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The young man's book of amusement

Halifax, 1848

The Mercurial Wand

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Withered Fruit Restored.

Take a shrivelled apple, and placing it under the receiver, exhaust the air. The apple will immediately be plumped up, and look as fresh as when first gathered; for this reason, that the pressure of the external air being taken off, the air in the apple extends it so much so that it will sometimes burst. If the air be let into the receiver, the apple will be restored to its original shrivelled state.

The Magic Bell.

Fix a small bell to the wire that goes through the top of the receiver. If you shake the wire, the bell will ring while the air is in the receiver; but when the air is drawn off, the sound will by degrees become faint, till at last not the least noise can be heard. As you let the air in again, the sound returns.

The Mercurial Wand.

Take a piece of stick, cut it even at each end with a penknife, and immerse it in a vessel of mercury. When the air is pumped out of the receiver, it will at the same time come out of the pores of the wood through the mercury, as will be visible at each end

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of the stick. When the air is again let into the receiver, it falls on the surface of the mercury, and forces it into the pores of the wood to possess the place of air.

When the rod is taken out, it will be found considerably heavier than before, and that it has changed its colour, being now all over of a blueish hue. If cut transversely, the quicksilver will be seen to glitter in every part of it.

Feathers heavier than Lead.

At one end of a fine balance, hang a piece of lead, and at the other as many feathers as will poise it; then place the balance in the receiver. As the air is exhausted, the feathers will appear to overweigh the lead, and when all the air is drawn off, the feathers will preponderate, and the lead ascend.

The Self-moving Wheel.

Take a circle of tin, about ten inches in diameter, or of any other size that will go into the receiver, and to its circumference fix a number of tin vanes, each about an inch square. Let this wheel be placed between two upright pieces on an axis, whose extremities are quite small, so that the wheel may turn in a vertical position with the least possible force. Place the wheel and axis in the receiver, and ex-