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The young man's book of amusement

Halifax, 1848

A Powder which catches Fire when exposed to the Air

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water will run through the bottom, and make him completely wet.

To produce great Heat by presenting two Solids to each other.

Take a crystal or two of the nitrate of copper, and bruise them, then moisten them with water, and roll them up quickly in a piece of tin-foil, and in half a minute, or little more, the tin-foil will begin to smoke, and soon after take fire and explode with a slight noise. Except the crystals of the nitrate of copper are moistened, no heat will be produced.

A Powder which catches Fire when exposed to the Air.

Put three ounces of rock alum, and one ounce of honey or sugar, into a new earthen dish, glazed, and which is capable of standing a strong heat; keep the mixture over the fire, stirring it continually till it becomes very dry and hard: then remove it from the fire, and pound it to a coarse powder. Put this powder into a long-necked bottle, leaving a part of the vessel empty: and having placed it in a crucible, fill up the crucible with fine sand, and surround it with burning coals. When the bottle has been kept at a red heat for about seven or eight minutes, and no more vapour issues from it, remove it from the fire, then

stop it with a piece of cork ; and having suffered it to cool, preserve the mixture in small bottles well closed.

If you unclose one of these bottles, and let fall a few grains of this powder on a bit of paper, or any other very dry substance, it will first become blue, then brown, and will at last burn the paper or other substance on which it has fallen.

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To construct and inflate a small Balloon.

It is an interesting and amusing experiment to inflate a small balloon made of gold-beater's skin, (using a little gum-arabic to close any holes or fissures) filling it from a bladder or jar, and tying a thread round the mouth of it to prevent the escape of the gas.—When fully blown, attach a fanciful car of coloured paper, or very thin pasteboard to it, and let it float in a large room ; it will soon gain the ceiling, where it will remain for any length of time : if it be let off in the open air, it will ascend out of sight. This experiment may be varied, by putting small grains of shot into the car, in order to ascertain the difference between the weight of hydrogen gas and atmospheric air.

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