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

**Halifax, 1848**

Gigantic Meterological Aeolian Harp

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*Gigantic Meterological Æolian Harp.*

Captain Haas, of Basle, has designated by these an apparatus which emits of itself a variety of sounds during a change of weather. Since the year 1787, he had stretched above his garden fifteen iron wires, three hundred and twenty feet long, and at the distance of about two inches from one another: the largest wire was two lines in diameter, the smallest one line, and those of intermediate size one line and a half. They were situated towards the south, and are inclined 20 or 30 degs. to the horizon, being stretched by means of rollers, properly arranged for the purpose. Whenever the weather changes, these wires sound with such loudness that it is impossible to go on with a concert in the house. The sounds sometimes resemble the hissing noise of water rapid in ebullition, sometimes that of an harmonicon, and sometimes that of a distant chime, or an organ.

The inventor of this curious apparatus is Mr. Venttau, provost of Burkli, not far from Basle. He sometimes shot at a mark from his window, and in order that he might not go to the mark at each shot, he attached to it a long iron wire to draw it to him at pleasure. He remarked more than once that the wire sounded exactly an octave; and he found that every iron wire, stretched in a direction parallel to the sounds, emitted this tone at every change of the weather.

A brass wire did not produce any sound, nor did an iron wire when it was stretched from east to west.

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M. Dobereiner, of Jena, conceives that the phenomenon now described, is the effect of an electro-magnetic action; and he proposes to try if the brass wire would not sound when it communicates at its extremity with an energetic electrometer.

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*To Make an Æolian Harp.*

This instrument may be made by almost any carpenter: it consists of a long narrow box of very thin deal, about five or six inches deep, with a circle in the middle of the upper side, of an inch and a half in diameter, in which are to be drilled small holes. On this side, seven, ten, or more strings, of very fine gut, are stretched over bridges at each end, like the bridges of a fiddle, and screwed up or relaxed with screw pins. The strings must be all tuned to one and the same note, and the instrument be placed in some current of air, where the wind can pass over its strings with freedom. A window, of which the width is exactly equal to the length of the harp, with the sash just raised to give the air admission, is a proper situation. When the air blows upon these strings, with different degrees of force, it will excite different tones of sound; sometimes the blast brings out all the tones in full concert, and sometimes it sinks them to the softest murmurs.