

the way in which they are elaborated in such vast quantities seems to be simply as follows:— They all rise in the Lias,— a formation abounding in sulphate of iron, lime, magnesia, lignite, and various bituminous matters; but they have their origin far beneath, in the saliferous marls of the Upper New Red, which the Lias overlies. In the inferior formation they are simply brine springs: but brine is a powerful solvent; passing through the Lias, it acts upon the sulphur and the iron; becomes, by means of the acid thus set free and incorporated with it, a more powerful solvent still; operates upon the lime, upon the magnesia, upon the various lignites and bitumens; and at length rises to the surface, a brine-digested extract of Liasic minerals. The several springs yield various analyses, according to the various rocks of the upper formation which they pass through,— some containing more, some less lime, sulphur, iron, magnesia; but in all the dissolving menstruum is the same. And such, it would appear, is the mode in which Nature prepares her simples in this rich district, and keeps her medicine-chest ever full.

Let us trace the progress of a single pint of the water thus elaborated, from where it first alights on the spongy soil in a wintry shower, till where it sparkles in the glass in the pump-room at Cheltenham. It falls among the flat hills that sweep around the ancient city of Worcester, and straightway buries itself, all fresh and soft, in the folds of the Upper New Red Sandstone, where they incline gently to the east. It percolates, in its downward progress, along one of the unworkable seams of rock-salt that occur in the superior marls of the formation; and, as it pursues, furlong after furlong, its subterranean journey, savors more and more strongly of the company it keeps; becomes in succession hard, brackish, saline, briny; and then many fathoms below the level at which it had entered, escapes