

EASTERN BATHING.

There are very few persons among us who have not heard of Mr. Buckingham, the oriental traveller. Mr. B. is, professedly, a most zealous friend of cleanliness, and of all the other virtues which conduce to health of body and purity of soul. In his lectures of Egypt, he gives a particular account of one form of bathing as practised in that country, from which we think every individual may derive important hints.

The following are his remarks as reported for the New-York Observer.

Baths are extremely numerous in Egypt; and so great are the advantages which attend the use of them, that it is greatly to be lamented they are not universal. They are so favourable both to health and to pleasure, that I could desire no private house should be without its bath; but it is surprising to think that in many cities of England there is no bath at all; or if there be one, it is in some obscure corner, so far off as to be of little general use.

Among the Mahommedans, baths are as numerous as their mosques. I doubt if in their cities a single street can be found, without one or more of them. There is a general conviction in the East, that personal cleanliness is favourable to morality; while, on the other hand, vice and filth go naturally together. Baths are to be had at all prices. For a single *para*, (in value about one-fourth of one of your cents,) you are furnished with a private apartment, hot water, a towel and soap, and have liberty to stay half an hour.

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 odoriferous 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 vertebræ.

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 *Athletæ*, 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 will 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