

**The history of the Dorton Chalybeate, near Brill, Bucks : with a concise treatise on its chemical properties and medicinal uses.**

**Contributors**

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**Publication/Creation**

Oxford : Printed by J. Ham for Whittaker and Co., London [etc., etc.], 1833.

**Persistent URL**

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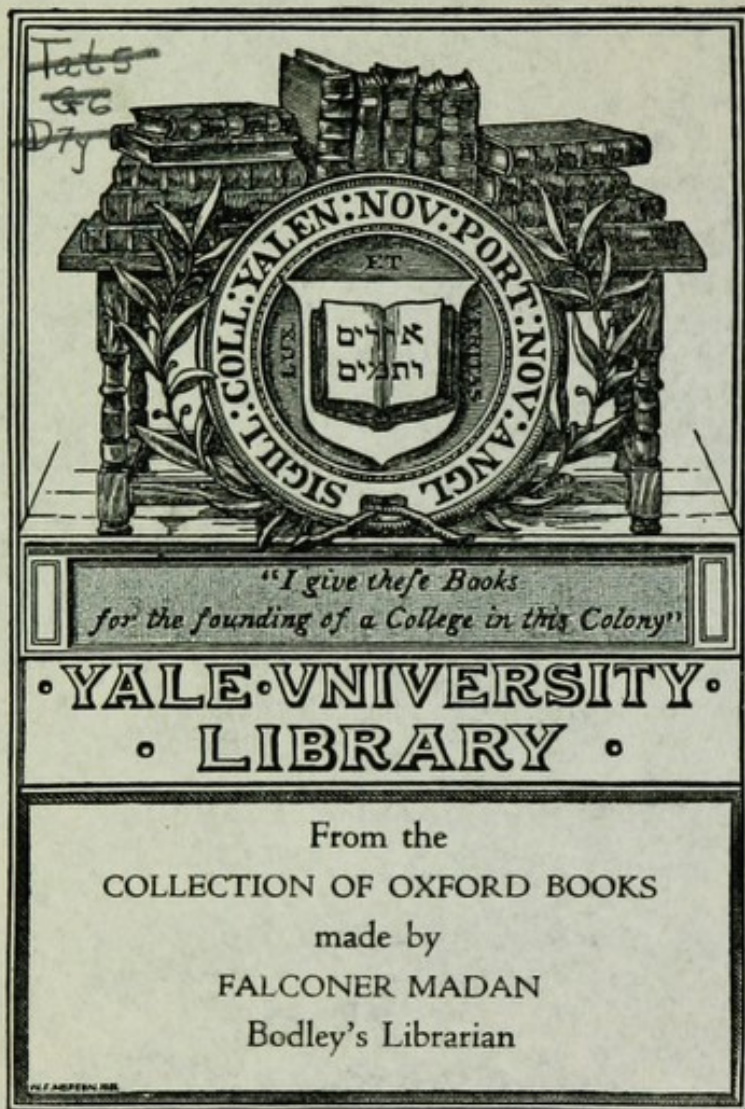
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Knight, T.

The history of the Dorton Chalybeate ...

Oxford, 1833.



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THE  
**HISTORY**  
OF THE  
**DORTON CHALYBEATE,**  
NEAR BRILL, BUCKS;  
WITH A  
**CONCISE TREATISE**  
ON ITS  
CHEMICAL PROPERTIES AND MEDICINAL USES.

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BY  
T. KNIGHT, SURGEON.

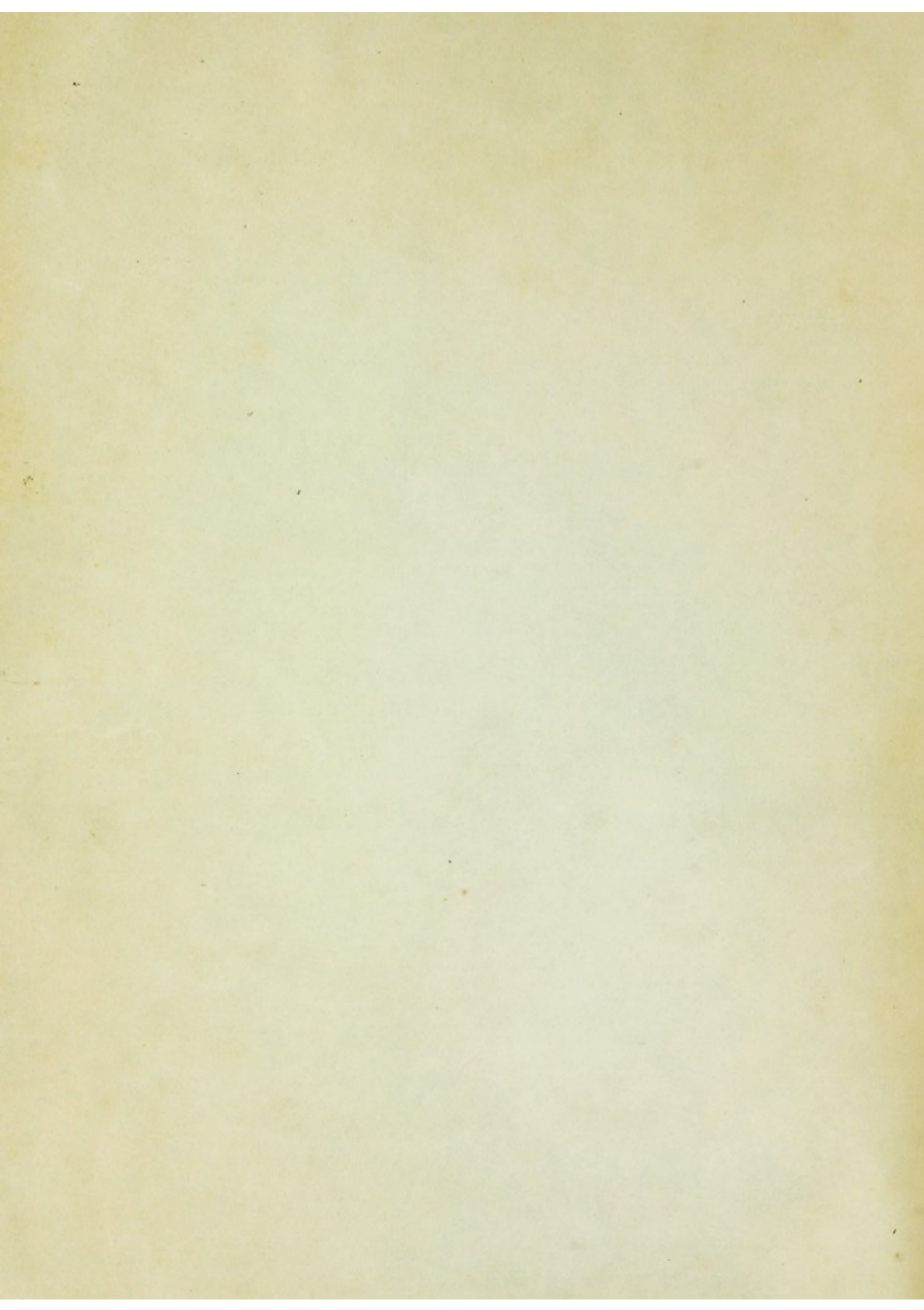
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"Infirmis capiti fluit utilis, utilis alvo." Hor. Epist. lib. I. xvi. 14.

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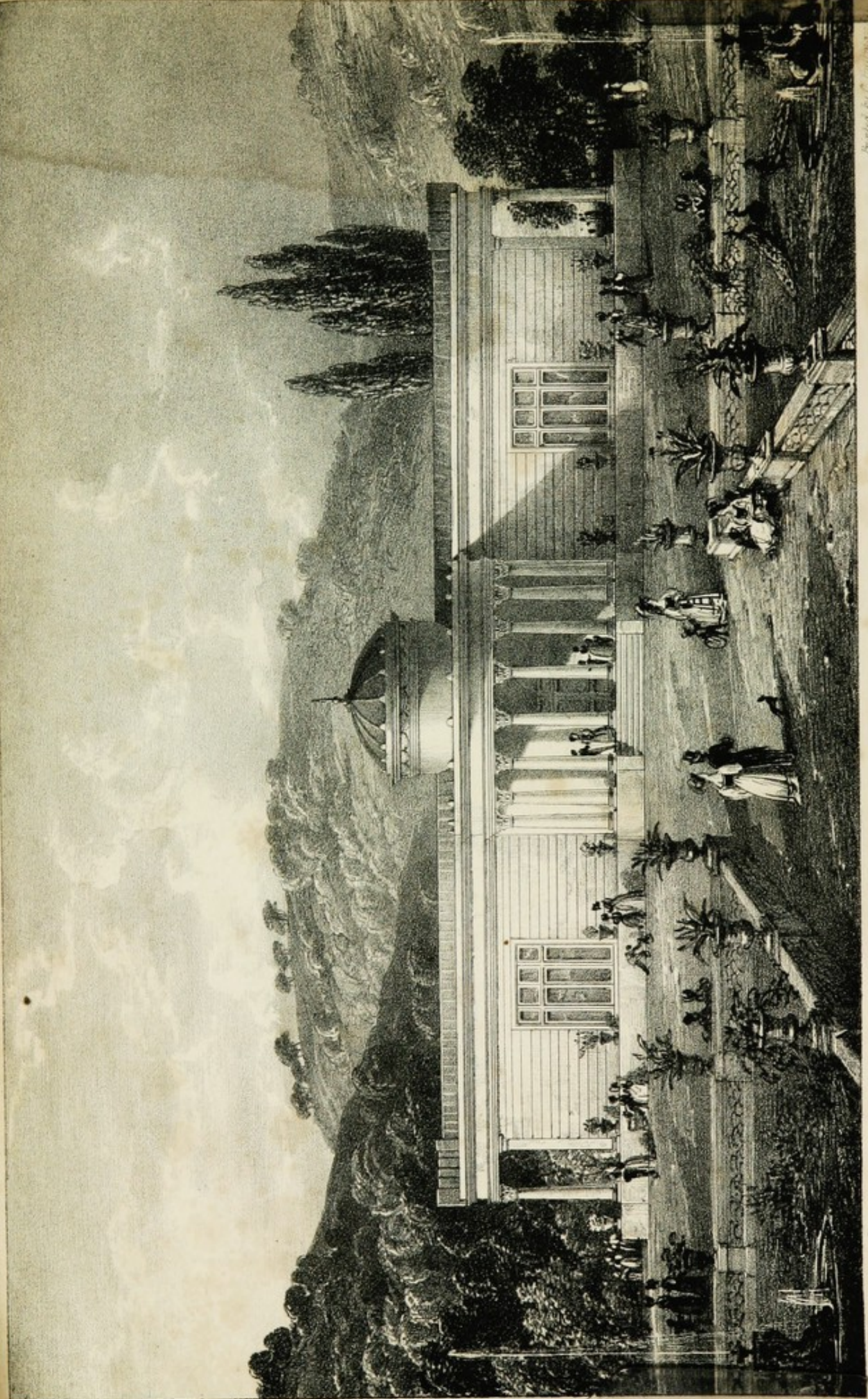
OXFORD:  
*PRINTED BY J. HAM,*  
FOR WHITTAKER AND CO., AVE MARIA LANE, LONDON;  
AND W. GRAHAM, HIGH STREET, OXFORD.

1833.









Printed by J. Matthews.

EAST FRONT of the BEATTIES, at the DORTON GLEANING, BUCKS.

on the Property of C. S. RICHTTS, ESQ. &c

Erected from the Designs of Mr James Hakewill

London, Published by Ackermann, No. 96, Strand 1835

Drawn on Stone by G. Bernard.

THE  
UNION  
DORTON CHEMICALS

NEAR BRICK LANE

WITH

CONCISE TREATISE

OF

CHEMICAL PROPERTIES AND MEDICINAL USES.

BY

T. KNIGHT, Surgeon.

"Infirmitas corporis sed utilis, utilis alio." Plin. Hist. lib. 1. xvi. 14.

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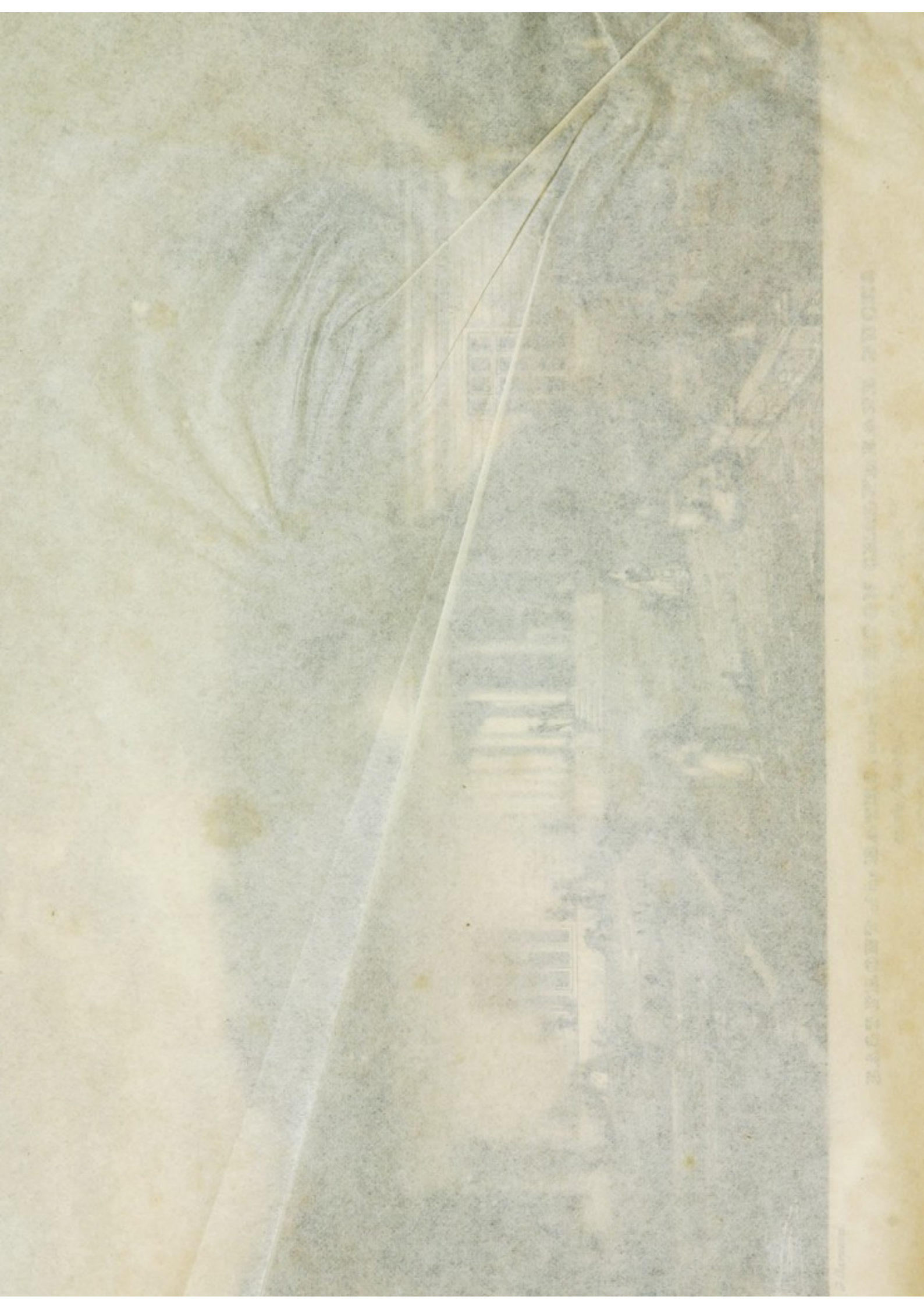


PLATE I. THE GREAT HALL OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THE  
**HISTORY**  
OF THE  
**DORTON CHALYBEATE,**

NEAR BRILL, BUCKS;

WITH A  
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CHEMICAL PROPERTIES AND MEDICINAL USES.

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BY  
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“*Infirmo capiti fluit utilis, utilis alvo.*” Hor. Epist. lib. I. xvi. 14.

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1833.

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## PREFACE.



**T**HE motives which have led to the present publication are of a very unambitious kind. A natural remedy of singular power, and proved efficacy, has for the last four years been administered under the inspection of the writer. Disorders, in which the appliances of art were found "of none effect," experienced either relief, or cure, by the exhibition of this medicine of Nature's own preparing. To note these cases, and to give the public an account of the advantages hitherto derived from this source, appeared to him who witnessed them an imperative duty. His object in drawing up the following simple statement will be amply fulfilled, if but one case of sickness and of pain be relieved by his instrumentality.

*BRILL,*

*June 20th, 1833.*



## DORTON CHALYBEATE;

### ITS HISTORY AND CHEMICAL PROPERTIES.



**I**T is surprising that although attention was early directed to the effects of Mineral waters, no chemical investigation of their contents was attempted until the end of the seventeenth century. Since that period the component parts of all the springs, which either fashion, or utility, has rendered celebrated, have been accurately ascertained; and the means, which the laboratory of nature furnishes for the mitigation of human suffering, have become co-extensive with the progress of science.

The increased certainty given to analysis by the researches of modern chemists, and the knowledge now attained of the powers of the various tests, whose qualities and use were till recently imperfectly understood, enable us at once to ascertain the value, and direct the application of the healing fountains of “our general mother-earth.” Those which are termed Mineral differ, it need



hardly be said, from the simple element, by the admixture of foreign substances; and are distinguished from each other by the nature of a strata, through which they flow. In examining their respective qualities, both their Physical, and Chemical Phenomena are to be taken into consideration. The former consists in the taste, odour, colour, and temperature of the water examined; and the latter in the gaseous fluids, acids, alkalies, earths, and compound salts it may contain.

With respect to the first of the divisions I have here laid down, the Dorton Chalybeate has a strong inky taste; a peculiar, but not an offensive odour; it is perfectly clear at the well, but when exposed to the action of the sun and air, a slight pellicle (an evidence of gas) appears on the sides and surface of the water, and, in a short time, it deposits a light brown sediment. Boiling does not affect its colour, which would afford a strong presumption, even previous to analysis, that this is not a common Carbonated Chalybeate.

When it is mixed with powdered galls, or an infusion of tea, a deep black is produced, which might in fact serve as a substitute for ink.

The addition of lime water precipitates a white powder, slightly tinged with green, indicating the presence of aluminous earth,

intermixed with sulphate of iron; this process deprives the water of the distinct and characteristic taste it derives, from its combination with the two last-named substances.

Lunar caustic also throws down a copious, white precipitate.

With respect to the Chemical substances, held in solution by this Chalybeate, the result of a careful investigation, kindly undertaken by Professor Brande, gives the following proportions of their component parts. After subjecting a Pint of the water to evaporation, its residual contents amounted to the extraordinary quantity of forty-two grains of saline matter, distributed as follows:—

	Grains.
Of Sulphate of Iron . . . . .	8,5
————— of Alumina } . . . . .	34,0
————— of Lime . . . . .	

with a trace of Sulphate of Magnesia. Thus the iron, absorbed by the water, amounts to more than a fifth part of its solid contents; and on referring to the table, given in Ure's Chemical Dictionary, of the relative proportions of the most celebrated mineral springs, it appears that there is no other known in this country, which can bear comparison with the strength of this Chalybeate. Indeed there is only one Spa in Germany—so prolific in similar springs, which contains Vitriolated Iron to so an

unusual a degree. From this circumstance arises the peculiar efficacy of the Dorton waters; since even our present enlarged knowledge of chemistry, cannot enable us to form the extraordinary combination, thus furnished by the alembic of nature.

Previously to entering upon a detail of the complaints, in which resorting to this spring has been found beneficial, it may prove not uninteresting briefly to trace “the local habitation and name” of this hitherto unnoticed Spa.

The estate, on which the spring is situated, descended to its present proprietor, CHARLES SPENCER RICKETTS, Esq. from the late SIR JOHN AUBREY, Bart.; and it lies about twelve miles to the north of Oxford, having the small town of Thame, through which is a direct communication with London, about six miles to the west.

Springs of the purest water rise from almost every hill on the estate; and in the upper grounds of Dorton Park, bordering on the parish of Brill, the attention of the neighbouring villages has been attracted from time immemorial to a stream, issuing from a small orifice, which marked its course towards the brook into which it emptied itself, by the destruction it occasioned to vegetable life. The few blades of grass that were spared, bore a thick encrustation of Oxyd of Iron; and the surface of the ground, which

for a few yards on either side of its channel assumed a yellow, and scorched appearance, was covered with a similar metallic deposit. It was named by the common people in the vicinity, the "Alum Well;" the taste of this salt being most apparent to the palate; and the cattle in the neighbouring pastures, being allowed a free access to it, it was observed that those amongst them, which laboured under any disease, recurred to its use spontaneously, and rapidly recovered.

Its effects on that very obstinate, and almost incurable disorder, the mange of the horse, were perhaps of all others the most singularly remarkable. Thus it has happened with this, as with other springs now "long known to fame"—to go no farther than those of Bath, for instance—that the knowledge of its medicinal properties is due to those instinctive feelings of the brute creation, which so often serve as a guide to the higher faculties of man. One circumstance, connected with the animals that partook of the water, deserves notice, not only from its singularity, but from the proof it affords of its powerful Chalybeate qualities. Their manure, when collected for the purpose of fuel, as is customary here, burns to a cinder similar to the clinkers thrown from a blacksmith's forge, and possessing the same sonorous ring. However its benefits were not long confined within this limited range, and

many inveterate cases of human suffering, exhibited on its application the same successful results.

Of late years its fame has been widely spread in the surrounding country ; but the almost impassable state of the country roads, until very recently, joined to the advanced age of the late proprietor, rendered it impossible to take any steps respecting the spring, calculated to promote the public advantage. At length the influx to the well become so great, owing to some recent cases of cure I shall hereafter notice ; and at the same time the injury done to the fences and herbage of the Park so serious, that it was judged advisable to restrain the peasantry who flocked thither to one path, to inclose the Well, and to give it in charge to a superintendant, who should regulate the distribution of the water. By these precautions from fifty to one hundred gallons of the water *per diem* have been supplied to the various applicants ; and this too it should be observed to a class of persons, who would appreciate it only in proportion to the benefit they derived from its use.

Under the certainty of its healing qualities, induced by repeated proof, and corroborated by the high authority of Professor Brande, the proprietor has felt it incumbent upon him to take measures for giving to the public at large every facility of access to the Chalybeate, accompanied with that security which its value demands.

Accordingly he has employed a professional gentleman from London to erect a Pump Room and Baths on an extensively, useful, as well as ornamental plan; and has ordered twelve acres of the Park to be laid out so as to add to these buildings all the *agrèmens* of a pleasure-ground.

Nor is the situation of a medicinal spring to be disregarded as an object of trifling importance. The mind and the body are too intimately allied to suffer the latter to remain passive, under what affects the former. Those individuals, whose cases are most likely to be benefitted by the use of mineral waters, in general labour under the depression of spirits, which is the natural result of corporeal debility; and circumstances which seem to the robust of slight consequence, trifles as they may be, become to the invalid an aggregate of real evil. Whatever tends to engage the attention, to preserve the mind light and unclouded; whatever holds out inducements to proper exercise, and, in a word, can excite, attract, or amuse, without fatiguing, is to be taken into our account of the advantages likely to be produced when quitting our home to seek renewal of health amidst unknown objects, and change of scenes. In these respects, Dorton will be found most happily situated.

The pastoral district around, verging on the fertile Vale of

Aylesbury, affords a delightful variety of rural walks, and rides, diversified by that alternation of gentle ascent, with quiet and sequestered dell, which relieves the unobtrusive beauties of English landscape from the charge of monotony. From the higher grounds, extensive prospects of the rich champaigns of Oxford, and Bucks, open on every side; and their declivities are covered with noble woods, under whose grateful shade the invalid may securely wander. The majestic course of the Chiltern Hills, which is commemorated by many interesting objects of antique story, is seen ranging through several counties; and from these breezy summits, which command a view into nine counties, the eye is gratified, as it glances around the panorama, with the classic spires of Oxford, the monument in Blenheim Park, the high lodge in Whichwood Forest, the tasteful plantations of Wootton (the favourite seat of the Marquis of Chandos), the splendid mansion of Stowe, and Hanslope Spire rising gracefully in the extreme distance, within a few miles of Northampton.

Nor is the immediate neighbourhood devoid of interest in an historical point of view. The traces of a Roman Camp are visible on the summit of Brill Hill, and in Brill are the remains of a hunting Lodge, once the favourite resort of King John; the adjacent Forest of Bernwode, rendering this the chosen scene of woodland

sports during the feudal times. The ancient Tower of Boarstall, the former residence of the Fitz-Nigels, and the Monastery of Notley, near Thame, likewise attest the consequence to which this district had attained, even at that early period. Bishop Kennett, in his Parochial Antiquities, thus describes—"Brill, a *town* well graced with many fair houses and good buildings, delicately situated upon a fruitful hill, in the midst of the forest, and blest with all kinds of commodities, as corn, hay, grass, wood, herbs, and roots, WELLS and SPRINGS, that the earth can bring forth in the upper parts; the earth within serving for the best brick and earthen vessels, and the stones for lime. It standeth on a fair hill, in the upper part of the Vale of Aylesbury, having a goodly prospect every way, except the Chinnor side (the Chilterns), where it reacheth but twelve miles; and so passing down between Muswell and Boarstall, by Studley Abbey, to the great fat common of Otmoor, that in winter is nothing but a sea of waters." "It was formerly a Royal Burgh, and frequently honoured by Royal visits. King John spent his Christmas here in 1205."

The visitor will however look in vain for the splendid streets and sumptuous public buildings of Cheltenham or Leamington; he must be content with nature in a high degree of beauty and cultivation, with a fine climate, and a cheap supply of the neces-



saries of life. Its air is pure and salubrious, and persons live to an extreme old age. Brill will afford accommodation to families requiring simple conveniences only, and preparations have been made by many of its inhabitants for that purpose.

The frontispiece exhibits the Eastern Elevation of the Baths—the annexed plate gives their plan—and the accompanying Map describes its particular locality.

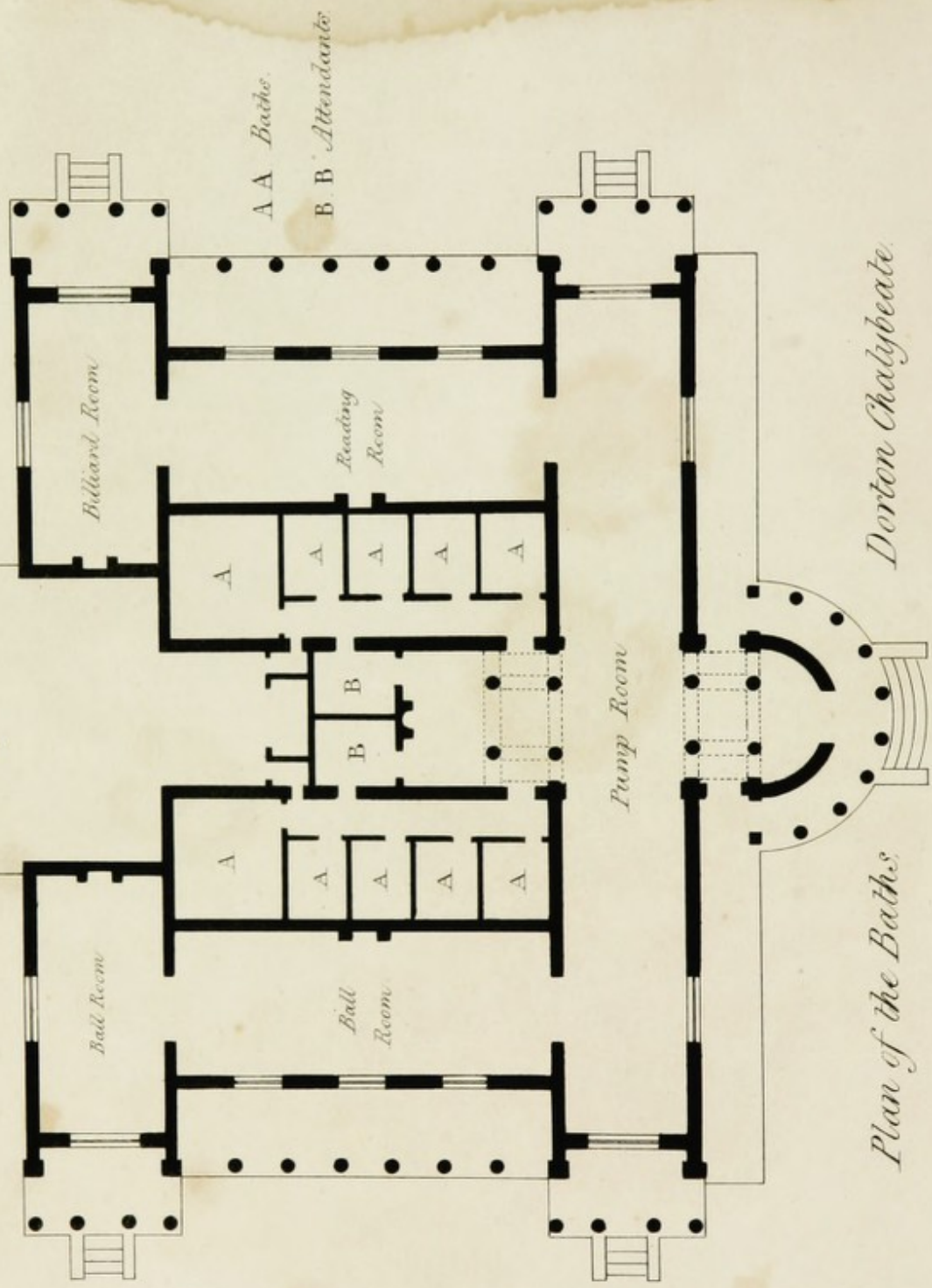
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**The Summary of its Distances, is,**

From London to Dorton, by Wycombe and Thame,	50 miles.
— Oxford .....	12 ditto.
— Buckingham (Stowe) .....	14 ditto.
— Aylesbury .....	10 ditto.
— Bicester .....	9 ditto.
— Thame .....	6 ditto.



Enclosed  
Yard



Dorton Chalybeate.

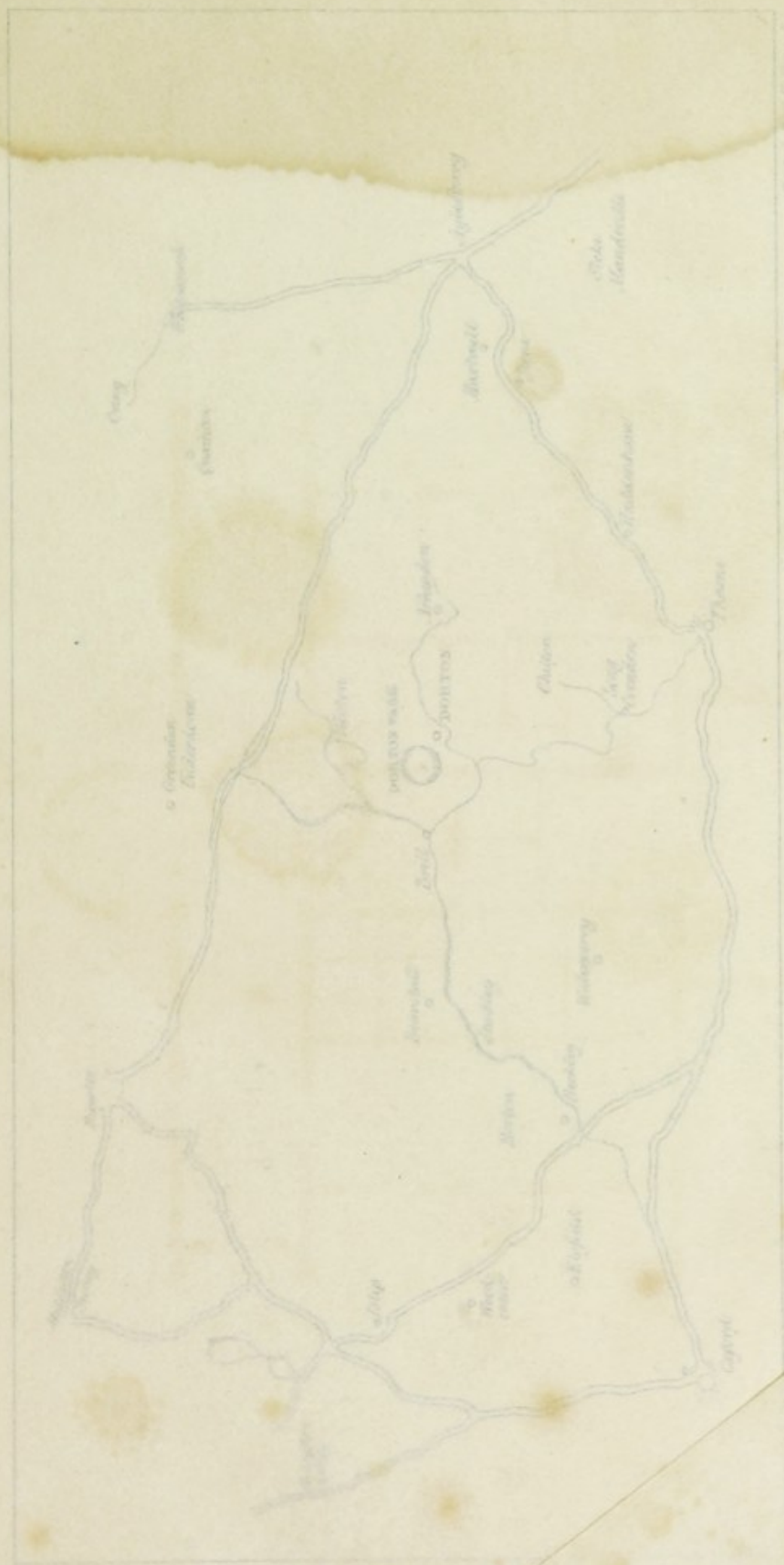
Plan of the Baths.

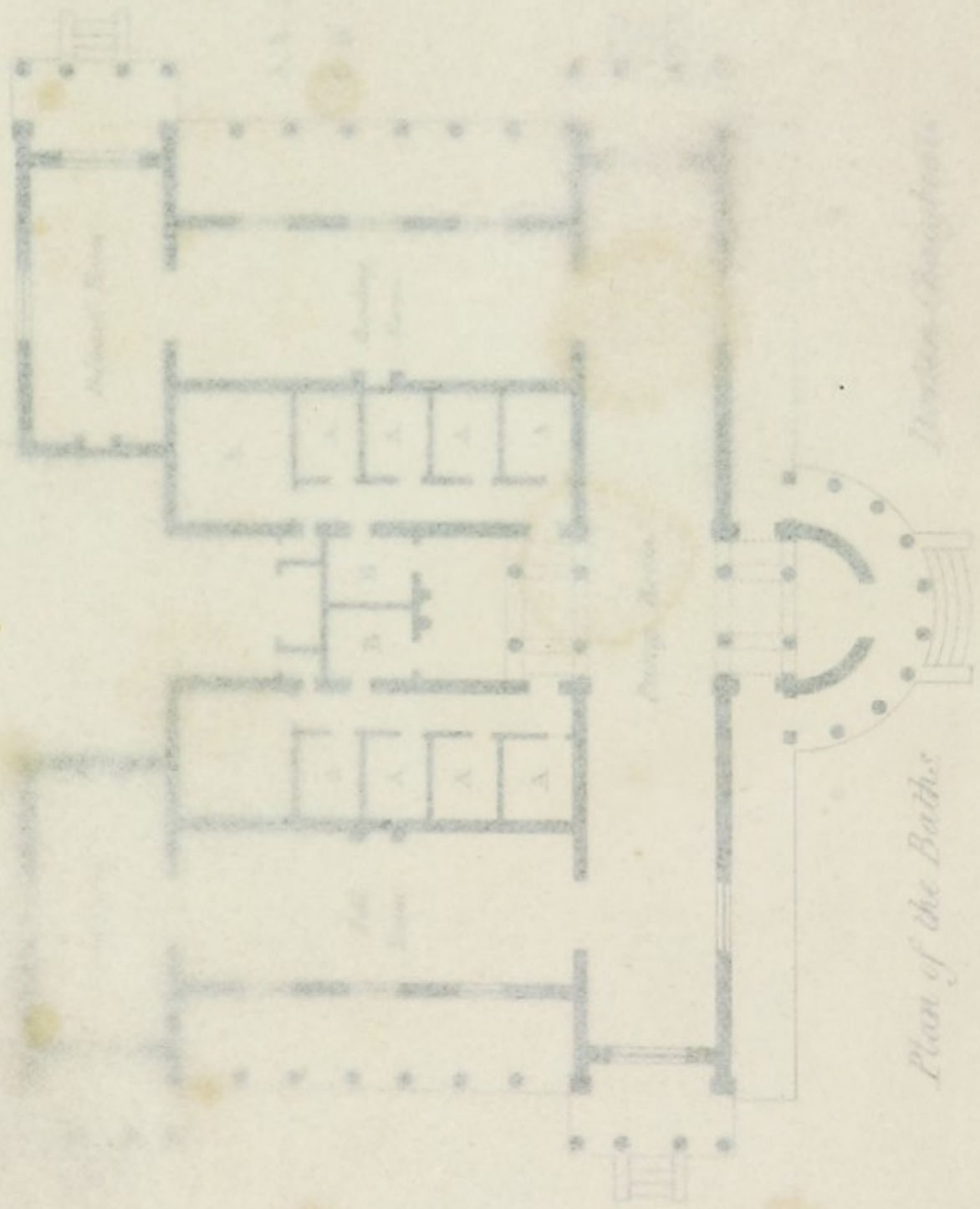


Designed by James Haeswill.

Printed by C. Hulman & Co.

Map of the Country surrounding the Dorton Chalybeate.



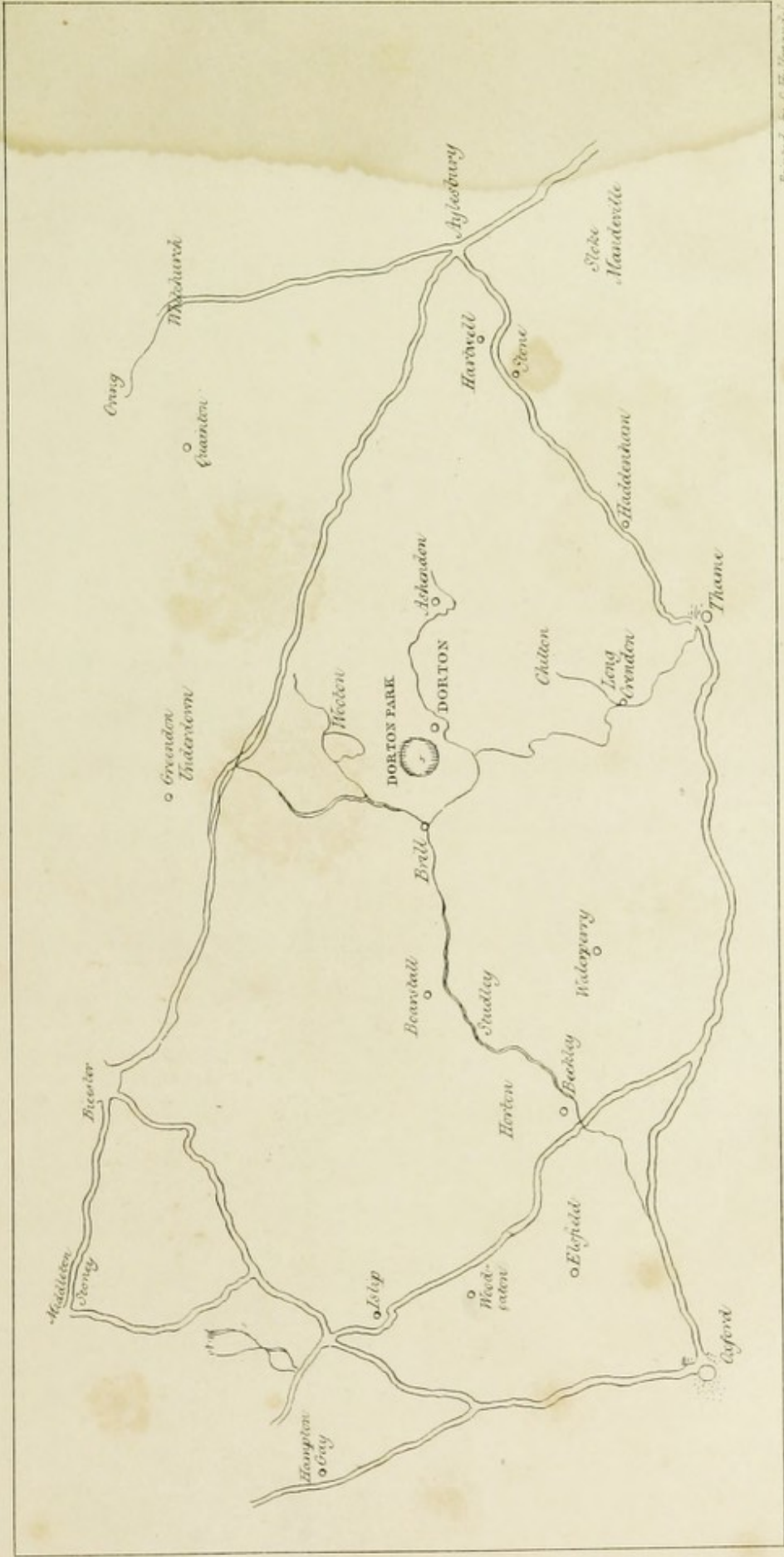


*Plan of the Baths*

*London Chancery*

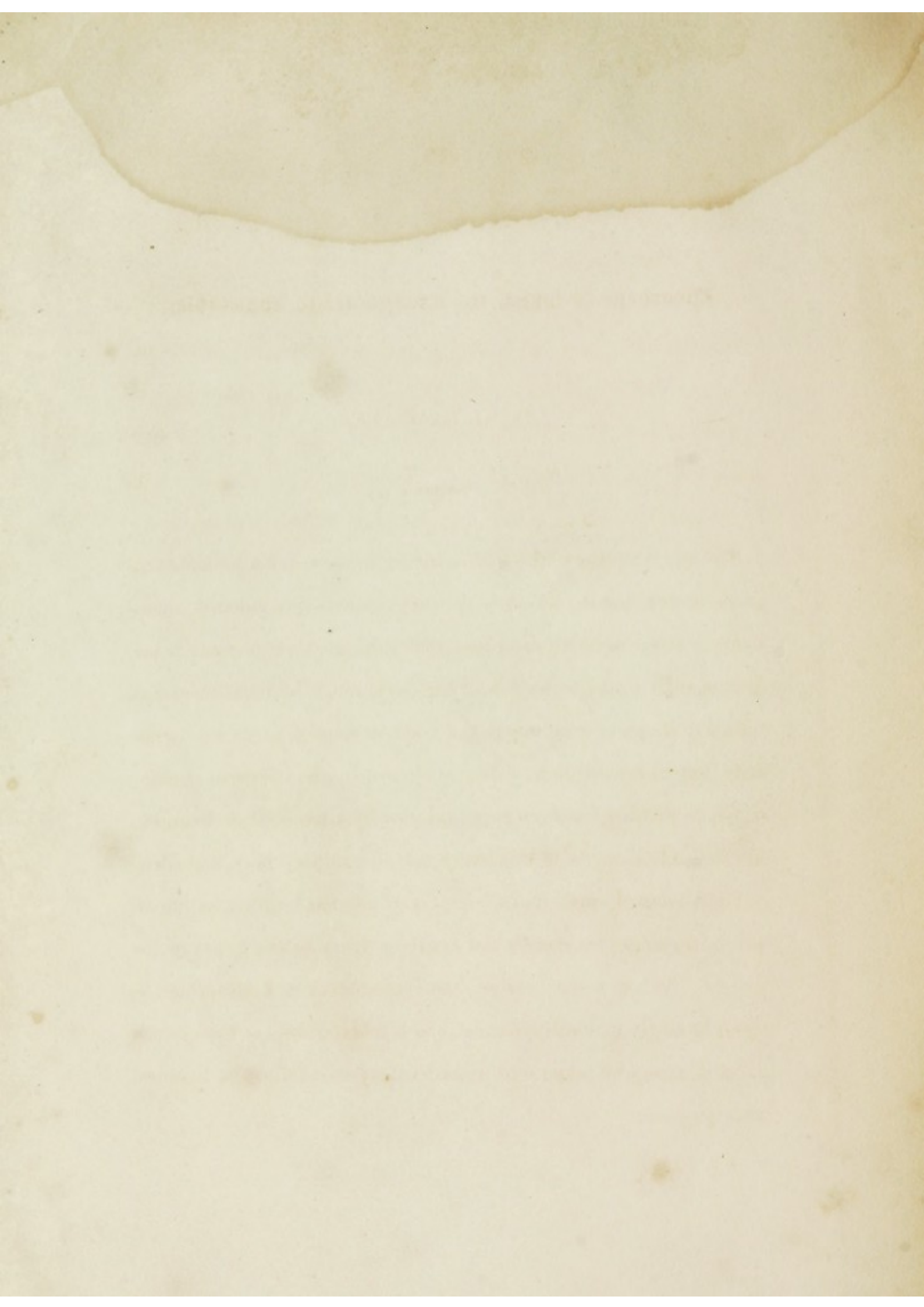


*Map of the Country surrounding the Dorton Chalybeate.*



Printed by G. Baldwin.





**Disorders to which the Chalybeate is applicable,**

WITH

**A LIST OF CASES.**

The great efficacy which this spring possesses as a tonic, owing to its strong impregnation with iron, renders it a valuable auxiliary in those nervous disorders, that through their weaker frame are peculiar to the softer sex. Not only will it be found useful in the early stages of gestation, when taken in small doses (a wine glass full), but in constitutions either weakened by the effects of climate, or where debility has been superinduced by a too delicate bringing up, the judicious use of this water will invigorate, cheer, and bless.

I have stated small doses, since if drank too largely, its effects will be to bring on results the exact contrary to the hopes of the patient. When a too profuse Menorrhagia, or a Leucorrhœa is brought on by general weakness, and a relaxed state of the system, the water may be taken with confident expectation of the happiest consequences.



Another disease intimately connected with the above, and susceptible of relief by the same means, is Chlorosis. "And if," says Dr. Saunders, "one disease more than another was pointed out, which received the most benefit from mineral waters, it would probably be this. The great debility attending this complaint, with the disposition to a Cachectic state of body, and to dropsy, strongly indicate, as its proper remedy, this form of Chalybeate, whose operation tends so much to restore the healthy state of all the secretions, and at the same time to reanimate the whole system." Indeed, in every case of debility peculiar to the sex, and more particularly in local debility, the tonic powers of this Chalybeate will mitigate, and relieve; and in most instances, as far as my own experience is concerned, it will prove a successful remedy.

Preparatory to a course of the water, it is always advisable to take some mild aperient; and the quantity, times of taking, and proper regimen to be observed, will be best regulated by the advice of the patient's medical attendant. It is however essential to remark, that the dose of this water should, generally speaking, be more limited than that of most other mineral springs.

In all cases, and especially in those attended with a delicate and irritable habit of body, a wine glass full two or three times a day may be pronounced sufficient. Indeed few patients will

require, or will be able to bear more than a pint in the course of the day.

In cases of Dyspepsia, attended by its usual distressing symptoms, loss of appetite, flatulency, tremors, nocturnal wakefulness, and lowness of spirits after meals, a patient trial, and regular course of the water, have been proved to insure permanent relief. Patients of this description should take two wine glasses full of the water an hour before breakfast, with the same quantity an hour before dinner; and after a few days the dose may be increased to a tumbler full at each time. A brisk walk immediately after drinking it will promote its good effects; and by regularly observing this course, the stomach will gradually recover its lost tone, and the increased action of the gastric juice will, ere long, remove the formidable symptoms which, as above enumerated, follow in the train of Indigestion.

Before I proceed to particularize a few, out of the numerous cases, which have either come under my own observation, or have been attested by credible witnesses, it will not be out of place to subjoin a list of those disorders, for the removal of which the Dorton Chalybeate has been found eminently effectual. Nervous disorders in general—Dejection of Spirits and Hysteria—Tic Doloureux—Indigestion and loss of appetite—Impurities of the

blood—Bronchoceles and Scrofula—Dropsical complaints—Bilious diseases, when unaccompanied by fever—Passive Hæmorrhage—Profuse Sweats—Debility induced by excess of any kind, or the result of a continued illness.

In Intermittent Fevers it has been also used with exceeding advantage; and has proved highly efficacious in the weakness consequent on protracted Ague.

It is worthy of trial in every chronic complaint unattended with fever.

The earliest case to which I can with certainty refer, is that of a servant in the employ of the late SIR JOHN AUBREY. This man was afflicted with an obstinate herpetic disorder, and nearly covered with painful and unsightly blotches from head to foot. Recourse was had to the best advice of the day, but without advantage; and his disorder gained ground so rapidly as to incapacitate him for service. In this extremity, the poor fellow aware of the effects of the spring on animals, betook himself to its use. He first applied the water externally, and by degrees venturing to employ it as an internal medicine, he experienced its efficacy by a complete cure.

A case, nearly similar to this, attracted the attention of Sir Christopher Pegge, at that time the leading Physician at Oxford.

The sufferer, who laboured under a decided leprosy, was by his advice induced to make very free use of tar, both taken in solution, and applied outwardly, but without effect. As a last resource he was ordered to seek relief at one or other of the mineral springs of the country, but his means being limited, he was forced, as a matter of necessity, to recur to the nearest. Repairing to Dorton he experienced a complete cure; and now, at the expiration of twenty years, he has suffered no return of his complaint. It should be observed, that since his cure was effected, it has been his practice occasionally to visit the village, and drink of its healing stream.

Among the cases which have come under my own immediate notice, one of the most extraordinary is that of a labouring man, of the name of Varney, who is at present a resident in the village of Dorton. For two and twenty years he had been afflicted with an indolent ulcer, seated just above the inner angle, for which he had three several times been, without amendment, an in-patient at the Radcliffe Infirmary. The ulcer, when I recommended him to make trial of the water, was of such depth that a walnut might have easily been buried in it. He followed my advice with but little faith, and although by no means of a spare habit, the ulcer rapidly healed, and has remained closed ever since, during a period of nearly four years.

Two cases of cure, corresponding in every respect to the above, occurred recently in the persons of —— who is an inhabitant of Headington, and of —— who resides at Stanton St. John's. The former had been a hospital case of many months standing, and was regarded as hopeless. Both laboured under the same species of indolent ulcer, and both were cured in a comparatively short space of time, by drinking the water of the Spa, and using it as a lotion.

A female of the name of Kemp, living at Buckingham, and who was a martyr to Scrofula, in its most dreadful shape, had the water sent to her from the well. On enquiring into the history of her case, it appeared that she had suffered from a long-standing ulceration of the bones of the nose, and having had recourse to our excellent Infirmary, the Radcliffe, at Oxford, she was received as an in-door patient. Whilst there, several portions of diseased bone were at various times extracted; but notwithstanding every care, there was no disposition in the ulcer to granulate. The discharge from it continued to be copious, and the constitution of the patient was evidently unable to bear up much longer against the exhaustion. At this period she commenced the use of the Chalybeate, and in six weeks afterwards repaired to Dorton to thank the proprietor for her complete restoration to health.

The mention of this cure leads me to state, that in several instances of Cancer it is now being used, I hear, with the happiest results.

Numerous instances of the cure of Psora, and of *Tinia Capitis*, have come under my notice. Few disorders are more troublesome, and the efficacy of the Chalybeate in removing them is truly surprising.

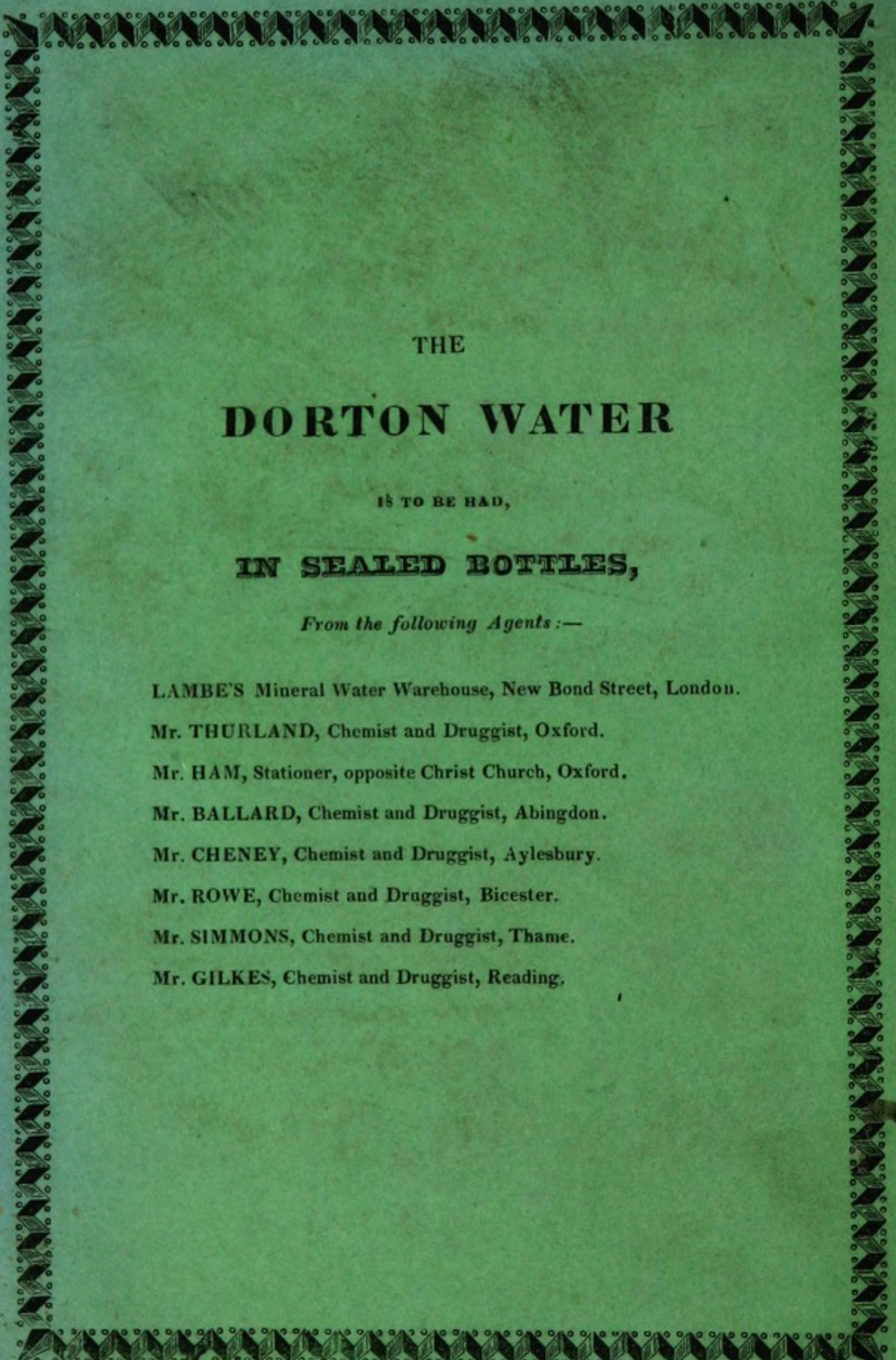
Many other cases might be adduced, were not the writer fearful of incurring the charge of empiricism. It has indeed now become a task of danger and of difficulty to speak the truth. In this age of unabashed eulogy and of sordid interest, to speak all would be, it is feared, to beget distrust, whilst to say too little might be to ensure neglect.

The writer of the foregoing unadorned narrative has wished to avoid either hazard, but with what success time alone can shew.









THE  
**DORTON WATER**

IS TO BE HAD,

**IN SEALED BOTTLES,**

*From the following Agents:—*

LAMBE'S Mineral Water Warehouse, New Bond Street, London.

Mr. THURLAND, Chemist and Druggist, Oxford.

Mr. HAM, Stationer, opposite Christ Church, Oxford.

Mr. BALLARD, Chemist and Druggist, Abingdon.

Mr. CHENEY, Chemist and Druggist, Aylesbury.

Mr. ROWE, Chemist and Druggist, Bicester.

Mr. SIMMONS, Chemist and Druggist, Thame.

Mr. GILKES, Chemist and Druggist, Reading.





Syracuse, N. Y.  
PAT. JAN 21, 1908

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