

Badische Landesbibliothek Karlsruhe

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The young man's book of amusement

Halifax, 1848

Another way

[urn:nbn:de:bsz:31-100120](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:bsz:31-100120)

Artificial Thunder.

Mix two drachms of the filings of iron, with one ounce of concentrated spirit of vitriol, in a strong bottle that holds about a quarter of a pint; stop it close, and in a few moments shake the bottle: then taking out the cork, put a lighted candle near its mouth, which should be a little inclined, and you will soon observe an inflammation arise from the bottle attended with a loud explosion.

To guard against the danger of the bottle bursting, the best way would be to bury it in the ground, and apply the light to the mouth by means of a taper fastened to the end of a long stick.

Another way.

Mix three ounces of saltpetre, two ounces of salt of tartar, and two ounces of sulphur; roll the mixture up into a ball, of which take a quantity, about the size of a hazel nut, and placing it in a ladle or shovel over the fire, the explosion will resemble a loud clap of thunder.

You will produce a much more violent commotion if you double or treble the quantity of the last experiment; suppose you put two or three ounces of the mixture into the shovel. For fear of accidents, it should not be done in the house, but by placing the shovel over a chafing-dish of very hot coals, in the open air, standing a great distance off.

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Common prudence will dictate the necessity of using great care in the above experiments, as an accident will soon happen, if a person does not get out of the way before the composition explodes.

The Tumbling Egg.

Fill a quill with quicksilver, seal it at both ends with good hard wax; then have an egg boiled, take a small piece of the shell off the small end, and thrust in the quill with the quicksilver; lay it on the ground and it will not cease tumbling about so long as any heat remains in it: or if you put quicksilver into a small bladder, and blow it up, then warm the bladder, it will skip about so long as heat remains in it.

Money augmented by an Optical Illusion.

In a large drinking glass of a conical shape, (small at the bottom and wide at the top) put a shilling, and let the glass be half full of water; then place a plate on the top of it, and turn it quickly over, that the water may not escape. You will see on the plate a piece of coin the size of half-a-crown; and a little higher up, another, the size of a shilling.

It will add to the amusement this experiment affords, by giving the glass to one of the company, (but who of course has not witnessed your operations)