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The young man's book of amusement

Halifax, 1848

Chinese Shadows

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Shadows.

Behind a transparent screen of white cloth, place a *very powerful* light, from which as the performer, whose image is formed on the screen, recedes, his figure will attain to gigantic proportions; again, when he approaches, and is between the light and the screen, his figure will be more accurately defined; by jumping over the light, he will appear to ascend to a great height, and disappear. By nimble and grotesque movements and attitudes—by the judicious introduction of any animal, &c.—the effect may be considerably heightened, and much laughter be excited.

This amusing optical exhibition was successfully employed at the Royal Gardens, Vauxhall, where it excited great applause.

Chinese Shadows.

This ingenious instrument consists in moving, by pegs fastened to them, small figures cut out of paste-board, the joints of which are all pliable, behind a piece of fine painted gauze, placed before an opening in a curtain, in such a manner as to exhibit various scenes according to pleasure; while the opening, covered with gauze is illuminated, towards the apartment where the spectators sit, by means of light reflected back from a mirror, so that the shadows of

the pegs are concealed. When it is requisite to cause a figure to perform a variety of movements, it is necessary to have several persons, who must be exceedingly expert. When a snake is to be represented gliding, the figure which consists of delicate rings, must be directed, at least, by three assistants.

This amusement, which one can hardly see the first time without pleasure, is a Chinese invention. Many years ago, Chinese boxes were seen, on which such moveable figures were apparent only when the box was held against the light. In China, these shadows are used at the well known feast of lanterns.

There are many other pleasing Experiments which might be made with the Magic Lantern, but the limits of our work will not permit us to specify them, without excluding many other equally interesting subjects of a different nature.