

island Orisant was annihilated. One of the most memorable inroads of the sea occurred in 1421, when the tide, pouring into the mouth of the united Meuse and Waal, burst through a dam in the district between Dort and Gertrudenberg, and overflowed seventy-two villages, forming a large sheet of water called the Bies Bosch. Thirty-five of the villages were irretrievably lost, and no vestige, even of their ruins, was afterwards seen. The rest were redeemed, and the site of the others, though still very generally represented on maps as an estuary, has in fact been gradually filled up by alluvial deposits, and had become in 1825, as I was informed by Professor Moll, an immense plain, yielding abundant crops of hay, though still uninhabited. To the north of the Meuse is a long line of shore covered with sand dunes, where great encroachments have taken place from time to time, in consequence chiefly of the prevalence of south-easterly winds, which blow down the sands towards the sea. The church of Scheveningen, not far from the Hague, was once in the middle of the village, and now stands on the shore; half the place having been overwhelmed by the waves in 1570. Catwyck, once far from the sea, is now upon the shore; two of its streets having been overflowed, and land torn away to the extent of 200 yards in 1719. It is only by aid of embankments, that Petten, and several other places farther north, have been defended against the sea.

*Formation of the Zuyder Zee and Straits of Staveren.*— Still more important are the changes which have taken place on the coast opposite the right arm of the Rhine, or the Yssel, where the ocean has burst through a large isthmus, and entered the inland lake Flevo, which, in ancient times, was, according to Pomponius Mela, formed by the overflowing of the Rhine over certain lowlands. It appears that, in the time of Tacitus, there were several lakes on the present site of the Zuyder Zee, between Friesland and Holland. The successive inroads by which these, and a great part of the adjoining territory, were transformed into a great gulf, began about the commencement, and were completed towards the close of the thirteenth century. Altling gives the following relation of the occurrence, drawn from manuscript documents of contemporary inhabitants of the neighbouring provinces. In the year 1205, the island now called Wieringen, to the south of the Texel, was still a part of the mainland, but during several high floods, of which the dates are given, ending in December, 1251, it was separated from the continent. By subsequent incursions, the sea consumed great parts of the rich and populous isthmus, a low tract which stretched on the north of Lake Flevo, between Staveren in Friesland and Medemblick in Holland, till at length a breach was completed about the year 1282, and afterwards widened. Great destruction of land took place when the sea first broke in, and many towns were swept away; but there was afterwards a reaction to a certain extent, large tracts, at first submerged, having been gradually redeemed. The new straits south of Staveren are more than half the width of those of Dover, but are very shallow, the greatest depth not exceeding two or three fathoms. The