

**OBSERVATIONS ON THE
MEDICINAL SPRINGS
OF HARROGATE**

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Observations on the medicinal springs of Harrogate by George Kennion

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GEORGE KENNION

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OF HARROGATE**

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ON
THE MEDICINAL SPRINGS
OF HARROGATE.

BY GEORGE KENNION, M.D.,
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Ἄριστον μὲν ὕδωρ.

FIFTH EDITION.

LONDON:
J. CHURCHILL, PRINCES STREET, SOHO;
THOMAS HOLLINS, HARROGATE AND HARROGATE WELLS
AND ALL BOOKSELLERS.

MDCCLXIII.

~~150. c. 108.~~
151. c. 320.

PREFACE

TO THE FIRST EDITION.

The following pages are not intended as a "Guide to the Harrogate Waters," nor as a "Hand-book" to the locality; and still less are they intended as a "Watering-place Puff." My object, in writing them, has been to place upon record, in as clear and concise a form as possible, a statement of the peculiar properties and effects of the various Springs with which Harrogate abounds; and in doing so, to endeavour to remove the erroneous impression, which too widely exists, that the Sulphur Water is *the only* source of attraction to Harrogate, and that the class of *cutaneous* diseases is that for which the Harrogate Waters are chiefly suitable. I have, as far as possible, avoided any digressions which were not necessary to the elucidation of my subject: while, at the same time, I have endeavoured to condense into a small compass the results of the experience, which a tolerably wide field of observation, during fifteen years, has afforded to me.

Low Harrogate, March 4th, 1853,

PREFACE
TO THE FIFTH EDITION.

As I am called upon by my publisher to supply a fifth edition of this little book, I embrace the opportunity which is thus afforded to me, of expressing the gratification which I feel, in knowing that during the ten years which have elapsed since the first edition was published, the suggestions I then made have had the effect, which, in their publication, I was desirous that they should produce. I believe that Harrogate is much more resorted to as a watering place, and the patients who are sent here now, are not nearly so exclusively as was formerly the case, the subjects of cutaneous disease alone.

I may add a further remark, in opposition to a very prevalent idea, that the waters and baths of Harrogate are only useful, and even only applicable, in the summer months of July, August, and September. I can affirm with much confidence, that in a very large proportion of cases, as much benefit may be derived from the use of the waters during the winter and spring months as in the height of summer.

Oak Lea, Harrogate, March 2nd, 1863.

OBSERVATIONS, &c.

THE village or town of Harrogate is commonly divided into two parts, which are termed High and Low Harrogate. The greater part of what is called High Harrogate is built upon a high table land, which is elevated 420 feet above the level of the sea, and commands a magnificent and extensive view all around; while Low Harrogate is situated in a basin, which is bounded on the south and east sides by High Harrogate hill, and on the west by Harlow Hill. The upper stratum of the soil is sandstone, below this is a bed of shale (in some places of considerable depth), and below this again is a carboniferous limestone. The air of Harrogate is peculiarly pure and bracing, and, as is commonly remarked, possesses more of the freshness and elasticity of the sea air, than almost any other inland place; and to this, without doubt, in conjunction with the salutary effects of the waters, invalids are indebted for much of the improved health and strength which they obtain here.

The position, too, of Harrogate is such, that we may recognize, at least, two distinct climates; the air at Low Harrogate being comparatively mild, even when a strong and cool breeze may be blowing on the more exposed "common" at High Harrogate; while from the sandy nature of the soil, and the excellent drainage which has recently been carried out at a large expense, there are few days in the year, when the ground is not sufficiently dry for the most tender invalid to walk with comfort and safety. Of how great advantage this dryness of the soil must prove to invalids, I need not stop to remark: the advocates of sanitary reform will learn with interest that ague, as an indigenous complaint, is unknown here (proving the dryness of the climate); that cases of fever are rarely seen, and when occurring, being brought by strangers from a distance, the infection has rarely, if ever, been propagated; and that no single case of cholera has ever occurred here.

To these advantages may be added the *agrèmens* which meet the visitors to Harrogate, in a richly wooded, and, for the most part, well-cultivated country, abounding with hill and dale, with river and with stream, with the most splendid monuments of art and the richest glories of nature: all these form attractions of no common order; and, of themselves, would be sufficient to make Harrogate an eligible residence for those

who, for mere recreation, seek a change of air and scene. But, in fact, they are only accessories (accessories, however, of no mean order) to the more solid claims which Harrogate possesses for public favour.

I leave it to the writers of the local Hand-books, to describe the various objects of interest, with which Harrogate and its neighbourhood abound; my object in the following brief sketch being simply this,—to impress the public mind with the knowledge that diseases of the skin are very far from being the only complaints which the Harrogate waters can remedy; and that the Water of the Sulphur Well is only to be considered as *one* of the *many* varieties of mineral water, which Nature has more bountifully supplied to Harrogate, than to any other place, British or Continental, with which I am acquainted.

First, then, of the diseases to which the Harrogate waters are appropriate. There is a prevalent impression, even among those who ought to be better informed, that there exists a certain connection between diseases of the skin and the sulphur water, the former being the bane—which they most unquestionably are; the latter, the antidote—which is a much less certain conclusion. The fact is, that diseases of the skin are a large and numerous group, depending upon a vast variety of different causes; and it would be as unphilosophical, as it is hopeless, to expect

that one mode of treatment, of whatever description, could infallibly cure each and all of so large a tribe, differing in relation no less than in origin. I am the more anxious to impress this upon the reader's attention, because of the vast disappointment which is occasioned to numbers, owing to their ignorance of this fact. During the Harrogate season scarcely a day passes without my hearing this said, "I came here to drink the water for this troublesome disease of the skin; I have been here two, three, four, weeks: I have drunk so many glasses of the water; I have taken so many baths; and here I am worse than ever." I repeat it, this is a daily complaint, and I am sure, that every medical practitioner in the place can bear testimony to the truth of this assertion. And, why is this? Simply for the reason I have already given: that persons, who are afflicted with cutaneous diseases, believe that sulphur waters and sulphur baths are specific for their complaints, and they use this specific, according to their individual disposition, moderately or immoderately, as the case may be; and sometimes,—they get well; but not always. And why should they expect it?

A. B. has a scaly disease; C. D. has a scaly disease. In each case, the disease may have precisely the same appearance. A. B. has lived well, has indulged in all the pleasures of the table; life, to him, has been one scene of luxurious enjoyment, without one day of illness, with nothing