It is curious to find a practice which has for ages been a part of the oriental toilet becoming the rage in England as an important therapeutic agent. Every well taught bearer in India is a masseur, and every competent ayah a masseuse, and the weary limbs of European ladies and gentlemen have been relieved of fatigue or pain by the skilful and gentle manipulations of these domestics ever since the invasion of India by Europeans began. Among the natives systematic massage is resorted to by the wealthy before entering the diurnal bath, and among the poorer classes aches and pains are treated in this manner. Nothing is more common than to see the operation carried out on the footpath of a Calcutta street or in the doorway of a shop. Massage has, in fact, been used both a luxury and therapeutic agent in the East from time immemorial. In the latter aspect it has been, no doubt, employed empirically, but like its congener bone-setting, there can be no doubt of its advantage in properly selected cases and when applied with due caution and discrimination. The public, medical and lay, are perhaps a little wild upon it at present, but there can be no question that it is a valuable—we had almost written invaluable—measure of cure in many complaints which do not yield readily to drugs.

Dr. Murrell, of the Westminster Hospital, has written a very interesting little book on massage,* which is very opportune. He traces the history of the practice, describes its methods, relates the facts that have been derived from observation and experiment regarding its physiological action, and details briefly the circumstances and diseases in which it is likely to be of advantage. He has familiarised himself with the views of those who have recently written on the subject, watched the practice of physicians who have made it a speciality and resorted to it largely in his own practice. He is therefore in a position to write with intelligence and authority. He cautions us against supposing that massage means simply "shampooing" or "rubbing," and states that "it takes at least two years to learn" the art or rather arts of massage. He shows that the art in some shape or other is as old as Hippocrates, and was known among the Greeks and Romans mainly as a luxury. It appears to have been practised by the Chinese at a very much earlier time, and in more modern times it has been employed in various countries and in divers ways as a restorative and as a cure. The admission of massage into medical science dates from 1868, and is due to Dr. Mezger, of Amsterdam. Since then various distinguished men in France, Germany, England, and America have taken the subject up, and the literature of massage is described by Dr. Murrell as being "extensive."

The various kinds of manipulation which are included in the term have had different names applied to them by the precise and methodical French. Thus they distinguish effleurage or stroking, pétrissage or kneading, friction or digital pressure, tapotement or percussion, and so on. One thing will surprise most reader, namely, that "massage should be dry, that is, without the use of oil, or liniments or ointments of any kind."

Another matter which we were not prepared for is the duration of the séance. "The whole operation should not occupy more than from eight to ten minutes, and many authorities think that four minutes is quite enough." The physiological action of massage has been studied experimentally by several observers, but this part of the subject requires further elucidation.

The general effect of massage on a healthy subject appears to be a gain in weight and bodily vigour, increased appetite, better sleep, and more regular action of the bowels. The process is said to raise the temperature of the part, promote absorption by the lymphatics, increase the circulation, dilate the deep vessels, improve nutrition, enhance the electrical contractility of muscles, stimulate removal of waste products, restore muscular power, and develop delicate
DESTRUCTION VERSUS DECOMPOSITION.

It is a marvellous fact that organic material, dead or effete, in undergoing those changes which befit it for usefulness in a lower sphere of creation, becomes offensive and dangerous to animated organisms — more especially to those of whose systems it formed a part. The descent from the organic to the inorganic is a slow process, and the intermediate steps of the descent when the complex is being broken up into the simple, are characterised by the evolution of noxious and deleterious products. It is these transitional products of decomposition which constitute the greatest dangers to health and life to which human, and in lesser degree other, beings are subjected, and one of the main objects of sanitation is to prevent or hasten the process of decomposition of organic material. Prevention may be accomplished in various ways — by embalming or hermetically sealing, disinfecting (pickling) on the one hand, or by making arrangements for the utilization of the material while in an early stage of chemical retrogression. The hastening of decomposition can also be accomplished by exposing the material to those physical influences — heat and moisture the chief of them — which are known to accelerate the stages of the process. There is, however, one means of overcoming the dangers inseparable from decomposition, which is vastly superior to any means of staying or hastening the process, namely, subjecting the material to the influence of an agency, which is capable by one short step of reducing it to harmless inorganic substances. Electricity chemical agents and heat are the means competent to accomplish this end, and of these powers, heat is the cheapest, most effective and manageable.

These principles are applicable to all dead or effete organic material, but it is with reference to the disposal of the human dead, that they acquire the chiefest interest. The retardation of decomposition has been extensively adopted in the form of embalming, and this process has also gained sentimental support from gratifying the feeling which prompts men to preserve the forms of those whom they have respected.