

beginning to prevail, that society would be benefited by the possession of a certain degree of knowledge, in every individual, of the laws of his structure and œconomy, and of the diseases to which he is generally subjected. Without deciding on the justness of this principle, or of the length to which it may with utility be extended, there can be little doubt of the propriety of advising mankind of the general application, both externally and internally, of these active agents. To shew that the publick are deficient in this information, we need only adduce the well-known declarations of the medical practitioners of Bath, that patients are perpetually consigned to the use of these springs, to whose conditions they are utterly inapplicable and unfit. The circulation of this work may extend to those who do not peruse professional treatises; and they may either be led to the adoption of this singularly-beneficial remedy, when it is admissible, or deterred from its inconvenient or injurious application.

It is essential, in the first instance, to advert to a theory which has been extensively propagated, viz. that the Bath waters possess no medical properties different from common water heated to the same temperature.

That some of the effects produced, both externally and internally, (but especially the former) by the Bath waters, are in common both with itself and simple water of the same temperature, it would be neither true nor philosophical to deny; but after conceding this, it is by no means admitted that their specifick medical powers depend on the properties of heat and fluidity alone. Their effects, when internally used, of raising the pulse, increasing the secretions, (especially that of urine) and of exciting highly the whole system, when taken even in moderate quantities, cannot be estimated by the impartial observer as a possible effect of a simply hot fluid. Although it must in candour be admitted, that their external effects are chiefly to be accounted for on the principle of temperature alone; yet acute and able observers have thought them more stimulant, when used in this way, than common water. The opinion of their acting merely by temperature, if false, must be injurious; both in superseding the application of a powerful remedy by one comparatively inert, and by the application of the active powers of the mineral water deleteriously, where common water would be harmless. Chemical knowledge, general observation,  
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and particular facts, equally prove the futility of this opinion. The chalybeate impregnation of this and similar springs have certain obvious and sensible effects; which are probably owing to the peculiar state of combination in which the chalybeate principle exists, and to the increased activity afforded to it by dilution and heat. Their visible operation, when taken moderately, is distinctly marked; and their influence, when either taken under unsuitable circumstances, or in excessive quantities, has repeatedly produced fatal effects, by inducing apoplexy, hæmorrhages, and dangerous inflammatory diseases. The reputation of the Bath waters is not formed on theoretical or speculative grounds. Numerous and authenticated facts evince their superior efficacy to the common modes of relief in various afflictive and obstinate diseases; such are to be found in the writings of Drs. Charleton, Oliver, and Falconer.

The Narrative published by the Physicians and Surgeons of the Bath General Hospital, in 1787, contains the following statement:

*State of the Paralytick Patients in the Bath Hospital, from Jan. 1, 1776,  
to Dec. 31, 1785.*

Whole number admitted .....	1102
Cured .....	237
Much better .....	454
Better .....	142

It appears, also, in extracts, published by Dr. Falconer, from the Hospital register, that of patients admitted for the external use of the Bath waters, in that disgusting and deplorable disease *the leprosy*, from January 1, 1776, to January 1, 1783, 119 patients out of 196 were cured. In five years, viz. from 1775 to 1780, of 362 patients admitted into the Bath Hospital for chronick rheumatism, 127 were cured, and 144 were rendered much better.

The authenticity of these documents is unquestionable; and they afford the most solid evidence of the efficacy of the Bath waters. It is not, however, in the disorders just quoted that they are alone beneficial; numerous other irksome and painful conditions of disease by their use have been both mitigated and removed, which had resisted the ordinary processes of medicine.

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