

violently in some cities, such as Oppido, from the immense magazines of oil which were consumed.

Many persons were engulfed in deep fissures, especially the peasants, when flying across the open country, and their skeletons may perhaps be buried in the earth to this day, at the depth of several hundred feet.

When Dolomieu visited Messina after the shock of Feb. 5th, he describes the city as still presenting, at least at a distance, an imperfect image of its ancient splendour. Every house was injured, but the walls were standing: the whole population had taken refuge in wooden huts in the neighbourhood, and all was solitude and silence in the streets: it seemed as if the city had been desolated by the plague, and the impression made upon his feelings was that of melancholy and sadness. "But when I passed over to Calabria, and first beheld Polistena, the scene of horror almost deprived me of my faculties; my mind was filled with mingled compassion and terror; nothing had escaped; all was levelled with the dust; not a single house or piece of wall remained; on all sides were heaps of stone so destitute of form, that they gave no conception of there ever having been a town on the spot. The stench of the dead bodies still rose from the ruins. I conversed with many persons who had been buried for three, four, and even for five days; I questioned them respecting their sensations in so dreadful a situation, and they agreed that, of all the physical evils they endured, thirst was the most intolerable; and that their mental agony was increased by the idea that they were abandoned by their friends, who might have rendered them assistance."*

It is supposed that about a fourth part of the inhabitants of Polistena, and of some other towns, were buried alive, and might have been saved had there been no want of hands; but in so general a calamity, where each was occupied with his own misfortunes, or those of his family, aid could rarely be obtained. Neither tears, nor supplications, nor promises of high rewards were listened to. Many acts of self-devotion, prompted by parental and conjugal tenderness, or by friendship, or the gratitude of faithful servants, are recorded; but individual exertions were, for the most part, ineffectual. It frequently happened, that persons in search of those most dear to them could hear their moans,—could recognize their voices,—were certain of the exact spot where they lay buried beneath their feet, yet could afford them no succour. The piled mass resisted all their strength, and rendered their efforts of no avail.

At Terranuova, four Augustin monks, who had taken refuge in a vaulted sacristy, the arch of which continued to support an immense pile of ruins, made their cries heard for the space of four days. One only of the brethren of the whole convent was saved, and "of what avail was his strength to remove the enormous weight of rubbish which had overwhelmed his companions?" He heard their voices

* Dissertation on the Calabrian Earthquakes, &c., translated in Pinkerton's *Voyages and Travels*, vol. v.