

their noxious effluvia, and so strongly impregnated the water of the river, to the distance of one hundred and fifty miles below, that it could hardly be used for any purpose for a number of days.

"New Madrid, which stood on a bluff bank, fifteen or twenty feet above the summer floods, sunk so low that the next rise covered it to the depth of five feet. The bottoms of several fine lakes in the vicinity were elevated so as to become dry land, and have since been planted with corn!"*

To this interesting sketch by Dr. Hildreth, we append a few particulars.

In the town of Cape Girardeau, were several edifices of stone and brick. The walls of these buildings were cracked, in some instances from the ground to the top, and wide fissures were left.

"*The great shake*," as the people call it, was so severe in the county of St. Louis, that domestic fowls fell from the trees as if dead; crockery fell from the shelves and was broken, and many families left their cabins, from fear of being crushed beneath their ruins.

Mr. Bradbury, an English scientific explorer, who was on a keel boat passing down the river at the time, says:

"On the night of the 15th of December, the keel boat was moored to a small island, not far from Little Prairie, where the crew, all Frenchmen, were frightened, almost to helplessness, by the terrible convulsions.

"Immediately after the shock, we noticed the time, and found it near two o'clock in the morning of the 16th. In half an hour another shock came on, terrible, indeed, but not equal to the first." This shock made a chasm in the island, four feet wide and eighty yards in length. After noticing successive shocks, the writer states: "I had already noticed that the sound which was heard at the time of every shock, always preceded it at least a second, and that it always proceeded from the same point, and went off in an opposite direction. I now found that the shock came from a little northward of east, and proceeded to the westward. At daylight we had counted twenty-seven shocks, during our stay on the island."†

B. further records a series of shocks that continued daily, as he passed down the river, until the 21st of December.

The late L. F. Linn, in a letter to the Chairman of the Committee

* American Pioneer, 1. 129.

† Travels in the Interior of America, by John Bradbury, pp. 199-207.