

30,000 persons were destroyed. At Riobamba, however, after the earthquake, a great number of corpses were found to have been tossed across a river, and scattered over the slope of a hill on the other side.

(52.) The frequency of these South American earthquakes is not more extraordinary than the duration of the shocks. Humboldt relates that on one occasion, when travelling on mule-back with his companion Bonpland, they were obliged to dismount in a dense forest, and throw themselves on the ground: the earth being shaken uninterruptedly for upwards of a quarter of an hour with such violence that they could not keep their legs.

(53.) One of the most circumstantially described earthquakes on record is that which happened in Calabria on the 5th of February 1783; I should say began then, for it may be said to have lasted four years. In the year 1783, for instance, 949 shocks took place, of which 501 were great ones, and in 1784, 151 shocks were felt, 98 of which were violent. The centre of action seemed to be under the towns of Monteleone and Oppido. In a circle twenty-two miles in radius round Oppido every town and village was destroyed within two minutes by the first shock, and within one of seventy miles' radius all were seriously shaken and much damage done. The whole of Calabria was affected, and even across the sea Messina was shaken, and a great part of Sicily.

(54.) There is no end of the capricious and out-of-the-way accidents and movements recorded in this Calabrian