

**HEALTH PRIMERS;
BATHS
AND BATHING**

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Health Primers; Baths and Bathing by Various

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VARIOUS

**HEALTH PRIMERS;
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Health Primers.

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BATHS AND BATHING.

CHAPTER I.

THE PHYSIOLOGICAL ACTION OF BATHS.

SINCE the influence of baths is exerted primarily upon the skin, and through the medium of the skin, upon the deeper-lying tissues and organs of the body, it is an absolute necessity for the reader at the outset to be made aware of the structure of the skin and its functions, as well as the relations which it bears to deeper-lying organs.

If the skin, say of the thumb, be looked at with a lens of moderate power, its surface is seen to be arranged in ridges and furrows, like a ploughed field ; and at frequent intervals along the ridges are little depressions, which are known as the pores of the skin. These pores are the openings of the sweat ducts, and it is through these pores that the perspiration exudes. They are exceedingly numerous, and it has been calculated that there are as many as 2,800 to every square inch of surface, or about seven millions of them altogether. The ridges are seen to be divided into a series of minute hillocks,

or *papillæ*, which are arranged in lines. These papillæ are the organs of touch, and are probably as numerous as the pores. They contain in their interior either loops of blood-vessels or nerve-endings.

These nerve-endings in the papillæ are of three kinds, which are readily distinguishable, and are known as tactile corpuscles, pacinian bodies, or end bulbs, according to the form which they take. Between the superficial and deep layers of the skin, the so-called cuticle and cutis, is a layer which partakes somewhat of the character of both. This is called the rete mucosum, and it is here that the pigment, found in the skin of the negro and in certain parts of the skin of white races also, is located.

Beneath the skin, in the subcutaneous tissue, are situated the sweat-glands, which are microscopical bundles of tubing, having one end running through the skin to terminate in the pores. These tubes are, or rather would be, if straightened out, about a quarter of an inch long; and it is estimated that the length of them in the entire body is about 28 miles! They pass through the upper layer of the skin or cuticle spirally, so that, although it is an easy matter for fluid to pass *out*, the passage in the opposite direction is by no means so easy. Each sweat-gland is plentifully supplied with blood-vessels, and is surrounded by a thin muscular coat, which is presumably able to exert, by its contraction, a certain amount of