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*A Paradise on Earth.  
On Swedish Spas and Watering-places 1680–1880*

*A Paradise on Earth* presents Swedish spa culture during its first 200 years, from 1680 till 1880. As spa cures unite many aspects of life, the study touches on a rich variety of topics within a wide range of disciplines from history of science and ideas, intellectual history and comparative literature, to theology, philosophy and medicine. The analysis is based upon a study of letters and diaries of spa guests, prayers and sermons used within the spa, hydrotherapeutic literature, medical records and journals and spa statistics submitted to the state archives, as well as poems and pictures of spa life.

The introduction gives an historical survey of Swedish spas in relation to the development of spa culture in Scandinavia and the rest of Europe, and provides initial information about organization and economy.

The main part of the study explores the notion of the spa as a paradise on earth, and uses the story of creation in Genesis 1–3 as a pattern of analysis. Special attention is paid to the utopian traits of spa culture and the position of women in this milieu.

The main object of the study is to reconstruct and interpret the ideas and expectations, the dreams and hopes connected with spa life during this period, rather than to outline the history of each spa or critically examine the medical effects of the cure.