

panied by an admirable geological exposition. The Academy of Naples despatched to the scene a scientific commission, which devoted itself to a description of the various changes effected in the configuration of the surface, to counting and measuring the depressions, upheavals, fissures, and crevasses. The British ambassador, Sir William Hamilton, to whom we owe a standard work on the eruptions of Vesuvius, traversed the whole country; sailing along the coast in a *speronare*, and landing at intervals to explore, not without personal danger, the inland regions still in a condition of turmoil and unrest. It is from these various authorities we have gathered the particulars we shall now attempt to combine in one comprehensive picture of the principal effects of this melancholy and remarkable event.

More than one hundred and ninety towns and villages were razed to the ground, as we have already said, in Upper Calabria and Sicily by the earthquake of February 5, 1783. Unable here to enter into any minute details, we shall cast a rapid glance at the leading events which occurred in a certain number of these localities.

The disastrous day, so fatally marked in the annals of Calabria, was the 5th of February; the time three quarters past noon. The shock lasted only two minutes; this brief interval sufficed for the destruction or devastation of Calabria. The ground was agitated in every direction; it undulated like the waves of the sea, and to such an extent that not a few persons experienced all the effects of sea-sickness. Dolomieu, whose well-weighed evidence merits every consideration, assures us, on the faith of several eye-witnesses, that the trees were so curved and bent as to touch the earth with their loftiest boughs. At the same time, violent vertical movements occurred, acting from below to above. In fact, the earth seemed seized with a sudden dizziness, and rolled like a child's top which has nearly ceased to spin.

"I cannot better describe the effect," says Dolomieu, "than by supposing several cubes of sand, cut and kneaded into shape by the hand, placed at a short distance from one another. Then, by striking repeated blows under the table, and shaking it at the same time horizontally and violently at one corner, you will gain an idea of the different and furious movements by which the earth was for a time disturbed."

No structure raised upon the earth's surface could possibly resist so complex an agitation. The towns, the hamlets, the isolated farmsteads, were all thrown to the ground at the same moment. The foundations of the houses seemed vomited out of the earth. The stones were pounded, crushed, and violently triturated against each other.

In the rapid description we are thus drawing, we halt for a moment at Messina. Two minutes sufficed to shatter into a heap of ruins that bright and beautiful Sicilian city, the seat and centre of the commerce of all Southern Italy. We shall not attempt to describe the horrors of its downfall, or the terror of its wild, shrieking, distracted inhabitants. The art of Timanthes failed him when he would have painted the grief of Antigone's father; words are unable to cope with some of the weightier and more awful manifestations of the secret forces of nature.