tide, and the tides themselves are very irregular. Thus vessels, by shunning the one, were in the utmost danger of being swallowed up by the other.

At present, in moderate weather, when the tide is cither at ebb or flood, boats pass across the whirlpool ; but, in ge­neral, it is like the meeting of two contending currents, with a number of eddies all around ; and even now, there is scarcely a winter in which there are not some wrecks.

SCYROS, an island in the Ægean Sea, at the distance of about twenty-eight miles north-east from Eubœa. It is sixty miles in circumference. It was originally in the pos­session of the Pelasgians and Carians. Achilles retired there to avoid going to the Trojan war, and became father of Ne­optolemus, by Deidamia, the daughter of King Lycomedes. Scyros, which was conquered by the Athenians under Cimon, was very rocky and barren. It is now called Sciro. Long. 25. 0. E. Lat. 38. 15. N.

SCYTALA Laconica, in *Antiquity,* a stratagem or de­vice of the Lacedæmonians, for the secret writing of letters to their correspondents, so that if they should chance to be intercepted, nobody might be able to read them.

To this end they had two wooden rollers or cylinders, per­fectly alike and equal ; one of which was kept in the city, the other by the person to whom the letter was directed. For the letter, a skin of very thin parchment was wrapped round the roller, on which the matter was written ; and this being done, it was taken off, and sent away to the party, who, upon putting it in the same manner upon his roller, found the lines and words in the very same disposition as when they were first written.

SCYTHE, a well-known instrument, which has been long employed in cutting grass. See Agriculture.

SCYTHIA, an ancient name for the northern parts of Asia, now known by the name of Tartary ; and also for some of the north-eastern parts of Europe.

This vast territory, which extends itself from the Ister or Danube, the boundary of the Celts, that is, from about the 25th to almost the 110th degree of east longitude, was di­vided into Scythia in Europe and Scythia in Asia, includ­ing, however, the two Sarmatias, or, as they are called by the Greeks, Sauromatias, now Circassian Tartary, which lay between and separated the two Scythias from each other., Sauromatia was also distinguished into European and Asia­tic ; and was divided from the European Scythia by the river Don or Tanais, which falls into the Palus Mæotis, and from the Asiatic by the Rha or Volga, which empties itself into the Caspian Sea.

The Asiatic Scythia comprehended, in general, Great Tartary, and Russia in Asia ; and, in particular, the Scythia beyond or without Imaus contained the regions of Bogdoi or Ostiacoi, and Tanguti. That within or on this side of Imaus had Turkestan and Mongul, the Usbeck or Zagatai, Kalmuck and Nagaian Tartars, besides Siberia, the land of the Samoiedes, and Nova Zembla. These three last not being so soon inhabited as the others, were, as may be rea­sonably supposed, wholly unknown to the ancients ; and the former were peopled by the Bactrians, Sogdians, Gandari, Sacks, and Massagetes. As for Sarmatia, it contained Al­bania, Iberia, and Colchis, which now form Circassian Tar­tary and the province of Georgia.

Scythia in Europe reached, towards the south-west, to the Po and the Alps, by which it was divided from Celto- Gallia. It was bounded on the south by the Ister or Danube and the Euxine Sea. Its northern limits have been sup­posed to stretch to the fountain-heads of the Borysthenes or Dnieper, and the Volga, and so to that of the Tanais. The ancients divided this country into Scythia Arimaspæa, which lay eastward, joining to Scythia in Asia ; and Sarmatia Eu­ropeans on the west. In Scythia properly so called were the Arimaspæi on the north, the Getæ or Dacians along the Danube on the south, and the Neuri between these two.

It contained therefore European Russia or Muscovy, and the Lesser Crim Tartary, to the eastward ; and, on the west, Lithuania, Poland, part of Hungary, Transylvania, Walachia, Bulgaria, and Moldavia. Sarmutia is supposed to have reached northward to that part of Sweden called *Feningia,* now Finland ; in which they placed the Ocenes, Panoti, and Hippopodes. This part they divided from Northern Ger­many, now the western part of Sweden and Norway, by the *Mare Sarmaticum or Scythicum,* which they supposed to run up into the Northern Ocean, and, dividing Lapland into two parts, formed the western part of Sweden and Norway into one island, and Finland into another ; supposing this also to be cut off from the continent by the gulf of the same name.

Although the ancient Scythians were celebrated as a war­like people, yet their history is too uncertain and obscure to enable us to give any detail which would not prove equally tiresome and uninteresting to the reader. Mr Pin­kerton, in a dissertation on their origin, endeavours to prove that they were the most ancient of nations ; and he assigns for the place of their first habitation the country known by the name of Persia. From Persia, he thinks, they proceed­ed in numerous hordes westward, surrounded the Euxine, and peopled Germany, Italy, Gaul, the countries bordering on the Baltic, and part of Britain and Ireland. That the Scy­thians were of Asiatic origin, cannot, we think, be question­ed ; and as Persia was peopled at a very early period, it may not improbably have been their parent country. But when our author contends that their empire had subsisted for more than 1500 years before Ninus, the founder of the Assyrian monarchy, and that it extended from Egypt to the Ganges, and from the Persian Gulf and Indian Sea to the Caspian, we cannot help thinking that his prejudices against the Celts, and his desire to do honour to his favourite Goths, have made him advance a paradox inconsistent with the most authentic records of antiquity. His dissertation how­ever is ingenious, and replete with curious learning.

SEA, in a strict sense, signifies a large portion of water almost surrounded by land, as the Baltic and Mediterranean Seas ; but it is frequently used for that vast body of water which encompasses the whole earth. See the articles Geo­logy and Physical Geography.

*Sea-Air* is that part of the atmosphere which is above the sea. Sea-air has been found salubrious and beneficial in certain distempers. This may be owing to its contain­ing a greater portion of oxygenous gas or vital air, and be­ing less impregnated with noxious vapours, than the land. Dr Ingenhousz made several experiments to ascertain the salubrity of sea-air. By mixing equal measures of common air and nitrous air, he found that at Gravesend they occu­pied about 10·4, or one measure and 4/100ths of a measure ; whereas on sea, about three miles from the mouth of the Thames, two measures of air, one of common and one of nitrous air, occupied from 0∙91 to 0∙94. He attempted a similar experiment on the middle of the channel between the English coast and Ostend ; but the motion of the ship rendered it impracticable. He found that in rainy and windy weather the sea-air contained a smaller quantity of vital air than when the weather was calm. On the sea-shore at Ostend it occupied from 941/2 to 97 ; at Bruges he found it at 105, and at Antwerp 1091/2. Dr Ingenhousz thus concludes his paper. “ It appears, from these experiments, that the air at sea and close to it is in general purer and fitter for animal life than the air on the land, though it seems to be subject to the same inconstancy in its degree of purity with that of the land ; so that we may now with more con­fidence send our patients labouring under consumptive disorders to the sea, or at least to places situated close to the sea, which have no marshes in their neighbourhood. It seems also probable that the air will in general be found much purer far from the land than near the shore, the for­mer being never subject to be mixed with land-air.”