

CHAPTER VII.

RULES FOR THE USE OF THE WILDBAD WATERS ; — REGIMEN AND DIET.

Having once determined, with the assistance of his medical adviser, to proceed to Wildbad, the patient should endeavour to procure a brief and clearly-written statement of his case, from the physician to whom he may be recommended, or whom he may prefer to consult. On his arrival he should not follow the example of those who, the instant they alight from the carriage, run to the springs in order not to lose a moment. He should, on the contrary, give his body time to recover from the fatigues of the journey, and, in the meanwhile consult one of the physicians of the place, if it be only for general and local information. The intercourse between physician and patient is here, as in most other German Spas, placed on an easy and most convenient footing, and none need hesitate in consulting them. The bathing-season lasts from May to September; but the best season for using the baths is that from June to the end of August. Observations made by Dr. Fricker, Dr. Heim, and Dr. Peez, however, have shown that they may also be used very successfully in winter. The latter says in his work: „Although this Spa may not be counted

amongst the number of those, which are chosen as climatic remedies for a winter's stay, owing [to its being situated in a valley, partly open in the direction of north-east to south-west, and exposed in consequence to the cold winds from the first-mentioned point of the compass, (which on the other hand, by the quick changes of air, it occasions, in combination with the exuberant vegetation of the forests, renders the atmosphere the more pure and excellent during the warm season) — and also because the high surrounding hills partly shut out the sun, which causes too sudden changes of temperature on mornings and evenings,—still even in winter Wildbad counts fine and sunny days, of which the warmer hours may be used for walks in the open air; the walks are kept in good state during this season also; besides, according to Fricker, there are but ten or twelve foggy days in November, and the commencement of March, and endemic diseases are unknown there—all these advantages are well adapted to obtain a preference for Wildbad, from such as want to bathe in Winter." The mean temperature during the months of December, January and February, is 29° of F., while that of Stuttgart, which is considered the warmest point of Würtemberg, is 33° to 34° F. The average barometrical height during winter, is 27".

There exists still, at Wildbad as well, as also at other Spas, a prejudice against the winter-seasons, a cure in winter appearing either absolutely impossible, or at least being considered as an extraordinary phenomenon, but why? Is not the patient obliged to be somewhere during the winter? may he not find at Wildbad the same treatment, the same accommodation, or the same advantages, he has at home? Must not he submit also to medical treatment at home, and must not he often take there also baths, notwithstanding the rigour of the climate? Why should he,

who has fallen under an attack of apoplexy, or he who has become paralytic for some other reason,—why should he allow the paralysis to inveterate during the space of six or nine months, intervening between the access and next summer, when perhaps a course of bathing would have become useless. Why should he who has fractured some limb, wait so long a time for chasing away the callous excrescences or the stiffness of his member?—Instances have shown that the sanative powers of Wildbad are exactly the same in winter, as during the other seasons, and every precaution has been taken at the bathing-establishment for such cases; besides, there are some sufferings,—as for instance, a sort of debility, arising from a relaxed influence of the nervous system upon the reproductive actions of the organism—which certainly require the sending of the invalid to a more bracing climate; such, instead of hastening to Italy with the first approaches of autumn, ought to go to some such place as Wildbad, when to the fall

“ — — — the joyous winter-days
 Frosty, succeed; and thro' the blue serene,
 For sight too fine, the ethereal nitre flies;
 Killing infectious damps, and the spent air
 Storing afresh with elemental life,
 Close crowds the shining atmosphere; and binds
 Our strengthened bodies in its cold embrace,
 Constraining; feeds, and animates our blood;
 Refines our spirits, thro' the new-strung nerves
 In swifter sallies darting to the brain:
 Where sits the soul, intense, collected, cool,
 Bright as the skies, and as the season keen.”

Persons however, who are inclined to perspire and are liable to catch cold, or to be exhausted from that circumstance, will find the mild spring and autumn months preferable. In the spring, the crisis is brought about more

quickly. Sometimes the case requires two courses in one year. In that case the first may begin in May, and the second in August, with an interval of a month, or six weeks.

The best time for drinking the waters is early in the morning. The heat is then not so oppressive, and the body and mind are refreshed by sleep; the stomach is also empty. But some patients cannot leave their bed at so early an hour, owing to the nature of their disorder. Such patients should drink the water in bed, under proper restrictions, which are best learned on the spot. After a bad night, and if the patient suffers of head-ache, or other signs of agitation, he ought to eschew this morning-draught altogether.

The patients should be careful how they dress. The best rule one can give on this head, is to observe the clothing worn by the inhabitants of the place, who are acquainted, from experience, with the variableness of the temperature, and wear, accordingly, something consistent with it. The visitors, for instance, are often surprised to see a countryman, on a hot day, coming in with his cloak on his arm; but he knows from experience that in his country the hottest day is often succeeded by a cold evening.

Gentle exercise between each glass of water is necessary. It should last about a quarter of an hour. But such patients, as are not accustomed to walking exercise, should not force themselves to follow the above rule; for fatigue is the very worst concomitant of water-drinking.

The mineral water should be drunk like other liquids; not gulped down in a hurry, for the sake of the gas or any other reason. Such practice is injurious; it either produces cramp or oppresses the stomach, distending it with flatus. The warm water should be sipped out of the glass — that of a lower temperature should be drunk slowly, and

at several draughts. Trifling as these rules may appear, the power of digesting the water often depends on their observance.

It is best to begin with half a glass of the water at a draught (the glass contains about four ounces), and to proceed, for the first two or three days, as far as two or three glasses, not more—until at the expiration of a week or ten days, when the quantity may be augmented.

The patient should take care never to drink the mineral waters while he himself is heated, or exhausted from protracted walking; for by that means he avoids the chance of obstruction and inflammation of the bowels.

The quantity of mineral water adapted for each patient cannot be ascertained beforehand; but the general rule with respect to the proper quantity of water, to be drunk, is to take as much of it as will pass off by the kidneys, or the pores of the skin, and cause, at the same time, brisk action of the intestinal canal twice or three times per diem.

Constipation will occasionally tease a patient, notwithstanding the quantity of resolvent water drunk. In such a case it is advisable to increase the laxative power of the water, by adding Carlsbad salts, or cream of tartar, or any other gentle or saline aperient. Dr. Malfatti, the great leading physician, at Vienna, recommends as a proper means of opening the bowels in case of costiveness during the use of hot mineral springs, half a glass of lukewarm new milk, taken half an hour before the use of the water.

Patients, suffering of complaints of the chest, should take the water, mixed with half its quantity of warm goats-milk; measures have also be taken to prepare goats-whey equal to that of Switzerland, which is drunk in combination with the mineral waters.—Such patients also, whose cases

require the use of some other mineral springs, will find here the waters of the most celebrated Spas of Germany.

Respecting the use of the baths, the first care of the patient should be, not on any account to enter into the bath flushed or feverish, or with a full stomach, and that his digestion be in a normal state.

As to the duration of the cure, no standard can possibly be given; the average number, as has been stated above, is twenty-four baths for each patient. Still it is a fact, which will require no further proof, that the character of the complaint, the constitution and the age of the invalid, even the state of atmosphere during the season; that all these, we say, will combine to increase or diminish this number. Everything here depends from the time of the reaction. If the sufferings of the patient have ceased after the lapse of a fortnight, it is not necessary to continue bathing for a longer period; on the other hand, if this be not the case, the course of bathing may be protracted to a month, or even six weeks. — Here may also be mentioned the belief, current at Wildbad, that the effects of the waters pronounce themselves regularly in periods of seven days, and there are many who think it impossible that a cure could be effected on the sixth, or eleventh, or fifteenth day. This is not quite unfounded, as experience has shown that the *crises* generally ensued on these days.

The bath should be taken early in the morning—fasting, if ever the forces of the patient allow it. Very exhausted and nervous persons who find it impossible to take the waters, externally or internally, with an empty stomach, should at least take their breakfast one or two hours before they use the waters, and never enter into the bath before their food is fully digested. This remark applies also to the evening-baths, which never ought to be taken

before six o'clock, when the dinner has been properly digested.

The patient should not, at first, remain above fifteen minutes in the bath. Five or six minutes however may be added every subsequent day, up to three quarters of an hour, or an hour. Still the manner in which this time is to be extended, must chiefly be left to the judgment of the bather, gouty patients of a healthy complexion, besides, generally are able to bear the bath for the longest period, and Dr. Fricker has observed cases, when patients of this class did remain in the bath for an hour and a half, daily, without being inconvenienced by it.

The average duration of a morning-bath, is half an hour. The evening-baths, where they are allowed by the physician, should not exceed fifteen minutes; for a longer duration is nuisible to the night's rest. Generally only one bath per diem is taken, still obstinate rheumatic and arthritic complaints, may sometimes allow two baths a day, during the latter period of the season. Very feeble persons will do best to bathe on evenings.

Such individuals as are inclined to dizziness, headaches and congestions of blood to the head, should, during the bath, cover their head with a wet napkin. Persons of this description ought particularly to guard themselves from excitement of the body or mind, shortly before the bath. Upon entering the bath-room the patient should first wash his forehead and chest with the water, and then slowly sit down in the basin, until the water rises up to his neck. In general, calmness is to be recommended in the bath, those however, who are suffering from stiffness of the joints, paralyses, etc., *may* try some movements, while they, whose complaints are, rheumatisms, gout and gouty tumors, induration of the glands, swellings, etc., *ought*,

frequently to rub the suffering parts with the warm sand of the basin.

If the patient, during the bath, be attacked by feelings of frost or heat, of pressure in the head, or oppressions of the chest, etc., or if he feel generally unwell, he should leave the bath, and communicate the fact to his physician. In undressing and dressing he should take care, not to get cold. After the bath gentle exercise is advisable, still such patients (chiefly gouty and rheumatic persons), who experience an increased perspiration at this time, should remain at home, without, however, forcing on sweats.

During the period of reaction, the patient ought to take the most rigorous care of his body, to respect the dietetic rules given below, and to leave it to his physician whether he should continue or leave off bathing.

Patients suffering of periodical hemorrhoids should leave off bathing for the period of their fluxes. This also applies to the female period. All these bathing-rules of course cannot be considered as absolutely binding for every individual; still it would lead to far, to mention the many modifications required in particular cases. We therefore proceed at once to the exposition of the regiminal rules applicable to both bathers, and brunnen-drinkers.

The most appropriate time for breakfast is about an hour after bathing, or drinking the last glass of the mineral water. It should consist of one or two cups of coffee, with white bread. There is a particular sort of the latter article prepared at Wildbad, which is excellent, and should be eaten without butter. Chocolate is also admissible, or cocoa and milk, or a basin of broth with bread in it.

After breakfast the invalid may take a little more exercise, either on foot, on horseback, or in a carriage; pay his visits and attend to household-affairs. The hours between

breakfast and dinner should be so engaged, that neither the head nor the body shall feel fatigued. Every severe exertion of the mind is forbidden, and no sleep must be suffered to intrude on the hours between breakfast and dinner.

One o'clock is the usual dinner-hour; however in later years a table d'hôte has been arranged for English visitors, at the principal hotels. A moderately nourishing and easily-digested dinner suits all patients, but every sort of extravagance at table ought to be avoided.

It may as well be stated at once, as a general rule, that fruit, raw vegetables, and many of the flatulent *légumes*, particularly unripe potatoes, should be carefully excluded from all repasts, by such as drink the mineral water. The contrary practice exposes the offender to the penalties of incessant rumbling and noise in the stomach, and to pains likewise, which will often last the whole day.—Strawberries however, which grow in prodigious quantities in the woods about Wildbad, may in small quantities, and seasoned with white wine and sugar, be taken without inconvenience.

It is not judicious to drink mineral water as a common beverage at meals. Wine is permitted, but in moderation, and if it produces heat after dinner, it must be omitted. The best wines are those of Würtemberg and Baden, Hock, and the Mosella wines. Patients who suffer of acidity, will do well to keep to the Mosella-wines, while those subject to flatulence, and of vitiated digestion, may drink a glass or two of claret. Champaign, after a copious dinner, ought entirely to be eschewed.—Beer, although it is of good quality at Wildbad, does not well agree with brunnen-drinkers, but the use of what is called porter, stout, or double beer, cannot sufficiently be condemned.

After dinner, particularly on walks, a cup of coffee is admissible,—as to the propriety of sleeping after dinner,

opinions are divided. The celebrated physician Plater was present one day at an assembly of doctors, who discussed the question of napping after dinner, and most of whom condemned it. "Ecce homo," said the old Esculapius; "I am seventy-six, have never been ill in my life, and I have always slept after dinner." If the patient goes into the open air directly after dinner, the weariness and drowsiness, which are apt to come on at that time, wear off, and thus the patient secures to himself a more refreshing sleep at night.

The supper should be very moderate, and the time for it about eight o'clock. A basin of light soup with bread in it will be found the most suitable food at that hour.

Every species of amusement, card-playing, dancing, etc., must be regulated by the inclination of the patient, and the circumstances of the place. In general, social intercourse with a few choice spirits during an hour or two, previously to retiring to rest, is the most proper and agreeable mode of passing that time of the evening.

An absurd notion prevails in England, that physicians on the continent are inferior in talent and education, as well as in tact and vigour of practice, to those of this country. Hence, invalids, who are about to visit the Spas of Germany, will rather run the risk of taking the advice and directions of a medical man at home, who is totally unacquainted with the nature and character of the German mineral water intended to be used, and still more so with the locality and other collateral circumstances belonging thereto, than to fall into the hands of a German doctor. However all unprejudiced medical men who have paid any lengthened visit to the continent, unanimously agree,—that a more learned, or better instructed class of medical men is not easily to be found, either in England or elsewhere; that they are as deeply versed in the science and

philosophy of medicine as any of their brethren on the other side of the channel, and even often much more so; and that if they exhibit a degree of feebleness in their practice, compared to the bolder and more confident treatment of English physicians, it is because the constitutions with which they have to deal, seldom require very active measures. The medical treatment, such as it is, of the patients in Germany, is evidently suited to their constitutions; as we find that the people there enjoy as good health as in this country, recover as fast, and do not die in larger numbers under ordinary circumstances.

In conclusion we would say to such as are able and willing to try the effect of these baths, in hopes of casting off any disease under which they may have laboured at home with little hope of a recovery, — “Haste away, and make the trial by any means. Do not waste your life and your purse in swallowing endless drugs, and ringing the changes of remedies and doctors, pent up in a hot-house in London during the summer months; or in being lifted in and out of the carriage, the prey of some chronic and insidious disorder, which baffles your vigilant physician’s skill; or in being sent from Brighton to Tunbridge, and from thence to Leamington or Cheltenham, merely to return again to Brighton or London, exactly as you left it; having in the meantime tried as many doctors as places, and as many new places and new remedies as doctors, to no purpose. Fly, I say, from all these evils, proceed to some spring of health, and commit yourself for once to the hands of nature — of medicated nature — assisted by every auxiliary which an excursion to a German Spa brings into play; and depend on it, that either at the first, or at the second or third occasion of visiting and using such Spa, you will have reason to rejoice that you exchanged art for nature.”
