

decay under water), it may readily be conceived how much this formidable source of danger has lessened in the last few years. At the season when the river is lowest, grappling irons are firmly fixed to these snags, and the whole force of the engines in the snag-boat is exerted to draw them out of the mud; they are then cut into several pieces, and left to float down the stream, but part of them being water-logged, sink at once to the bottom.

Several travelers assure me, that serious accidents are not more common now on the Mississippi and its tributaries, when there are 800 steamers afloat, than twenty years ago, when the number of steamers was less than fifty. The increased security arises, chiefly, from the greater skill and sobriety of the captains and engineers, who rarely run races as formerly, and who usually cast anchor during fogs and in dark nights. Such precautions have no doubt, become more and more imperative, in proportion as the steamers have multiplied. On the wide Atlantic, the chances of collision in a fog may be slight, but to sail in so narrow a channel as that of a river, at the rate of ten miles an hour, unable to see a ship's length ahead, with the risk of meeting, every moment, other steamers coming down at the rate of fifteen miles an hour, implies such recklessness, that one can not wonder that navigators on the western waters have earned the character of setting small value on their own and others' lives. Formerly, the most frequent cause of explosions was a deficiency of water in the boiler; one of the great improvements adopted, within the last five years, for preventing this mischief, is the addition of a separate steam-apparatus for pumping up water, and securing a regular supply by machinery, instead of trusting to the constant watchfulness of the engineers. On the whole, it seems to be more dangerous to travel by land, in a new country, than by river steamers, and some who have survived repeated journeyings in stage-coaches, show us many scars. The judge who escorted my wife to Natchez, informed her that he had been upset no less than thirteen times.

On the left bank, about sixty miles above New Orleans, stands Jefferson College; a schoolmaster from the north, speaking to me of its history, imputed its want of success to the insubordination