

seen from the downs, is exactly semi-circular, beginning with a church and ending with a palace, the Grove making, as it were, a beautiful knot in the middle. . . . When you are on the top of the downs, 'tis one of the loveliest prospects imaginable to view in the vale below such an agreeable mixture of trees and buildings, that a stranger is at a loss to know whether it be a town in a wood or a wood in a town."

The history and fortunes of Epsom have been thus epitomised in mock-heroic style by Mr. Martin F. Tupper:—"Let us come to Ebba's Ham, the notorious Epsom, famed alike for purgatives and for races. Wherever water is nastier than usual, thither at some time or other the Circean queen of fashion is sure to drive her hogs to be drenched; so did Prince Bladud with his lucky pigs at Bath; neither will those erudite persons who are now doing duty as canals at Cheltenham or Harrogate marvel to be told that Epsom salts have had their day. Fresh from Nature's vase bubbled up the hideous combination, and thousands flocked together in public to be purged. Prince George of Denmark, we are told, was accustomed to visit Epsom, and to drink the waters, and his presence contributed to draw together the nobility and gentry, with many persons of all ranks. They had their early matin walk to the treacherous well; thence, as Mr. Toland tells us, 'they made their cavalcade in family coaches, sometimes as many as sixty in the ring;' after which they regaled their elegant minds with displays of 'cudgel-play and

wrestling,' and recreated their exhausted bodies by 'chasing a soaped pig;' at eventide the viol and tambour held divided sway with King Faro and Pope Joan. But now arrived a crisis and a change in the history of Epsom; and let every such place, from Tunbridge Wells to Buxton, take warning by what next befel. Fraud and covetousness, in the shape of an apothecary, finding Nature's laboratory too sluggish, dared of her mysteries [to make] most villainous imitation; he concocted in a pit his drugs and other sorceries, led a pipe of water through them, built a showy well-room above, advertised his find, and waited the event. They came, they saw, they were conquered; human nature could not stand the poisonous mess; the water-bubble burst. Epsom was blown up, and Mr. Livingstone was ruined. Take ye heed from this, O Montpelier and Pittville: forge not upon Nature's dewy banks; let Mother Earth well up whatever cleansing waters she will, and her children drink it gratefully and uninquiringly; but if doctors fabricate polluted streams, our free-born antipathies arise, and bid us 'throw the physic to the dogs.'"

A most interesting account of this place, "by an Inhabitant," was published by Mr. Dorling, of Epsom, by subscription, in 1825. Though apparently a "labour of love," for its profits were to be "devoted to the Subscription School at Epsom," it is very exhaustive, and gives authorities. It will, therefore, afford some material for the following pages.

## CHAPTER XXX.

### EPSOM (continued).—THE WELLS, ETC.

"Arise betimes, to pump repair,  
First take the waters, then the air;  
Most moderate be in meat and drink,  
And rarely, very rarely think."—*Bath G. Id.*

Watering-places in and near London in the Seventeenth Century—Discovery of the Mineral Waters at Epsom—The Properties of the Waters—The Rise of Epsom from an obscure Village to a fashionable Watering-place—Sabbatarian Prejudices at a Discount—Epsom in the Time of Charles II.—A Royal Visit—Lady Castlemaine—Epsom in the Reign of Queen Anne—The Decline of Epsom's Popularity—The Saline Waters—Mrs. Mapp, the Bone-setter—Dr. Clarke.

The above motto—half serious, half satire—taken from the "Bath Guide," might well have been adopted by the "quality" who formed the company here a century and a half ago. It has been well remarked by Dr. Macpherson, in "Our Baths and Wells," that "the history of our watering-places as places of amusement reflects the manners and the fashionable pleasures of different ages, and affords curious illustrations of the state of society, or rather, of its

phases." Goldsmith certainly was wrong in supposing that the English baths and spas were at first frequented only by invalids who sought relief.

Quaint old Fuller writes, in 1662:—"London is in this kind stately attended, having three medicinal waters within one day's journey thereof, viz., Ebsham, or Epsom, Barnet,\* and Tunbridge.

\* See Vol. I., p. 322.