A VISIT

TO THE

PURTON SPA;

WITH A

SHORT ACCOUNT

OF THE

EXTRAORDINARY PROPERTIES AND EFFECTS OF ITS SULPHATED AND BROMO-IODATED SPRING.

BY

ROBERT H. BAKEWELL, M.D.,

Member and Licentiate in Midwifery of the Royal College of Surgeons of England; L.S.A.;
Formerly House Surgeon to the Middlesex Hospital, London;
Late of the Medical Staff in the Crimea;
Late Surgeon to the Royal Kent Dispensary;
Author of a "Popular Manual of Female Diseases;"
"Practical Hints on the Management of the Sick Room," &c., &c.

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Some few months ago, I received by post a copy of a small pamphlet, entitled "Analysis of the Purton Sulphated and Bromo-Iodated Saline Water, with some Remarks on its History, Properties, and Uses. By S. C. Sadler, M.R.C.S.," &c., &c. Having some knowledge of Purton and its neighbourhood, from the fact that I was formerly in practice there for a time, and having had the pleasure of Mr. Sadler's acquaintance, I perused the pamphlet with great interest. It gave a brief account of the qualities of a Spring of which I had heard much during my residence at Purton, and which I had often urged the proprietor to re-open. The remarkable chemical composition of the water as revealed by Dr. Voelcker's analysis, and the extraordinary cures reported to have been effected by its use in the short time that has elapsed since it was re-opened, excited great interest in my mind, and an eager desire to make a personal examination of the water and its effects After some correspondence on the subject, Mr. Sadler, who is the proprietor of the land in which the spring is found, invited me to go down to Purton, kindly offering to give me every facility for the examination of patients who had taken or are taking the water. In March of this year (1861) I went down for this purpose, devoting as long a space of time to the investigation as other professional engagements would

allow. My previous knowledge of the locality, and of most of the persons whose cases I examined into, of course greatly assisted me. I should premise that I went down to some extent a sceptic: not that I doubted that the statements made in the pamphlet were true, but because, in common with every other medical man, I have so often seen new remedies vaunted as almost infallible, of which time has proved the uselessness, that I believed that, though valuable in some cases, the extraordinary cures reported to have been effected by the water must be capable of explanation in some other way. It seemed impossible that one water should cure maladies so different in their causes, symptoms, and pathology. The result proved that I was mistaken, as I hope to show in the course of a few pages.

Purton is an agricultural village, beautifully situated in the north of Wiltshire, about six miles from Swindon, on the Great Western Railway. It possesses a station of its own, the railway passing through the centre of the parish. On leaving the arrival platform of the station, a gently-rising road leads up to the eminence on which the main part of the village is situated. The first thing that strikes the stranger, especially if he be an inhabitant of a large town, is the intense quiet of the place. An air of calmness and repose seems to pervade it, which to the jaded and harassed man of business is, for a time at least, inexpressibly refreshing. There is a song in which a sentimental lady states that "The village seems asleep to me when Lubin is away;" possibly a prosaic cockney might consider that the presence or absence of Lubin (whoever he was) makes little difference, and that the village is always asleep. This, however, to those who go to it in search of health will prove no disadvantage.

The day on which I visited Purton was one of those delightful ones of early spring which ought to shut up our grumbling English mouths when abusing our own climate. It was a fine sunshiny day, with only just enough wind stirring to make a

pleasant breeze. Coming direct from London in a railway carriage, with the windows closed, the fresh, pure, balmy air seemed to give new life and vigour to the frame.

On reaching the summit of the eminence on which the chief part of Purton is built, a beautiful view of the surrounding country is obtained, extending before the beholder like a panorama for some twenty or thirty miles. The village itself consists of more than the average number of respectable houses belonging to the resident gentry, professional classes, farmers and tradespeople, mostly built of a stone which is quarried in the neighbourhood, and which is abundant and cheap. The only public buildings requiring notice are the church and the new schools. The former is a fine old building in the early decorated Gothic, having both a spire and a tower—a peculiarity not often found in small churches. It is in excellent preservation, though disfigured in the interior with some of the usual churchwarden repairs.

The parish is remarkably healthy; indeed, I may say, looking at it from a purely professional point of view, it is dreadfully healthy. There are, in proportion to the population, a very large number of old people, and the average of deaths per annum is exceedingly low.

With these few preliminary remarks, I will now proceed to the more immediate subject of this pamphlet—the Purton Sulphated and Bromo-Iodated Saline Water.

As has been before intimated, the virtues of this water were known by tradition, and also by the personal experience of some of the older inhabitants. The well had, however, been closed up for many years, and it was only in September, 1859, that it was re-opened. Since then the proprietor has erected a convenient pump-room, &c., for the use of persons coming to drink the waters.

The water itself is clear and bright, like any ordinary spring water: it possesses hardly any odour, and very little taste. In fact, a thirsty person might easily swallow down a glassful

without perceiving anything different from the ordinary spring water. If it is deliberately sipped, its taste will be found to be slightly saline and alkaline, but not to any extent, or so as to render it in the least degree disagreeable. It thus possesses a very great advantage over many other mineral waters, and one which will be duly appreciated by those who have tasted some other mineral spas. It has been analyzed by two celebrated chemists, who agree as to its chemical constituents. The analysis of Dr. Voelcker, of the Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester, is now before me. He gives as the result of his experiments the following ingredients in one gallon (70,000 grains) of the water, the temperature being 58½ deg. Fahrenheit, and the specific gravity 100·45.*

Analysis by Dr. Voelcker, *in an imperial gallon.*

Organic matter and water of combination . .	8·750
Sulphate of soda	112·239
Sulphate of magnesia	77·208
Sulphate of lime	83·873
Sulphate of potash	1·916
Carbonate of potash	28·880
Chloride of sodium	34·297
Oxide of iron, alumina, with traces of phosphoric acid	·280
Soluble silica	1·280
Total solid residue per gallon	348·723
Free carbonic acid, in cubic inches . . .	50·4
Sulphuretted hydrogen	A trace.

* For the better information of readers unacquainted with Chemistry it may not be superfluous to mention, that this expression means that if a vessel, which holds exactly 100 grains of distilled water, were filled with the Purton water, the weight would be $\frac{45}{100}$ of a grain (nearly half a grain) more.

When this analysis was made, Dr. Voelcker suspected the existence of bromine and iodine in the water, but not having a sufficient quantity to determine the amount of these ingredients, he wrote for a further supply; having received which, he furnished the following additional analysis :—

Determination of Iodine and Bromine in the Purton Mineral Water.

Iodine	·056
Bromine	·080
The iodine is equal to iodide of sodium . .	·066
The bromine to bromide of magnesium . .	·092

The ingredients whose presence is thus revealed have a large range of action. Not to go too minutely into their therapeutic action, which would only weary the non-professional reader, it may be stated that the neutral sulphates are aperient and diuretic, the alkaline carbonates of course are antacid, while the iodine and bromine are powerfully alterative—a convenient medical term, invented to conceal our ignorance of the *modus operandi* of some drugs, of which we only know that they act on the system in some mysterious way, and change or *alter* it. The carbonic acid gas, of which it contains a larger quantity than any other English mineral water, is of use by its direct action on the stomach and nervous system, and also by giving the water a pleasant briskness, and thus taking away what would otherwise be the unpleasant taste of the saline ingredients. It is, therefore, essential that those who obtain the water in bottles or jars should keep the bottles tightly corked, so as to prevent the escape of the carbonic acid gas. If any one wishes to ascertain by direct experiment the value of this gas in improving the taste of the water, let him pour a small quantity into a tumbler, and allow it to stand for a few hours in a warm room; then let him taste it, and he will find the water will possess a bitter saline and alkaline taste.

I was shown some of the water which was undergoing spontaneous evaporation in a glass. It had a very strong smell of iodine and bromine; much more than I should have thought would result from the presence of such a minute quantity of these elements as appears by the analysis. Possibly during the process of evaporating some gallons of the water (as is necessary in order to enable the test to act), some portion of these very volatile elements may be driven off in the form of vapour. However this may be, it is certain that even a small glassful of the water, when allowed to evaporate spontaneously to half its original bulk, possesses a very powerful and characteristic odour of iodine.

The use of iodine and its compounds in scrofulous and skin-diseases has long been known and recognized by the profession. There are few remedies in more general use, or more highly valued by medical men.

It is yet too early to speak positively as to the action of the water on the human frame, in all respects. At present the cases that have been treated by it are so varied in their nature and symptoms that an examination of them with this view only baffles me. It is certain, however, that the great majority of those who have taken the water find it to act on the kidneys, and on the bowels; the effects being proportioned to the doses taken. All but one of the patients I saw described it as increasing the appetite, and this to a remarkable extent. In the one exception (when in other respects the effect was most beneficial) the patient stated that the appetite decreased when taking the water. All, without exception, stated that the general health rapidly improved during its administration. The agreement on this point was remarkable. It seems to exercise also some kind of influence on the nervous system, as several of the patients described a sensation following it as if it entered at once and simultaneously into every part of the body. Some described it as "searching" into every part of them. No doubt some of these

sensations are owing to the imagination and fancy of the patients. The effect of the water, when taken internally, on the skin and its functions, is probably in a great measure indirect through its influence on the excretions, but there may be also some direct diaphoretic effect produced, though this requires further investigation. A very marked instance of its action on the liver will be narrated presently.

Such, so far as my brief investigation extends, are the physiological effects of the Purton mineral water. But it needs a fuller and more systematic inquiry than has yet been given. I am about to carry on a series of careful experiments on its properties and uses. Of its great, I may say without exaggeration, its marvellous powers, the few cases I am about to relate will afford ample proof.

The first case which Mr. Sadler introduced to my notice, was that of a tall strapping young man, in the uniform of the Royal Artillery. He had been enlisted only *three weeks.* He is about 20 years old, and ever since he was an infant in the cradle he has been subject to an eruption of the scalp, of such an extent and severity that his hair was to all appearance entirely destroyed by it, and he was compelled to wear constantly a skull-cap. The whole head was covered with a large crust or scab. The severity of the case may be judged of from the fact that until a few months ago he had never had his hair cut—for the simple reason that there was none requiring cutting! It is almost needless to add that he had been under the care of all the surgeons in the neighbourhood, none of whom could cure him. He tried Homœopathy: that, too, failed. Indeed, there was nothing recommended to him or his parents that was not tried. When the well was reopened, of course he tried the water, and in a very short time found himself benefited. He applied it externally also; the scabs became loose and began to fall off; no others appeared in their places. Gradually the whole scalp became clear, and the hair began to grow. In six months from commencing the

use of the water, the whole head was perfectly free from disease, and a crop of short hair covered it! At the same time, his general health greatly improved, and when I saw him he was the picture of robust health, and the head was quite free from disease. This case was a most satisfactory one to my mind as to the directly curative powers of the water. Here was a case that had resisted every kind of treatment (my own among the rest)—a case of the most obstinate and chronic kind—a case in which nothing could be owing to the imagination, for what imagination has an agricultural peasant of eighteen or nineteen?—and in which there could be no doubt of the cure or its permanence, for more than a year has elapsed since the eruption disappeared. The hair is now of the usual length, but rather thin.

Another case of skin-disease brought under my notice was that of a little girl aged 10 years. She had had since infancy a scaly eruption on both hands and on part of the arms. In July, 1860, she began to take the water, the eruption entirely disappeared in three months afterwards, and the skin is now soft and clear.

Another case was that of a gentleman aged about 50, who had suffered from the scaly eruption called *Lepra,* which was attended by a most troublesome itching, for six months. He had been under the care of two medical men without benefit. He commenced taking the waters, and in less than a fortnight he found the itching ceased; then the patches of eruption, which were situated in every part of the body, began to die away, and all disappeared in the course of three months. At the same time, the appetite, which had been bad, increased, and the general health very greatly improved. This gentleman, whom I saw myself, expressed a very high opinion of the value of the water, to which alone he attributed his recovery.

A fourth instance of the power of the water over skin-diseases was related to me by the brother of the patient,

who had, when heated, drunk a quantity of cold beer. A rash or eruption appeared round the body, which persisted, in spite of treatment, for two months. He sent for two gallons of the water, and when he had drunk that quantity sent word back that he was quite cured. No re-appearance of the eruption has taken place.

One more case was related to me by a friend of the patient. It was that of a somewhat elderly man, who had suffered for *three years* from a scabby pustular eruption over both arms and legs, and about the face. For the relief of this he had been to Cheltenham, Leamington, and Weymouth, and tried other modes of treatment, but all without benefit. He began to take the Purton water, and soon found a marked improvement; and by perseverance in its use, for a period of six months, he was cured.

It appears that the water has also been used in cases of boils, eruptions in children during teething, and the like, with similar results.

The consideration of even these few cases of skin-diseases will lead to the irresistible conclusion that the water possesses a great power over these often most intractable maladies. It is true that we are in the dark as to the mode by which the water effects a cure, and that, therefore, its use in the treatment of these affections must, for the present at least, be empirical. But, unfortunately, it happens that nearly all our treatment of skin-diseases is empirical. We know, for instance, that arsenic exercises a most powerful effect on many forms of them, especially the scaly forms, but we do not know how it acts—we only know the fact. Arsenic, however, is a medicine of such a dangerous character that it is most undesirable to administer it if any substitute can be found. It requires unceasing watchfulness on the part of the medical attendant lest its poisonous effects should be produced; besides which, patients have very naturally great reluctance to take it unless they find themselves incurable by every other plan.

I certainly shall try the Purton water in any case of obstinate skin-disease that may come under my care for the future, in preference to using arsenic or any such hazardous remedy. It will be much more satisfactory to prescribe a remedy, of which an overdose cannot possibly do any harm, than one of which an overdose may necessitate a coroner's inquest.

In using the Purton water, or indeed any other remedy, for the cure of skin-diseases, it will be necessary to bear in mind that diet must be carefully attended to. Most of these cases have their origin in some irregularity or impropriety of the diet—it may be defective in quality or excessive in quantity—but whatever may be the case, it will be well for the patient to obtain medical advice as to the most suitable diet for the particular disease before commencing the use of the water.

Of the effect of the water on scrofulous or strumous diseases I had little opportunity of judging during my brief stay. These diseases, when occurring among a rural population like that of North Wilts, where the air is so pure, and the occupations of the people so favourable to health, arise more from poverty and insufficiency of food than from any other cause. The rate of wages in these districts is extremely low, not sufficient to procure what a working-man in towns would consider the necessaries of life. Fresh meat is a luxury rarely seen on the tables of these agricultural labourers, and when they have meat at all, which, generally speaking, is only once a week, it consists almost universally of salt pork. It will be obvious, therefore, that no merely medicinal treatment of scrofula among such a population can be expected to do much good. However powerful might be the curative effects of any drug or combination of drugs, when aided by an improved and generous dietary, alone they would accomplish little.

Nevertheless, in the few cases I saw, the water seemed to have accomplished all that could be expected from medicine,

and more than I should have contemplated. One young woman was brought under my notice who had suffered from enlargement of the glands of the neck, ending in abscess. The glands began to enlarge about June, 1860, and about a month before Christmas in that year the abscesses resulting were opened. No improvement took place, and at the end of a month the sores were still open and showed no signs of healing up. She then began to take the waters, leaving off all other medicine. In a week's time she found a great improvement, and by the end of a month from commencing the use of the water the sores were entirely healed. The appetite greatly improved while taking the water, and the general health and strength also.

Another young woman whom I saw had suffered since infancy from scrofulus inflammation of the edges of the eyelids—the *ophthalmia tarsi* of medical writers—a very obstinate and disfiguring disease. The result of it in the chronic form is to occasion loss of the eyelashes and a very unsightly redness of the eyelids. This young person applied the water locally and took it internally, and was completely cured. When I saw her, the eyelids were in a natural state.

An instance of the effect of the water on a case of advanced consumption was brought under my notice. The case is incomplete, inasmuch as no record was taken of the stethoscopic signs of diseased lungs either when the treatment was commenced or when it was discontinued. I therefore give the history of the case as it was related to me by the widow of the patient. He was a man under 30, who having been suffering for a long time from symptoms of consumption, was at length admitted into the Brompton Consumption Hospital. Before he went he had taken cod-liver oil and other medicines. He was dismissed from the Brompton Hospital in a very bad state, cough very severe, giving him no rest at night; the expectoration was purulent and mixed with blood; pulse 130. In this condition he commenced taking the water. The effect

was most beneficial; the cough almost disappeared, the expectoration ceased, the pulse became slower and stronger, and he increased a pound a week in weight for nine weeks. After this, he was obliged to go to work as a baker's workman, in which capacity he had to attend to the oven, and then go out in the keen air of last winter. He caught cold, inflammation of the bowels set in, and he died in a fortnight. Incomplete as this case is, it seems to me clear, from Mr. Sadler's statements and the widow's, that very marked amendment took place under the use of the water, and this, after the usual treatment had failed. His wife particularly stated that the relief to the cough was very great by the use of the water,—an effect which *à priori* reasoning from the chemical composition of the water would not lead us to expect. It will at any rate be well worth a trial where cod-liver oil and tonics fail to do good.

The next case brought under my notice by Mr. Sadler was one of a very remarkable kind, and in which the benefit derived from the use of the water was distinct and unequivocal. The patient is a married woman, aged 50. For upwards of *twenty years* she had been a martyr to frontal headaches of the most severe and distressing character, accompanied by sickness and nausea. When these headaches attacked her, she was obliged to go to bed, and she described the pain as of the most excruciating kind. Not a week used to pass without an attack, and at times they would occur every day. She had tried various kinds of treatment, but without success. About a year before I saw her, she commenced the use of the water; in a month she was entirely cured of the headaches, and they have never occurred since, except in a very slight degree, when they have been removed immediately by the use of the water. She stated that while she took a small dose of the water daily she never suffered at all. Now, in this case, the water probably acted by removing some derangement of the liver or stomach, which had been the exciting cause of the headaches. I there-

fore couple with it another very remarkable case, in which the action of the water on the liver was signally marked. A farmer, apparently between 40 and 50 years of age, had been a sufferer from dyspepsia of the most aggravated kind for eighteen years. All the usual symptoms of this malady had been present, such as flatulence, oppression and pain at the pit of the stomach, great depression of spirits, and latterly frequent vomiting of his food, after which a temporary relief was obtained. He had tried every medical man in the neighbourhood, and a great number of quack remedies besides. Still the dyspepsia increased, until at length not a single meal was digested properly. About fifteen months ago, he began to drink the Purton water; after he had taken it for ten days, with only the ordinary effects on the kidneys and bowels, he began to pass from the bowels a substance which he described as being as black as ink. He passed a quantity of this daily for a week, with daily improvement in his health and dyspeptic symptoms. At the end of the week, the evacuations became natural and healthy; and he positively declared to me that since then he has digested every meal as comfortably as any man could, and that he has not suffered from the slightest discomfort after eating, or indigestion in any form, from that time to this. He also stated that whereas before he was very thin and weak, his health and strength, as might be expected, have vastly improved, and, to use his own words, "he feels a different man altogether." There can be little doubt, I think, that the black substance passed consisted of inspissated bile, with which probably the gall-bladder was filled, and the liver loaded. The fact that as this was removed from the system the dyspeptic symptoms disappeared, shows pretty clearly that the liver was in this case the "*fons et origo mali.*"

Another case, which is of rather an anomalous kind, was that of a young farmer, who had had very severe diarrhœa for upwards of a fortnight. It had resisted all treatment,

and reduced him to a state of great debility, and was beginning seriously to affect the general health. One night he took two tumblers of the water; a violent action on the bowels and kidneys was produced, and the next day he was quite well. There was no return of the diarrhœa. In this instance the water, no doubt, acted by purging away some irritating matter in the bowels which had been keeping up the diarrhœa.

The following cases show the power of the water in ascitis, or dropsy of the abdomen, a condition which generally depends on disease of the liver. The second case is the most remarkable I ever read or heard of, and I confess that, unless I had seen and examined the patient myself, I could not have believed it.

The first case was that of an elderly female, who for seven years had suffered from an intermittent, apparently an irregular kind of quotidian ague. She has had shiverings daily. For the last four years she had been greatly distended with dropsy of the abdomen, so that she could not stoop down to put on her shoes, and was able to move about only with difficulty, in consequence of anasarcous swelling of the feet and legs. She took the waters for some two or three months with great benefit as regards the intermittent. The shiverings diminished in severity and frequency, and *the dropsy entirely disappeared.* When I saw her, the abdomen evidently contained no fluid, and the feet and legs were perfectly free from all trace of anasarca. I was not able to examine the condition of the spleen for want of time. This person was the only one who stated that the water diminished her appetite.

In the second case, I am permitted to make public the patient's name, as indeed he sent an account of his case to the local newspaper—the *Wilts and Gloucester Standard.*

Robert Williams, aged 57, brick-moulder by trade, had been for several years in a state of ill-health, which he attributes to a cold caught some nine years ago. It had left him weak, and with a fixed pain in the loins, which prevented him rotating

the spine, and compelled him to turn on his heels, moving the whole body stiffly, when he wished to turn merely from one side to the other. Two years previous to taking the water, the abdomen began to swell, and the swelling increased to a very great extent. He suffered constantly from the pain and stiffness in the back; he could, with great difficulty, walk a mile to his work, and a mile back again; in the morning, when he first arose, his face was puffed up with dropsy; his general health was very bad. At this time he commenced the use of the water by taking the enormous dose of three half-pints. This he did entirely on his own responsibility. The effect was tremendous. From the time he took it in the afternoon, until 9 o'clock at night, he passed urine in large quantities, no less than twelve times, and the bowels were acted on several times also. He went to bed at 9 o'clock, and at 4 A.M. the bowels and kidneys were again acted on. The result was an immediate lessening of the swelling. He continued the use of the water in more moderate doses, and in a fortnight the dropsical effusion was entirely dispersed, and the pain and stiffness in the back entirely gone! He was so much stronger and better that he was able to walk several miles. Since that time (a year and a half) there has been no return of the dropsy or pain; he is now, as I ascertained by percussion, entirely free from any dropsical effusion; he appears in good health and excellent spirits; the week before I saw him, he had walked nearly forty miles in two consecutive days, and in order to see me he had walked seven; he was able to bend and twist the body about in any direction.

The shortness of time requisite for the cure in this instance, and the permanency of the result, would be sufficient testimony to my mind of the value of the water, if not another case had been treated by it. There could have been no possible ground of mistake; the effect of the water was direct and immediate, and—as time proved—permanent. I never

saw a case in my life in which the power of a remedy was more satisfactorily shown.

It is not necessary to adduce any further proofs of the power of the water as a purgative and diuretic, though I have notes of some cases of kidney and bladder disease in which its diuretic action was very marked. Any person can test its qualities in these respects by taking a single tumbler-full. In cases of habitual constipation it will, without doubt, prove most useful. Its action is described by those who took the ordinary dose, as being mild but effectual. It has also, as I understand from Mr. Sadler, been used with great benefit in Piles.

There is one case in my note-book of Chronic Rheumatism, in which the water was exceedingly useful. One case, it is true, is not worth much, but those who are sufferers from this very obstinate form of disease, will be glad to hear anything which gives a promise of relief, especially when it presents itself in such a harmless and innocent form as that of a glass of spring water.

A female, aged 46, had had an attack of acute rheumatism, or rheumatic fever as it is sometimes called, fourteen years ago. Since this first attack she has been constantly liable to rheumatic pains of a chronic kind, but very severe in their nature, especially in the left knee. She was in the workhouse at one time, and found great difficulty even in getting upstairs to bed, so much so that she petitioned for leave to sleep on the ground floor. For four years previous to taking the water she was only able to walk with short, tottering steps, and only for a very short distance. Partly this was owing to anchylosis of the left knee-joint, but chiefly to the excessive tenderness of that joint and the rheumatic pains, so that she could not bear her weight on the knee, and the least jar or shock to it gave her acute pain. She took the water regularly for some time, and applied it to the knee by means of bandages; the result is, that the tenderness of the knee-joint is entirely

removed; she can bear her whole weight on it, and stamp on it with ease, and she is able to walk several miles without difficulty. At the same time the general health is greatly improved.

I might add many other cases to this collection, but I prefer to give those only which I was myself enabled to investigate. I was informed by Mr. Sadler that some remarkable cures of ulcerated legs had been effected by the use of the water. As these ulcers will often heal up under very various kinds of treatment, and sometimes without any treatment at all, a large number of cures will be required to establish the claim of the water as a specific for these cases.

It is only fair to state that I have purposely omitted in this pamphlet all mention of numerous slight or trivial complaints which were benefited or cured by the water. Dozens of such cases are not so satisfactory to the mind of the intelligent inquirer as one in which a cure has been made after all other means had failed. A medical man invariably rejects as valueless any case of a slight ailment, or one which is likely to get well of itself, as a proof of the power of a new remedy. Neither must it be supposed that I have related all the remarkable cases of cure by this water. Many persons object to the publication of their cases in any form, and from the publication of others I was debarred by the rule, to which I have rigidly adhered, of not quoting any for the correctness of which I could not myself vouch.

The perusal of the foregoing cases will probably suggest to the intelligent reader the question, "How is it possible that one kind of water can cure such varied and different diseases?" This, I confess, was the question that suggested itself to my mind when I heard of the cures, and rendered me incredulous, until I had seen and examined them for myself. Until we have acquired a larger experience of the action and power of the water, it will be impossible to give a thoroughly satisfactory answer to the question. This, however, we may say, that

the water contains a great variety of ingredients, some of which are suitable for one diseased condition of the system, some for another, while, probably, in some cases, all the ingredients help towards the desired result. We have among the bases the alkalies and the alkaline earths—Soda, Potassa, Magnesia and Lime, besides Iodine, Bromine, a trace of Iron and Phosphorus; these bases we find combined with the Sulphates, forming Neutral, Aperient, and Diuretic Salts, and with the Carbonates, forming Alkaline Salts. It is, therefore, by no means improbable, that in some of the cases in which the water has proved so beneficial, a portion of the chemical constituents may have taken no part in the cure, may have remained neutral as it were. Thus, in the scrofulous cases, the Iodine and Bromine are doubtless the most powerful ingredients, the others occupying but a subordinate place.

"But," another objector may say, "may not other agencies have been at work in effecting these cures? How can you be sure that the water, and the water alone, was the curative agent?" To this I reply, that in nearly all the instances adduced, the patients had previously tried other modes of treatment without effect; that the cases were mostly long and obstinate chronic maladies, in which the patients tried the water as a sort of forlorn hope after everything else had failed. Besides this, none took any other medicine at the same time as the water. And other agencies of a different kind, but which often effect a cure, were absent here. There was no change of air, for all the patients I saw have resided in the same neighbourhood for years. There was no change of diet, as they resided at home, partaking of their usual fare. And there was no faith, the most powerful agent of all, for as it happens, the water has had to undergo the usual amount of scorn and ridicule which attends every novelty that is not fashionable. This is chiefly owing to the fact that the water has no unpleasant taste or smell, but is hardly to be distinguished from ordinary spring water. The ignorant only regard-

ing this fact, and forgetting that by the simplest of tests (namely, allowing it to evaporate spontaneously), the large quantity of salts it contains would be manifested, did not fail to laugh at the idea of any one being cured by drinking cold water.

There is, therefore, no other mode or way in which these cures could be effected except by the water itself, and so extraordinary are they, that I have thought it my duty to lay this account of them before the public, firmly believing that in the Purton Mineral Water, a new and most important therapeutic agent has been found. I may mention that the water can be had in bottles and jars, and if kept tightly corked will remain good for months.* To those who can go down to Purton in person, I would strongly recommend a visit. The village and the surrounding country are very picturesque, and the air is of the most bracing and healthy quality that can be breathed in England. Lodgings may be had, though the supply is very limited at present. If any enterprising builder would erect a good hotel, it would prove an excellent speculation, and would greatly add to the convenience of the place. As has been before stated, stone is abundant and cheap, and all other building materials may be procured in the neighbourhood.

* The ordinary dose for adults is a half-pint tumbler at bed-time, and the same or more one hour before breakfast the following morning; in some cases a wine-glassful two hours before dinner, daily, beginning with a little less, increasing to a little more, according to the effects produced, &c. The doses, however, and times of taking the water, should in all cases be under professional guidance. The charge for the water at the Spa, ~~including hamper and packing~~, is, Quarts, 13*s.* per doz.; 1½ Pints, 10*s.* 0*d.*; Pints, 9*s.* 6*d.*; which can be had by addressing the "Manager," Spa, Purton, Wilts.