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The young man's book of amusement

Halifax, 1848

How to meal Gunpowder, Brimstone, and Charcoal

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There have been many methods used to grind these ingredients to a powder for fireworks, such as large mortars and pestles made of ebony, and other hard woods ; but none of these methods have proved so effectual and speedy as the new invention, of the *mealing table.* It is made of elm, with a rim round its edge, four or five inches high ; and one end is a slider, which runs in a groove and forms part of the rim, so that when you have taken out of the table as much powder as you wish, with a copper shovel, you may sweep all clean out at the slider. When you are going to meal a quantity of powder, do not put too much on the table at once, but when you have put in a good proportion, take a muller and rub it therewith till all the grains are broke ; then sift it in a lawn sieve, that has a receiver and top to it ; and that which does not pass through the sieve, return again to the table and grind it more, till you have brought it all fine enough to go through the sieve. Brimstone and charcoal are ground in the same manner as gunpowder, only the muller must be made of ebony, for these ingredients being harder than powder, would stick in the grain of the elm, and be very difficult to grind ; and as the brimstone is apt to stick and clog to the table, it would be best to keep one for that purpose only, by which means you will always have your brimstone clean and well ground.