

night of the 20th instant. Three large extraordinary fires, in the air, one appeared in an easterly direction, one in the north, and one in the south. Their continuance was several hours; their size as large as a house on fire; the motion of the blaze was quite visible, but no sparks appeared.

“Another phenomenon appeared on the 22d of November, of which I was a spectator. About 2 o'clock P. M. a meteor took fire in the air, attended with a fulminating noise, and bore a southeast direction; and however unaccountable, it is a fact, that about the same instant, a whitish substance, resembling a duck in size and shape, detached itself, and descended with a swift motion, from the cloud of smoke that was formed, and was beheld at my house, and fifteen miles due north of it, and twenty-three miles west of it, at the same instant.

“Whether these things are ominous or not, one thing is certain, this is a time of extraordinaries.”

To these curious notices, I add the communication from New-Orleans, of William Shaler, Esq. dated March 23d, 1812.

“DEAR SIR,

“KNOWING the interest you take in all natural events, I do myself the pleasure to communicate to you the following simple account of the late earthquake, as I received it from the patron of a Kentucky boat lately arrived here. On the 7th of last February, at 3 A. M., being moored to the bank of the Mississippi, about thirteen miles above New-Madrid, he was awakened by a tremendous roaring noise, felt his vessel violently shaken, and observed the trees over the bank falling in every direction, and agitated like reeds on a windy day, and many sparks of fire emitted from the earth. He immediately cut his cable and put off into the middle of the river, where he soon found the current changed, and the boat hurried up, for about the space of a minute, with the velocity of the swiftest horse; he was obliged to hold his hand

to his head to keep his hat on. On the current's running its natural course, which it did gradually, he continued to proceed down the river, and at about daylight he came to a most terrific fall, which, he thinks, was at least six feet perpendicular, extending across the river, and about half a mile wide. The whirls and rippings of this rapid were such that his vessel was altogether unmanageable, and destruction seemed inevitable; some of the former he thinks were, at least, thirty feet deep, and seemed to be formed by the water's being violently sucked into some chasm in the river's bottom. He and his men were constantly employed in pumping, and bailing, by which, and the aid of Providence, he says, he got safe through! As soon as he was able to look round, he observed whole forests on each bank fall prostrate, to use his own comparison, like soldiers grounding their arms at the word of command. On his arrival at New-Madrid he found that place a complete wreck, sunk about twelve feet below its level, and entirely deserted; its inhabitants, with those of the adjacent country, who had fled there for refuge, were encamped in its neighbourhood: he represents their cries as truly distressing. A large barge loaded with five hundred barrels of flour, and other articles, was split from end to end, and turned upside down at the bank. Of nearly thirty loaded boats only this and one more escaped destruction; the water ran twelve feet perpendicular, and threw many of them a great many rods on shore; several lives were lost among the boatmen. Another fall was formed about eight miles below the town, similar to the one above, the roaring of which he could distinctly hear at New-Madrid. He waited five days for the fall to wear away; during that time the earth was constantly trembling, at intervals of about five minutes. He observed many fissures in the earth below the town, five or six feet wide, extending in length out of sight, and one side several feet lower than the other. On the fifth day he passed the lower fall which had worn away to a practi-

cable rapid. He felt a succession of shocks of earthquake until he came down to Flam Island. He spoke of many physical changes in the river, particularly a great multiplication of sawyers, but he does not describe them with sufficient accuracy to enable me to give you an account of them.

"I have also seen several persons who passed New-Madrid on the 20th of February; they report that the earth still continued to tremble there, at that time. The falls had worn away to smooth rapids.

"With very great respect and esteem I am, Dear Sir, your
very humble servant,

"The Hon. SAMUEL L. MITCHILL.

W. SHALER."

The information contained in a description, forwarded to William Duane, Esq. by one of his correspondents at St. Genevieve, in Louisiana, shows the state of opinion in the mind of the sensible writer, there, about the 1st of April, 1812, on the subject of the earthquakes at New-Madrid, and the surrounding region. This may be found on the pages of his *Aurora*.

A. B. Woodward, Esq. one of the judges of Michigan Territory, in his letter of the 7th of April, 1812, wrote thus: "We have had nine shocks of the earthquake here, of which I have an exact memorandum of eight, and have somehow entirely lost the time of the other. I felt four myself. I know only one person, a French lady, who felt the whole; speaking here of the eight." And in a letter dated June 23d, the same gentleman observes, that "in a late journey to the *Riviere aux Tranches*, in Upper Canada, I found the number of shocks of the earthquake felt there, was exactly the same as here, that is, *nine*."

Dr. Robertson, the enterprising traveller to the sources of the Arkansas River, by order of the government, in 1806, witnessed the phenomena of these earthquakes, very particularly at St. Genevieve, where