

ber of places, which were situated, six or eight hundred years ago, at the edge of the sea or of large pools, are now several miles distant from the water.

Any one may observe in Holland and Italy, with what rapidity the Rhine, the Po, and the Arno, since they have been confined within dikes, raise their beds, advance their mouths into the sea, forming long promontories at their sides ; and judge, from these facts, how small a number of ages was required by these rivers to deposit the low plains which they now traverse.

Many cities, which were flourishing sea-ports at well known periods of history, are now some leagues inland ; and several have even been ruined, in consequence of this change of position. The inhabitants of Venice find it exceedingly difficult to preserve the *lagunes*, by which that city is separated from the continent ; and notwithstanding all their efforts, it will be inevitably joined to the mainland *.

We know, from the testimony of Strabo, that Ravenna stood among lagunes in the time of Augustus, as Venice does now ; but at present Ravenna is a league distant from the shore. Spina

* See M. Forfait's Memoir on the lagunes of Venice, inserted in the Mém. de la Classe Phys. de l'Institut, t. v. p. 213.