space of a