Saltmaking is by no means an unhealthy trade, some slight sore­ness of the eyes being the only affection sometimes complained of ; indeed, the atmosphere of steam saturated with salt in which the workmen live seems specially preservative against colds, rheumatism, neuralgia, &c. It is said that wages are rather better and employment more regular in Worcestershire than in Cheshire.

The parliamentary commission above referred to was appointed with a view to the investigation of the causes of the disastrous subsidences which are constantly taking place in all the salt districts, and the provision of a remedy, ft led to no legislative action ; but the evil is recognized as a grave one. At Northwich and Winsford scarcely a house or a chimney stack remains straight. Houses are keyed up with “shaps,” “ face plates,” and “bolts,” and only kept from falling by leaning on one another. The doors and windows have become lozenge-shaped, the walls bulged, and the floors crooked. Buildings have sunk,—some of them dis­appearing altogether. Lakes have been formed where there was solid ground before, and incalculable damage done to property in all quarters. At the same time it is difficult to see how this grievance can be remedied without inflicting serious injury, almost ruin, upon the salt trade. The workings in Great Britain represent the abstraction of rather more than a cubic mile of rock every five years, and of this by far the larger part is in Cheshire.

Manley gives the following statistics of the production of salt in England for 1881 :—

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ( Northwich |  | |
| , . ) Winsford | 1,000,000  30,000 | **,,** |
| Middlewich | **99** |
| ( Wheelock and Lawton .. | 100,000 | **,,** |
| Staffordshire... Shirleywick and Weston | on-Trent 4,000 | **99** |
| ,17 . , . i Droitwich  Worcestershire. jgtoke Prior | 115,000  105,000 | **99**  **99** |
| Total | 1,854,000 | **99** |

He also gives the following details of the salt exported for years ending Dec. 31, 1881 to 1883 inclusive, quoted from the archives of the Salt Chamber of Commerce, whence the importance of the salt trade in England may be judged :—

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1881. | 1882. | 1883. |
| From Liverpool:—  To United States | Tons.  228,891  80,784  15,556  25,181  324,109  23,872  100,957  1,187  67,780  41,653 | Tons.  223,602  81,716  23,953  34,287  274,866  17,232  116,509  5,001  67,334  32,462 | Tons.  239,459   1. 25,413 36,896   316,327  10,860  107,978  2,803   1. 46,753 |
| ,, British North America  „ West Indies and South America  ,, Africa  „ East Indies  ,, Australia |
| ,, Baltic and North Europe  ,, France and Mediterranean  ,, Holland and Belgium  Coastwise  Total from Liverpool  From Runcorn |
| 909,970  148,122  85,545 | 876,962  146,716  68,147 | 958,194  141,021  87,954 |
| „ Western Dock  Grand total |
| 1,143,637 | 1,091,825 1,187,169 | |
|  |
| (F. M. L.) | | | |

*Ancient History and Religious Symbolism.—*Indispensable as the use of salt appears to us, it must have been quite unattainable to primitive man in many parts of the world. Thus the *Odyssey* (xi. 122 *sq.)* speaks of inlanders (in Epirus ?) who do not know the sea and use no salt with their food. In some parts of America, and even of India (among the Todas), salt was first introduced by Europeans ; and there are still parts of central Africa where the use of it is a luxury confined to the rich. Indeed, where men live mainly on milk and flesh, consuming the latter raw or roasted, so that its salts are not lost, it is not necessary to add sodium chloride, and thus we understand how the Numidian nomads in the time of Sallust and the Bedouins of Hadramant at the present day never eat salt with their food. On the other hand, cereal or vegetable diet calls for a supplement of salt, and so does boiled meat. The important part played by the mineral in the history of commerce and religion depends on this fact; at a very early stage of progress salt became a necessary of life to most nations, and in many cases they could procure it only from abroad, from the sea-coast, or from districts like that of Palmyra where salty incrustations are found on the surface of the soil. Sometimes indeed a kind of salt was got from the ashes of saline plants *(e.g.,* by the Umbrians, Aristotle, *Met.,* ii. p. 459), or by pouring the water of a brackish stream over a fire of (saline) wood and collecting the ashes, as was done in ancient Germany (Tac., *Ann.,* xiii. 57), in Gaul, and in Spain (Plin., *H. N.,* xxxi. 7, 82 *sq.);* but these were imperfect surrogates. Among inland peoples a salt spring was regarded as a special gift of the gods. The Chaonians in Epirus had one which flowed into a stream where there were no fish; and the legend was that Heracles had allowed their forefathers to have salt instead of fish (Arist., *ut supra).* The Germans waged war for saline streams,

and believed that the presence of salt in the soil invested a district with peculiar sanctity and made it a place where prayers were most readily heard (Tac., *ut* *sup.).* That a religious significance was attached to a substance so highly prized and which was often obtained with difficulty is no more than natural. And it must also be remembered that the habitual use of salt is intimately con­nected with the advance from nomadic to agricultural life, *i.e*., with precisely that step in civilization which had most influence on the cults of almost all ancient nations. The gods were worshipped as the givers of the kindly fruits of the earth, and, as all over the world “bread and salt” go together in common use and common phrase, salt was habitually associated with offerings, at least with all offerings which consisted in whole or in part of cereal elements. This practice is found alike among the Greeks and Romans and among the Semitic peoples (Lev. ii. 13); Homer calls salt “ divine,” and Plato names it “a substance dear to the gods” *(Timæus,* p. 60 ; comp. Plutarch, *Sympos.,* v. 10). As covenants were ordinarily made over a sacrificial meal, in which salt was a necessary element, the expression “a covenant of salt” (Numb, xviii. 19) is easily understood ; it is probable, however, that the preservative qualities of salt were held to make it a peculiarly fitting symbol of an enduring compact, and influenced the choice of this particular element of the covenant meal as that which was regarded as sealing an obligation to fidelity. Among the ancients, as among orientals down to the present day, every meal that included salt had a certain sacred character and created a bond of piety and guest friendship between the participants. Hence the Greek phrase άλας Καί τράπεδαυ

παραβαίυειν**,** the Arab phrase “there is salt between us,” the expression “to eat the salt of the palace” (Ezra iv. 14, Rev. Ver.), the modern Persian phrase *namak harâm,* “untrue to salt,” *i.e.,* disloyal or ungrateful, and many others.

It has been plausibly conjectured that the oldest trade routes were created for traffic in salt; at any rate salt and incense, the chief economic and religious necessaries of the ancient world, play a great part in all that we know of the ancient highways of commerce. Thus one of the oldest roads in Italy is the *Via Salaria,* by which the produce of the salt pans of Ostia was carried up into the Sabine country. Herodotus’s account of the caravan route uniting the salt-oases of the Libyan desert (iv. 181 *sq.)* makes it plain that this was mainly a salt-road, and to the present day the caravan trade of the Sahara is largely a trade in salt. The salt of Palmyra was an important element in the vast trade between the Syrian ports and the Persian Gulf (see Palmyra, vol. xviii. p. 200), and long after the glory of the great merchant city was past “the salt of Tadinor” retained its reputation (Mas'ûdi, viii. 398). In like manner the ancient trade between the AEgean and the coasts of southern Russia was largely dependent on the salt pans at the mouth of the Dnieper and on the salt fish brought from this district (Herod., iv. 53; Dio Chrys., p. 437). In Phoenician commerce salt and salt fish—the latter a valued delicacy in the ancient world—always formed an important item. The vast salt mines of northern India were worked before the time of Alexander (Strabo, v. 2, 6, xv. 1, 30) and must have been the centre of a wide­spread trade. The economic importance of salt is further indi­cated by the almost universal prevalence in ancient and mediaeval times, and indeed in most countries down to the present day, of salt taxes or of Government monopolies, which have not often been directed, as they were in ancient Rome, to enable every one to pro­cure so necessary a condiment at a moderate price. In oriental systems of taxation high imposts on salt are never lacking and are often carried out in a very oppressive way, one result of this being that the article is apt to reach the consumer in a very impure state largely mixed with earth. “The salt which has lost its savour” (Mat. v. 13) is simply the earthy residuum of such an impure salt after the sodium chloride has been washed out.

Cakes of salt have been used as money in more than one part of the world,—for example, in Abyssinia and elsewhere in Africa, and in Tibet and adjoining parts. See the testimony of Marco Polo (bk. ii. ch. 48) and Col. Yule’s note upon analogous customs elsewhere and on the use of salt as a medium of exchange in the Shan markets down to our own time, in his translation of Polo, ii. 48 *sq.* In the same work interesting details are given as to the importance of salt in the financial system of the Mongol emperors (ii. 200 *sq.).* (W. R. S.)

SALTA, capital of a province of the same name in the Argentine Republic, with a population of about 20,000 (1881), is a well-built town occupying a somewhat in­salubrious situation, 3780 feet above the sea, at the con­fluence of the Rio de la Sillata and Rio de Arias, head streams of the Rio Salado (there called Rio Pasaje or Juramanto), about 820 miles north-west of Buenos Ayres. The town, founded by Abreu in 1582, was originally known as San Clemente de Nueva Castilla, took the name of San Felipe de Lerma when Hernando de Lerma removed it to