

**The vapour bath. : A slight sketch of the value of the Indian medicated vapour bath, as a certain cure in cases of gout, rheumatism, neuralgia, muscular contractions and sprains, colds, influenza, etc., and an admirable conservator of health.**

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The Vapour Bath.

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OF THE  
INDIAN MEDICATED VAPOUR BATH,  
AS  
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IN  
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CONTRACTIONS AND SPRAINS, COLDS, INFLUENZA, &c.  
AND  
AN ADMIRABLE CONSERVATOR OF HEALTH.

BY  
HORATIO MAHOMED,  
No. 7, RYDER STREET, ST. JAMES'S.

London:  
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—  
1854.

THE REPORT

A REPORT ON THE

INDIAN MEDICAL AND PHARMACEUTICAL

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AN

HORATIO

NO. 1

BOOK

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## THE VAPOUR BATH.

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It is a well known fact that the "*Vapour Bath*," in a more or less complete form, has been used by various nations, from time immemorial; the inhabitants of the eastern and northern hemispheres consider it essential to their existence, and it is a common luxury among all classes: there the Vapour Baths are so constructed that numbers may resort to them at the same time, and it is certain that the ancient Greeks and Romans did the same, as the extent and magnificence of the buildings dedicated to that purpose amply testify.

The form introduced and adopted in this country by my Father, *Sake Deen Mahomed*, is more convenient for medical purposes, and more in accordance with our habits of privacy; but in order to understand thoroughly the superiority of this kind of Bath, over every other, it is necessary in the first place to be convinced of the importance of that wonderful membrane which envelopes our whole body, and, on the action of which, there cannot be greater or more satisfactory proof, than will be found in the following extract from a work by Dr. Hufeland,\* where, in recurring to the relation of the skin to health, he observes, that "it must not be considered as a common covering to defend us from the sun and the rain, but as one of the most important organs of our body, without the incessant activity and agency of which, there can be neither health or long life, and in the neglect of which, in modern times, lies the secret source of numberless diseases and evils, that tend to shorten our existence. The skin is the greatest medium of purifying our bodies, and every moment, a multitude of

\* The Art of Prolonging Life, by Christopher William Hufeland, M.D. Public Lecturer on Medicine at Jena, 1797.



useless, corrupted, and worn out particles, evaporate through its numberless small vessels, in an insensible manner; this secretion is inseparably connected with life, and the circulation of our blood; and by it the greater part of all the impurity of our bodies is removed; if the skin, therefore, be flabby, or inactive, and if its pores be stopped up, accridity and corruption of our juices will be the unavoidable consequences, and the most dangerous diseases may ensue."

Again, that highly popular author, Mr. Erasmus Wilson, in one of the best treatises ever written upon the subject, gives such an extraordinary and ingenious description of the pores of the skin, as must be conclusive to the most sceptical.\* "Taken separately, the little perspiratory tube, with its appended gland, is calculated to awaken in the mind very little idea of the importance of the system to which it belongs; but, when the vast number of similar organs composing this system are considered, we are led to form some notion, however imperfect, of their probable influence on the health and comfort of the individual. I use the words 'imperfect notion' advisedly, for the reality surpasses imagination and almost belief. To arrive at something like an estimate of the value of the perspiratory system, in relation to the rest of the organism, I counted the perspiratory pores on the palm of the hand, and found 3528 in a square inch. Now, each of these pores being the aperture of a little tube of about a quarter of an inch long, it follows, that in a square inch of skin on the palm of the hand there exists a length of tube equal to 882 inches, or  $73\frac{1}{2}$  feet. Surely such an amount of drainage as seventy-three feet in every square inch of skin, assuming this to be the average of the whole body, is something wonderful, and the thought naturally intrudes itself—What if this drainage were obstructed? Could we need a stronger argument for enforcing the necessity of attention to the skin?

"On the pulps of the fingers, where the ridges of the sensitive layer of the true skin are somewhat finer than in the palm of the hand, the number of pores on a square inch

\* A Treatise on the Management of the Skin and Hair in relation to Health, by Erasmus Wilson, F.R.S., page 37.



a little exceeded that of the palm; and on the heel, where the ridges are coarser, the number of pores on the square inch was 2268, and the length of tube 567 inches, or 47 feet. To obtain an estimate of the length of tube of the perspiratory system of the whole surface of the body, I think that 2800 might be taken as a fair average of the number of pores in the square inch. and 700, consequently, of the number of inches in length. *Now, the number of square inches of surface in a man of ordinary height and bulk is 2500; the number of pores, therefore, 7,000,000, and the number of inches of perspiratory tube, 1,750,000, that is, 145,833 feet, or 48,600 yards, or nearly twenty-eight miles.*

“The regulation of the temperature of the body is only one of the purposes fulfilled by the perspiration: another, and an important one, is the removal from the system of a number of compounds noxious to animal life. It was estimated by Lavoisier and Seguin, that eight grains of perspiration were exhaled by the skin in the course of a minute, a quantity which is equivalent to thirty-three ounces in twenty-four hours. Of this quantity, a large proportion is, naturally, water: but nearly one per cent., according to Anselmino, consists of solid substance; of the latter, one hundred parts contain about twenty-three parts of salts, the remainder being organic matter. An analysis of one hundred parts of the solid matter of perspiration, according to Anselmino, gave the following results—namely:

Osmazome,* combined with common salt.....	48 parts.
Lactic acid salts, with osmazome .....	29 „
Animal matter, with vitriolic salts.....	21 „
Calcareous salts.....	2

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“Mentioned in detail, the substances contained in the perspiration are, animal matter, gases, acids, alkalies, calcareous earth, metals, salts, and probably a simple body,

\* The peculiar animal principle which gives flavour to meats and part of the odour to perspiration.



sulphur. Among the animal matter occurs a small quantity of fat. The gases are, the carbonic acid, which is most abundant after a meal of vegetable food, and nitrogen, which is most largely given off after animal diet. The acids are, butyric, lactic, acetic, hydrochloric, phosphoric, and sulphuric: the alkalies, soda, potash, and ammonia: the calcareous earth, lime, in combination with phosphoric acid: the metals, peroxide of iron, and, possibly, copper and lead in minute quantities: and the salts, a long list formed by the combination of the acids with the alkalies and lime. The principal salts are, the chloride of sodium, carbonate, phosphate, and sulphate of soda; chloride of potassium, and acetate of potash; lactate and hydrochlorate of ammonia; and phosphate and carbonate of lime. The peculiar odour of perspiration is due to its organic constituents, and to the butyric and lactic acids.

“When the perspiration is checked, from disorder of the skin, or cold, the whole of these matters fail of being removed, and are circulated through the system by the blood. Under favourable circumstances they are separated from the latter by the kidneys, the liver, or the lungs, but not without disturbing the equilibrium of action of those organs, and sometimes being the cause of disease. The perspiration is a fluid whose regularity and continuance of exhalation are not merely conducive, but absolutely necessary to health; without such regularity, the animal temperature would run riot, and substances of an injurious quality would be allowed to permeate the finest and most delicate of the tissues of the body. Some experimentalists in France conceived that, by obstructing the perspiration of the skin, and thereby preventing the dispersion of animal temperature by evaporation, they would be enabled to produce internal fever at will. To satisfy themselves on this question, they covered a rabbit with an impermeable coating of varnish: but the result failed to satisfy their expectation. Instead of an increase of temperature, the heat of the body quickly diminished; and in one hour and a half the animal died of asphyxia.

“The suppression of perspiration is merely one of the effects of a shock received by the constitution, and by no means the cause. The first effect of the cold upon the



part is a lower tone of the cutaneous nerves, and a consentaneous contraction in diameter of the capillary blood-vessels. As a consequence of these preliminary changes, the skin becomes contracted and shrunken; less blood than natural is sent to the surface; nutrition and its chemical actions are suspended; perspiration is suppressed; and the surface becomes pallid and bloodless. The blood, in fact, no longer able to enter the contracted capillaries, its cutaneous circulation being at an end, retreats upon the internal membranes and vital organs, affecting one part or other of the mucous membrane, or one or other of the of the vital organs, according to the constitutional peculiarity of the individual. In one, the blood will be determined on the lungs, causing cough and inflammation; in another, upon the throat, producing sore-throat; in a third, upon the membranes lining the nose, eyes, and ears, producing 'migraine,' or cold in the head; in a fourth, upon the stomach, causing a bilious attack; in a fifth, upon the bowels, causing pain and inordinate action, in a sixth, on the kidneys, producing severe pain in the loins; in a seventh, on the joints, producing rheumatism; in an eighth, on the nerves, producing neuralgia or tic-doloureux; in a ninth, on the brain, producing faintness, insensibility, convulsions, and even apoplexy, and so on. 'There is scarcely an organ in the body,' remarks Dr. Dunglison, 'that may not be affected by undue or irregular action excited in some portion of the capillary system of the skin.' In a minor degree, it may be observed, that whenever we are slightly chilled, as by too light dress, by cold shoes, &c., any sensitive organ of the body immediately evinces discomfort or distress; thus, if we have suffered at any period from tic-doloureux or rheumatism, we immediately feel a warning twinge, or if our lungs are delicate, we begin to cough; while, on the other hand, the very instant we get warm, the twinge ceases, and the cough subsides."

Thus, then, we see seven millions of outlets for a special purpose; and ought not the individual question be—Shall I nullify this marvellous provision of Nature, and in the face of precept and example, allow my skin to be incrustated with that which is unnatural, and so effectually render it



useless, totally regardless of the consequences? Should this question be answered in the negative, I would then proceed to show, in how simple a manner the Vapour Bath acts upon the system, and speedily renders each minute pore subservient to the end for which it was formed.

The manner of administering the Vapour Bath at my establishment is as follows:—The bather is seated upon a chair, enclosed in a flannel covering, which rests on a framework of brass; the vapour, passing through fragrant herbs, of peculiar virtue, rises gradually and slowly, until the requisite temperature is obtained; it is consequently breathed, and brought in contact with every part of the interior of the lungs; and the whole body being in the same temperature, renders determination of blood to the head impossible (which frequently happens when the head is not enclosed; and a similar effect is experienced in a hot-water bath, when taken at too high a temperature). The steam is then gradually reduced, and a shower of warm perfumed water poured over the body; the bather is then wrapped in hot linen, and reclines upon a couch, until sufficiently cool to dress.\* The vapour can be instantly stopped, and the covering as quickly removed, so that there need be no hesitation on the part of the most timid. I feel it necessary to make these remarks, from the constant prejudice I hear expressed against this kind of bath, by those who have never tried them, as well as by those who have unfortunately had them improperly administered elsewhere. There is nothing unhealthy or unwholesome in inhaling the medicated vapour; it may be inhaled freely by the most delicate or the strongest, by an infant or an adult; and in cases of inflammation of the throat or loss of voice, it affords instantaneous relief.

The effect of such a bath (even to those who constantly take them as a luxury, and as a means of retaining their health) is totally different from the enervating feeling after

\* After such a process, the Bather is in a position to agree with Sanctorius, that melancholy is overcome by a free perspiration, and that cheerfulness, without any evident cause, proceeds from perspiration succeeding well.



taking a hot-water bath. The whole body feels refreshed and invigorated, the brain more energetic and active, and the skin pliant and silky ; in fact, the system altogether appears, in a wonderfully short time, to have undergone a most complete renovation. This description will, of course, appear over-colored to some ; but I fearlessly appeal to all who have used my baths, as to its correctness, being confident that I have asserted no more than the truth.

To persons of strong habit and constitution there is yet another luxury, and one of the highest class, which surpasses all the imagination can conceive, and which requires to be undergone but to be appreciated. It is the invariable custom of many (who consider the bath incomplete without it,) to step from the Vapour to the Cold Shower Bath, upon retiring from which, and being well rubbed, a feeling of such an exhilarating kind is experienced, that whatever languor or lassitude may have been previously felt, gives place at once to one of delightful vigour and elasticity.\* There is not the slightest fear to be entertained, by this sudden transition from heat to cold, as will be seen by the following, from Mr. Erasmus Wilson's work, page 147, where, treating of the influence of ablution on the health of the skin, he says: "Among the Romans, cold affusion after the warm bath was the common practice, and still continues to be so in those countries in which the Vapour Bath is used. The *Thermæ*, or public baths of Rome, were very numerous, and comprehended many of the most magnificent buildings in that city. The bath consisted of four apartments: a *Tepidaria*, heated with warm air, in which the bather undressed and afterwards dressed himself, when the final friction and inunction with oil and pomatum were accomplished; a *Laconium*, raised to a higher temperature by heated air or vapour; a *Calidaria*, containing a warm bath; and a *Frigidaria*, a cold bath, into which the bather plunged after quitting the *Calidaria*; from the cold bath he returned to the *Tepidaria*, to be dried, anointed, and powdered.

\* Homer, speaking of a person just returning from the Bath, and anointed with fragrant oils, says that he appeared taller and larger than before, and was grown something like the immortals.



“It is incorrect to suppose that any danger is likely to result from cold affusion when the skin is in a state of excitation, and the nervous powers at their natural standard, or elevated above the normal range. It is only when the body is chilled, and the powers of the nervous system are depressed, whether from moral or physical causes, such as fatigue or disease, that any ill consequences can accrue. Dr. Currie, many years since, pointed out the importance of cold affusion in the hot stage of fever, and pursued the practice with success. Cold never injures the body when acting as a stimulant; it is only when it acts long upon the surface, and robs the latter of its heat, that cold is injurious. The youth of Rome, to avoid the dangers arising from the cold, were wont, after their contests on the Plain of Mars, to leap into the Tiber. By this practice, they checked and removed the perspiration from the skin, prevented its slow evaporation, and the cold engendered by that process, and caused a healthful reaction. If we hear of disease following this practice, it is in cases where the object is unknown or overlooked. The individual is labouring under nervous exhaustion from fatigue, or his nervous powers are lowered by the long continuance of the ablution, or he is passive in the bath. There is always some such depressing cause. As a stimulant, I repeat, immersion cannot be injurious.”

The fear of “catching cold” after the application of the Vapour is a most erroneous opinion. Dr. Andrew Combe, in his work on health,\* observes, “The prevalent fear of catching cold, which deters many from using the Vapour Bath, even more than warm bathing, is founded on a false analogy between its effects and those of profuse perspiration from exercise or illness. The latter weakens the body, and by diminishing the power of reaction, renders it susceptible of injury from sudden changes of temperature, but the effect of the Vapour Bath, *properly* administered, is very different, by exciting the vital action of the skin, and giving rise to a power of reaction, which enables it to resist cold better than before.”

\* The Principles of Physiology applied to the Preservation of Health.



Dr. Granville remarks, in his "Travels to St. Petersburg," that "the physical effects of a bath of this description are highly favourable to the constitution. Judging by my own feelings, I should be inclined to place it above every form of bath in general use, and I think I am indebted to it for the removal of severe rheumatic pains which, before, nothing seemed to alleviate. A Russian is apt to think that almost every disorder to which he is necessarily liable, from the severity of the climate, may be removed by the Vapour Bath, and he flies to it on all occasions when ailing. Most of those who have travelled in Russia, or in the Levant, where a similar kind of bath is used with even greater frequency by every class of people, can bear testimony to the efficacy as well as the comfort of a Russian or Turkish bath in their own case, when afflicted with colds, rheumatism, cutaneous affections, or incipient fever. On two other occasions, besides the one already alluded to, I attended the same establishment in the course of five weeks spent at St. Petersburg, and both times derived the full measure of benefit from it which I expected. I went thither with every symptom of an approaching feverish cold, and returned quite well, and continued so. The external temperature was on both occasions seven or eight degrees below freezing point; snow was upon the ground. In the ante-room the temperature was at  $100^{\circ}$ , and in the bath-room  $132^{\circ}$ ; yet notwithstanding this striking difference of temperature, I walked home the distance of half a mile, without the least inconvenience or ill effect."

There is no more absurd or pernicious opinion than that Vapour Bathing is a weakening exercise. Can it be argued that the restoration of the exhalent system (one of the most important functions of the animal economy) when rendered incapable of action, from neglect or disease, is an injudicious course? Is the withdrawal of morbid matters from the system by means of the pores of the skin, their *natural channel*, an unwise and weakening practice? On the contrary, there are no surer means of acquiring strength and vigour.

In a lecture recently delivered by Mr. Alexander Bain,



at the Edinburgh Philosophical Institution, he states, that "next to eating and sleeping, this bath may be ranked among the very foremost of the necessaries and supports of life. It is of far higher consequence, and of more general utility, than any kind of manual exercise, gymnastic, or sport. It affects the system more powerfully than these, even in the very points wherein their excellence consists; and it is applicable in a thousand circumstances where they are not. It does not supersede, but it ought to come before, these other practises. There certainly does not exist a greater device in the art of living, or a greater instrument for securing a vigorous and buoyant existence. It is one of the most powerful diversions to the current of business occupation; it can suspend for a time the pressure of our pursuits and anxieties, and return us fresh for the enjoyment of our other delights. To the three varieties of state which our bodies pass daily through, eating, working, sleeping, it would add a fourth, luxurious in itself, and increasing the relish for all the rest. It would contribute to realize the perfect definition of a good animal existence, which is, *to have the appetite always fresh for whatever is before us*. The health of the mind must be based in the first place on the health of the body; mental occupation and refined enjoyments turn into gall and bitterness, if they are not supported by the freshness and vigour of the physical frame."

Many persons who are unacquainted with the effects of the Vapour Bath, entertain a dread of its application, apprehending suffocation, scalding, prostration of strength, syncope, and other disagreeable consequences. It is hardly necessary for me to say, such apprehensions are entirely groundless; indeed I have generally found that those persons who have entertained the greatest dread of the process before encountering its effects, have afterwards been amongst its most zealous encomiasts, invariably describing it as a most delicious and invigorating operation.

The Indian Medicated Vapour and Shampooing Bath is wonderfully efficacious in *gouty* and *rheumatic* affections, *lumbago*, *sciatica*, *muscular contractions*, *stiff joints*, *sprains*, &c. &c.; and when properly applied, it diminishes nervous



irritability, and has effectually relieved cases of *tic doloureux* and paralysis. It has been found of essential use in the cure of the various and complicated diseases arising from derangement of the stomach, liver, and bowels. Also in diseases of the kidneys and bladder, as well as in glandular affections, whether arising from scrofula, or any other disorder of the constitution, and counteracts the ill effects arising from the abuse of mercury, &c. It possesses also a most miraculous effect in all complaints of the skin.

The Vapour Bath, in combination with Shampooing, equalises the circulation of the blood, and powerfully tends to prevent its determination to the head, and also to remove giddiness and prevent coldness of the hands and feet. It re-establishes insensible perspiration, and by opening the pores of the skin, relieves or removes symptoms of inflammation. It is also highly serviceable in reducing superabundance of fat, and is frequently used in the process of "training." To persons of sedentary habits, or whose occupation prevents their taking sufficient exercise, it is of immense and acknowledged value; many of the greatest senators, advocates, and literary characters of the day, constantly making use of it.

The Douche Bath, being a contrivance for the application of water *locally* from a great height, and combining with affusion, concussion of the skin, is highly serviceable (especially when followed by Shampooing) in all cases of sprains, weakness, and stiffness of the joints.

The operation of Shampooing is an art first practised by the inhabitants of the Eastern World, with whom it has preserved a great celebrity for many ages. It requires judgment and experience in its application, and, combined with the Indian medicated oils, in *sprains, lumbago, sciatica*, and all chronic affections, produces marvellous effects, and has a most grateful influence on the system; it gives a pliability and elasticity to the muscles, and freedom to every joint, imparting an activity and suppleness to the body which is extremely invigorating and agreeable.

The Vapour Bath may be employed at all times and seasons of the year, with the most decided advantage. The only improper times being immediately after a meal, or just previous to going to bed.



## TESTIMONIALS.

*The following testimonials from such eminent Surgeons and Physicians will, it is presumed, be sufficiently satisfactory as to the utility of these Baths, and the mode of administering them at my Establishment, where they may be inspected, as well as numerous other autograph letters, testifying as to their extraordinary efficacy :—*

Having had frequent opportunities of witnessing the usefulness of Vapour and Shampooing Baths (properly applied), I have great pleasure in strongly recommending them. Mr. H. MAHOMED, some years back, was a pupil of mine, since which I have heard that he has devoted much of his attention to these auxiliaries for the cure of diseases.

JOHN LAWRENCE,

Surgeon to the Sussex County Hospital.

Brighton.

I have for a considerable time been in the habit of recommending Vapour Baths (and indeed of using them myself) in cases of Chronic Rheumatism, Stiffness of Joints, &c., and I have generally sent my Patients to Mr. H. MAHOMED, because I have had experience of his perfect competence to apply them properly, as well as of his great attention.

I can therefore venture strongly to certify to his merits, and to his being worthy of confidence as to his mode of conducting his Bathing Establishment.

ROBERT KEATE,

Serjeant-Surgeon to the Queen.

11, Herford Street, Mayfair.

I have great satisfaction in stating that, having frequently sent Patients to the Baths prepared by Mr. MAHOMED, I have always had great reason to be pleased with the manner in which they have been administered.

MARSHALL HALL, M.D., F.R.S.

Grosvenor Street.



Having frequently recommended, and taken myself, Vapour Baths, at Mr. MAHOMED's, Ryder Street, I can with satisfaction, state that they are very good in arrangement and construction, and administered by him with great judgment and attention. I regard Mr. MAHOMED therefore as, in all respects, deserving of patronage and success.

JOHN BURNE, M.D.,

Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians,

Physician to the Westminster Hospital, &c.

24, Lower Brook Street.

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This is to certify, that I have frequently sent Patients to Mr. MAHOMED's Baths, and I have always heard from them how well pleased they have been with his attention and general knowledge as to their anagement and application.

JOHN NUSSEY,

Apothecary to the Queen.

4, Cleveland Row, St. James's.

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I have great pleasure in expressing my entire approval of the system which Mr. MAHOMED pursues in his bathing Establishment. The Vapour Bath is a very great luxury, and, as a medical measure, is of immense and acknowledged utility in a great variety of affections. I have had many Vapour Baths in different Establishments: the manner in which Mr. MAHOMED administers his, is in all respects very superior to any other I have had.

ROBERT LISTON,

Late Surgeon to the London University Hospital, &c., &c.

5, Clifford Street.

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Having frequently sent Patients to Mr. MAHOMED's Baths, and taken the Baths myself, I am enabled to give an opinion of the Baths themselves and of their management. On both points I cannot but express my entire satisfaction. The manipulation practised by Mr. MAHOMED in the Vapour Bath is admirable, and conduces much to the efficiency of the Bath as a remedy in disease. I can also speak in equal praise of the ladies' department, having had frequent opportunities of testing its management.

ERASMUS WILSON, F.R.S.

17, Henrieta Street, Cavendish Square.



# MAHOMED'S BATHS,

7, RYDER STREET, ST. JAMES'S.

The above celebrated Baths, acknowledged to be the most complete in the kingdom, are open daily, under the immediate superintendence of Mr. MAHOMED.

The department for Ladies is under the personal direction of Mrs. MAHOMED.

## TERMS:

	£	s.	d.
Indian Medicated Vapour and Shampooing Bath . . . . .	0	6	0
A course of four ditto . . . . .	1	1	0
Shampooing after the Bath with Indian Oils . . . . .	0	2	6
A Sulphur Vapour Bath . . . . .	0	6	0
A Vapour Douche . . . . .	0	5	0
Hot Water Bath . . . . .	0	2	6
Nine ditto . . . . .	1	1	0
Shower Bath . . . . .	0	2	0
Six ditto . . . . .	0	10	6
Douche Water ditto . . . . .	0	2	6
An artificial Sea Water Bath . . . . .	0	3	6
Shampooing without a Bath . . . . .	0	5	0

## MEDICAL GALVANISM AND ELECTRICITY.

Mr. MAHOMED having been informed by several of his Medical Friends that an Establishment was much required where GALVANISM and ELECTRICITY could be properly applied for medical purposes, he begs to acquaint the Public that he has appropriated part of his house for this purpose, being thoroughly acquainted with its various modes of application.

The entire apparatus required has been made on the latest and most scientific principle, and has been highly approved by the first medical authorities who have adapted this remedy as a powerful therapeutical agent in a variety of diseases.

Mr. MAHOMED attends Patients at their residences, either for Galvanism or Shampooing.

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