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**The young man's book of amusement**

**Halifax, 1848**

The Fiery Shower

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

and taking those pieces into a dark place, scrape off the parts that shine brightest, which, if good, will be a white powder.

Then construct a circular board, of three or four feet diameter, on the centre of which draw in gum-water, or any adhesive liquid, a half-moon, of three or four inches in diameter, and a number of stars round it, at different distances, and of various magnitudes. Strew the phosphorus over the figures, to the thickness of about a quarter of an inch, laying one coat over the other. Place this board behind a curtain; and when you draw the curtain up or back, discharge one electrifying jar or phial over each figure, at the distance of about an inch, and they will become illuminated, exhibiting a very striking resemblance of the moon and stars; and will continue to shine for about half an hour, their splendour being gradually more faint.

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#### *The Fiery Shower.*

On the plate put a number of any kind of seeds, grains of sand, or brass dust. The conductor being strongly electrified, those light particles will be attracted and repelled by the plate suspended from the conductor, with amazing rapidity, so as to exhibit a perfect fiery shower.

Another way is by a sponge that has been soaked in water. When this sponge is first hung to the conductor, the water will drop from it very slowly; but

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when it is electrified, the drops will fall very fast, and appear like small globes of fire, illuminating the basin into which they fall.

*The Illuminated Vacuum.*

Take a tall receiver that is very dry, and fix through the top of it, with cement, a blunt wire: then exhaust the receiver, and present the knob of the wire to the conductor, and every spark will pass through the vacuum in a broad stream of light, visible through the whole length of the receiver, let it be as tall as it will. This generally divides into a variety of beautiful rivulets, which are continually changing their course, uniting and dividing again in the most pleasing manner.

If a jar be discharged through this vacuum, it presents the appearance of a very dense body of fire, darting directly through the centre of the vacuum, without touching the sides; whereas, when a single spark passes through, it generally goes more or less to the side, and a finger placed on the outside of the glass, will draw it wherever a person pleases. If the vessel be grasped by both hands, every spark is felt like the pulsation of a large artery; and all the fire makes towards the hands. This pulsation is even felt at some distance from the receiver, and a light is seen between the hand and the glass.

All this while the pointed wire is supposed to be electrified positively; if it be electrified negatively,