stration, and determined to bring his conjectures to the test of experiment as soon as the spire of the church at Philadelphia, then building, should be finished. But it was not easy to wait with patience when so important a question was to be determined, and he provided himself with other means of inquiry, which were so simple that they could only have been selected and adopted by a truly philosophic mind. The instrument by which Franklin determined to investigate the nature of lightning was a common kite; and he accordingly prepared two cross sticks, over which he stretched a silk handkerchief, and with this he acted the part of the fabled Prometheus. On the first approach of a thunder-cloud he prepared for his experiment; but so apparently childish were his apparatus and his hopes, that, with a modesty frequently the attribute of a great mind, he communicated his intentions only to his son, who assisted him in the experiment. The kite was raised, and for some time no effect was produced; but at last he saw that there was a bristling up and apparent repulsion between the loose threads of the hempen cord; and, shortly after, when the string had been moistened by a shower of rain, he obtained sparks and other appearances demonstrative of the presence of electricity. In this way Franklin discovered the identity of the electricity of the machine and the agent which produces the phenomenon of lightning, and in after experiments succeeded in obtaining by it all the effects which were then known to attend the progress of ordinary electricity.

But, although the honour of this discovery is universally given to Franklin, it is but due to MM. Dalibard and Deler to state, that they, having acquainted themselves with Franklin's hypothesis, made some experiments about the same time, and came to the same results as Franklin himself.

EFFECTS OF LIGHTNING.

The most disastrous effects are frequently produced by the transmission of accumulated atmospheric electricity, and numerous instances are upon record. It seems to be the habit of electricity to seek out a good conductor; and it will, in some instances, make an eccentric course, in order to be transferred by particular substances. When this agent passes through bodies that offer but little resistance to its progress, no mechanical effects are produced upon them, except in