

The area devastated by the earthquake embraced about sixty square leagues. Its theatre was the region situated between the 38th and 39th parallels of latitude.

If taking for our centre the town of Oppido, in Upper Calabria, we trace around it a circle with a radius of twenty-two miles, the space so enclosed comprehends the surface of country whose every town and village were destroyed. The shock of the 5th of February 1783, overthrew in a few minutes the majority of the houses, towns, and villages comprised between the Apennines and Messina, in Sicily—revolutionizing the country, changing its level, and producing, so to speak, an universal *shudder* of the superficial soil. A second convulsion,\* which occurred on the 28th of

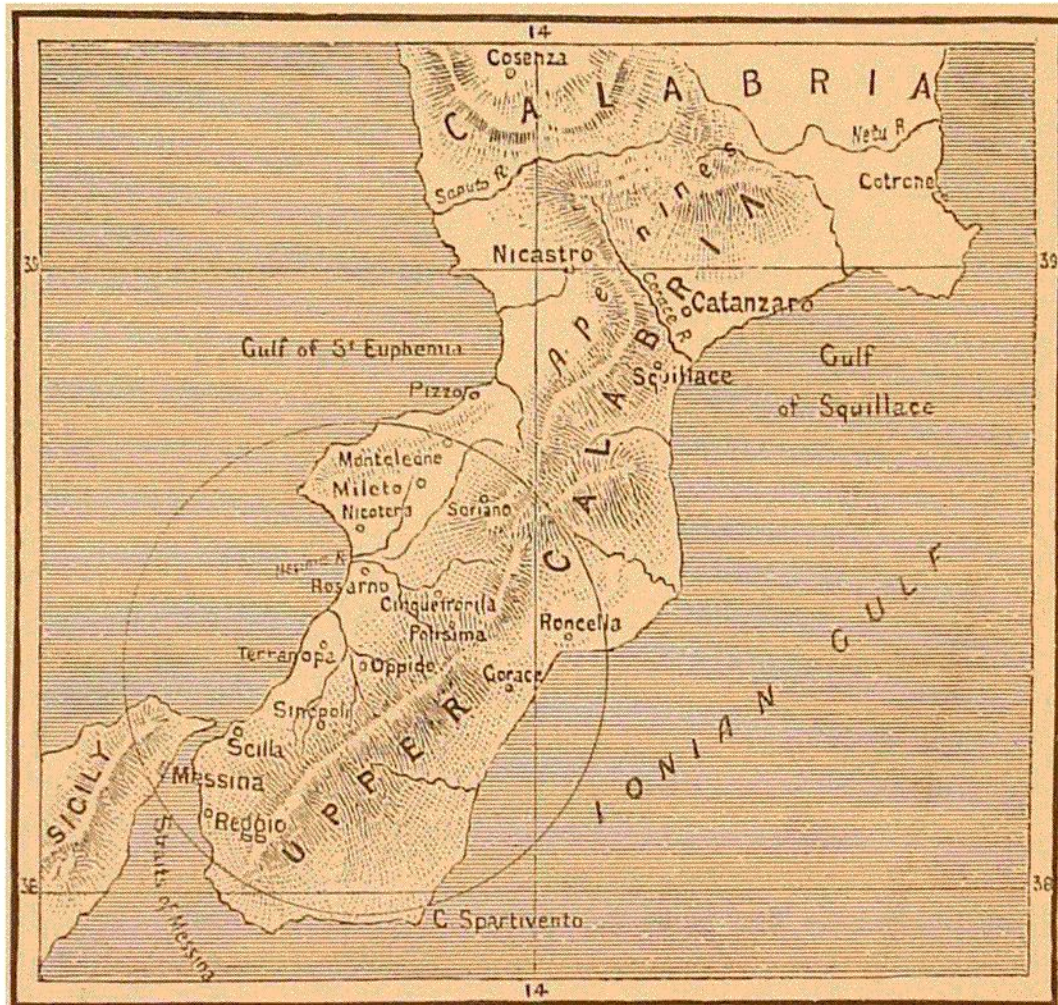


FIG. 126.—MAP OF CALABRIA.

March, was fully as violent as the former; it shattered and rent the chain of the Apennines, and if it did not overthrow any towns and villages, that was because the work of destruction had so far been completed by the shocks of the 5th of February.

The Calabrian earthquake is the most terrible, and yet, at the same time, the most easily described of all similar calamities which have occurred in modern times, because its site has been frequently visited and explored by scientific men and geologists of deserved reputation. The French naturalist, Déodat de Dolomieu, who at the time was travelling in the south of Italy, hastened to Calabria at the first tidings of the disaster, and has left on record a narrative of the phenomena, accom-

\* [Minor shocks took place on the 6th and 7th of February, and on the 1st of March.]