

cient Italy, "it is very uncommon for an individual to bathe alone; he is generally accompanied by one, or sometimes several, of his acquaintance: bathing indeed is so essentially a social amusement, that to decline going in to bathe, when invited by a friend, is one of the highest indignities that can be offered to him" (p. 190).

SECT. VI.

The Fluidity of Water.

FAMILIARIZED as we are to the consequences resulting from that property of water, whereby its particles move so easily among themselves as to yield to the least impulse, provided there be space for yielding, we rarely perhaps meditate on its importance: and yet it is entirely owing to this property that a free communication is capable of being maintained between distant parts of the world by means of the ocean at large, and between different parts of the same country by means of navigable rivers; or by those more than rivals of navigable rivers, artificial canals^k.

Rarely also, perhaps, do we meditate on the equally important fact, that, throughout the greater part of the world this element usually

^k It has been stated, on credible authority, that an agent of a great proprietor of canals being incidentally asked, during a legal examination, for what purpose he conceived rivers had been made, answered, "that, no doubt, they were intended to feed canals."