the workmen live seems specially preservative against colds, rheu­matism, neuralgia, &c.

A parliamentary commission was appointed in 1881 to investigate the causes of the disastrous subsidences which are constantly taking place in all the salt districts, and the provision of a remedy. It 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 annual abstraction of rather more than a mass of rock equal to a foot in thickness spread over a square mile. The table gives the outputs in metric tons of the most important producers in 1900 and 1905 (from Rothwell, *Mineral Industry,* 1908).

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Salt Production in Metric Tons.* | | |
|  | 1900. | 1905. |
| Austria  France  Germany .... Hungary ....  India  Italy  Japan  Russia  Spain  United Kingdom . United States . | 330,277  1,088,634  1,514,027  189,363  1,021,426  367,255  669,694  1,768,005  45o,o41  1,873,601  2,651,278 | 343,375  1,130,000  1,777,557  195,410 1,212,600  437.699  483.506  1,844,678  493.451  1,920,149  3.297.285 |

See F. A. Fürer, *Salzbergbau- und Salinenkunde* (Braunschweig, 1900) ; J. O. Freiherr νon Buschmann, *Das Salz: dessen Vorkommen und Verwertung* (Leipzig, vol. I, 1909, vol. 2, 1906). (X.)

*Ancient History and Religious Symbolism.—*Salt must have been quite unattainable to primitive man in many parts of the world. Thus the *Odyssey* (xi. 122 seq.) 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 Hadramut 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 docs 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 arc 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 seq.) ; 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 ” *(Timaeus,* p. 60; cf. Plutarch, *Sympos.* v. 10). As covenants were ordinarily made over a sacrificial meal, in which salt was a necessary clement, 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 clement 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 dλαs *καί rρhτreζav τraρaβahw,* the Arab phrase “ there is salt between us,” the expression “ to eat the salt of the palace ” (Ezra i

. 14, R.V.), the modern Persian phrase *namak haram, "*untrue to salt,” *i.e.* disloyal or ungrateful, and many others. Both early in the history of the Roman army and in later times an allowance of salt was made to officers and men. In imperial times, however, this *solarium* was an allowance of money. for salt (see Salary).

It has been conjectured that some of 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 seq.) 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), and long after the glory of the great merchant city was past “ the salt of Tadmor ” retained its reputation (Mas'ūdi 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 medieval 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 seldom lacking and arc 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 ” (Matt. 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 Colonel 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 seq. In the same work interesting details are given as to the importance of salt in the financial system of the Mongol emperors (ii. 200 seq.). (W. R. S.)

SALTA, a N.W. province of Argentina, bounded N. by Bolivia and the province of Jujuy, E. by the territories of Formosa and the Chaco, S. by Santiago del Estero and Tucuman, and W. by the Los Andes territory and Bolivia. Area, 62,184 sq. m.; pop. (1904, estimated) 136,059. The western part of the province is mountainous, being traversed from N. to S. by the eastern chains of 'the Andes. Indenting these, however, are large valleys, or bays, of highly fertile and comparatively level land, like that in which the city of Salta is situated. The eastern part of the province is chiefly composed of extensive areas of alluvial plains belonging to the Chaco formation, whose deep, fertile soils are among the best in Argentina. This part of the province is well wooded with valuable construction timbers and furniture woods. The drainage to the Paraguay is through the Bermejo, whose tributaries cover the northern part of the province; and through the Pasage or Juramento, called Salado on its lower course, whose tributaries cover the southern part of the province and whose waters are discharged into the Paraná. The climate is hot, and the year is divided into a wet and a dry season, the latter characterized by extreme aridity. Irrigation is necessary in a great part of the province, though the rainfall is abundant in the wet season, about 21 in. Fever and ague, locally called *chucho,* is prevalent on the lowlands, but in the mountain districts the climate is healthy. There is considerable undeveloped mineral wealth, including gold, silver and copper, but its inhabitants are almost exclusively agriculturist. Its principal products are sugar, rum *(aguardiente),* wine, wheat, Indian corn, barley, tobacco, alfalfa and coffee. The Cafayate wines are excellent, but are chiefly consumed in the province.