

Strabo cites examples of wide-spread and also local sinkings of land, as well-known historical events, such as the catastrophe that submerged the town of Helice in Achaia, together with an extensive surrounding district. He believed that to earthquakes and similar causes were due the risings, slips and other changes which at various times affect the surface of the earth, and he held that deluges, earthquakes, eruptions of wind, and elevations of the bottom raise the level of the sea, which on the other hand, is lowered when the bottom subsides.¹

The numerous islands in the Mediterranean Sea occupied much of Strabo's attention. He appears to have believed that their insular character arose from two causes. Some he supposed to have been torn from or joined to the mainland by such convulsions as earthquakes, while others were obviously thrown up by volcanic agency. Those which lie off headlands he was inclined to attribute to the former cause; but those which stand in the middle of the sea seemed to him to have been most probably thrown up from the bottom. He does not appear, however, to have had any settled grounds of belief upon this question, for in one passage he speaks of Sicily having been broken off from the mainland of Italy by earthquakes,² while elsewhere he thinks that this island "may have been thrown up from the bottom of the sea by the fires of Etna, as the Aeolian and Pithecusan Isles (Ischia, etc.) have been."³ He refers to submarine eruptions among the Lipari Islands that had given rise to islets or shoals of hard rock

¹ Book I. iii. 10.

² VI. i. 6.

³ I. iii. 10.