

obscurity to consequence and renown—from thinly inhabited places, to cities densely crowded with a busy and indefatigable population! Look again at the phenomena presented on the bosom of rivers and the surface of the ocean! Vessels propelled in every direction, in opposition to wind and tide, across even the broad Atlantic, and through the most perilous storms, with a speed and regularity almost miraculous!

The following curious description of the Phænician ships of old, recently detected in Homer by an ingenious mechanic, has been well observed by Dr. Birkbeck to be no inaccurate description of steam navigation.

"So shalt thou instant reach the realm assigned,  
In wondrous ships, self-mov'd, instinct with mind.

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Though clouds and darkness veil the encumber'd sky,  
Fearless, through darkness and through clouds they fly;  
Though tempests rage—the roll the swelling main,  
The seas may roll, the tempests swell in vain.  
'E'en the stern god\* that o'er the waves presides,  
Safe as they pass, and safe re-pass the tides,  
With fury burns; whilst careless they convey  
Promiscuous every guest to every bay." POPE.

It would almost appear, from the above passage, which for ages was considered merely a bold flight of the imagination, that the ancients were not unacquainted with some method beyond the ordinary one of sailing-ships, of propelling vessels through water, with great safety and celerity. At all events, the idea of the poet is no longer a fiction, but has, on our own days, become a positive reality.

#### STEAM NAVIGATION.

The application of the power of steam to the art of navigation, first on rivers, and then on seas, is one of the most magnificent of human triumphs. It is to an American of the name of Fulton, that we are indebted for the first successful project of this nature; but certainly not to the Americans generally; for while he was proceeding with his experiments, it was ridiculed under the name of the "Fulton Folly," and he had the mortification of experiencing every discouragement, instead of support, from his own countrymen. But by indomitable courage and fortitude, as well as confidence of ultimately attaining the consummation of his wishes, and by unconquerable perseverance, he finally overcame all the prejudices by which he was surrounded and retarded in his career, but, alas! himself doomed to a fate that but too frequently awaits the sons of genius and the benefactors of mankind. But let him tell his

own story, it cannot be read without feelings of deep interest, and is taken from an American quarterly work published some years since.

#### THE FIRST STEAM BOAT.

"When," said Fulton himself to a friend, in an animated and affecting manner, "I was building my first steam boat at New York, the project was viewed by the public with either indifference, or with contempt, as a visionary scheme. My friends, indeed, were civil, but they were shy. They listened with patience to my explanations, but with a settled cast of incredulity on their countenances. I felt the full force of the lamentation of the poet,—

"Truth would you teach to save a sinking land,  
All fear, none aid you, and few understand."

As I had occasion to pass daily to and from the building yard, while my boat was in progress, I have often loitered unknown near the idle groups of strangers, gathering in little circles, and heard various enquiries as to the object of this new vehicle. The language was uniformly that of scorn, or sneer, or ridicule. The loud laugh often rose at my expense; the dry jest; the wise calculation of losses and expenditures; the dull but endless repetition of the Fulton Folly. Never did a single encouraging remark, a bright hope, a warm wish, cross my path. Silence itself was but politeness, veiling its doubts, or hiding its reproaches. At length the day arrived when the experiment was to be put in operation. To me it was a most trying and interesting occasion. I invited many friends to go on board to witness the first successful trip. Many of them did me the favour to attend, as a matter of personal respect; but it was manifest, that they did it with reluctance, fearing to be the partners of my mortification, and not of my triumph.

I was well aware, that in my case there were many reasons to doubt of my own success. The machinery was new and ill-made; many parts of it were constructed by mechanics unaccustomed to such work; and unexpected difficulties might reasonably be presumed to present themselves from other causes. The moment arrived, in which the word was to be given for the vessel to move. My friends were in groups on the deck. There was anxiety mixed with fear among them. They were silent, and sad, and weary. I read in their looks nothing but disaster, and almost repented of my efforts. The signal was given, and the boat moved on a short distance, and then stopped and became immovable. To the silence of the preceding moment now succeeded mur-

\* Neptune.