

VARIOUS

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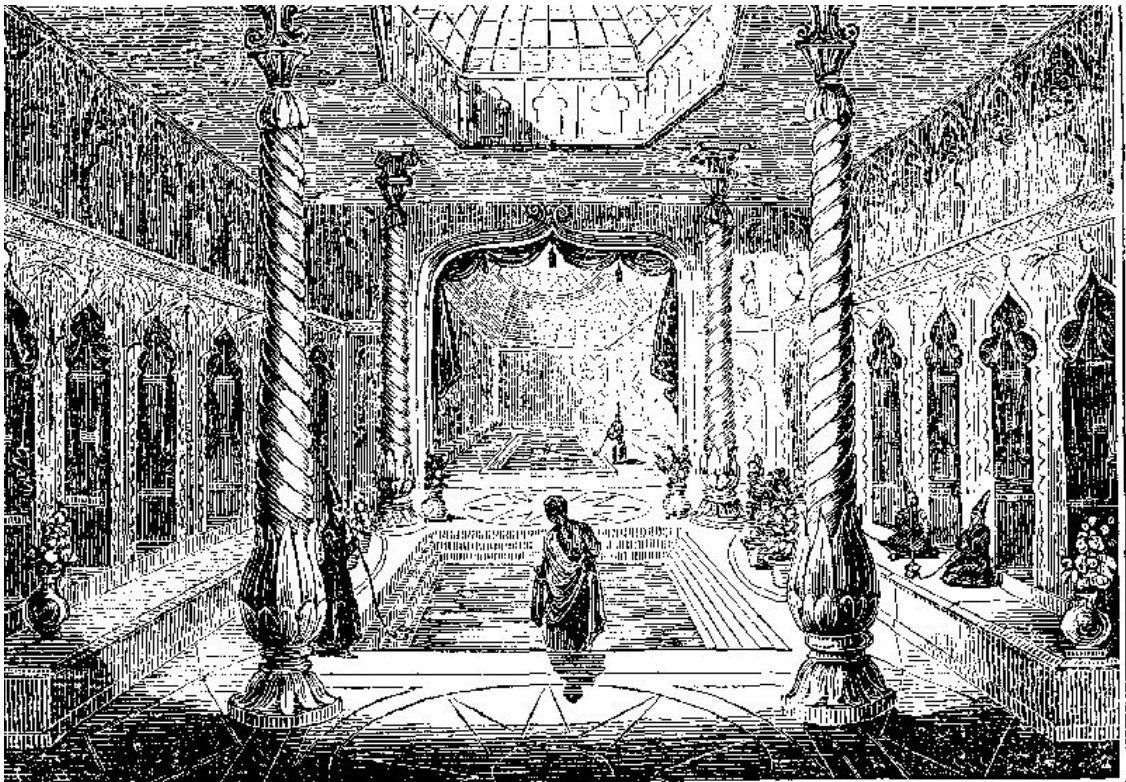
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PERSIAN BATH



PERSIAN BATH

The luxurious indulgence of baths in the East is generally known to the reader of travels, so as to render acceptable the following details. They are extracted from Mr. Buckingham's Travels,¹ and bear all the graphic minuteness of his entertaining pen.

The Bath is one of the principal ones of Kermanshah, an important frontier town of Persia. "It was entered by a porch, extremely clean, and neatly ornamented by painting and other devices on its ceiling and walls. This remarkable contrast to the low, dark, and foul passages which generally lead to Turkish baths, was a presage, upon the very threshold, of greater comfort and accommodation within.

"When we reached the undressing-room, this prepossession was still further strengthened. Here we found a square hall, well lighted from above, having on three of its sides elevated recesses for the visitors, and on the fourth, the passage from the outer porch to the hall, and from this to the inner bath. At the angles of these raised recesses, and dividing their lower roof, which they supported, from the higher one of the central square, were, four good marble pillars, with spirally fluted shafts, and moulded capitals, perfectly uniform in size and design, and producing the best effect. In the centre

¹ Travels in Assyria, Media, and Persia. H. Colburn, 4to., 1829.

of the square space, which these marked out, and on a lower floor, was a large marble cistern of cold water; and at each end of this, on wooden stands, like those used in our arbour and breakfast rooms, were arranged coloured glass jars, with flowers of various kinds in them, well watered and perfectly fresh.

"The walls of this outer hall were ornamented all around by designs of trees, birds, and beasts, in fanciful forms, executed in white upon a blue ground. We undressed here, and were led from hence into the inner bath, where all was still free from everything offensive, either to the sight or smell. This inner room was originally an oblong space of about fifty feet by twenty-five, but had been since made into two square divisions. The first, or outer one, was a plain paved hall, exactly like the undressing-room, except that it had no side recesses, but its floor was level, close to the walls. There were here also four pillars; and in the square space which they enclosed in the centre of the room, was a cistern of water as in the outer one. It was on the floor of this that the visitors lay, to be washed by the attendants; for there were no raised seats for this purpose as in Turkish baths, and the great octagonal one, with its cold fountain, the sides and tops of which are ornamented with mosaic work of marble in Turkey, was here replaced by the cistern described.

"The second division to which this room led, consisted of three parts; the central one was a large and deep bath, filled with warm water, its bottom being level with the lower floor of the building, and the ascent to it being by three or four steep steps.

"As few pleasures are entirely perfect, so here, with all its general apparent superiority to the baths of Turkey, this was inferior to them in the most essential points. The attendants seemed quite ignorant of the art of twisting the limbs, moulding the muscles, cracking the joints, opening the chest, and all that delicious train of operations in which the Turks are so skilful. The visitors were merely well though roughly scrubbed, and their impurities then rinsed off in the large cistern above, from which there was neither a running stream to carry off the foul water, nor cocks of hot and cold to renew and temper it at pleasure, as in Turkey.

"In place of the luxurious moulding of the muscles, the use of the hair-bag, or glove, for removing the dirt, and the profusion of perfumed soap, with which the Turks end a course of treatment full of delight, the Persians are occupied in staining the beard and hair black, the nails of the toes and fingers of a deep red, and the whole of the feet and hands of a yellow colour, by different preparations of henna. This operation is the most unpleasant that can be imagined. The Persians do not shave the whole of the head, as is usual with most of the Turks and Arabs, but, taking of all the hair from the forehead, over the crown, and down the neck, for about a hand's breadth, they leave on each side two large bushy masses depending over their shoulders. This, then, with a very long and full beard, in which all the people here take pride, is plastered with a thick paste, of the consistence of hog's lard, and not less than two pounds weight of which is sometimes used on one person. It possesses a strongly astringent and penetrating quality, and requires great skill in the use of it, to avoid doing considerable mischief. As the eye-brows are plastered with it, as well as the rest of the hair, and as it softens by the heat of the room and of the body, it frequently steals into the eyes, and produces great pain.

"When all is finished, and the visiter leaves the inner bath, he is furnished with two cloths only, one for the waist, and the other to throw loosely over the head and shoulders: he then goes into the outer room into a colder air, thus thinly clad, and without slippers or pattens; no bed is prepared for him, nor is he again attended to by any one, unless he demands a nargeel to smoke; but, most generally, he dresses himself in haste, and departs."

ORIGIN OF PSALMODY

In D'Israeli's *Curiosities of Literature*, there is an amusing and instructive account of the *Origin of Psalm-Singing*. It appears that Psalms in verse were first written by that elegant French poet, Clement Marot, the favoured court bard of Francis I., who was termed by his *un-enviuous* brother poets, "the poet of princes." They were published at Paris, and the volume contained fifty Psalms, written in various measures, and, which, from the beauty of their composition, (some specimens of which we have seen,) appear to be worthy of the muse of Marot. This "Holy Song Book," as he entitled it, was "humbly dedicated to the powerful King of France," and being considered by the volatile French people as an amusing novelty, it sold faster than any book of that period. In fact, the printers could not supply impressions fast enough for the demand; and, as the Psalms were considered in the light of ballads, they were set by the people to popular tunes, and were commonly *sung* as ballads.

This good reception of Marot's Psalms induced the celebrated Theodore Beza to continue the collection; and another volume was printed, of which 20,000 were immediately sold: this was a considerable circulation, when we consider the few readers that then existed, in comparison with the number of readers in the present age. These had the advantage over Marot's of being set to tunes of greater spirit. Beza, in his preface, says, that "these Psalms are admirably suited for the violin and other musical instruments;" and our readers will learn, not without surprise, that through the instrumentality of the gloomy Calvin, these compositions were set to most beautiful and simple airs. He wisely took advantage of popular feeling to spread his religious opinions, through the means of melody, and, in furtherance of this plan, he engaged the most celebrated composers of his time to furnish tunes to these Psalms. At first, the scheme was not discovered: for Catholics sang the Psalms as well as Hugonots; but, when Calvin appointed these Psalms, with their music, to be sung at his meetings, there was an end to the solace of the dreary hours of the poor Catholics. Marot himself was compelled to quit Geneva; Psalm-singing became an open declaration of Lutheranism; and "woe to the poor wight" who was caught in the *diabolical* act of singing these "pernicious Psalms."

The history of Psalm-singing in our own island can be comprised in very few words. When the enthusiasm of the French in favour of their Psalms was at its height, one Sternhold, undertook to be *our* Marot, and wrote a Book of Psalms, which captivated the hearts of the Puritans, by whom they were practised at their chapels in the Protectorate of Cromwell, but were more particularly set and sung in the reign of Elizabeth. Psalms, about this time, were sung at City and Lord Mayors' feasts, and turtle-eaters delighted to honour Psalm-singers. Soldiers used them as stimulants to exertion on their march, and even on parade; and there was scarcely a regiment but could boast of its Marot. About this time, too, it was customary for the inhabitants of houses which had windows facing the street, to regale the passenger with the "holy songs" of Sternhold.

E.J.H.

[By way of an appropriate pendent to our Correspondent's paper, we quote the following excellent passage on Psalmody, by the Rev. W.S. Gilly, in his *Memoir of Felix Neff*.]

The effect produced by the words, or by the music, or by the combination of the two, is such, that the cultivation of psalmody has ever been earnestly recommended by those who are anxious to excite true piety. Tradition, history, revelation, and experience, bear witness to the truth, that there is nothing to which the natural feelings of man respond more readily. Every nation, whose literary remains have come down to us, appears to have consecrated the first efforts of its muse to religion, or rather all the first compositions in verse seem to have grown out of devotional effusions. We know that the book of Job, and others, the most ancient of the Old Testament, contain rhythmical addresses to the Supreme Being. Many of the psalms were composed centuries before the time of king David,

and it is not extravagant to imagine, that some of them may have been sung even to Jubal's lyre, and were handed down from patriarch to patriarch by oral tradition. Nor did the fancy of Milton take too bold a flight when it pleased itself with the idea that our first parents, taught by the carols of the birds in the garden of Eden, raised their voices in tuneful notes of praise to the Creator of all, when they walked forth in the cool of the day to meet their God before the fall. But this is certain, that one of our Lord's last acts of social worship on earth was to sing a hymn with his disciples. Few, therefore, can be slow to understand, that if Christ and his disciples broke forth in holy song, immediately after the solemnities of the Last Supper, and just before the Shepherd was smitten, and the sheep were scattered; and if Paul and Silas sung praises unto God in their prison-house, congregational worship may always be the better for such helps. Add to these examples, the apostolical exhortation to the merry hearted to sing psalms, and the apostolical descriptions of the choral strains which resound in the courts of heaven, and we cannot but feel certain, that the services of the Christian church were cheered from the earliest times by hymns and psalms. "Those Nazarenes sing hymns to Christ," said Pliny, in contempt. We thank him for recording the fact. The words of the Te Deum were composed by a native of Gaul, (for the use probably of one of the churches on the Rhone, or of the Alps) about the third century; and at the same period, men, women, youths of both sexes, and even children joined in the psalmody of the sanctuaries, in such cordial and harmonious unison, that a father of the church has well compared the sound to the loud, but not discordant, noise of many waves beating against the sea shore.

At the time of the Reformation, sacred music, which had begun to run wild, was brought back to its first principles. The melodies of religious worship were rendered more heart-touching, by being set to words in the vernacular tongues, which every body could understand. Luther's hymn, "Great God, what do I hear and see," led the way. Henry VIII. hated the German reformer, and all that he did, but he burned to rival him in every thing, and he gave a stimulus to the public taste, by composing words and music for the service of the English church. In France, soon after the middle of the sixteenth century, when it was doubtful whether the nation would become Protestant or remain Roman Catholic, the pathetic tunes and devotional stanzas of the reformers obtained so great an influence over the minds of men, that the music of the temples, as the Protestant sanctuaries were called, to distinguish them from the Roman Catholic churches, became the fashionable melodies of the day. This taste found its way even to the court, and to the great alarm of the Romish party, some of the sweetest and most stirring of the psalms, which had been translated into French metre by Clement Marot, were set to music by Lewis Guadimel, and were constantly in the mouths not only of the Protestant families of the provinces, but of the ornaments of the saloons of Paris, and of the palace of the Louvre. It is said to have been quite astonishing how much this pious and simple device found favour for the Protestant cause, and induced people, who had never read Scripture before, to search the holy volume out of which those treasures were drawn, which so charmed their ears and their imagination. It is still the practice in most of the mountain churches to make sacred music a part of family devotion, and many of the tunes which Guadimel composed with such success are still sung to the praise of God. I can bear witness to the forcible manner in which these strains, rising to heaven from the lips of parents, children and domestics, quicken piety, and stir up the best affections of the heart towards God and man. I have seen and felt the effect produced by them in the humble dwelling of the village pastor, where none but human voices swelled the notes; and in the chateau, where the harp and the organ have mingled their fine sounds with the well modulated tones of an accomplished family of sons and daughters. My thoughts, at the moment I am writing this, are at Chateâu Blonay, but most of the voices, which I heard there, are now silent in death! I am thoroughly convinced that family worship, and congregational worship lose a great auxiliary to piety, when there is not the power or the inclination to join in psalmody.

LINES

Written after reading the Memoir and Poems of Miss Lucretia Davidson. ²

Ev'n till thy latest hour, Lucretia! thou
Didst cherish *that* which but consum'd thy frame.
'Twas *then* it shone the brightest on thy brow,
Like the last flickerings of an earthly flame—
Yes, thy brain harass'd by deep toil, became
With all its fire, a tenant of the tomb,
And dim is now thine eye, Belov'd of Fame!
Thy cheek is pale—thy lip without perfume—
And there thou liest—the child of Genius—and its doom.

Like the proud eagle soaring to the skies,
Intent "the topmost arch" of heaven to scale,
When heeding naught that would oppose its rise,
It breaks with fearless nerve the tempest-gale—
And spreads its wings like a majestic sail,
Full on the bosom of the raging blast,
Thy spirit soar'd—but ah! too like us frail,
When the same breeze which bore it from the dust
Wing'd home the fatal shaft that tore its bleeding breast.

Would I could sing thy fame with thine own lyre,
Then should I breathe a more deserving lay,
A lay which every spirit would inspire,
And melt each eye to tears of sympathy;
But others at thy shrine, their tributes pay.
Offspring of Beauty! child of native song!
And I, ev'n I, would venture to essay,
To raise my lauding voice amidst the throng
Of those who weep thy loss—and who shall weep it long!

N.C.

² See Memoir, and specimens of her Poetry, *Mirror*, vol. xiv. p. 340.

Spirit of Discovery

IMPROVED RAW SUGAR

[We find the following information communicated to the *Literary Gazette*, apparently by the parties connected with the improvement.]

Considerable interest has been excited in the market by the introduction of an improved native raw sugar, which portends very great advantages to all who are engaged in this so long unprofitable branch of colonial and commercial intercourse. It is pure raw sugar, obtained direct from the cane-juice, without any secondary process of decoloration or solution, and by which all necessity for any subsequent process of refining is entirely obviated. It is obtained in perfectly pure, transparent, granular crystals, being entirely free from any portion of uncrystallisable sugar or colouring matter, and is prepared by the improved process of effecting the last stages of concentration in vacuum, and at a temperature insufficient to produce any changes in its chemical composition; the mode of operation first proposed by the late Hon. Ed. Charles Howard, and subsequently introduced, with the most important advantages and complete success, into the principal sugar-refineries of Great Britain.

By this improved and scientific process of manufacture, the application of which to the purpose of preparing raw sugar from the cane-juice has now first been proposed, the most singular advantages are secured to the planter, in an increased quantity of sugar, the product of his operation, and in saving from the immense quantity of deteriorated material, uncrystallisable sugar and molasses, which were products of the former mode of operation, from the intense and long-continued degree of heat employed in the processes. The time and labour of the operation are also greatly decreased; the apparatus possesses the power to make double the quantity in the same space of time as the old method, and this is ready for shipment in four days, in lieu of three weeks, as heretofore. The sugar likewise readily commands an advanced price in the market to the planter of ten or twelve shillings per cwt.

This improved sugar readily ensures a preference for all purposes of manufacture, solution, or domestic economy. It is a purer sweet, and of a richer mellifluous taste than even the best refined; it is not apt to become ascescent in solution; and, from its superior quality, it well answers all purposes of the table. In the manufacture of rum from the molasses, which are separated during the first process of the operation, there is no danger of deterioration in the production of empyreuma, and a far purer spirit is obtained than that made from ordinary molasses.

This improved process is now in complete and successful operation on eight estates in Demerara. The general introduction of the process is considered by the best practical judges to ensure certain means of revivifying the spoiled fortunes of the planters, and to open a new era in the prosperity of those portions of the British crown, of which this forms the principal staple commodity of support.

[According to Dr. Moseley, the art of refining sugar, and what is called loaf sugar, is a modern European invention, the discovery of a Venetian, about the end of the fifteenth or beginning of the sixteenth century. Sugar candy is of much earlier date, for in Marin's *Storia del Commercio de Veneziani*, there is an account of a shipment made at Venice for England in 1319, of 100,000 lbs. of sugar, and 10,000 lbs. of sugar candy. Refined, or loaf sugar is mentioned in a roll of provisions in the reign of Henry VIII.

The process of refining sugar *in vacuo* is the most useful application of "the fact that liquids are driven off, or made to boil at lower degrees of heat when

the atmospheric pressure is lessened or removed."³ The first part of the process is to dissolve impure sugar in water, and after clarifying the solution, to boil off or evaporate the water again, that the dry crystallized mass may remain. Formerly this evaporation was performed under the atmospheric pressure, and a heat of 218° or 220° was required to make the syrup boil; by which degree of heat, however, a portion of the sugar was discoloured and spoiled, and the whole produce was deteriorated. The valuable thought occurred to Mr. Howard, that the water might be dissipated by boiling the syrup in a vacuum or place from which air was *excluded*, and therefore at a low temperature. This was done accordingly; and the saving of sugar and the improvement of quality were such as to make the patent right, which secured the emoluments of the process to him and other parties, worth many thousand pounds a-year. The syrup, during this process, is not more heated than it would be in a vessel merely exposed to a summer sun.

³ Arnott's Elements of Physics.

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