

After a few days, observing some cough remain, it seemed adviseable to give two or three vomits; as, from late experience, they do not endanger a renewal of the discharge, and must promote the expectoration of the eschar, or any extravasated blood; which otherwise, by its delay acquiring a putrid acrimony, perhaps most frequently erodes the contiguous vessels, and, forming new ulcerations, becomes the general cause of consumptions, subsequent to accidental spitings of blood.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your very humble servant,

Lichfield, Dec. 17. 1759.

Erasmus Darwin.

LII. *An Account of the late Earthquakes in Syria: In a Letter from Dr. Patrick Ruffell, to his Brother, Alexander Ruffell, M. D. F. R. S.*

Aleppo, Dec. 2, 1759.

Read Feb. 21,
1760.

AS I recollect nothing in the way of business, which I have not already wrote you about; and as I know not when this letter may get away, I shall, in the mean time, give you some account of the earthquakes here, which have thrown the people into a terrible consternation.

The spring of this year was unusually dry, the summer temperate, and the autumn, though the rains came on towards the end of September, might be

be esteemed much drier than in other years. The Aleppo river has been very low all the summer; and its bed, from the first to the second mill, is, I believe, even now still without water. This phenomenon I, at first, thought remarkable; but have been informed, that the scarcity of water complained of, during all the summer, was occasioned by driving the river into some rice-grounds lately formed towards Antab.

On the morning of the 10th of June, a slight shock of an earthquake was felt here, and, as usual, soon forgot; having, so far as we know, been felt in no other place, in any degree of severity.

October the 30th, about four in the morning, we had a pretty severe shock (indeed the most violent I had ever felt), which lasted somewhat more than a minute, but did no damage in Aleppo. In about ten minutes after this first, there was a second shock; but the tremulous motion was less violent, and did not last above fifteen seconds. It had rained a little in the preceding evening; and when the earthquake happened, the west wind blew fresh, the sky was cloudy, and it lightened.

This earthquake occasioned little alarm amongst the natives, and even with the Europeans was the topic only for a day. But the subject was soon revived, by letters from Damascus, where the same shock felt by us at Aleppo, and several other successive ones, had done considerable damage. From this time, we had daily accounts of earthquakes from Damascus, Tripoly, Seidon, Acri, and all along the coast of Syria; but so exaggerated in some circumstances, and so inaccurate in all, that we only knew
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in general, that Damascus, Acri, and Seidon, have suffered injury from the earthquake, though less than was at first given out.

Such stories circulating among the people, rendered them more susceptible of alarm; and an occasion soon offered, where they feared, that the worst of their apprehensions were to be realized.

This happened the 25th of November. The morning had been serene, some clouds arose after noon, and the evening was remarkably hazy, with little or no wind. About half an hour after seven at night, the earthquake came on: the motion, at first, was gently tremulous, increasing by degrees, till the vibrations became more distinct, and, at the same time, so strong, as to shake the walls of the houses with considerable violence; they again became more gentle, and thus changed alternately several times during the shock, which lasted in all about two minutes. In about eight minutes after this was over, a slight shock, of a few seconds duration, succeeded. The thermometer was at 50, and the barometer stood at 28-9, the mercury suffering no alteration. There was little or no wind in the night, the sky clear, excepting some heavy clouds, that hung about the moon. At a quarter after four next morning, we had another shock, which lasted somewhat less than a minute, and was hardly so strong as that of the preceding night. The night of the 26th was rainy and cloudy. At nine o'clock we had a slight shock, of a few seconds. The motion here appeared to be very deep, and was rather undulatory than tremulous. The 27th, cloudy and rainy. From midnight of the 25th, besides these now mentioned, four or five slighter

shocks were felt; but I myself was sensible of none, till the morning of the 28th, when we had a short pulsatory shock. The same day, at two o'clock, we had a pretty smart shock, lasting about forty seconds. From this time, I was sensible of no more, though others either felt or imagined several slight vibrations every day.

However violent this earthquake was, or rather, by the frightened people of Aleppo, imagined to be, it is certain, that, excepting in a very few old walls, the city bears no fresh marks of ruin; none of the oldest minarets have suffered. Its effects at Antioch were more formidable; many houses have been thrown down, and some few people killed.

December 7 h.

THE earthquake of the evening of the 25th has proved fatal to Damascus; one-third of the city was thrown down, and of the people, numbers yet unknown perished in the ruins. The greater part of the surviving inhabitants fled to the fields, where they still continued, being hourly alarmed by slighter shocks, which deterred them from re-entering the city, or attempting the relief of such as might yet be saved, by clearing away the rubbish. Such was the purport of a letter I read this day, which was wrote from Damascus three days after the earthquake. Other accounts we have at this place, make the loss of the inhabitants amounts to 20,000; but, in circumstances of such general horror and confusion, little accuracy can be expected, and the eastern disposition to exaggeration reigns, at present, universally.

Tripoly has suffered rather more than Aleppo; three minarets, and two or three houses, were thrown down,

down, while the walls of numbers of the houses were rent. The Franks, and many of the natives, have deserted the city, and remain in the fields.

At Seidon, great part of the Frank kane was overthrown, and some of the Europeans narrowly escaped with their lives. Acri and Latakea have suffered little, besides rents in some of the walls; but Saphet (eight hours from Acri) was totally destroyed, together with the greater part of the inhabitants.

Such are the most authentic accounts we have from abroad; how much they contribute to calm the minds of the people at Aleppo, you may easily imagine. Since the afternoon of the 28th, several slight shocks have been every day felt, and many more formed by the power of imagination: for my own part, I have since that time perceived none, excepting one the evening of the 5th, which was pretty strong, but lasted not above twenty seconds. The weather, for these two days, has been gloomy and rainy; a change which people are willing to flatter themselves is favourable. It often lightens in the night, and thunder is heard at a great distance.

Extract from another Letter of Dr. Patrick Russell, to Dr. Alexander Russell, dated at Aleppo, 29 March 1760.

IN my last, of the 7th of December, I gave you a full account of the earthquakes, which have occasioned an universal panic all over Syria. There were several other shocks in December, and a few very slight ones in January: since which time, all has been quiet.

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Excepting a few old houses, none of the buildings in Aleppo were actually thrown down; but the walls of a considerable number of houses have been rent.

We have had the wettest winter I ever saw in this country. The Coic has every-where overflowed its banks, and is just now much higher than it has been known to rise for many years.

LIII. *Remarks on the Bovey Coal: In a Letter to the Right Honourable George Earl of Macclesfield, President of the Royal Society. By Jeremiah Milles, D. D. F. R. S.*

My Lord,

Read Feb. 28, 1760. **T**HE description, which the learned professor Hollman has given the Society *, of two remarkable strata of fossil wood in Germany, one in the neighbourhood of Munden, in the duchy of Grubenhagen, and the other near Alendorf in Hesse, corresponds, in so many particulars, with some strata, discovered about fifteen years ago, in Devonshire, that it suggested to me a doubt, whether those German strata were really (what the learned professor supposes them) fossil wood, and formerly a vegetable substance, or (what he says the miners call them) fossil coal. The reasons, on which this doubt is founded, are submitted to the judgment of your Lordship, and the Society, in the following

* See the above, N^o xlix. p. 506.