

first time this year, for about five hours. The farmers, who plant corn near the sea-coast, where the atmosphere is more humid, taking advantage of this shower, would break up the ground; after a second they would put the seed in; and if a third shower should fall, they would reap a good harvest in the spring. . It was interesting to watch the effect of this trifling amount of moisture. Twelve hours afterward the ground appeared as dry as ever; yet after an interval of ten days, all the hills were faintly tinged with green patches; the grass being sparingly scattered in hair-like fibres a full inch in length. Before this shower every part of the surface was bare as on a highroad.

In the evening, Captain Fitz Roy and myself were dining with Mr. Edwards, an English resident well known for his hospitality by all who have visited Coquimbo, when a sharp earthquake happened. I heard the forecoming rumble, but from the screams of the ladies, the running of the servants, and the rush of several of the gentlemen to the doorway, I could not distinguish the motion. Some of the women afterward were crying with terror, and one gentleman said he should not be able to sleep all night, or if he did, it would only be to dream of falling houses. The father of this person had lately lost all his property at Talcahuano, and he himself had only just escaped a falling roof at Valparaiso, in 1822. He mentioned a curious coincidence which then happened: he was playing at cards, when a German, one of the party, got up, and said he would never sit in a room in these countries with the door shut, as, owing to his having done so, he had nearly lost his life at Copiapó. Accordingly he opened the door; and no sooner had he done this, than he cried out, "Here it comes again!" and the famous shock commenced. The whole party escaped. The danger in an earthquake is not from the time lost in opening a door, but from the chance of its becoming jammed by the movement of the walls.

It is impossible to be much surprised at the fear which natives and old residents, though some of them known to be men of great command of mind, so generally experience dur-