

MY FIRST LECTURE ON ELECTRICITY.

What a multitude of speculations and guesses do we hear from time to time as to the nature of the Electric Telegraph, and the subtle mysterious fluid that is perpetually flashing through fabulous distances, and without the least regard to time, messages of greeting and of grief, tidings of weal and of woe !

I remember once to have heard a respectable old lady, well read in other matters, declare her conviction that the wires of the telegraph must be hollow, and that the messages having been written neatly on slips of paper and compressed into small pellets, were driven by some curious and ingenious adaptation of atmospheric pressure from end to end of the tubes ; I have known others possessed with the idea that some one *pulls the wires*—but the majority of people whom I have met, and especially of the dwellers in these parts where telegraph poles have not yet been planted, live in a sort of perpetual puzzle upon the subject, and if they hink about it at all, are troubled by intense haze and mistiness.

"Why," said I to myself, one cold dreary day as I drove along by the shore of "the Gulf," wondering, among other things, whether our winter loneliness would ever be mitigated by "daily news" and "telegrams," only an hour old, instead of the rather stale provision with which we are fain to content ourselves—"why," said I, "should I keep my little spark of *electric light* under a bushel ? A few of the dwellers by the 'mournful and misty Atlantic' will be all the wiser for a lecture, however elementary, on electricity and the telegraph ; I shall have them in the school-house ; I shall explain some of those phenomena that will be as wonderful here as they were elsewhere in the days of Franklin, and I shall beat *him* in one respect, for I shall talk about the Telegraph ; then I shall give shocks ; I shall take sparks from noses ; I shall ring bells ; I shall astonish the natives ; I shall"—but here I stopped ; my castle was going up rather fast, and the somewhat depressing reflection immediately succeeded—that I was not possessed of a single piece of apparatus—neither a battery, nor a telegraph, nor an electrical machine, How I wished that there was a "Polytechnic Institution" within a hundred miles or so, from which I could supply my wants ; how many recollections returned of a certain shop window, against the panes of which I frequently flattened my nose in the marvel-loving days of my youth, where machines and gargon-heads of hair, and cannon to be discharged by a "*spark*," and magnets, great and small, caused in me an intense hankering, which was only occasionally and partially gratified : but this was of no avail. I must now manufacture my own apparatus, if I am to have any ; the difficulties are great, without doubt, thought I, but not insurmountable.

And so, soon afterwards I set to work. My first look-out was for a bottle sufficiently large and strong for a *cylinder*. This I diligently sought out in all the shops in our village, but without success.

I then tried the stores in the next village, and at length I set my eyes upon a desirable article. The owner, evidencing a love of science, not suspected before,