NOTES ON HEALTH RESORTS.

VII.—SCHWALBACH.

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THE following brief description of Schwalbach, and of the modes of treatment there carried out, are based upon notes taken upon the spot during a visit in the summer of 1891.

Schwalbach (or, more correctly, Langen-Schwalbach) is about nine miles from Wiesbaden, and is 1,050 feet above the sea level. It may be reached either by railway from Wiesbaden or by a carriage drive of two hours from Eltville on the Rhine. The railway journey is somewhat tedious, although the line runs through beautiful beech woods. The gradient is so steep that the train can only travel at a very slow pace, either up or down, taking an hour and ten minutes to cover the distance.

The town is surrounded, but by no means shut in, by hills belonging to the Taunus range, which are for the most part covered by woods of birch, beech, oak, and fir trees. The air is usually fresh and bracing, especially in the higher parts of the town, in which are situated the Curhaus, Royal Baths, and the most frequented springs. Behind and to the sides of the Curhaus are pleasant grounds, well wooded, and abundantly supplied with seats. The mineral springs, eight in number, are all rich in dissolved carbonic acid, and, with one exception, they contain iron in the form of carbonate.

The springs used for drinking purposes are the Stahl and Weinbrunnen—the once fashionable Paulinenbrunnen, which were so much in vogue when Sir Francis Head wrote his well-known book, *Bubbles from the Brunnen of Nassau*, having fallen into disuse for this purpose, although it still contributes to the supply of water for the baths.

The water when fresh drawn from the springs is cold, colourless, brilliantly clear, and rich in bubbles of carbonic acid gas. The taste, although chalybeate, is by no means very unpleasant. The patients usually drink 6 or 8 ounces three times a day, sipping the water slowly as they walk up and down the paths of the Curgarten, or along the covered promenades which afford protection in rainy weather. The amount taken is gradually increased, as dyspepsia is apt to result if too large quantities are taken at the commencement of the course. The water of the Stahlbrunnen is the richer in iron, containing 0.8 part per 1,000 whereas that of the Weinbrunnen contains only 0.5 part per 1,000. The baths are situated in two establishments—the Royal Bath House, situated in the Curgarten, and the Lindenbrunnen Bath House, in the middle of the town—the arrangements for bathing being very similar in both.

The Royal Establishment is chiefly supplied by the Stahlbrunnen and Weinbrunnen, but the Paulinenbrunnen and other springs help to swell the supply of water. The bath rooms are comfortably appointed, well lighted, and airy. The baths are constructed of brass, and the water in them is heated by coils of piping placed under their floors, through which a current of steam is driven. In this manner the water is easily raised to the required temperature, without dilution, and with the minimum loss of carbonic acid gas. As the temperature of the water rises, this gas is set free in large quantities, and the surface is broken up by the bursting of innumerable minute bubbles. The first baths of the course are taken at a temperature of 88° F., but later on the temperature is gradually lowered by a few degrees, and in some instances even to 79° or 77°.

The patient, who sits upon a small wooden stool and is immersed to the shoulders, remains in the bath from ten to twenty minutes, according to circumstances. If the face be held very near the surface of the water, a slight oppression of breathing is experienced owing to the admixture of a considerable proportion of carbonic acid gas with the respired air, and some headache may follow; but even at the surface of the water the carbonic acid is not sufficiently abundant to extinguish a flame. In spite of the rather low temperature of the bath, a pleasant sensation of warmth is felt over the entire body as long as the patient keeps perfectly still, and the whole surface of the skin becomes coated with a layer of small bubbles. When, however, the limbs are moved these

bubbles rise at once to the surface and the water feels distinctly cooler.

Before leaving the bath those who are able to bear it receive a douche of cold mineral water from a shower apparatus. On emerging from the water the skin is found to be reddened, an effect which is probably due to the carbonic acid. The tepid character of the bath may cause a want of reaction on the first few occasions; but this is hardly noticed when one of the large well-warmed towels which are placed in a box by the bath side is immediately wrapped round the body. A brisk walk should be taken immediately after bathing.

Peat baths, which are also provided, are prepared in an outhouse and are wheeled into the bathrooms upon a tramway. These baths are constructed of wood, and into them the peat earth is shovelled after it has been sifted. Heated mineral water is then added until the proper consistency is obtained. During the process of mixing a rather unpleasant odour is given off; but this does not offer any serious drawback to the use of the baths. The temperature of the peat baths is from 95° to 99° F., and the patient remains immersed from twenty minutes to half an hour. When once the natural repugnance to entering them is overcome the sensation which they impart is very comfortable and pleasant. On coming out, a cleansing bath of mineral water is taken, in which the patient remains for a few minutes only.

Of the patients who visit Schwalbach for treatment, a large number are simply chlorotic, and these derive much benefit from drinking the chalybeate waters, which contain a considerable quantity of iron in an easily assimilable form. Since iron is not absorbed by the skin, we must attribute the benefit derived from the baths to the carbonic acid gas contained in the water, and their action probably differs but little from that of non-ferruginous baths containing the same gas, such as those of Homburg. Other forms of anæmia, whether primary or secondary, are also benefited by the Schwalbach course.

Another large class of patients is composed of sufferers from various kinds of uterine disorders, including tendency to abortion and sterility. Nervous troubles also, especially such as are of a functional nature, are also treated with success.

The season commences on May 1st—but the weather is sometimes cold in the early part of that month—and lasts on into October, when the baths are closed. The ordinary duration of the course is six weeks.

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PROFESSOR GOTTLIEB GLUGE, OF BRUSSELS.—On June 18th, Dr. Gottlieb Gluge, of Brussels, one of the oldest of microscopists and pathologists, celebrated the completion of his eightieth year. After studying at Berlin under Rudolphi, Ehrenberg, and Johannes Müller, and, gaining a prize for an essay on "Influenza or Grippe, prepared from Historical and Pathological Sources" (1838), he proceeded to Paris, where he worked under Magendie, Breschet, and Cruveilhier. He was soon afterwards appointed Professor of Physiology and Pathology in the newly-founded University of Brussels, where he has remained ever since. Most of Professor Gluge's work, which includes an *Atlas of Pathological Anatomy*, was done in the precellular era, but he has published a good deal in more recent years, notably *Experimental Researches on the Inoculation of Cancer, the Structure of Hydatids, etc.*, and a paper on Louise Lateau, printed in the *Bulletin de l'Académie Royale de Médecine*, 1875. As a proof how keen his interest in the progress of science continues to be may be mentioned a communication on the microbes of suppuration presented by him to the Belgian Academy of Medicine in 1891. Professor Gluge was in 1851 awarded the Montyon Prize by the Paris Academy of Science for his work on pathological histology.