

MINERAL SPRINGS.

There is resting in the minds of the majority of civilized human beings the idea that if pure water is beneficial in the treatment of disease, then water which contains some mineral must be still more beneficial when applied either externally or internally. Hence, in all civilized countries, most springs that are known to contain a variety of mineral impurities are resorted to by hundreds, and many, by thousands, of invalids yearly who drink of, and bathe in, the impure water with the expectation that the impurities of the water will impart to them health and vigor. **There never was a greater mistake made than this,** yet there are many who, after a few weeks' or months' stay at these springs, leave with health apparently improved. They suppose that all is due to the medicinal properties of the water, and, consequently, they advise every invalid they meet to go and try the springs. **Could the same invalids foresee the ills that they must suffer in after years as the result of a few months' use of mineral water, they would be extremely wary how they either use or advise others to use such water.** **No benefit is received from the use of mineral water that might not be received in still greater amount by the use of pure water.** It is true that many

who drink of, and bathe in, mineral water experience, after a short time, a great change in their feelings and symptoms, and think themselves better; but that this change is produced in whole, or even in part, by the mineral substances contained in the water is by no means certain; on the other hand, it is extremely doubtful whether this is the case, for the reason that mineral water contains no substances that are not administered freely by every drug physician for those very complaints for which the patient visits the springs, and, in most cases, substances identical in character had been taken freely by the patient without benefit. This fact and the additional fact that **pure water, when properly applied in the treatment of similar diseases, always results in lasting benefit**, and the still further additional fact that nearly every patient who visits mineral springs has not been in the habit of using water sufficiently often for the common purposes of health, indicate that the minerals in the water did not make it any more efficacious. When we add to these the fact that whatever change can be wrought in a patient's mind to inspire hope, expectation, and confidence, will always be of great benefit, and that the change of scenery and surroundings does inspire these feelings in the minds of ninety-nine out of every one hundred who visit such places, we must conclude that the change that takes place in their cases is owing

to the changes that have taken place in their material surroundings and in their habits of life; and not only this, but that if they had used **pure, soft water** as freely and in the same manner that they did the mineral water, they would have derived much greater benefit from its use.

We are strengthened in this conclusion by the fact that nearly **every patient who uses mineral water freely for any length of time, finds himself afflicted with some serious chronic disease which is directly traceable to its use for its origin.**

Let not the reader gather from the foregoing remarks the idea that mineral waters do not occasion what the physicians call a "medicinal effect," for they do, and in the same way that all medicines do; but this "medicinal effect," as we have shown in Part II., is nothing more nor less than vital resistance, or an effort on the part of the vital organism to expel whatever substance occasioned or produced the "medicinal effect." Now, since all such efforts **waste the patient's vitality**, and in the end **weaken his constitutional vigor**, **they are to be avoided at all times**; and to do this, it is necessary to avoid receiving into our systems, or in any way using, any of those substances that occasion such effects, even though they be in **mineral waters**.

It is true that impure water may be used for bathing purposes with less injury to the patient than will occur if he drinks the same water; yet, since water, and whatever substance it may hold in solution, **is freely absorbed through the pores of the skin, it is far better that we should use nothing but pure, soft water for bathing purposes.**

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