

convent, over which now fisherboats pass in deep water. Venice, also, the venerable city of the doges, sinks, year after year, more into the arms of her betrothed bride, as if to hide her shame and disgrace in the bosom of the Adriatic. Already, in 1722, when the pavement of the beautiful palace of St. Marco was taken up, the workmen found, at a considerable depth below, an ancient pavement, which was then far below water-mark. Now, the Adriatic has again encroached upon the twice-raised square; at high water, magazines and churches are flooded, and if proper measures are not taken in time, serious injury must inevitably follow. Not far from there, at Zara, superb antique mosaics may be seen, in clear weather, under the water; and on the southern side of the island of Braguitza, at calm sea, your boat glides over long rows of magnificent stone sarcophagi, far below the clear transparent surface.

France also bears many an evidence of such changes in place. The unfortunate St. Louis embarked at the spacious port of Aigues Mortes for his ill-fated crusade; the place—a harbor no more—is now at a mile's distance from shore. Only in the last century, in 1752, an English ship stranded near La Pocheila, on an oyster bank, and was abandoned. Now the wreck lies in the midst of a cultivated field, thirteen feet above the level of the sea, and around it the industrious inhabitants have gained over two thousand acres of fertile land in less than twenty-five years. England presents similar instances; thus, the bay of Hithe, in Kent, was formerly considered an excellent harbor; it is now, in spite of great pains and much labour bestowed on it, firm land and very good pasture for cattle.

These gradual and almost imperceptible changes of land have probably been most carefully observed in Sweden, where already in the times of Celsius, the people believed that the water was slowly withdrawing from the land. The great geologist Buch has since proved that, north of the province of Scania, Sweden is rising at the rate of from three to five feet a century, whilst south of this line it is sinking in proportion. Some villages in a southern Scania, are now three hundred feet nearer to the Baltic than they were in the days of Linnæus, who measured the distance a hundred years ago. Historical evidence abounds as to this mysterious movement of a whole continent; the coasts of Norway and England bear, moreover, ample proof on their surface. Nearly six hundred feet above the actual level, long, clear lines of the former level may be seen distinctly marked by horizontal layers of shells, not of extinct species, but such as are still found in the adjoining waters.

As we go further south, the land seems to sink. All along the coast of Germany and Holland legends and traditions are found, speaking of lost cities and inundated provinces. The Germans have their songs of the great city of Iduna, in the Northern Sea, the bells of whose churches may be still heard, in dream-like knelling, on a quiet, calm Sabbath day; and in Holland they tell of steeples and towers that can be seen in clear weather, far down in the Zuyder Zee.

Stern reality shows that these are not idle inventions; it is well known that great cities, large islands, and whole provinces have actually been ingulphed, and in both countries man is even now at work to protect the sinking shore against the encroaching waves.

In Greenland, the level changes so much, and the ocean intrudes so fast, that the Moravian settlers had more than once to move the poles to which they moored their boats nearer inland. On the low,

rocky islands around, and on the mainland itself, numberless ancient buildings have been submerged, and for ages the inhabitants have ventured no longer to build near the sea coast.

For the sea also has its strange motions like the firm land—gentle, progressing oscillations, which return at stated periods, or act with sudden force.—In the South Sea, we are told, the bottom of the sea rises and sinks in regular alternation: the same occurs near the coast of Chili, teaching us by land and water, the inconstancy of the present order of things, and the changes to which, at great intervals, the outlines of our continents are most probably subject. Truly, He alone, who is our God, He changes not.

From Jonathan Dymond.

THE DANGER OF NATIONAL IRRITABILITY.

If nations fought only when they could not be at peace, there would be very little fighting in the world. The wars that are waged for "insults to flags," and an endless train of similar motives, are perhaps generally attributable to the irritability of our pride. We are at no pains to appear pacific towards the offender; our remonstrance is a threat; and the nation, which would give satisfaction to an enquiry, will give no other answer to a menace than a menace in return. At length we begin to fight, not because we are aggrieved, but because we are angry. One example may be offered:—"1789," says Smollet, "a small Spanish vessel committed some violence in Nootka Sound under the pretence that the country belonged to Spain. This appears to have been the principal ground of offence; and with this both the government and the people were very angry. The irritability and haughtiness which they manifested were unaccountable to the Spaniards; and the peremptory tone was imputed by Spain, not to feelings of offended dignity and violated justice, but to some lurking enmity, and some secret designs which we did not choose to avow." If the tone had been less peremptory and more rational, no such suspicion would have been excited, and the hostility which was consequent upon the suspicion, would of course, have been avoided. Happily, the English were not so passionate, but that before they proceeded to fight, they negotiated, and settled the affair amicably.—The preparations, however, for this foolish war cost £3,133,000! So well, indeed, is national irritability known to be an efficient cause of war, that they who from any motive wish to promote it, endeavour to rouse the temper of a people by stimulating their passions—just as the boys in our streets stimulate two dogs to fight. These persons talk of the insults, or the encroachments, or the contempt of the destined enemy, with every artifice of aggravation; they tell us of foreigners who want to trample upon our rights, of rivals who ridicule our power, of foes who will crush, and of tyrants who will enslave us. They pursue their object certainly by efficacious means; they desire a war, and therefore irritate our passions; and when men are angry, they are easily persuaded to fight. That this cause of war is morally bad, that petulance and irritability are wholly incompatible with Christianity, is too clear to need proof.

BE NOT DIVERTED from your duty by any idle reflections the silly world may make upon you—for their censures are not in your power, and consequently should not be any part of your concern.—*Epictetus*.