

and this element itself becomes occasionally a most powerful medicinal instrument by its external application, in every one of its forms; whether as a liquid, under the name of the cold or warm bath; or in the form of ice, in restraining internal inflammation and hemorrhage; or in the state of steam, as in the application of the vapour bath.

#### SECT. V.

##### *Baths.*

THE custom of bathing, whether in a medium of a high or of a low temperature, appears to be in a great measure derived from the gratification of a natural feeling: for we find it prevalent in every country and in every stage of society, not only with reference to its medicinal effects, but as a mere luxury. Thus at every season of the year, when the sky is serene at least, the inhabitants of hot climates plunge into their native streams for the sake of the refreshment imparted to the surface of their bodies; and the same refreshment is equally sought by the natives of colder climates during the heat of their short summer: in each of which instances the pleasurable sensation is the principal motive for the practice. But on some occasions a more permanent good is sought; and the hope of immediate pleasure is so far from being the motive, that a sensation very nearly allied to pain, and in many instances less tolerable than pain itself,