THE MINERAL SPRINGS OF AIX-LA-CHAPELLE AND OF BORCETTE

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The Mineral Springs of Aix-La-Chapelle and of Borcette by Alex. Reumont

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MINERAL SPRINGS

OF

AIX-LA-CHAPELLE

AND OF

BORCETTE.

THEIR MEDICAL PROPERTIES AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR THEIR USE

EXEMPLIFIED IN ANCIENT AND MODERN CASES

BY

ALEX. REUMONT, M. D.,

RESIDENT PHYSICIAN IN AIX-LA-CHAPELLE.

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1861.

ADVERTISEMENT.

Presuming that my German Treatise recently published on the mineral springs of Aix-la-Chapelle and Borcette would not only interest but benefit the many English sufferers under the several maladies for which those springs afford a cure, I have translated it into the English language. I was the more induced to this attempt, having been formerly attached to one of the great London Hospitals, and nearly twenty years having passed, since any English work has appeared on the subject.

The subjoined *Cases*, classified in their order and character -- some of them in an abridged form but with no detriment to their perspicuity — are selected from ancient and modern observers on the Aix-la-Chapelle springs; others are from my own personal experience; but principally from the notes of my late father, Doctor Gerard Reumont

during his very long practice as a Physician in this City.

I now commit my little Manual to the indulgence, and — let me hope also — to the service, of its English readers.

Aix-la-Chapelle, 1861.

A. R.

AIX-LA-CHAPELLE.

"An old and venerable spring, wherein the Romans and ancient Germans had used to bathe, and Charlemagne obtained strength and recreation after his campaigns; but still excellent in its virtues, and acting with unimpaired and salutiferous effect through so many centuries unto this day."
Chr. Wilh. Hufeland.

SITUATION. THERMOMETRIC, BAROMETRIC AND GEOLOGICAL RELATIONS. FLORA.

Aix-la-Chapelle, an ancient town with about 58,000 inhabitants in the Rhenish provinces of Prussia near the Dutch (Limburg) frontier, and between the rivers Rhine and Maes, lies under the 50° 46′ 34″ north latitude and the 23° 44′ 17″ east longitude from Ferro (6° 4′ 39″ east longitude from Greenwich): the altitude, from the base of the fountain of the market-place, is 553,4 Prussian, or 534,7 Paris, or 569,8 English feet above the level of the sea (Amsterdam water-mark Nr. 0), few hot sources lying so low. The summit of the *Lousberg*, at the Pyramid, is 263 feet higher than the foot of the Sandkaul-gate. According to a twelve years diligent observation made by Professor *Heiss*, the mean temperature is found to be + 7,49° R. (48,9° Fahr.); that of the morning observations + 6,29° R. (46° Fahr.),

of those made at noon + 9,69° R. (53,8° Fahr.), and those of the evening + 6,68° R. (47,03° Fahr.) The media of the seasons are: Winter 1,27° R. (34,86° Fahr.), Spring 7,04° R. (47,84° Fahr.), Summer 13,51° R. (62,4° Fahr.,) Autumn 8,46° R. (51,3° Fahr.) The mean temperature of spring-water (cold sources, and for the most part hard) is + 7,8° R. (49,55° Fahr.) The mean point of the Barometer is at 0° R. (32° Fahr.) mercury warmth — 27 inch. 6,86 lin. The saturation of the atmosphere with vapour 5,79 Gr. in 1' cub. rhen. air. The prevailing winds are north-east and south; the inclination of the Compass shows 19° 33' westerly (1st January 1850); the yearly decrease is 8 min.

As to *the geological relations* of the Basin of Aix-la-Chapelle (a bay of a former World) there are perhaps few regions in Germany which equal them in variety, or in reference to natural history and commercial interest. Within less than a (german) mile we find here four of the most important geological formations: in the south and east the Transition limestone (Devonian System), which in the west is leaning toward the Belgian, and in the east toward the Eifel- and Rhenish limestone; from this spring the hot sulphureous sources; in it are found rich veins of lead, calamine, iron and copper. In the west and north-west of the town rises a series of undulated hills, suggesting a mighty Chalk-formation, which shows itself *two strata*: the Greensand, which Dr. *J. Müller*

parallels with the Greensand of Blackdown, and the other and younger formation, which he compares to the upper Chalk-formation of Dover, Meudon, Rügen etc., and is celebrated for its rich petrifications of shells, remains of animals, and plants of a former world. From the Chalk-mountain, as everywhere, spring the richest and healthiest sources of common water, which supply the town with most excellent drinkable water. In the north and north-east the Coal-formation is developed of a rare thickness; not only the inhabitants of the adjacent villages getting their livelihood by mining the immense coalpits, but Aix-la Chapelle itself being, since the invention of the steam-engine, indebted to these inexhaustible coal-seams for its prosperity. Besides these three important geological epocha, there appears near the village of Nirm a very interesting stratum of Brown-coal with a sand belonging to this formation, which supplies the neighbouring glass-houses with an excellent material. — The surface of the whole district is covered with diluvial Detritus, the Rhenish Löss, and Pebbles, for the most part Flintstone. The interesting discovery by Professor *Ehrenberg* of Infusory Animalcula in a fossil state, has led to the discovery of such fossils in the cretaceous formation of Aix.

This variety in the relations of the soil, and the different heating of certain layers of earth through the hot springs, render the Flora of the environs of Aix very rich, which exhibits within

scarcely six (English) miles more than a thousand species of Phanerogamic Plants, and a no less varied number of Cryptogamic.

Aix-la-Chapelle possesses mineral Springs of different qualities: *hot sulphureous* (Thermae) and *chalybeate.*

THE HOT SULPHUREOUS SPRINGS OF AIX-LA-CHAPELLE.

These, unquestionably known to the Romans, and renovated by the Emperor *Charlemagne*, bubble up through and over beds and strata of transition Limestone, nearly in the centre of the town, and give together, according to computations made in 1811, an hourly supply of 26 cubic metres of water, being nearly 230,000 cubic metres yearly. Adding to these the hot springs of *Borcette*, the mineral waters of the two places withdraw from the earth about 1,760,000 Kilo, or 35,000 quintals, of different salts, among which are 25,000 quintals of common salt. This great quantity of the latter gave the late Dr. *Monheim* the idea, that a considerable stratum of mineral salt exists in the vicinity of both towns. To produce artificially the heat of the mineral springs would require 5 millions Kilo of dry fire-wood yearly.

All the hot springs of Aix-la-Chapelle deposit *sublimated Sulphur* (Flowers of Sulphur) and Sinter; but of the latter less than do the hot springs of *Borcette, which* exhibit less of the sublimated