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The young man's book of amusement

Halifax, 1848

Curious Experiment with a Viper

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The Animated Bacchus.

Construct a figure of Bacchus, seated on a cask ; let his belly be formed by a bladder, and let a tube proceed from his mouth to the cask. Fill this tube with coloured water or wine, then place the whole under the receiver. Exhaust the air, and the liquor will be thrown up into his mouth. While he is drinking, his belly will expand.

The Artificial Balloon.

Take a bladder containing only a small quantity of air, and a piece of lead to it, sufficient to sink it, if immersed in water. Put this apparatus into a jar of water, and place the whole under a receiver. Then exhaust the air, and the bladder will expand, become a balloon lighter than the fluid in which it floats, and ascend, carrying the weight with it.

Curious Experiment with a Viper.

Many natural philosophers, in their eagerness to display the powers of science, have overlooked one of the first duties of life, humanity ; and, with this view, have tortured and killed many harmless animals, to exemplify the amazing effects of the air-

pump. We, however, will not stain the pages of this little work, by recommending any such species of cruelty, which in many instances can merely gratify curiosity: but as our readers might like to read the effect on animals, we extract from the learned Boyle, an account of his experiment with a viper.

He took a newly-caught viper, and shutting it up in a small receiver, extracted the air. At first, upon the air being drawn away, the viper began to swell: a short time after, it gaped and opened its jaws; it then resumed its former lankness, and began to move up and down within the receiver, as if to seek for air. After a while, it foamed a little, leaving the foam sticking to the inside of the glass: soon after, the body and neck became prodigiously swelled, and blistered on its back. Within an hour and a half from the time the receiver was exhausted, the distended viper moved, being yet alive, though its jaws remained quite stretched: its black tongue reached beyond the mouth, which had also become black in the inside; in this situation it continued for three hours; but on the air being re-admitted, the viper's mouth was presently closed, and soon after opened again; and these motions continued some time, as if there were still some remains of life.

New Method of Congealing Water.

A celebrated gentleman gives the following account of his interesting experiment on this subject:

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