

THE BATHS AND WASHHOUSES.

DURING the summer of 1848 some important statistics were published with respect to the comparative rates of mortality under different social circumstances and in different localities. The figures were carefully collated and summarized by Mr. John May, who was then Clerk to the Board of Guardians and Superintendent Registrar of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, and they related to this Union. The results were startling, showing, in fact, a very wide difference between the average age at which death occurred in rural and manufacturing districts, and an equally striking difference between the age at death of the upper classes and the working population. It was plain that some powerful causes were in operation to account for so great a difference, for though, from the very necessity of their position, certain hardships had to be borne by the poorer classes, rendering the duration of life shorter with them than with the rich, still, it was evident that there must also be causes in operation not legitimately proper to a condition of labour. Mr. May frequently called public attention to what appeared to be the principal causes of excessive mortality, and he delivered two lectures on the subject, and pointed out to the authorities the want of drainage, ventilation, and cleanliness. As might be expected, a smart opposition sprang up, but this inspired the sanitary reformer with greater energy and courage. The controversy finally led to a proposal to erect Baths and Washhouses for the use of the inhabitants of the borough of Macclesfield. Somewhat bearing on this matter, and co-relative to it, was the question of increased water supply, police supervision, and sanitary reform, which was then agitating the borough. In January of 1848 a special meeting of the Corporation was called to consider a Bill to enable the Corporation to extend the Waterworks. There was then before the country a Bill dealing with sanitary works in towns, latterly known as Lord Morpeth's Act, which subsequently developed into the Public Health Act, under which Boards of Health superseded commissioners of police in boroughs, and called Urban and Rural Sanitary Authorities into existence in every part of England. Mr. Gee, Mr. T. Wardle, Mr. T. Brodrick, Mr. Watts, Mr. D. Oldham, Mr. Grimsditch, and Mr.

Potts vigorously supported the petition in favour of the special Act, which was as strenuously opposed by Mr. John Brocklehurst, on the ground principally that Lord Morpeth's Bill might render it unnecessary. A scene not without similarity in later days followed on the division; 17 voted for Mr. Brocklehurst's amendment—to consider the petition that day twelvemonths—and 18 for the motion to affix the seal. When the Mayor (Mr. Frederick Francis Lallemand) was about to apply the seal to the form of petition several members left in high dudgeon. Before the meeting closed, Mr. (now Alderman) David Clarke, one of the malcontents, got up and said he had been making a list of those who had voted for Mr. Brocklehurst's amendment, and his list contained 18 names, reducing the division to an equality. Mr. T. Norbury produced another list for the motion, which also contained 18 names, and the attenuated meeting went through the extraordinary proceeding of counting votes of members who were not present. The Mayor gave his casting vote for the motion, declaring that that proceeding "was in conformity with the practice of the Speaker in the House of Commons, who usually votes for what is in favour of the business proceeding in the regular way." This smart and heated debate ultimately led to the sanitary clauses of the Corporation Bill being dropped and the water clauses being pushed forward. The prospect of an ample supply of water raised the hopes of those who favoured Mr. May's views on the means of improving the physical conditions of life in the town. On the 12th July following, therefore, a meeting was held in the Town Hall for the purpose of taking measures for the establishment of public baths and washhouses. The Mayor (Mr. Richard Wright) was in the chair, and those assembled were addressed at great length by Mr. L. Holland, who gave a large amount of information as to what had been done in this connection in Manchester and Liverpool. Resolutions were passed declaring the desirability of baths and washhouses and appointing a committee to carry out the project. The members of this body were The Mayor, Revs. C. A. J. Smith, C. O'N. Pratt, W. H. R. Brickman, P. Banton, Messrs. W. Barker, T. Brodrick, W. Barnett, J. Barker, R. Brodrick, W. Bullock, J. Firth, S. Higginbotham, L. Holland, J. Hooley, J. May, T.

Newton, G. Oldham, E. Procter, W. Potts, D. Rowbotham, J. Rathbone, J. Swinnerton, J. Smith (Langley), I. J. Watts, J. Wright (Brook-street), J. Woodward, J. Wright (Sunderland-street), the Mayor to be chairman and Mr. J. May hon. sec. A sub-committee was appointed from these to arrange a canvass for subscriptions, and operations with that view were begun at once. Matters went on quietly for six weeks, and in the meantime an agitation, headed by the Rev. C. O'Neil Pratt, had arisen to establish Model Lodging-houses. It was felt then, and has since been proved to be true, that these dens, the common lodging-houses, were but hot beds of disease and immorality. The movement, though energetically started, did not eventuate in fact, chiefly through the operation of general Acts giving local authorities powers to deal resolutely and effectually with the cleanliness and order of these places. At a meeting of the general committee held on Wednesday, 23rd August following, the lodging house question was fully discussed, and a sub-committee appointed to forward their erection in connection with the Baths and Washhouses. This committee included the Mayor, Revs. J. Thornycroft, W. A. Osborne, C. O'N. Pratt; Major Brooksbank, Messrs. T. R. Dainty, Mayer, Firth, and Procter, Mr. Pratt being associated with Mr. May in the secretaryship. At that meeting the venerable Mr. C. S. Roe expressed his high approval of the scheme for baths and wash-houses, and said he was ready to present a freehold site for them on land opposite Mr. Brodrick's factory—an announcement which called forth applause. This site and others very favourably situated as regarded the convenience of the inhabitants were not available in consequence of the difficulty of obtaining an ample supply of water which the Corporation at that time were not able to grant. At the joint committee meeting a week later, Mr. Thornycroft was appointed chairman of the committee, and a report was made to the effect that a building be provided capable of accommodating twenty families, with one commodious bedroom for each, and one common living room and kitchen, with suitable washing and other conveniences, and that as soon as £500 was raised the committee be empowered to proceed with the work. A thorough canvass for subscriptions was set on foot, it being left to the subscribers to donate their money to either baths or lodging-houses. So enthusiastic were the promoters at the time that they actually had it under consideration to include other objects than those named—in fact to form a Health of Towns Association. Wise counsels prevailed, and the immediate objects in view were to be overtaken first, and then the others would follow. In the meantime Mr. May had been

soundings the Marquess of Westminster and other county noblemen and gentlemen, and preparations were being made for a public meeting, to be presided over by the Lord Lieutenant of the County, and addressed by others. This gathering came off on 19th October, 1848, in the Large Sunday School, under the presidency of the Mayor, Mr. R. Wright. Lord Eddisbury proposed a resolution in favour of baths and washhouses, and Viscount Ebbington, M.P., (now Earl Fortescue) seconded. Mr. John Brocklehurst, M.P., followed with an amendment in favour of baths only, and announced that as soon as the scheme for erecting them commenced he would give £100. In the course of his speech the hon. member said when he was a lad he could go and bathe in the canal without fear of being run after by policemen or canal watchers, but they had no places to bathe now, for the bathing places of a few years ago were now built over. Mr. John Williams, then one of the members for the borough, took an opposite view to his colleague, and promised £400 for the Baths and Washhouses and £100 to the Useful Knowledge Society. On the opinion of the meeting—the Sunday School was crowded with working men—being asked, no hands were held up for the amendment, and the Mayor, amid great cheering, declared the resolution in favour of Baths and Washhouses carried unanimously. Next His Grace of Westminster submitted a motion to establish Model Lodging Houses, Mr. G. Cornwall Legh, M.P., being his seconder. This resolution was also adopted. On the motion of the Recorder of Macclesfield, Mr. W. C. Townsend, a subscription list was opened. Before the meeting closed Mr. Brocklehurst's chagrin induced him to say that the screw had been put on, and he would subscribe £100 to the Lodging, Bath, and Washhouses as soon as he saw a probability of their being carried out. He, at the same time, called to mind the annual meeting of the Useful Knowledge Society, which fell to be held in the following week, and said he would then be begging for it—if they were to have all these institutions they must be supported, and where was the money to come from? Up jumped Mr. Wm. Potts, on this challenge, and, amid thunders of applause, said, with respect to the Useful Knowledge Society, he would subscribe an amount equal to Mr. Brocklehurst. Notwithstanding this lively incident, the meeting closed quietly. In the following week a favourable report was made on the state of the subscription cards, the amount then subscribed being nearly £1,100, and arrangements were made for lectures on sanitation. Apparently at this early period the lodging houses project had begun to lag, for the amount subscribed was but £125. Mr. Edward Wakefield delivered the first of the lectures,

and the placard announcing his subject is a striking specimen of the heroic style common in all ages. He announced himself thus:—

"HEALTH OF THE INHABITANTS OF MACCLESFIELD."

"It appears from the official registered report that one in 24 of the inhabitants die annually, whilst in the healthy parts of England, Devonshire for instance, the mortality is only one in 50.

"Why this is, the public in general are ignorant—the dead tell no tales—it remains for the living to ascertain the cause, and to remove it—now that it is known on the average life is shortened many years to those who exist in so unhealthy a town. Every human being is interested in this important subject, and all are invited to attend—persons of every trade—persons of both sexes—persons of every occupation, from the first manufacturer in the town to the humblest workman or workwoman, persons of every profession—clergy of all sects—medical men, &c., &c."

In the course of his address Mr. Wakefield dealt with the poisoning of the living by burying the dead within the town, public slaughter-houses, sewerage on the plan adopted at that period for Liverpool, baths and washhouses, the same furnaces heating water for both, "lodging-houses—their present state, and the necessity for forming them for travellers and others, so that families may be separated, and the unmarried of both sexes no longer occupying the same sleeping apartment. Public walks and places for exercise and rational amusement for the recreation of those whose lives are devoted to labour." Here was a syllabus sufficient for the entire remodelling of Macclesfield, and for the most part it has been accomplished by steady, gradual progress. There was a crowded house at the Town Hall when Mr. Wakefield delivered his comprehensive address. The lecturer, who is now dead these many years, was a famous philanthropist and sanitary reformer in his day, and author of "Ireland Statistical and Political." A work of Mr. Wakefield's on the Physical Condition of Ireland was long a standing authority on the social status of the Irish people. The effect of the lecture was seen in the large attendance at the meeting of the general committee on the following Wednesday evening. Mr. May having explained all that had been done up to that period to those who had been in irregular attendance, the managers and stewards from most of the mills in town formed themselves into a committee for the purpose of attending to and taking charge of the subscription lists introduced into the factories and workshops. Mr. May stated that those mills which were not represented he trusted would be, and that he intended calling at as many mills as his time and opportunities afforded, to invite

their co-operation and support. He then announced that the subscriptions had reached £1,241 18s., and that the lodging-houses had but £175 to their credit.

While the work of collecting money was hopefully proceeding, the course of lectures on sanitation was delivered with punctual regularity. Mr. E. Bowen, Mr. Horace Roche, Rev. W. A. Osborne, Rev. E. Weigall, Rev. C. O'Neil Pratt, Mr. May and others taking weekly duty during the winter of 1848 and spring of 1849. The borough at this time was smitten with severe cholera and fever epidemics; scores of families were plunged into destitution, and a public subscription to aid the work of the Guardians had to be opened. The question of site for a building such as was intended to be erected, was of course a most important one. Obviously the buildings, to be of most utility, must be placed in close proximity to the dwellings of the poor, huddled as they usually are together in towns. In February, 1849, the committee had not been able to accept Mr. C. Roe's offer of a site opposite Mr. Brodrick's factory in Bridge-street, and they appointed the Mayor (Mr. Richard Wright) and Mr. May to look out a site. At the weekly meeting a fortnight later the sub-committee produced a set of plans with elevations prepared by Mr. James Stevens, our townsman, then described as "of the Borough Engineer's Office, Liverpool." It will be remembered that Liverpool had already built and opened baths and wash-houses, and naturally to that town the sub-committee would turn as one where their wants would be most readily suited. The site selected was near the Buxton-road bridge in Waters-green, but this was subsequently found to be unsuitable. Other places were mentioned, but the ground rent of some of these being as much as 8d a yard, that was an insurmountable barrier to their approval. At length the committee decided in favour of a site on Hallefields, near Cuckstoolpit Hill, and tenders for the erection were ordered to be invited. These were sent in in May following, and that of Mr. Blackshaw, builder, Macclesfield, for £2,854 9s. 7d, was accepted. The buildings, as then intended, were thus described:—"The building is to be a plain substantial one, in the Elizabethan style of architecture. The house for the residence of a person to take charge of the Baths is to form the centre front, which will face towards Cuckstoolpit Hill. On the site next to James's-street will be formed the males' plunge bath, 30 feet long and 18 feet wide. On the site next to Davenport-street will be formed the females' plunge bath, 17 feet 6 inches long and 10 feet 6 inches wide, the entrance to each being distinct and on opposite sides of the building. Behind these there will be three first-class small private baths, a shower bath and a vapour bath for males, the same number of

each for females. The wash-house will be erected on the south-west site of the building behind the females' plunge bath. There will be two hydro-extractors for wringing clothes, by which a large amount of labour is saved. There will be a drying-room, in which the articles washed will be dried by hot air; a room for cleaning and drying infected clothes in times of fever, &c.; and an ironing room. Accommodation for 15 persons to wash at the same time can be provided; and if it be found that advantage is taken of the benefits which will be afforded, other wash-houses can be erected in different parts of the town unconnected entirely with baths." The Marquess of Westminster, who had handsomely subscribed, as we have seen, and had otherwise shown a deep interest in the scheme, was unable, from his numerous engagements, to leave London to lay the foundation-stone on Whit-Monday, May 28, 1849. This duty was imposed on the Rev. J. Thornycroft, to whom was presented on the occasion a handsome trowel, "wrought in the Elizabethan style," (whatever that may be as regards trowels). On the trowel was engraved the occasion for its use. The day was beautifully fine, and large numbers of Macclesfieldians, who were resident in Manchester, made the holiday a pretext for seeing the grand procession which was got up by the committee. "The bells of St. Michael's Tower" rang merry peals, and the streets were lined with working people—the cortege starting at one o'clock, then the dinner hour,—and passing from the Town Hall, where it assembled, down Mill-street, Parsonage-green (now Park-green), Mill-lane, Mill-road, High-street, Park-street, along Sunderland-street, Waters-green, Buxton-road, James street, to the site. A sealed bottle containing a scroll of vellum, bearing the date of the laying of the stone, the names of the Mayor and Members of Parliament for the borough, the Committee, and a complete list of subscriptions to the Baths and Washhouses, was placed in an aperture. Over this a plate was soldered down, and thereon were inscribed in enduring brass the following inscription:—

THE FOUNDATION STONE
OF THE PUBLIC BATHS
AND WASHHOUSES
MACCLESFIELD, WAS LAID
MAY 28TH, 1849. BY THE
REV. JOHN THORNYCROFT,
OF
THORNYCROFT HALL.

JOHN WRIGHT, CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE.
F. F. LALLEMAND, ESQ., MAYOR.
JOHN BROCKLEHURST, ESQ. } MEMBERS OF
JOHN WILLIAMS, ESQ. } THE BOROUGH.
JOHN MAY, HON. SEC.

Mortar was spread above the plate by the Rev. Mr. Thornycroft, and the stone was then well and truly laid. The rev. gentleman next delivered an oration, after which the procession reformed and proceeded down Cuckstoolpit Hill, along Hibel-road and up Jordangate to the Macclesfield Arms Hotel. Here a collation was provided, at which the Members for the borough, were present. Mr. John Brocklehurst, notwithstanding his former opposition, presided, while Messrs. John Wright and John May officiated as vice-presidents. Numerous toasts were drunk. The Oddfellows, who had taken part in the procession, repaired to their lodges for dinner, and the Teetotallers to Lord-street school, where they had refreshments.

Having completed the laying of the chief corner stone, the builder proceeded rapidly with his work. Meantime the committee were not idle. Their first hope was that the additional water supply to be obtained under the powers of the new Act would have enabled them to secure a full supply of water. In this they were not met in that generous spirit which should have actuated the Corporation. An arrangement was made with the Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway for water from the filter beds adjoining their Canal, and the North Staffordshire Railway was to buy all the waste passing from the baths for their station purposes. Suddenly, however, the price of water was cheapened, and the former part of this settlement fell through. A supply was obtained from the reservoirs, and the works had so far progressed as to allow the swimming bath to be opened in the beginning of September of the same year. The committee fixed the rates of payment as follows:—

CHARGES.

Swimming Bath 3d each up to Twelve o'clock at Noon, after that hour 1d each
First Class Bath 6d each, either warm or cold.
Second Class Bath 2d " cold, 3d warm.
Shower Bath 2d " with warm and cold Bath, 3d.
Private Family Bath... 1s " either warm or cold, for a Parent or Servant with Children.
Vapour Bath 1s each.

There will be a fresh stream of filtered water running through the Swimming Baths, and they will be emptied and cleaned every night. During the winter season and the cold days in summer, the Swimming Baths will be supplied with warm water, and kept at a temperature of about 70 degs. Towels will be provided without charge.

Annual Subscribers of One Guinea admitted to any of the Baths.

Annual Subscribers of 10s 6d admitted to the Swimming Baths after Twelve o'clock at Noon, and to the Second Class and Shower Baths.

Annual Subscribers of 5s admitted to the Swimming Baths after Twelve o'clock at Noon.

Annual Family Tickets of £1 11s 6d to admit all the members of a family residing together to any of the Baths.

PUBLIC WASH-HOUSES.

The charge will be 1d per hour, including Washing, Wringing, Drying, and Ironing.

On Tuesday, 1st January, 1850, the establishment was opened. The ladies, in consideration of certain days being set apart for them, presented 50 towels ready for use, and the number of bathers on that day were 42; on Wednesday 58; Thursday 55, and Friday 50. The wash tubs were fully engaged daily on week-days during the whole of that and subsequent weeks. In the following week between 50 and 60 washerwomen had engaged the wash tubs, of which it was deemed necessary to increase the number. Measures were at once taken for fitting up more rooms with washing apparatus. The bathers, too, were numerous. During the week ended 10th January, there had been 546 male and 34 female bathers, the number on Saturday, the 5th, being 241 males and 4 females. This grand result for a start set at rest, for the time at any rate, the fears of some as to the success of the new houses. In the following week there was an increase of 95 bathers, and 67 women had engaged the tubs. A system of annual subscribers' tickets was inaugurated, and many availed themselves of it. There was still an increase in the number of bathers in the third week, and complaint was begun to be made about the washerwomen being unable to find accommodation. In the last week of January there were 976 bathers, of whom 49 were females, and 65 washerwomen. Above and below these figures the calls on the institution rose and fell during the whole of the first year. When it was opened there was, it appeared, a debt of £800 on the building. Accordingly in March following the Committee of Management met, and entered into an arrangement for discharging this. A loan of £500 was sanctioned on the establishment, a party having offered to advance that amount with the buildings as security, and the remaining £300 was to be had from the bank, in the names of Mr. John Wright, Mr. Loton Holland, and Mr. John May, each becoming individually responsible for £100 until the amount was obtained by subscription or otherwise. On the 7th of March, 1850, the Committee passed the following resolution:—"That the cordial thanks of this Committee are due to Mrs. Davenport, of Capesthorpe, for the great kindness and liberality she has manifested on every occasion in promoting the establishment of

our baths and washhouses, and that our thanks are more especially given to her for the very handsome offer to throw open her park, hall, gardens, and conservatory for the celebration of a fête champêtre, in Whitsun week, in order to reduce the building debt, and that Mr. May convey this resolution to Mrs. Davenport." On the 15th of July the following minute was entered:—"Mr. May reported that the net amount raised by the fête champêtre at Capesthorpe Park, on the 22nd and 23rd of May was £463 10s 5d, which amount was paid to the treasurer, together with a subscription of £100 from Mrs. Davenport, and the accounts were examined and passed." On the 9th of February, 1852, in anticipation of the marriage of Mrs. Davenport to the Right Hon. Lord Hatherton, the Committee passed the following resolution:—"That an expression of the sense entertained by the meeting of the many benefits conferred on the institution by Mrs. Davenport be very respectfully conveyed to that lady, together with the earnest prayer that in the approaching change in her position it may please God to confer upon her all the happiness which they confidently anticipate as its result, thus returning to her in continued and manifold blessings, the kindness which she has ever shown to the inhabitants of Macclesfield, and which every supporter of the Macclesfield Public Baths and Washhouses especially most graciously acknowledges." Macclesfield had the credit of being one of the first provincial towns, after Liverpool, in which Baths and Washhouses were erected, and our example led Preston and other towns to follow, where the hon. secretary was constantly in request as an exponent of the success achieved here. A Mr. Councillor Smith, of Preston, denied that the Baths at Manchester, Liverpool, and Macclesfield had been a success, and a long correspondence took place in the *Preston Chronicle* on the subject. In one of those letters, which appeared in June, 1850, Mr. May says:—"The facts prove the very reverse of each of these statements, and I have written to Mr. Smith to say that it will afford me pleasure to shew him by our books and officers that no other establishment could in any particular, furnish a better example of entire success than the one in Macclesfield, though for some weeks we laboured under considerable disadvantages in regard to the supply of water, being obliged to use it in an unfiltered state during the reconstruction of our filter beds. Yet, notwithstanding these drawbacks, it will be seen that a very large number of persons availed themselves of the Baths. The establishment was opened on the 1st of January last, and in the 23 weeks 16,701 persons have bathed, which gives an average of 726 weekly. This too, comprises the most unfavourable months of the year, and it is

already found that the accommodation is far too limited. The washhouses have been equally successful, the average being 51 washers weekly; and to provide for the increasing demand, an additional washhouse has been fitted up. Mr. Smith has also obtained wrong information with respect to our finances, for on the first three months there was a profit of £30 handed to the treasurer."

The Washhouses after some years were resorted to by most of the washerwomen of the town and neighbourhood—those who washed for hire—to the detriment of the families of the working classes, and with such a demand they became too expensive to keep up and their primary object was not fulfilled. This led to their being temporarily closed for an endeavour to be made to keep the wash-houses to their legitimate purpose but it did not succeed, and they were not continued.

A debt of £350 remained as a charge upon the buildings for some years, and when the establishment was about to be handed over to the Corporation, Mr. May proposed that it should be transferred free from debt. He mentioned the subject to the Marquess of Westminster, at Eaton, on one occasion, and his lordship at once gave a cheque for the amount in discharge of the debt, and thus the Corporation became the possessors of the Institution free from debt, much to the advantage of the Borough, for the Corporation Committees have developed its resources and usefulness much more liberally than private individuals could have done.

So liberally have the Corporation developed the resources of the institution which Mr. May was enabled to raise through the generosity of the public of Macclesfield and the well-wishers of the borough, that to-day it bears but a remote resemblance to its original self. Nothing remains of the first structure but the external walls, and the interior arrangements have but a faint likeness to the first disposition of the baths. When first opened the keeper's house consisted of one room to right and one to the left of the entrances, of which there were two, one each for males and females. In 1876 there were added to this accommodation three bedrooms in a new first flat. This necessitated the erection of a staircase, and room was found for this by the demolition of a number of private baths used by males. When the buildings came into the hands of the Corporation, the drying shed for clothes was nearly in ruins, and the washhouses from disuse were rapidly following suit. Let us see what the original building was like. There are two main entrances, and passing through the males' lobby we encounter the keeper at the ticket office, opposite which is the door of his kitchen. Going forward, we enter a square apart-

ment, in which were seven private baths, ranged four on one and three with a closet on the other side of the lobby. A door to the left led to the males' swimming bath, which is now used for poorer urchins and younger children. Its depth ranges from 18 inches to 3 feet, and when filled for use it absorbs 15,000 gallons of water. To obtain room for the staircase to the keeper's bedrooms, those male baths and closet which were on the right of the lobby have been removed, and a commodious space left for articles to be moved about when this becomes necessary. The ladies suite of baths were exactly similar to those set apart for males, and had a separate entrance also from the front. There was no means of communication between the two sets of baths except through the ticket office, to the right of the ladies' passage being the keeper's parlour, which opens on the ticket office in like manner with the kitchen. The male and female closets were back to back, separated by a nine-inch brick wall. These have been demolished and a door let through to a second suite of private baths for males. Behind this second lot of bathrooms stood the washhouses, and here a third nest of baths for males has been arranged. Through the original washhouse a stream of water flowed, about 3 feet deep and 2 feet broad, into which the washerwomen threw their slops, which passed out into the discharge pipe. This has been covered over with flags, and is of no use now. In one of the baths of the second suite a madman tried to drown himself a few years ago, and this one has been relegated to the third, or cheapest class, a kind of wash down which is not much in request now-a-days, so it is very seldom used. At the upper end of the first nest was erected what went by the name of a "family bath." This partially-secluded enclosure was intended for the use of children of one family who might be brought there to bathe by the nurse, who herself occasionally bathed with them. It was in the rest of male baths, however, and was liable to be overlooked from adjoining bath spaces, so the Baths Committee resolved to discontinue its use for this special purpose. It has now been converted into an ordinary bath, with taps for spray, douche, and shower. Besides these bathing places there are enclosed boxes used as vapour baths. On asking Mr. Fisher, the obliging attendant, the purposes of this bath, he tells the visitor that if a man has had too much beer overnight the vapour bath is a far better cure than Eao, champagne, or B. and S. "Only yesterday," says he, "I had a patient here, who was cured in a quarter of an hour of all the beer he had swallowed since Christmas," and that must have been no small quantity. The method of operations of these baths is not commonly known. As a matter of fact, the patient does not take a bath; he sits in a

steam-tight box, with his head alone projecting through the roof, and while so seated steam is gradually let in till a degree of perspiration is reached which sweats everything objectionable out of his body. Medical men recommend these for rheumatic affections and other nervous complaints, and indeed they are useful adjuncts to convalescence from various classes of catarrhs and fever. There are three of these vapour baths for males and one for females. Passing through the first nest of male baths we reach a new plunge bath which was opened in Barnaby week, 1879 (June 18). This addition was not accomplished without much difficulty. When its erection was proposed by the Baths Committee considerable difference of opinion was manifested. This resulted in a public meeting at the Town Hall, where those present decided by a majority to approve the committee's recommendation. Events since then have shown that this step was a right one. The description of the bath furnished by the then Borough Surveyor, (Mr. Wright), was as follows:—The situation of the new plunge bath is on the east side of the old baths. The entrance has been made by taking down four private baths, (already spoken of) which gives an almost direct communication to the new bath from the main entrance. The bath is 56ft. long by 24ft. wide; 3ft. 8in. deep at the shallow end, and increases in depth until it attains the depth of 5ft. 9in; it is lined on the inside with white enamel bricks. The bath covers an area of 149½ square yards; it will hold 39,550 gallons of water. The present male plunge bath covers an area of 63½ square yards; it holds 14,237 gallons of water. The new bath is surrounded on two sides by 30 dressing boxes, with a gallery above, connected at one end by a bridge. The building enclosing the bath is 71ft. long and 45ft. 6in. wide, including the walls, making a total area of 359 square yards. The foot-paths round the bath are laid in concrete, and finished off with a layer of cement. The roof of the building is constructed with wood and iron principals, boarded over and covered with slates, having a large lantern light extending the whole length of the building, with ventilating casements at either side. The whole of the drawings, specifications, and quantities requisite for the carrying out of the work have been prepared by the Borough Surveyor. The estimated cost was £1,847 4s 6d, and the tender of Mr. George Roynance was accepted in October last. The sum includes the improvement of the manager's house, &c.

On the occasion of opening the bath there was a demonstration of swimming. Mr. Frost, chairman of the Baths Committee, called on Mr. C. E. Thornycroft to perform the ceremony of opening the door for the public. Mr. Thornycroft, before doing so, alluded to the fact that 30 years before his father

had laid the foundation stone of the building, and had always taken a deep interest in everything connected with it. Then in presence of Aldermen Joseph Wright, W. W. Stancliffe, and J. B. Wadsworth, Councillors Frost, J. W. H. Thorp, Shaw, C. W. Rowbotham, W. C. Pownall, T. Crew, Bowden, J. Smale, Hill, Cornes, T. Walker, J. Staniforth, G. Walker, Newton, Rudyard, and T. Pickford; Messrs. Stringer, and Geo. Bland (Medical Officer of Health), Wright (Borough Surveyor), and Barber (Borough Comptroller), was the key turned, and the ceremony was complete. After a short oration from Mr. Thornycroft, Mr. Thomas Wildgoose, a Macclesfield swimmer of some repute, ascended the diving platform, and made the first, and a very successful plunge into the new bath. The fact that a "Wildgoose" was the first to take the water in the new bath was the subject of stale joke during that afternoon. Two experts—Haggerty and Poulton—gave exhibitions of ornamental swimming during the afternoon, and there were competitions for prizes for diving and swimming. The new plunge bath when in use contains 44,000 gallons of water. Having now two swimming baths which could be used simultaneously, the Committee set about making other alterations. Twenty years ago a little girl was drowned in the ladies' swimming bath, and since that occurrence it had been almost entirely deserted. The Committee had a substantial roof built for this place, with strong joists and heavy flooring, and on the level thus obtained six private baths and one vapour bath for ladies have been erected. Entrance to these is obtained by the front door and they have no possible communication with any other part of the buildings, being entirely secluded and shut off from the other rooms. There are thus in the building 18 private baths for men, and six for women, and to supply all these with water a very ingenious and capacious arrangement of tanks for heating the water has been constructed. Entering from Canal-street, through a large portcullis, we come on the boiler-house yard, in which are a series of four stop-cocks, which turn off the hot water, or the cold water from the Baths, and a master stopcock which closes the water at the main, and shuts off all water from everywhere within the precincts of the institution. In 1883 Messrs. Tinker, Shenton, and Co., Hyde, erected a splendid boiler, 16ft. by 5ft. 6in., by means of which steam is raised. This is carried by pipes into a loft above, in which are four huge tanks filled with water. A ball valve floats on the last of these, and when a bathful of water is drawn off, it sinks and opens a valve from the cold water main, so that as the hot water is used its place is filled by fresh supplies. Underneath these

tanks is the drying-room, in which the towels when washed are dried. Its capacities are such that 200 towels can be dried for use in an hour in summer time. Close by is the wash-house in which are copper fixed tubs, and a Bradford's Vowel A washing machine. This latter has been in use nine years and has never been out of repair, though in constant work, and only the other day was it found necessary to have a new roller inserted. When we consider that as many as 2,000 towels are washed in this machine every week in summer, and that it is in use every lawful day in the year, its endurance speaks volumes for the excellence of Mr. Bradford's famous family washers. Attached to this house is a sort of shed, which is used by boys who frequent the smaller swimming bath, and for whom dressing accommodation is rather limited, there being but six dressing boxes attached to the small bath. Throughout the whole of the building steam has been laid on to keep the temperature up to sixty degrees. The management of this large institution entails incessant labour and attention on the part of Mr. and Mrs. Fisher, who, we are pleased to know, are well liked by all who frequent the baths for their urbanity and frank willingness to do all they can to make the bathers comfortable. The swimming baths are at the disposal of ladies on Mondays and Thursdays, and on other days males command them. The season during which they are open is from 1st May to 1st October, and they are available on week-days only from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. The smaller bath is used for urchins

who can afford but one penny; there is a graduated scale of charges for other users. There is no record of how many bathers took advantage of the institution in the long dry summer of 1868, but in 1878 the number of bathers was 16,179. In 1887 there were but 12,950, besides a few season ticket holders, but it must be remembered that baths in private houses and hotels have now become very common. The whole place is plentifully lighted with gas, and a walk through it shows it to be admirably managed and a great benefit to the people of Macclesfield. The scale of charges to-day is as follows:—

1st Class Swimming, 6 a.m. to 2 p.m.	...6d.
" " " 2 p.m. to 8 p.m.	...3d.
2nd Class " 7 a.m. to 12 p.m.	...3d.
" " 12 a.m. to 6 p.m.	...2d.
" " 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.	...1d.

Vapour or Hot-Air Bath, 1s each.

Ladies' or Gentlemen's Private Baths:

1st Class	1s.
2nd Class	6d.
3rd Class	4d.
3rd Class (without shower)	3d.

Twenty-five per cent. discount is allowed to all purchasers of tickets (transferable), to admit to any of the baths, if five-shillings' worth or upwards are taken at one time; viz., books of tickets, at five shillings each, contain 6 one shilling tickets, 13 six-penny tickets, 20 fourpenny tickets, 26 threepenny tickets, 40 twopenny tickets, or 80 penny tickets.