

STEAM-ENGINE.

STEAM-ENGINE, is the name of a machine which derives its moving power from the elasticity and condensibility of the steam of boiling water. It is the most valuable present which the arts of life have ever received from the philosopher. The mariner's compass, the telescope, gunpowder, and other most useful servants to human weakness and ingenuity, were the productions of chance, and we do not exactly know to whom we are indebted for them; but the steam-engine was, in the very beginning, the result of reflection, and the production of a very ingenious mind; and every improvement it has received, and every alteration in its construction and principles, were also the results of philosophical study.

1. The steam-engine was beyond all doubt first invented by the marquis of Worcester during the reign of Charles II. This nobleman published in 1663 a small book, entitled "A Century of Inventions," giving some obscure and enigmatical account of an hundred discoveries or contrivances of his own, which he extols as of great importance to the public.* He appears to have been a person of much knowledge and great ingenuity: but his description or accounts

* "In Hero of Alexandria's 'Spiritalia,' there are two toys moving by steam, described in propositions 50 and 71. They are both moved on the principle of Barker's mill, by steam issuing from an eolopile, moveable round a centre or axis, and not of a nature to be of any real use." W.