

Lady Castlemaine at the time was little more than twenty. The Queen, though short of stature, was young also, and looked handsomer than we expected; and as all parties seemed pleased, and His Majesty's little son came on the other side of the lady of the bed-chamber, we pretended to ourselves, that things were not so bad as report made them; though never more convinced, that everything which had been related was true."

The place must have been gay and attractive enough in its summer season. Toland, in his "Description of Epsom," published in the reign of Queen Anne, writes thus:—"You would think yourself in some enchanted camp, to see the peasants ride to every house with the choicest fruit, herbs, roots, and flowers; with all sorts of tame and wild fowls; the rarest fish and venison, and with every kind of butchers' meat, among which the Banstead Downs mutton is the most relishing dainty." He describes with the greatest minuteness the town and the company that filled it, and tells us how the fronts of the houses were "adorned throughout with rows of elms and lime-trees, in many places artificially wreathed into verdant porticos, cut into a variety of figures, and close enough wrought to defend those who sat under such hospitable shades from the injuries of the sun and rain. The finest of them all," he adds, "is that which shades the paved terrace in the centre of the town, and extends quite before the chief tavern and coffee-house. By the conversation of those who walk there you would fancy yourself to be this minute on the Exchange, and the next at St. James's; one while in an East India factory, and another while with the army in Flanders, or on board the fleet in the ocean; nor is there any profession, trade, or calling that you can miss of here, either for your instruction or diversion. Fronting this, our Forum, as I may call it, there is another of these shades lately wrought over a paved walk of considerable length, called the New Parade." Mr. Toland then proceeds to state that "the two rival bowling-greens are not to be forgotten, on which all the company, after diverting themselves in the morning according to their fancies, make a gallant appearance every evening (especially on the Saturday and Monday). Here are also raffling-tables, with music playing most of the day, and the nights are generally crowned with dancing. All new comers are awakened out of their sleep the first morning by the same music which goes to welcome them to Epsom. In the raffling shops are lost more hearts than guineas. Here the rude, the sullen, the noisy, and the affected; the peevish, the covetous, the litigious, and the sharpening; the proud, the

prodigal, the impatient, and the impertinent; become visible foils to the well-bred, prudent, modest, and good-humoured in the eyes of all impartial beholders."

"In the outer circle of the mineral springs which are to be found in the neighbourhood of London, those of Epsom are the best known, owing to their name having been given to sulphate of magnesia. They seem to have been first discovered in 1611, and became very much frequented immediately after the Restoration. They kept also their popularity through the former half of the eighteenth century, when they were visited by Prince George of Denmark. As many as sixty carriages might then be seen in 'The King' at the same time. Notwithstanding the bracing air of Epsom and Banstead Downs—said to be the purest near London—their popularity fell off after the accession of George III., and what was once the chief well, is now (1871) enclosed in a private garden and quite forgotten." So writes Dr. Macpherson. He adds that a little to the west of Epsom there was the scouring well in Ashted Oaks, over which is still some brickwork; and two miles further west, in the centre of the forest, is the better known Jessop's well. It still has a pump room over it, but is quite forgotten.

The finding of a mineral spring on the common, the first of the kind discovered in England, appears to have given the signal for the improvement of Epsom. At that time houses began to multiply, and company from a distance to pay their transitory visits. "The chief improvements of the town, however, date from the spoliation of Nonsuch, by the Duchess of Cleveland, in the year 1670, when the materials at hand affording an inducement to persons to build, the palace of Durdans and many other large mansions were erected in Epsom."

About the year 1715 Epsom began to be gradually deserted, partly, it is said, owing to the "knavish tricks and frauds" of an apothecary named Livingstone, who, having purchased some land in the town, set up a rival establishment to that which already existed, and which he called the New Wells. Here he had concerts, balls, assemblies, and gaming, and by his novelties allured the company from the old wells. The water of the new wells, however, as the local topographer tells us, did not possess any virtue, and consequently "those who drank it did not derive any benefit therefrom, by which means the waters of the old wells grew into unmerited disrepute for want of a distinction."

"The saline waters at Epsom," writes Abraham