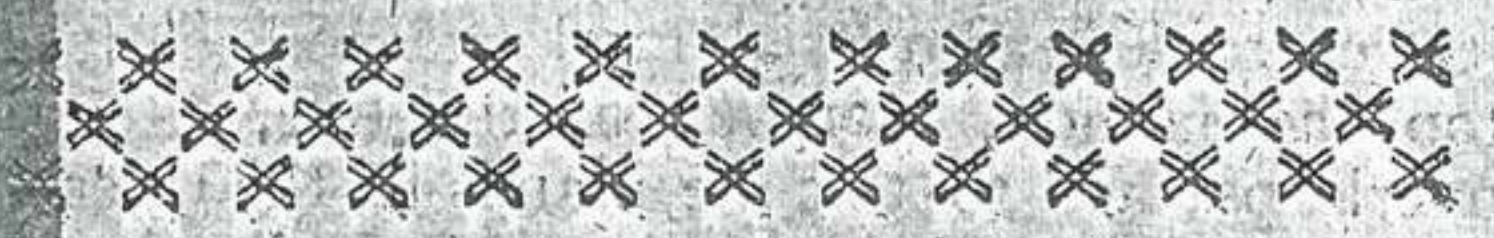


11 pages

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Limerick 94, 94



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CASTLE CONNELL SPA.

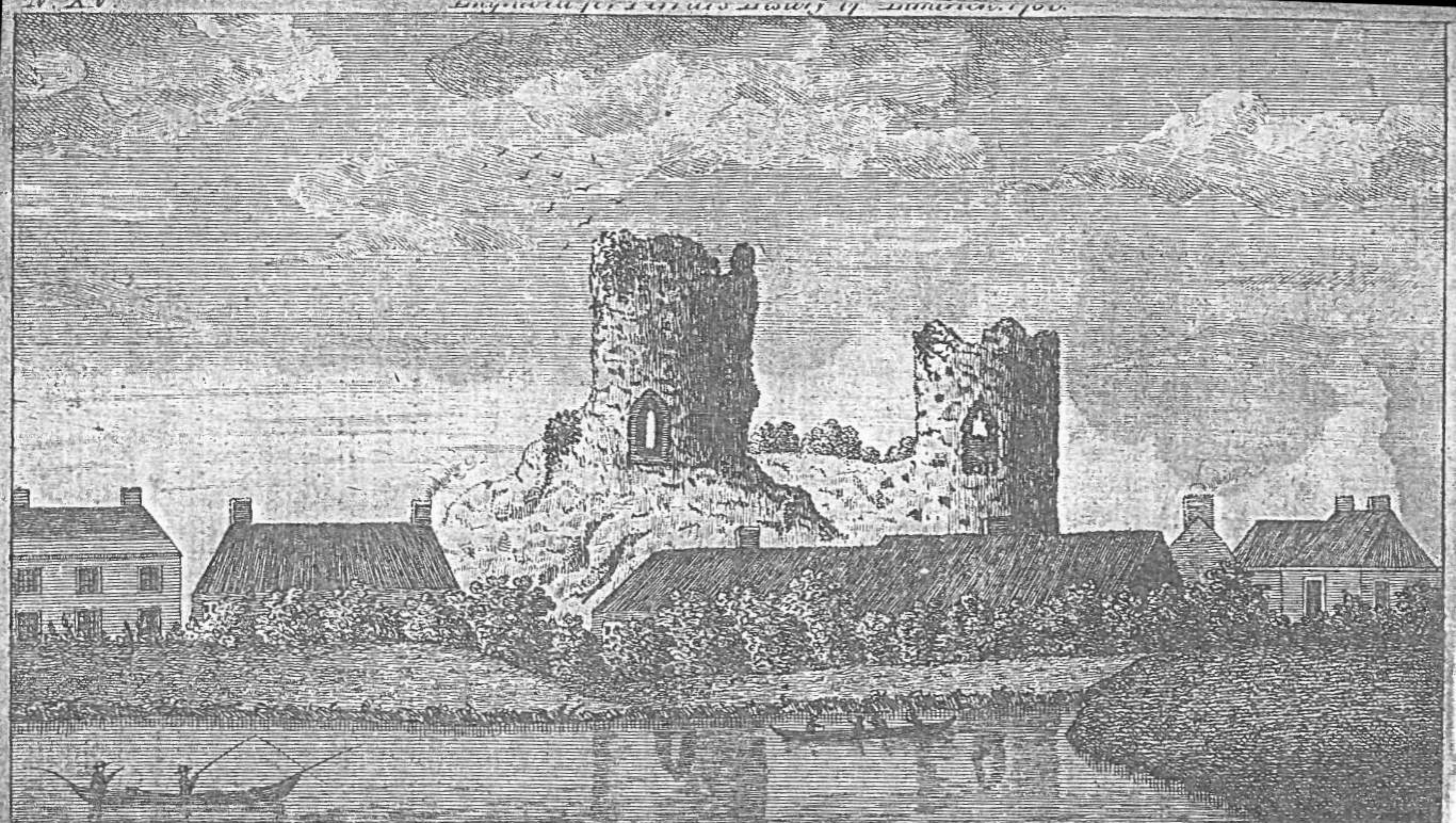
CASTLE CONNELL SPA is situated six miles north of Limerick, on the east side of the River Shannon. Passing over the river Mulkern, or Mulcare at Annacotty, and riding above three miles on the high road to Nenagh, we turn on a good smooth road to Castle Connell, having on the right hand, Rich-hill, the seat of Henry Brown, esq; on the left, Mount-Shannon, improved with judicious taste by the Right Hon. Silver Oliver; Prospect, the seat of Thomas Lloyd, esq; New-garden, the seat of Simon Purdon, esq; and Hermitage a villa, belonging to William Ryves, esq. The approach to the Castle exhibits a bold and extensive view of the Shannon and the adjacent mountains; the scenery is variegated, the landscape fraught with the wild sport of nature, and the ancient ruins, reflected in the stream, form a striking emblem, that time, which silently rolls on, destroys all monuments of human vanity.

HERMITAGE is justly esteemed a good situation; opposite to it the rock of Doonas bends its venerable head over a grand cataract, whose top the salmon, monarch of the tide, often overleaps; add to this the islands in the river Shannon, surrounded by hills and fruitful vales, and very few parts of the kingdom can produce more of the sublime and beautiful;—for where can such another river be found? This is the most desirable excursion near Limerick. The village however is inconsiderable, but the houses on the river side, occupied by Mr. Hunt, Mr. Quin, Mr. Grady, Mr. Blood, and Mr. Westropp, form a very good prospect from a particular spot in Mr. Hunt's field; which is considerably heighten'd by Mr. Browning's house and improvements at Doonas,* and by Erina, the seat of Philip Smyth, esq.

O'BRIEN'S

* Sir Hugh Dillon Mally, bart. is now building a Mansion house at Doonas, in an excellent situation. The whole estate is well improved and demands a tribute, which we shall pay with pleasure.

Far as the eye extends, — Doonas appears
 In all the pride of rural gaily,
 And grand perspective. — Mally's fields
 Bespeak the master generous and kind;
 There wretchedness shews not her haggard face;
 Benevolence, the brightest ornament,
 That decks the mind, or dignifies the man,
 There mitigates the weight of human sorrow!
 HIBERNIA! Happiest of the Nations round,
 In arts and commerce quickly would excel,
 If ev'ry landlord with that graceful pride,
 That marks the honest heart, — banish'd oppression;
 Would cheer the drooping peasant, bid him rise,
 The staff, the comfort of his family,
 And long enjoy the little farm, which toil
 With painful labour to perfection rear'd.



Engraving by J. Duff sculp. 1840.

D. Ryan fecit

North View of Castle Connell

J. Duff sc.

O'BRIEN'S Bridge and Nenagh are now the great roads to Dublin. Besides a good Inn at Castle Connell, there is one building at O'Brien's bridge, and another at Doonas. The distance is much the same to travel by Doonas or Castle Connell. The reputation of the Spa adds every year to the buildings at Castle Connell, where Sir Richard de Bourgho, bart. gives every wished-for encouragement. In the year 1783, a large and good Assembly-room was finished, within a few steps of the spa, which from a delightful situation on the river, must add much to the satisfaction of the company. Society and cheerfulness are great promoters of health.

THE castle is very ancient, and was the seat of the O'Briens, Kings of Munster. The grandson of Brien Boru, was murdered here by the prince of Thomond, who leaving his followers at the opposite side of the Shannon, was received with unsuspecting friendship. They however came over in the night, surprized the grandson of Brien, put out his eyes and murdered him. When the English landed in Ireland, it was granted to Richard de Burgo, Earl of Ulster, known by the name of the red Earl, on conditions of repairing and fortifying the Castle, in which manner it descended to William de Burgo, the last Earl of Ulster of that family, who being murdered at Carrick-on-suir, Castle Connell, with all his other estates should have devolved to his daughter, the dutchess of Clarence, but was with-held by collateral branches of the family. William de Burgo in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, was created Baron of Castle Connell.* His eldest son

* See page 442.

son being killed, he left an infant, whose uncle married a daughter of Morough Earl of Inchi-quin, and was created Baron of Brittas, all of whom being in the Rebellion in 1641, were attainted and fled to France. On King James's accession to the crown, the Lords Castle-Connell and Brittas were restored to their Estates, which they had forfeited. At the revolution in 1688 they were again attainted. The castle had a strong garrison of King James's forces, and General Ginkle sent 700 men from Limerick, under the command of the Prince of Hesse, when the garrison surrendered after a siege of two days. Ginkle considering it a strong hold, ordered it to be dismantled and blown up; the explosion was so great, that it shook the houses in Limerick and broke several windows. The castle was so spacious, and the ascent by steps so easy, notwithstanding its being built on a very high rock, that a troop of horse has been drawn up in the hall.

Dr. John Ratty published in London in 1757, a medical Synopsis of all the mineral waters in Europe; a work compiled with great labour, well worth the perusal of such as are advocates for the internal and external use of cold water. Doctor Ratty places Castle Connell water in the same table with the German Spa, and agrees with Doctor Martin, of Limerick, who wrote an Essay on it, that it is of the same specific gravity, of a ferruginous and astringent taste, each gallon producing from twenty to thirty grains of sediment. The soil about it is of a calcareous nature, the water every where leaving an ochre coloured matter, which

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in a red hot crucible, sparkled and was attracted by the magnet. This sediment is used successfully in curing ulcers and sores, and it is certain that bathing in this water would add great efficacy to the drinking it, which is the constant practice in England. As to the medicinal virtues of Castle Connell water, it is a chalybeate of considerable strength, having a mixture of marine salt and absorbent earth. An earth worm put into this water instantly dies, hence it has been found effectual for worms in children. It has long been experienced excellent in all scorbutic disorders, where the stomach has been weakened by excess, and in the jaundice; indeed it seems to be peculiarly adapted to those complaints where preparations of steel are ordered by the Physician.

CURIOSITY prompted me to compare it with other Chalybeates in Doctor Rutt's work, and I found it to have a great likeness to the Pouchon spring at Spa in Germany, and very much the same of Kilroran water, near Mount Talbot, in the county of Roscommon, which Doctor Hugh Fergus of Galway drank for three seasons, and of which he gives the following account. Its operation is by urine, being usually drank from three half pints to a quart early in the day. It is chiefly beneficial in all complaints from a weakness or relaxation of the stomach, with inappetency, sourness, flatus and vitiated digestion, for which there can scarcely be a more effectual medicine. It cleanses the blood, and has cured beyond expectation, inveterate obstructions of the liver and spleen, some aperient medicines being premised

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and taken, during the use of the water; which has also cured the jaundice and some confirmed dropfies, with no other addition than a few doses of Glauber salts, repeated now and then. This water likewise answers the expectations of cachectic persons labouring under loss of appetite, oedematous swellings, and lowness of spirits. Several drink it also for flushings and red pimpled faces, and profess to have received benefit.

This account of Kilroan water, I deemed highly necessary here, because I am well informed, that many persons afflicted with the like disorders have been cured at Castle Connell, and because I found by Dr. Ruttys table, the two waters to have the same sensible qualities, the same appearance with acids, the same colour with syrups of violets and galls at the fountain, the same quantity of contents in a gallon, and the same mixture of iron, marine salt and calcarious earth. Milk mixed with Castle Connell water keeps longer from turning sour; so that a milk diet is very consistent with the use of it, and to weak young children or scorbutic persons, it ought to be given mixed with milk. The water drinkers ought to sup early and light or not at all, that the stomach may be empty at the time of drinking in the morning. In order to which they must rise early, and walk or ride an hour, drinking two or three half pints in that time, not eating any thing for an hour afterwards. Another half pint or more may be taken with exercise between breakfast and dinner; the quantity of every mineral water is best proportioned as it agrees with the constitution, and if this feels cold

cold in the stomach, the person may take caraway seed or candied orange peel.

* It will now be necessary to mention some of the principal errors committed in drinking spa water.

1. Drinking too great a quantity in a short time, few having internal heat enough to actuate the cold water, especially those accustomed to the prevailing and pernicious fashion of drinking warm tea, coffee and chocolate in the morning, and this is still worse in phlegmatic, cold and weakly constitutions.

2. Using food hard of digestion during the use of the water.

3. Eating too much or too soon after drinking it.

4. Too much use of tea, coffee, chocolate or any warm liquors which counteract the bracing quality of the cold water.

5. Too much use of wine, which is the cause of many of the disorders attending the water drinkers.

6. EXERCISE too violent, particularly so as to raise a sweat, which hinders the natural passage of the waters.

At Spa there are three springs, Pyrmont, Pouhon and Geronsterre; the two first were formerly thought the only minerals that would retain their virtues when sent abroad. But now Castle Connell water is found to keep very well, and is frequently used with success in England and Dublin. If our people were as careful and cleanly in bottling it, as they are at Spa, it may be sent to remote places, with

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* See Hoffman and Rieger on the German Spa, and Doctor Ritty's book above mentioned, page 318.

very little loss of its virtues; by adding a few drops of the oil of sulphur it may be preserved a long time, for this keeps the ochre from precipitating and the ferruginous parts suspended.

In order to render this account of Castle Connell water as perfect as possible, it is necessary to make an extract from Dr. Martin's essay, which is written with great ingenuity and knowledge of mineral waters in general. Physicians in all ages have recommended the lightest mineral waters, and have always been of opinion, that in many disorders they are strong and powerful and excel all other medicines, if properly adapted to the patient's constitution, and the nature of his disorder. The want of this attention is the reason why they do not always prove successful, as people labouring under different disorders, speak of going to Bath, Bristol, Ballispellan, Mallow, &c. whereas it is demonstrable, that if one is proper for them, the other is not.

DOCTOR Martin observes that Castle Connell water does not touch the bog, but runs through a vein of very hard lime stone gravel, and probably takes its rise in the mountains several miles distant. It loses all its virtue by being warmed. By an experiment with oil of tartar, it appears there are no acids or allum in it, and that it runs partly through lime stone. The powder of galls turning it a deep, purple colour shews that it contains a considerable quantity of fixt particles of steel, and mineral spirit, as it does not long retain that colour. Several other experiments prove that this water is quite light, that it contains a salt, and an earth soft and sweet, which renders it excellent and a great

great antiscorbutic. Many chronic disorders proceed from obstructions in the minutest vessels of the body, which nothing can relieve but a most subtle medicine that can pervade these vessels. The most powerful medicines prescribed in such disorders, are taken from minerals, but they are gross and inactive compared to the volatile, mineral spirit which abounds in this water. The ancient physicians spoke of such mineral waters with admiration, and looked on them as singular blessings. They are strengtheners and mild astringents, helping such disorders as proceed from a relaxation of the solids, tender or weak nerves. From hence it has been experienced they have cured barrenness and other disorders peculiar to women, are of service in the asthma, rheumatism, gravel, dropsy, and even in a decay, if an ulcer is not formed in the lungs.

The preparation for drinking the waters is by bleeding or physic; exercise is of great service. The food ought to consist of young, fresh meat easy of digestion. Fruits, salad, roots, except asparagus, and artichokes ought to be avoided. Punch, cider or other acid drinks are not proper, and as this water requires no help to make it pass, a glass of good old claret is the liquor recommended by Dr. Martin.

There are some, who in eight or ten days after drinking the waters, will take salts to purge them; but Doctor Keogh condemns this, as highly improper; for it destroys all the benefit received from the waters, by putting the body into a violent commotion, by unhinging and debilitating the parts, which were confirmed and strengthened by the use of the waters.

From hence the Nervous System is disturbed, and the spirits too much agitated.*

No doubt but many of the surprizing cures wrought by mineral waters, are owing in great measure to the vehicle, the virtues of mere water. Prudently used externally and internally, and taken cold, or warm, or hot, it is capable of answering almost every intention. In the first place, it is the only proper diluter in nature, and as such corrects all acrimony whatsoever; thus it takes off the stimulating quality of sharp humours and cools. On the other hand, as cold water contracts and braces the fibres, it increases the motion of the blood, and may be deemed heating; thus it relaxes when taken warm, contracts when taken cold, and both moistens and dries. It attenuates and dissolves viscous humours, promotes and lessens the several secretions and discharges of the body, particularly those by urine and sweat.

Doctor Sparrman, who published last year his voyage to the Cape of Good Hope,—was greatly afflicted with the gout, from which he was intirely recovered, by using a warm bath, the good effects of which he had frequently seen on the natives of Africa, in the same disorder. His feet were placed twice a day for near three hours at a time, on a stick laid across a tub of warm water, in which the steam and heat were confined by means of cloths, and kept up by the addition of heated stones. At intervals he likewise put his feet down into the water, which did not seem to produce such speedy and evident relief as the vapour did.† To this we shall add

* Doctor Keogh on Chalybeate Waters, page 132. See an account of this Gentleman's family in page 356.

† Sparrman's Voyage, vol. 2, p. 184.

add the testimony of the universally, as well as justly celebrated Doctor Tissot, who recommends for the gout, domestic warm baths, in which a little soap and a few aromatic herbs have been infused, in which the legs ought to be frequently bathed. We have had an instance of a person afflicted many years with the gout, who had long and painful fits every spring and autumn, and escaped it many years by bathing his legs in this manner. Doctor Tissot adds, that mineral baths are useful, and if popular prejudice did not prevail, of which experience has proved the absurdity, the gout would thereby be greatly reduced.†

In restoring lost appetite, hot or cold water is a great remedy. Cold water cures the hickup, and drank after dinner cools a hot stomach, prevents wind and helps digestion. It is also of great service in shortness of breath, being void of the flatulence and viscosity of fermented liquors. Warm water is emetic, and used cold it stops immoderate discharges. According to Baynard, warm water drank at meals, is a great secret to prevent bilious colics, and cold water drank largely, to a gallon, has cured that disease, blunting the acrimony of the humour, and tempering the violent heat of the intestines. Galen recommends the free use of cold water in any fever, and Doctor Cleghorne in his observations on the diseases of Minorca, says the Spaniards generally give cold water in fits of the tertian remittent fever. On these principles pure water must, in the hands of an able physician, be of great and singular use in many chronic and acute diseases. And though a great degree of activity may be attributed to

† Tissot on Disorders of People of Fashion, p. 83. the

the iron, sulphur and salts of mineral waters, yet it appears by the above enumeration of the virtues of mere water, that it lays claim to a great share of their efficacy. It is also applicable to the cure of fevers and inflammatory disorders, where mineral waters are for the most part injurious.

WATER is the universal drink of vegetables, beasts and men, the ordinary drink of most nations in the world, and, as such is undoubtedly preferable to all the pretended improvements of it by art, pure water having this great pre-eminence, that whereas all these grow vapid, acid or rancid, water does not degenerate in that manner, but preserves its purity for many years. It never turns sour on the stomach, as fermented liquors do, has far less air, and no viscosity to ingender flatulence. Its extreme penetrability appears from the famous experiment of the Florentine society, who pressed it through the pores of gold; hence it is highly probable, there is scarce any vessel of the human body it cannot pass through.

A DRAUGHT of pure spring water promotes health, for it refrigerates or cools the blood, if inflamed by any excess or disorder. If taken in the morning, it creates a good appetite, if after meals, it dilutes and digests the meat in the stomach. Doubtless the present race of men would be as long lived as the ancients, if they accustomed themselves to the same temperate diet.*

It will now be necessary to speak of the external use of water, and the cold bath, with which almost every town in England is furnished

* Dr. Keogh on the Prophylactic part of Medicine, page 139.

ed, and where it is used very much by persons of all ages and each sex. All Physicians agree that exercise is as necessary as food to the body, that bathing is the best exercise, which in preventing and curing many disorders, in bracing the body and enlivening the mind, has done more service than all the medicines in the world. The colder the water is, the better; and a bath made of a spring is preferable to a river. The author of this essay received such great benefit from it, when in a very reduced state, that he hopes to render some little service to society, by giving the public the best history of it he could procure, and this he has done, not entirely from his own experience and observations, but from the writings of Floyer, Baynard, Ratty, and others.

It is a pregnant instance of the great benevolence of the Supreme Creator to man, that water, though the most cheap and common of all medicines, has a far better title to the appellation of an universal medicine, than any of the productions of art. Its effects as a stimulating medicine are very apparent in the familiar instance of rousing fainting persons, by sprinkling cold water on their faces; and upon the same principle the cold bath promotes the several discharges of the body, the fibres being contracted to the remotest parts. On the other hand putting the feet and hands in cold water, or wet cloths applied to different parts of the body has stopped violent hæmorrhages,† and Celsus recommends bathing the face frequently in cold water, to prevent spitting of blood.

THE cold bath, moreover, cures lameness, blindness,

† Pierce's Bath Memoirs.

blindness, loss of taste and smell, loss of appetite; and paralytic disorders, if the patient is not too far advanced in years, are frequently cured by cold bathing and chalybeate medicines.† When the nerves are weak and greatly relaxed by excess of any kind, and when the patient is threatened with a tabes dorsalis, or nervous atrophy, the cold bath and bark, with proper food, air and exercise, is the only cure,§ but the bark should be taken in the quantity of a dram at each dose, two or three times a day. Not only relaxations, but contractions of the limbs have been cured by the cold bath as we are assured by the cures wrought by these called Saints wells, which it seems owe their reputation to the repellent and diluting quality of cold water. Sir Hans Sloane, in a treatise of his writing, recommends spring water as a wash for sore eyes, preferable to all spirituous lotions. To the same bracing quality and its consequent effect, its attenuating fizy humours, is to be attributed the efficacy of cold water in the cure of white swellings of short duration, which do not proceed from a caries in the bone, by holding the limb under a mill stream, or by pumping water on it.

THAT the success of the cold bath in some slow, intermittent fevers, and even quartans, is owing to the stimulus of the cold, seems highly probable from the following observation of Doctor Short, viz. “Where bathing in warm river water in Summer time has not agreed, but rendered the person more dull and cold; the cold, spring bath has agreed —” “exceedingly

† Mesd's monita et præcepta medica.

§ Tassot's Essays.

“exceedingly well.” Besides its efficacy on the solids, it is a powerful condenser in excessive rarefactions of the blood and spirits, in flatulencies and other convulsive disorders. The best means of preventing convulsions in children; is to plunge them in cold water at their birth, and if the mistaken tenderness of the parents would permit them to do the same every day, until the child is a year old, it would doubtless establish its strength, and prevent many of the disorders attendant on the human race.

On this account also, the cold bath removes nervous pains, the priapismus, incubus, inflations of the stomach and uterus, the chin cough, hiccough, palpitation of the heart, and hysterical suffocations; it succeeds in the asthma, being used once in a fortnight or month, joined to the cold regimen, drinking water in the morning, having often, and washing the head with cold water every morning. In cutaneous disorders cold bathing has powerful effects, as it cleanses the pores, cools, moistens, dilutes the acrid salts, and restores the tone of the glands. Hence most of the cold springs and holy wells in England famous for cures, are particularly commended for scabs and the leprosy, a disease formerly frequent in England as well as here. The Israelites, who were much troubled with these disorders, had no other remedy, and our hardy ancestors made much use of bathing, until they became enervated by the use of tea and other warm liquors.

Doctor Keogh, a sensible and ingenious writer, recommends the cold bath, as a great promoter of health. On plunging into it, the

rigidity and coldness force the spirits suddenly to retire from the superficial to the principal parts of the body, such as the heart, head, &c. But when you come out of it, they as suddenly pass forward again, with such force and violence, that the pores of the skin, which were, in a great measure stopped, are cleared from the obstructions, and viscous particles which adhered to them.* Bathing therefore, though not one of the "sex res non naturales," yet is almost as useful and wholesome as any of them, which is the reason the ancient Romans scarcely ever passed a day without bathing; it exhilarates the spirits, strengthens the memory, and greatly contributes to produce the "mens sana in corpore sano."

Doctor Short observes in his treatise on the virtues of cold water, that Ichley and Willoughbridge waters have cured more ulcerated patients than the whole art of physic and surgery. Numberless are the cures of this sort attributed to our waters of Lough Neagh, and others more evidently impregnated with iron, sulphur, &c. Therefore it is, that bathing in the mineral waters in England is always added to drinking them, and if the same rule is followed at Castle Connell, and other watering places in Ireland, there is no doubt but it will be attended with happy consequences, and we need not be under the necessity of travelling abroad, for what may be easily found at home, when we learn how to use it properly. Certain it is, from the coldness of the water, and the quantity of iron it contains, there is no water in

* Doctor Keogh on the Prophylactic part of Medicine, page 136.

in Ireland more likely to be of singular service in all the above disorders, than the mineral water of Castle Connell.

Cold bathing, or where that cannot be used, washing the hands, face and head in cold water, and drinking a glass night and morning, will be attended with happy effects. It gives a genial warmth to the frame, a strength to the mind, and a glow to the spirits, which cannot be described, and which is only known to those who have experienced it. But where the cold bath can be used, let no person despair, however weak or low in spirits he may be; if he can gain courage to use the bath, he will probably be restored to health.

We shall conclude this Essay with a short Extract from a Poem written at Castle Connell, in the year 1783.

Hail Castle Connell! where incessantly
 The Shannon pours her rapid, foaming stream,
 Impatient to find out her native Sea.
 O for a Shenstone's pencil, to describe
 The spot where peace and health so much abound,
 No gay parade contaminates thy shore,
 No bright Rotunda;—but simplicity
 Adorns thy glade, and blooms in full perfection,
 Happy the man who flies to Castle Connell,
 And banishing each low and worldly thought,
 Seeks in the shade to tranquilize his mind.
 Here many a sage, and many a hero came,
 To taste the spring—fountain of life and vigour!
 Here many a generous, many a social soul,
 Drank the full cup of pleasures innocent!
 Here Hayest† with his Celinda stray'd, while love
 With every breeze was wafted to her ear!

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While

† See page 360 for the Life of Dan. Hayes; where we have given an extract from his Elegy, which is elegant and affecting. It conveys an useful lesson to young men, to avoid most studiously those youthful excesses, which in the words of the Author,—consume God's sacred fane with impious fire, poison all future mirth, and never fail to bring on an early death.

While folly's sons sleep out their early hours,
 How pleasant to forsake the arms of sleep;
 To view the rising sun purpling the skies,
 To exhale the sweetness of the fragrant air,
 And see all Nature growing to perfection;
 Now to the spring repair, where old and young,
 In consultation meet, praising its virtues!
 Maria's bloom impair'd, while her fond swain,
 Warmly invokes the Naiad of the stream,
 To give her back to life renewed and love.
 Then we ascend to Westropp's mount and view,
 The Shannon winding through the verdant meads,
 While Maffly's bow'rs and groves enrich the prospect!
 Beneath thy shade, how often have I laid
 My weary limbs, and gaz'd with transport round,
 While Goldsmith's tale beguil'd the fleeting time.

Hastening to breathe the air of Castle-Connell
 We joy to see each friend. — Soon round the board
 With plenty crown'd, we share convivial pleasure,
 The Heavens serene, while temperate mirth bestows,
 Of life, the greatest, best felicity!
 The Sun in awful Majesty array'd,
 Steals down the western sky, and silence reigns.
 The Sportsman takes the opportunity,
 To lure the finny brood to leave their beds,
 They tofs, they play, they rise to fall no more.
 These are the scenes that give the zest to life,
 These are the joys we find at Castle Connell.