

**HUNYADI JÁNOS, A NATURAL
PURGATIVE WATER DRAWN
FROM SAXLEHNER'S BITTER-
WATER SPRINGS NEAR BUDAPEST**

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Hunyadi János, a Natural Purgative Water Drawn from Saxlehner's Bitter-Water Springs near Budapest by Andras Saxlehner

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ANDRAS SAXLEHNER

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HUNYADI JÁNOS

NATURAL APERIENT WATER.

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1896

THE
HUNYADI JÁNOS
NATURAL APERIENT WATER.

INTRODUCTION.

HUNYADI JÁNOS water has been a household word wherever the sun of civilisation shines, for more than a quarter of a century. This fact in itself is a proof of its superior quality. The law of evolution holds good of mineral waters not less than of organised beings; in the struggle for life only the fittest survive. A worthless thing may be puffed into momentary notoriety, but a lasting reputation is acquired only by genuine merit. On its first introduction Hunyadi János at once took rank as the best among

the waters of its class, and this position it has maintained ever since. Doctors proverbially differ, but when they do agree their unanimity is wonderful, and in nothing is this rare unanimity more strikingly displayed than in the emphatic verdict of approval which has been returned by the medical profession of all countries in regard to Hunyadi János. There is no remedy of its kind can show such an array of scientific testimony of the highest order in its favour; the very leaders in the medical world have borne witness to its supreme excellence. When we find men of such undisputed eminence in their several lines as *Professor Rudolph Virchow (clarum et venerabile nomen)*, *Professor Jas. Moleschott*, of Rome; *Professor von Esmarch*, of Kiel; *Professor Lombroso*, of Turin; *Dr. Chas. Fauvel*, of Paris; *Professor Frederick T. Roberts*, *Dr. Lewis A. Sayre*, of New York; *Professor William A. Hammond*, late Surgeon-General of the United States Army; *Professor von Bamberger*, of Vienna; *Dr. Burney Yeo* referring to Hunyadi János in warm and even enthusiastic terms, nothing more is needed to

show that in point of medicinal properties it must be something quite out of the common. And these are only a few chosen almost at random from among living celebrities; a complete list of those who have spoken in praise of the water would include almost all the foremost representatives of medical science in the Old World and the New. A still more convincing proof of the high estimation in which the Hunyadi János water is held by doctors is that they not only prescribe it to their patients, but they take it themselves, showing a degree of faith in its virtues that they by no means have in all medicines which they use.

Hunyadi János belongs to a class of remedies that are coming more and more into favour with practitioners of the healing art, namely, natural waters holding in solution mineral substances which have a more or less powerful action on the economy. Combined as these substances are in such waters by the chemistry of nature, they are incomparably more effective than when they are mixed in exactly the same proportions by the deftest dispenser. Why this is so we do

not know. There is clearly something in the natural water which eludes chemical analysis as the soul or the vital principle, or whatever you like to call the living force that informs our tenement of clay—eludes the knife of the dissector. *Sir Henry Thompson* by careful evaporation reduced natural mineral waters to their pharmaceutical condition of crystallised salts, and found that they have no more power than similar salts obtained by the ordinary commercial processes and met with in every druggist's shop. He adds, 'There is something, which I do not pretend to explain, and certainly shall not speculate about here, which distinguishes the action of mineral waters from the action of salts which are made by our pharmaceutical processes.'¹

It has been suggested that the waters owe their peculiar activity to the magnetism and electricity with which they are charged by the earth, in the depths of which they have slowly been, so to speak, matured. Whatever may be

¹ *Clinical Lectures on Diseases of the Urinary Organs*, 8th Edition. London, 1888, p. 333.

the explanation of their immeasurably superior efficacy, there is no doubt at all as to the fact. We have seen that though it is easy to extract the salts which chemically are the active constituents of the waters, it is found that the virtue has to a great extent gone out of them in the dry state. Further, although it is easy enough to make a water which on chemical analysis appears to be absolutely identical, there is something wanting which no art can supply. In a word, to quote *Sir Henry Thompson* once more, 'what are called artificial waters, however admirably prepared, are simply pharmaceutical products, and are destitute of a remarkable quality, which distinguishes them from the remedies they are intended to imitate.' The artificial bears to the natural water the same likeness that a galvanised corpse bears to a living body.

The Natural mineral waters that concern us here are those belonging to the saline purgative group, which have the common and distinctive character that they all contain sulphate of soda (Glauber's salt) in considerable amount in solu-

tion, together with a varying proportion of sulphate of magnesia (Epsom salts), besides less important salts. From the fact of their containing the bitter aperient salt, sulphate of magnesia, these natural purgative waters are known in Germany by the name of 'Bitter Waters'. Of these waters the Hunyadi János water is the type. It is the most concentrated of the whole group, containing, as it does, about $2\frac{1}{4}$ drachms each of sulphate of soda and sulphate of magnesia in an English pint. Though the strongest in its composition, it is the most pleasant in taste and the gentlest in its operation, facts which show that more of the mysterious quality which makes these waters what they are has gone to the making of Hunyadi János in nature's laboratory than in any other. In it the elements are so kindly mixed as to form a compound of ideal perfection.

Such a water as this—which it is hardly fanciful to call a secretion from the bosom of Mother Earth—deserves special attention from its scientific interest as one of the wonders of nature, not less than for its remarkable action