

rendered uninhabitable by this new calamity. Its destructive effects, moreover, were not so widely spread as those of the 5th of February. Even the towns which suffered most—such as Nicotera, Tropea, Monteleone, Squillace, Nicastro, Catanzaro, San Severino and Cotrona—were not wholly destroyed. The shocks, however, augmented the disorders of Messina, and increased the damage done to Reggio.

Earth-movements continued throughout the year 1783. Several were even felt in the months of February and March 1784. But none of them could be compared in violence or fatality to those of the 5th of February and 28th of March in the preceding year.

Sir William Hamilton, the English ambassador, who carefully explored this region soon after the occurrence of its calamities, estimated the number of persons who perished at about 40,000 ; fully 20,000 others succumbed to the contagious fevers and epidemics occasioned by the spread of pestiferous vapours, want of food and of shelter against the inclemencies of the weather.

The majority of the victims were buried beneath the ruins of the houses and other buildings. Many, and especially the peasants who fled into the country, were swallowed up in the fissures which opened under their feet. It is probable that their skeletons are interred in the bowels of the earth at a depth of several hundred yards.\*

Numbers perished in the conflagration which followed the downfall of the houses, and which raged with awful fury in towns, like Oppido, containing vast stores of oil.

A great many victims might have been saved had assistance been at hand. Unfortunately, in catastrophes so terrible and sudden, each person, occupied with his own misfortunes or those of his family, seldom thinks of extending any help to his neighbour. And, moreover, the small number of survivors precludes all attempts at comprehensive and really efficacious succour. We shall quote a few traits of devotion inspired by maternal love, conjugal tenderness, or friendship ; but by the side of these isolated instances how many atrocious deeds of cruelty has not humanity to blush for !

When the earthquake took place at Messina, the Marchioness of Spadara, a Frenchwoman, and the daughter of a Provençal gentleman, fainted, and in this condition was carried by her husband as far as the port. On recovering her senses she perceived that she was not accompanied by her son. At a moment when her husband was too much occupied to watch over her, she contrived to escape ; made her way back to her house, which was still standing, and snatched her child from his cradle. But the staircase crumbled away before her feet, and blocked up her only means of retreat.

She fled from room to room—followed, as it were, by successive crashes—and, at length, as a last hope of safety, took refuge in the balcony. Showing her infant in her arms, she implored assistance from the few witnesses of this pathetic scene. But on occasions of public disaster we can place little reliance on the pity of our neighbours. Ere long the conflagration reached the ruins of her house ; the unfor-

\* [The reader will be on his guard against these sensational exaggerations.]