TUNBRIDGE WELLS AS A HEALTH RESORT.

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THE history of Tunbridge Wells dates from the days when the dissolute Dudley, Lord North, discovered the chalybeate springs in the early part of the seventeenth century, and was advised by his London physicians to drink the water as a restorative to his jaded energies. The experiment was an unqualified success. He came, he drank, and was cured. Others, emboldened by the happy result, hastened to try the new "cure," and the small township which sprang up in the vicinity of the Wells became the fashionable resort of the wits and brilliant society figures of the day. An old print shows Dr. Johnson promenading with David Garrick, William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, Speaker Onslow, and other notabilities of the eighteenth century. In addition to its fame as an inland watering place, the salubrity of the climate and the picturesque nature of the surrounding country have gradually attracted a large and increasing number of permanent residents, who have thus given to the town its distinctive feature as a residential health resort, and a place of refuge against the inroads of sickness and the infirmities of old age.

Situated as it is upon the bed of sandstone known as the Hastings Sands, at a height of nearly 400 ft. above sea level, and towards the eastern side of the island, Tunbridge Wells possesses the elements which go to make a dry and bracing climate. Its position towards the south coast (thirty miles from Hastings) tempers the keenness of the easterly breezes and reduces the chilling effect of the elevation, so that the climate may be described as exhilarating and mildly bracing. Its healthiness, as well as its picturesqueness, is greatly enhanced by the magnificent stretches of common—about 250 acres in extent—which penetrate to the very centre of the town, and supply abundant life-giving atmosphere to every part. The pine woods which abound in the vicinity also contribute to the tonic and invigorating effect of the climate, and suggest the suitability for the open-air treatment of tuberculous and allied diseases; for, owing to the southerly situation, it could be carried out all the year round.

The beneficial effects of the climate are fully borne out by the returns of the medical officer of health for the borough. For the last six years the death-rate has fallen below 13.0 per 1,000, and, when it is remembered that a considerable proportion of the population is made up either of invalids attracted by the salubrity of the climate or of the aged and retired who desire to spend their declining years amidst pleasant surroundings, these figures are sufficiently remarkable. In the year 1905 more than one-half the total number of deaths took place over the age of 60, and no less than 30 per cent. over 70 years—a striking testimony of the influence of the climate in promoting longevity. At the other end of the scale the abnormally low rate of infantile mortality—72 per 1,000 births in 1905—demonstrates the suitability of the climate for children; as to this the medical men of the town are fully agreed. Some credit, too, should no doubt be ascribed to the almost entire absence of deaths from zymotic diseases, in itself a tribute to the excellent system of sanitation which prevails in the town.

The therapeutic indications of the Tunbridge Wells climate may be briefly summarized: First and foremost it is especially suited to diseases of the respiratory organs. The mildness and tonicity of the atmosphere, the height above sea level, and the gravelly nature of the soil are of great value in the treatment of bronchitis and bronchial asthma, as well as in the open-air treatment of consumption and surgical tuberculosis. Cardiac diseases are benefited by the bracing atmosphere, as well as by Nauheim baths and massage to be obtained at the Spa baths. The number of gentle ascents are of value in the treatment of obesity and fatty heart by the Oertel method of hill climbing combined with hydrotherapeutic and other measures. The clearness and mildly bracing effect of the atmosphere renders it peculiarly valuable in the treatment of nervous diseases, more especially those attended with mental depression, such as cases of melancholia, hypochondriasis, and neurasthenia, and the early stages of general paralysis. Diseases of the digestive organs are also beneficially influenced; appetite is restored and the desire for exercise stimulated. Cases

of anaemia also benefit by the bracing air combined with internal treatment, and the climate is particularly valuable in convalescence after surgical operations, and was often recommended for this purpose by the late Sir Spencer Wells. In most children's diseases, especially those attended with malnutrition and general debility, a favourable influence may confidently be predicted.

The good effects of the climate are enhanced by the very attractive nature of the town and its surroundings. The stretches of open common, 450 ft. above sea level, in and around the town, open out lovely views of the neighbouring country. On every side are to be found woodland and pastoral scenery scarcely surpassed in any other part of England, with the hop-fields, for which Kent is famous. Pine woods also and picturesque villages and places of interest abound in the vicinity. The unique promenade, known as the Pantiles, is a never-failing source of attraction, where excellent music is provided during the season, which extends from June to October. Entertainments and theatrical performances are also provided for the amusement of visitors at the opera house and the "Great Hall."

Mention must also be made of the chalybeate waters, to the discovery of which Tunbridge Wells owes its name and existence. They contain on analysis about 4 gr. of carbonate of iron per gallon, with sulphates of potash and soda, and chlorides of sodium and calcium, and are of undoubted efficacy in the treatment of anaemia and allied disorders. They are largely drunk by visitors, and it is to be regretted that their use has, no doubt partly on account of the position of the springs, been allowed of recent years to fall into comparative neglect. The borough council is now, however, seeking Parliamentary powers to obtain full control of them, and there is every probability that in a short space of time the waters will become a greater source of attraction and benefit to visitors than is the case at present.

MEDICAL AND SURGICAL APPLIANCES.

Punch-forceps for Operations on the Maxillary Antrum and other Accessory Nasal Sinuses.—Messrs. Mayer and Meltzer have for some time considered the question of forceps for making a large opening into the maxillary antrum by the nasal route, and have constructed punch-forceps, from the design of Mr. Carwardine of Bristol, which appear to have given satisfaction to several practitioners who have used them. The complete set consists of four pairs of punches; two of these are downward-cutting, for enlarging the right and left antral openings respectively in a downward direction; the third is direct in cutting action; and the fourth reversed, to enlarge the opening backwards and forwards. They consist essentially of a strong hook and guide, the distal part of which is curved and ends in a male cutting blade. The sliding female blade of the punch-forceps is hinged to a thrusting shaft, to obtain lateral movement with a maximum of power.

The downward-cutting punches are sufficiently powerful to remove the inner wall of the antrum down to the floor of the nasal fossa, where it is thickest; the direct and reversed ones are intended for removal of the remainder of the inner wall of the antrum. Though designed for operations by the nasal route, they are also useful for operations through the canine fossa. The direct-action punch-forceps may be used for other purposes in addition; and they are powerful enough and have been found useful for removing the base of the sphenoidal sinus for dependent drainage of that cavity.