

then in force, put a total check to all exportation, and our cargo of furs, peltries and oil, which found their market in Europe, were a drug in New Orleans. The large quantity of oil, if not soon shipped, as the hot season had commenced, would become rancid, and almost worthless. The result was, that our large cargo, which at former rates would have brought between two and three thousand dollars, we now sold for the mere pittance of thirty-six dollars. No language can depict my great disappointment, first in failing to reach the Pacific, and then all our hopes being frustrated in regard to the proceeds of our two years' hunt. The sickly season now approaching, I proceeded through the Choctaw nation, accompanied by Spear, leaving Miller in New Orleans, and never seeing him afterwards. We passed through the Choctaw and Chickasaw country to Colbert's Ferry on the Tennessee, and thence to Vincennes, and at length to St. Louis.

While lodging about thirty miles north of New Madrid, on the 14th of December, 1811, about 2 o'clock in the morning, occurred a heavy shock of an earthquake. The house, where I was stopping, was partly of wood and partly of brick structure; the brick portion all fell, but I and the family all fortunately escaped unhurt. At the still greater shock,\* about 2 o'clock in the morning of the 7th of February, 1812, I was in New Madrid, when nearly two thousand people of all ages, fled in terror from their falling dwellings, in that place and the surrounding country, and directed their course north about thirty miles to Tywappety Hill, on the western bank of the Mississippi, and about seven miles back from the river. This was the first high ground above New Madrid, and here the fugitives formed an encampment. It was proposed that all should kneel, and engage in supplicating God's mercy,

---

\*Since Col. Shaw dictated this narrative, I have discovered by reference to Bradbury's published Journal, kept at the time, and the writer then in the vicinity of New Madrid, that the first shock, and which the writers on that event convey the idea of being the severest, occurred on the morning of the 16th of December; and as Col. Shaw was thirty miles distant from New Madrid, the centre of these convulsions of nature, on this first occurrence, and was there at the February shock, the latter doubtless appeared to him to be the most severe.