

AFFECTING PICTURE OF AN EARTH-QUAKE SCENE.

[From the same.]

I WILL mention another talk I had with a Sicilian lady. We met at the house of the Swedish minister, Monsieur André, uncle to the lamented officer who perished in our sovereign's service in America; and while the rest of the company were entertaining themselves with cards and music, I began laughing in myself at hearing the gentleman and lady, who sat next me, called by others *Don Raphael* and *Donna Camilla*, because those two names bring *Gil Blas* into one's head. Their agreeable and interesting conversation however soon gave my mind a more serious turn when discoursing on the liberal premiums now offered by the King of Naples to those who are willing to rebuild and repopulate Messina. *Donna Camilla* politely introduced me to a very sick but pleasing-looking lady, who she said was going to return thither: at which she starting cried, "Oh God forbid, my dear friend!" in an accent that made me think she had already suffered something from the convulsions that overwhelmed that city in the year 1783. Her inviting manner, her soft and interesting eyes, whose languid glances seemed to shew beauty sunk in sorrow, and spirit oppressed by calamity, engaged my utmost attention, while *Don Raphael* pressed her to indulge the foreigner's curiosity with some particulars of the distresses she had shared. Her own feelings were all she could relate, she said—and those confusedly. "You see that girl there," pointing to a child about seven or eight years old, who stood listening to the harpsichord: "she escaped! I cannot, for my soul, guess how far we were not together at the time."—"Where were you, madam, at the moment of the fatal accident?"—"Who? me?" and her eyes lighted up with recollected terror: "I was in the nursery with my maid, employed in taking rains out of some Brussels lace upon a brazier; two babies, neither of them four years old, playing in the room. The eldest boy, dear lad! had just left us, and was in

his father's country house. The day grew so dark all on a sudden, and the brazier—Oh, Lord Jesus! I felt the brazier slide from me, and saw it run down the long room on its three legs. The maid screamed, and I shut my eyes and knelt at a chair. We thought all over; but my husband came, and snatching me up, cried, run, run.—I know not how nor where, but all amongst falling houses it was, and people shrieked so, and there was such a noise! My poor son! he was fifteen years old; he tried to hold me fast in the crowd. I remember kissing him: Dear lad, dear lad! I said. I could speak just then; but the throng at the gate! Oh that gate! Thousands at once! ay, thousands! thousands at once: and my poor old confessor too! I knew him: I threw my arms about his aged neck. *Padre mio!* said I—*Padre mio!* Down he dropt, a great stone struck his shoulder; I saw it coming, and my boy pulled me: he saved my life, dear, dear lad! But the crash of the gate, the screams of the people, the heat—Oh such a heat! I felt no more on't, though; I saw no more on't; I waked in bed, this girl by me, and her father giving me cordials. We were on shipboard, they told me, coming to Naples to my brother's house here; and do you think I'll ever go back there again? No, no; that's a cursed place; I lost my son in it. *Never, never* will I see it more! All my friends try to persuade me, but the sight of it would do my business. If my poor boy were alive indeed! but be! ah, poor dear lad! he loved his mother; he held me fast—No, no, I'll never see that place again: God has cursed it now; I am sure he has."

A narrative so melancholy, so tender, and so true, could not fail of its effect. I ran for refuge to the harpsichord, where a lady was singing divinely. I could not listen though: her grateful sweetness who told the dismal story, followed me thither: she had seen my ill-suppressed tears, and followed to embrace me.

ANECDOTES OF METASTASIO.

[From the same.]

HERE are many ladies of fashion in this town (Vienna) very eminent for their musical abilities, particularly

Mesdemoiselles de Martinas, one of whom is member of the Academies of Berlin and Bologna: the celebrated Metastasio died