

It is common with the Mahommedans to practise ablution before prayer; and they all bathe once a day at least. But while a bath may be had for a quarter of a cent, they ascend in price, according to the scale of accommodation, until, for some, you must pay five dollars. Separate baths are provided for the sexes; and the sanctity of this separation is such, that a man who should violate it would be in imminent hazard of being murdered on the spot.

Entering into one of these costly baths, for example, before dinner, the windows of which are darkened with coloured glass and odiferous plants. The air is cooled by showers from a fountain. Agreeable attendants are provided to amuse you with conversation. Some of these are *improvisatori*, who will, off-hand, invent for you an interesting tale, in prose or verse; or if you prefer music, they will sing you an Arabic song, and accompany it with the guitar. You are then conducted into a warm chamber, and thence into another yet warmer.

Here, perhaps, you will find singing birds and some books; but of the latter, the native bathers rarely make any use. Your chamber grows warmer and warmer, till at length you are glad to pull off your clothes.

You are then laid out by your attendants on a marble slab. They are armed with gloves made of the Cashmere goat, which is rough, but not sufficiently so to give you pain. They then commence the process of *champooing* you. They draw out every joint, and let it go, till it cracks like a pistol. They twist about your arms; they bend your elbows, and thence passing down the back, they proceed in a similar manner, till you hear a report from each one of the vertebrae.

Under a process so unusual, a stranger reposes his chief confidence in the fact, that others have undergone it before him, and have escaped injury. This loosening of the joints is said to give suppleness to the frame; under which persuasion it was practised, as we know, by *Athleta*, the runners and the wrestlers of the Greeks.

Your persecutors next proceed to a process of violent friction over your whole body, and

you are surprised to discover that by means of these various operations, they have actually brought off from your body material substance to the weight of a pound, or even two pounds. Medical men well know that the epidermis is always coated with deposit, which is the effect of insensible perspiration; and any one will believe them who has passed through the manipulation I have described.

After it is completed, the skin feels like satin, and partially retains this delightful smoothness for a day or two. I am well persuaded, that half the diseases which prevail among us may be traced to obstructions of the skin; and that the use of the bath, accompanied by severe friction, conduces in an eminent degree to health and long life.

After you have undergone this series of cracking and rubbing, they finish off by plunging you into a bath of rose-water up to the neck. You are then furnished with coffee, the *chabouque*, or long pipe, and with sherbet, a liquor compounded of the juice of the pomegranate, orange and citron, but contaminated by no admixture of alcohol.

Such an indulgence may be censured as extravagant, and to some persons it would undoubtedly be so; but those who have money will use it for their gratification; and if that is the object, I know of hardly any way in which it may be more certainly secured. It is the fashion in London and in New-York, for gentlemen to attend public dinners. On the propriety of this practice, I pass no opinion; but I may be permitted to state what are not infrequently some of the consequences. A man eats twice as much as he would at home, and drinks three times as much; and after vociferating, perhaps, and cheering for three or four hours, he goes home, falls asleep, and gets the night-mare; wakes next morning with the headache; finds his tongue furred, and his nerves unstrung; sends for the doctor; swallows physic; yawns; is snappish and irritable; and, in short, is not a man for two or three days after. Then comes reflection, and then regret. Now, of the two modes of enjoyment, which is the most rational—an oriental bath, which costs you five dollars, and leaves you next day a healthier and a better