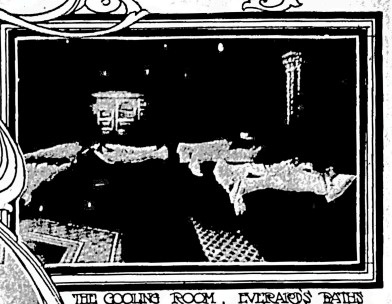
THE TURKISH BATHS OF NEW YORK

TRUE HEALTH RESORTS THAT VIE IN COMFORT AND EFFICIENCY WITH THE BEST HAMMAMS OF EUROPE



ELECTRIC LIGHT BATH AT THE MILLER BATHS



THE COOLING ROOM, EVERARD'S BATHS



INTERIOR OF ONE OF THE MASSAGE ROOMS

EVERARD'S BATHS

HOT ROOM AT THE MILLER BATH. TEMPERATURE 150°



LARGE PLUNGE AND FIRST HOT ROOM

EVERARD'S BATHS



GETTING A RUB-DOWN

EVERARD'S BATHS

ON the day following Mark Twain's famous description of taking a Turkish bath, written just after the civil war, the two bathing establishments of New York and Brooklyn were jammed with poets and politicians, taking the first real cleansing of their lives. That was thirty-five years ago, when Mark Twain was lecturing on his historical sketch of "The Jumping Frog." The only two baths of note then were Drs. Trails' and Miller's establishment, down on Lulght street, just off Canal, and Dr. Shepherd's, on Brooklyn Heights. A year or two after this Dr. Miller opened a more elaborate establishment in West Twenty-sixth street, with up to date features, which were enlarged to double capacity, and it has remained to this day.

Later came the marble palace baths, both Russian and Roman, at Lexington avenue. They were built by a distinguished German architect, classic in design and finished in white marble. Among the features were the largest plunge shower and needle baths in town. Then the Produce Exchange baths followed, and a little later Mr. James Everard gave the city a revelation in luxury, spacious, airy, well ventilated comfort in bathing which soon won wide popularity. On the principle, perhaps, that cleanliness is next to godliness, Mr. Everard obtained the old Twenty-eighth street Church of the Disciples (sometimes called Campbellites). James A. Garfield had preached there occasionally while he was a member of Congress, little dreaming that he would become a world famed President. Next were announced the Windsor and Murray Hill baths, and many others have followed.

New York's Many Baths.

No city in the country has more baths of the Turkish and Russian variety than New York; yet there should be a dozen where there is now one, to quote the opinions of men of science and health. In the language of Dr. Orff, of Everard's:—"It is undoubtedly true that the man who has the strongest antipathy to taking his first Turkish bath is the man who becomes most anxious to take the second."

Misinformed people who never took Turkish baths imagine they weaken the system or hasten death in case of organic heart troubles, and they believe that only rugged, athletic individuals should hazard their lives in taking the severe treatment of the scrubbing and hot room, followed by the cold plunge.

"It is false and absurd in the face of the facts to say that invalids should not take Turkish baths," said Dr. Orff yesterday. "We have kept careful record since our establishment was opened, in 1888, and the figures show that out of 2,000,000 (about 500 people a day) who have bathed here during sixteen years only one man of them all has died in our bath, and he was sixty years old and died of a sudden attack of acute stomach trouble.

The Everard establishment, opened at a cost of $150,000, occupies a frontage of fifty feet by one hundred and twenty-five in depth, and it stands but a step or two from Broadway.

To obtain pure water a 630-foot artesian well was bored into the deep water stratum far below the Hudson and the bay. It is asserted that by a graduated system of using the water at a carefully regulated temperature serious cases of rheumatism have been cured by the water and course of treatment. Dr. Orff says hundreds of regular bathers once so crippled with rheumatism that they had to be carried into the bath with the care bestowed on infants because of their acute pains are to-day well and as flexible in limb and muscle and as free from rheumatism as in their childhood days.

As detailed accounts of the baths in Europe have been published, a description of this New York Everard establishment may be interesting. Entering a marble vestibule, you are ushered into a cosey office, where you place your money in a large envelope, put your name on it and see it locked in a safe, with the key handed to you. This and the key to your dressing room attached to a rubber ring are fastened to your wrist. The attendant now escorts you to your dressing room, and as you enter the great rotunda the scene is like the grand salon on a Fall River steamer, rich with the splendor of an Oriental palace. When you are disrobed and ready for your bath you wrap a scarf about you, as they did in the days of the Romans, and you are led down a flight of marble steps to the first hot room, having a temperature of 125 degrees.

You soon become accustomed to the temperature and proceed to enjoy yourself, while disease, impurities of the skin, torturing rheumatism, agonizing neuralgia, insomnia, fear of death and other troubles begin to ooze out through the pores of your skin, and presently you imagine that you haven't got a joint or bone in your body. You're as limber as a boneless acrobat, and want to climb trees and perform feats of agility. You begin to think that you are to live a hundred years, and have strength enough to box with thoroughbreds of the prize ring.

When your pores seem as wide open as a port hole of a steamship the attendant leads you into a still hotter room, where an imaginative man can see the interior of Vesuvius and understand how the saints smiled to themselves when frying to death in boiled oil. You wouldn't mind taking a swim in a geyser, and you imagine you are a salamander when, again, the attendant leads you into a room full of hot steam.

This is called a Russian bath, and you wonder when the boiler exploded to supply so much roasting vapor. By this time your pores are like forty port holes. All the old colds left over from other years, all the bronchial affections and one lung troubles that depressed you have long disappeared, and you feel like a new man with a ticket for Paris in your pocket.

You wonder what next, when the attendant takes you into the massage room. This is not a place where they run you through steam rollers and lead horses over your naked body or tighten up your joints with sledge hammers, but a lovely cool room, where they shower you off with warm water until it becomes cold and you want to shake the tiling off the roof, you feel so strong. Then go at you with brushes and soap and make sure no pneumonia germs are left to get back into your system.

By the time the expert has finished scrubbing you you're ready for wings and angel cake with coffee. But like the chap in Tom Moore's "Epicurean" there is still more wonders ahead for you. They usher you into the swimming room, spacious and beautifully appointed. The marble floors and the richly decorated walls, the graceful palms and the musical murmur of the water make you think that you're at a fifteen dollar a minute hotel in Florida and all expenses paid.

You see a monster tank full of artesian well water, so clear that a ten dollar bill looks like a government bond, and in you plunge like a pearl diver. It's the finest swim of your life. The tank is fifty-two feet long and eight feet wide, and no matter if you wear number sixteen boots, there is plenty of room for your whole body. If, after diving back and forth a few times, you find you can't swim, there is shore bathing, so to speak, at one end of the side, where the water is shallow, and you can cool yourself off without fear of drowning. The temperature of the water is seventy degrees, although you thought you were bound for the North Pole when you first plunged in.

You now feel that you're a man in the full vigor of youth, ready for Wall street or Congress. There are electric lights blazing under the water, which illuminate it like the Mediterranean. Half an hour of this exercise and you take a needle shower bath or have your liver sprayed with a force to smash pig iron, or you can have a gentle, tickling douche, falling as light as a feather.

Next comes the drying room, at a temperature of ninety degrees. It is all like Southern California in a June shower, when an accomplished gentleman who presides as an attendant puts you on a leather couch, and gives you a thorough rubbing with alcohol or cologne water. This is followed by a massage, until you imagine yourself a second Chauncey Depew, with your pockets full of money and your heart full of eloquence ready to brave the world and all its mortgages. Of course there are the usual attractions "on the side," such as having the toilet of your feet attended to, your beautiful mother of pearl finger nails manicured, your face shaved by an artist barber, all to end in an hour or two in the Turkish room, where you have but to wish, and a cigar comes, with French coffee and other refreshments and a sweet little sleep of the Garden of Eden.

Besides this there are electrical baths, with Dr. T. S. Sumner, a physician of experience, in attendance. There is a café at hand, all under the same roof, where you can have lunch or breakfast and electric fans to cool you off when it is hot or hot air pumped on you when it is cold.

Electricity in Bathing.

A feature of Dr Miller's bathing establishment, in West Twenty-sixth street, is the recent introduction of the electric light bath. A London despatch to the HERALD, referring to these baths, says:—"The fact that King Edward gets through so much work and yet retains unimpaired his elasticity and vigor has been a source of wonder for a long time, even to members of the medical profession. The explanation of the mystery is offered at last. His Majesty is said to have been taking electric light baths.

"These scientific rejuvenators are installed at Windsor Castle and at Buckingham Palace. Inside the bath, in which a sitting posture is adopted, there are fifty-two electric lamps, which radiate any colored light desired. The light not only permeates every part of the body, but has a sort of Turkish bath effect. The lights are of colors which scientists say have curative effects on certain ailments."

It is a fact that light has a powerful influence on life of all kinds. Children in the tropics are full of smiles and happiness, while boys and girls at the Arctic Circle are serious and prematurely old before they are fifteen. If you plant a cherry tree on a sunny slope you'll have wondrous fruit. If you plant it in a cellar it will die. Electricity is life, the doctors say. In Dr. Miller's establishment they have a cabinet about as high as a man's chin when he is sitting. The top of it closes tight around his neck, and his entire body is within the cabinet. When the doors are shut and the hundreds of little electric lights are turned on a warm glow begins to permeate the body, and all the good deeds of the man's life are shining on his face. He feels the beneficial effects at once.

The doctor calls these lights of radiant heat. Each bath is lighted with one hundred sixteen candle power incandescent electric lights, whose thousands of rays are multiplied and focussed on the octagon of the bath by mirrors and reflectors.

Increased Oxidation.

The direct and reflected rays of life, thus concentrated and intensified, penetrate the deepest tissues of the body, says the expert.

They increase oxidation and stimulate the vital portions. Assimilation, tissue building and nerve feeding, as well as elimination of effete and poisonous substances, are promoted more effectively by this bath than by any other means. Profuse perspiration is produced, in the majority of cases, in from three to five minutes.

The effects of the bath can be easily and instantly controlled, increased or diminished, to suit the comfort or condition of the bather. This is possible in the electric light bath as in no other. The effect is not dependent on the temperature of the air in the cabinet, but is the result of the direct and reflected rays of light and radiant heat. The instant a group of lights is turned on or off the intensity of the bath is at once increased or diminished.

It is claimed by this treatment that instead of lassitude or weakness as a reaction, extreme exhilaration is the result. A patient remarked after treatment—"I was exhausted. Now I feel as if I could do another ten hours' work. When I arrived my brain felt as if my head were in an iron clamp, now I feel as fresh and as bright as a child."