

THE FIRST NAVIGATOR.

ILLI robur et aes triplex
 Circa pectus erat, qui fragilem truci
 Commisit pelago ratem
 Primus nec tremuit præcipitem Africum
 Decertantem Aquilonibus,
 Nec tristes Hyades, rabiem Noti,
 Quo non arbiter Hadriae
 Major tollere sen ponere volt freta,
 Quem Mortis timuit gradum?

Horace, Carm. I., 3.

Well mayest though sing, sweet-toned Venusian swain
 The praise of that undaunted heart that faced,
 For the first time, the perils of the main,
 And plowed the untraversed ocean's trackless waste.

But what of him who first launched forth his bark
 Upon the waters of the untried sea —
 That sea that lieth fathomless and dark,
 And boundless round life's shore—Eternity!

As one who idly drifting in his boat,
 Adown some narrow river, falls asleep,
 And, waking, finds his feeble craft afloat
 Upon the waters of the unbroken deep.
 So the first mortal laid him down to die,
 And for the last time saw the great red sun
 Sink beyond the purple hills—the sky,
 Fading in splendor as the earth grew dim—
 And heard the waves beneath him on the strand
 Fainter and fainter beating, while his soul,
 In silence, swiftly glided from the land
 Out where Eternity's dim billows roll.

And millions after him have launched away,
 Through mists that heavy hang along the shore;
 Yet all have taken comfort since that day,
 Knowing that others sailed that way before.

But he, the first explorer of that sea,
 What visions passed before that Spirit's eye!
 And Oh! what dread, what hope, what mystery,
 When the first mortal laid him down to die!

PERCY A. GAHAN.