

whelmed by some invisible power beyond human control or comprehension."\*]

No catastrophe, in fact, alarms the human soul with such justifiable terrors. When we are told that 30,000 or 40,000 persons have perished by an earthquake, this simple fact, significant as it is, can give us no exact idea of the misfortunes directly and consecutively provoked by such a catastrophe.† Those who have escaped it alone can tell us under what various and terrible forms death is presented to their gaze; they alone can tell us what frightful tortures the human victims, buried alive, have experienced; how they perish of rage, despair, or hunger—giving utterance to their agony in heart-rending groans—and with none to help them in their supreme distress! It must be left for eye-witnesses to paint the situation of the poor unfortunates who, wounded or half-dead, have miraculously been rescued from the disaster, but are exposed to the horrors of cold and famine—in want of bread, and provisions, and clothing—their household gods shattered, and their possessions all destroyed. It is for them to speak of fortunes destroyed in the twinkling of an eye, of the rich reduced to beggary, of entire families deprived of all their resources; as also of states half-ruined by such enormous losses; the progress of civilization and the national welfare retarded by catastrophes which overthrow towns, block up harbours, devastate cultivated fields, render roads impracticable, and transform fertile valleys into lakes, or fill them with the piled-up ruins of the neighbouring hills.

\* [The *Spectator*, vol. for 1868, p. 1307.]

† [Seneca has traced a comparison full of truth between the dangers of earthquakes and those with which we are menaced by other physical phenomena:—

“A tempestate nos vindicant portus; nimborum vim effusam et sine fine cadentes aquas, tectus propellunt: fugientes non sequitur incendium; adversus tonitrua et minas cœli, subterraneæ domus, et defossi in altum specus, remedia, sunt. In pestilentia mutare sedes licet. Nullum malum sine effugio est. Hoc malum latissime patet, inevitabile, avidum, publice noxium. Non enim domos solum, aut familias, aut urbes singulas haurit, sed gentes totas, regiones que subvertit.”—*Quint. Nat.*

(Harbours shelter us from the tempests, roofs defend us from the violence of the storms and from incessant rains; fire does not pursue the fugitives; caves and deep caverns are a refuge from thunder and the arrows of heaven; we can save ourselves from the plague by changing our place of abode. But the scourge of the earthquake extends afar—is inexorable and inevitable—an universal calamity. Not only does it swallow up houses, districts, and towns, but it convulses nations and desolates entire countries.)]