

lying in the direction of the Silla, north-east of the city, were perhaps the vents, at the time of an eruption, for those elastic fluids which cause earthquakes on the coasts of the continent. These considerations, founded on local knowledge of the place, and on simple analogies, are very far from a prediction justified by the course of physical events.

On the 30th of April, 1812, whilst violent commotions were felt simultaneously in the valley of the Mississippi, in the island of St. Vincent, and in the province of Venezuela, a subterranean noise resembling frequent discharges of large cannon was heard at Caracas, at Calabozo (situated in the midst of the steppes), and on the borders of the Rio Apure, over a superficies of four thousand square leagues. This noise began at two in the morning. It was accompanied by no shock; and it is very remarkable, that it was as loud on the coast as at the distance of eighty leagues inland. It was everywhere believed to be transmitted through the air; and was so far from being thought a subterranean noise, that in several places, preparations were made for defence against an enemy, who seemed to be advancing with heavy artillery. Señor Palacio, crossing the Rio Apure below the Orivante, near the junction of the Rio Nula, was told by the inhabitants, that the firing of cannon had been heard distinctly at the western extremity of the province of Varinas, as well as at the port of La Guayra to the north of the chain of the coast.

The day on which the inhabitants of Terra Firma were alarmed by a subterranean noise was that of the great eruption of the volcano in the island of St. Vincent. That mountain, near five hundred toises high, had not thrown out lava since the year 1718. Scarcely was any smoke perceived to issue from it, when, in the month of May 1811, frequent shocks announced that the volcanic fire was either rekindled, or directed anew to that part of the West Indies. The first eruption did not take place till the 27th of April, 1812, at noon. It was merely an ejection of ashes, but attended with a tremendous noise. On the 30th, the lava overflowed the brink of the crater, and, after a course of four hours, reached the sea. The sound of the explosion is described as resembling that of alternate discharges of very large cannon and musketry; and it is worthy of re-