

Bath possesses a very large quantity of thermal water, which is under the control of a Bath Committee, appointed by the Corporation, which, until recently, contented itself, like us at Rotorua, with the simplest mode of bathing, immersion being the only treatment given. In 1885 the Bath Committee finding that the science of balneology had made such progress on the Continent that their invalid clients became less and less in number, the medical men of England recommending all patients who could afford it to go to the Continental watering-places, where "massage" and other recent scientific modes of the application of thermal-water treatment had become recognised as a trustworthy and efficient agency in the treatment of many diseases which yield but indifferent results to the action of drugs, they, on the representation of J. G. Douglas Kerr, M.B.C.M., who paid a visit to Aix-les-Bains, and who on his return presented a report to the Bath Committee, took the matter energetically in hand, the result being that the Corporation sent their architect to visit Aix-les-Bains and other Continental establishments, to acquire the technical knowledge necessary to improve their baths; and upon his (the architect's) return a sum of money was procured by way of a loan, and works were at once put in hand; and when I visited Bath the appliances for the application of water in use there were equal to most of those I saw on the Continent, and the Bath Committee think so highly of them that they have brought over some *doucheurs* and *doucheuses* from Aix-les-Bains to train their own attendants into this special form of "massage" treatment; the pulverisators, sprays, &c., for the treatment of diseases of the mouth, throat, nose, ears, and eyes, being procured from the same Paris firm of medical-instrument makers who furnished and installed those in use at Aix-les-Bains.

I was everywhere well received by the directors of the different establishments which I visited, and they were most kind and painstaking in showing and explaining to me the use of the different appliances, apparatus, &c., used in their respective establishments. I took copious notes, and some sketches of anything new likely to be introduced here.

I was also very much interested in the Balneal and Therapeutic Pavilion erected within the Paris Exhibition grounds, where many of the bathing-establishments of France had courts illustrating by means of wax figures the peculiar mode of applying their special mode of treatment, with attendants willing and anxious to give information respecting their use, and physiological effects on patients.

The impression made on me by what I saw and heard in Europe is that by neglecting these special modes of application of our mineral waters we lose the greater part of the benefit to be derived by their use. And the fact that we have proved so successful by simple immersion-baths in so many cases which have come under my personal notice during my three years' residence at Rotorua can only be attributed to the powerful sulphurous and other mineral ingredients which the Rotorua springs contain; and it makes me feel confident that we would have wonderfully good results if the Government took steps to introduce the improved and, I may say, scientific mode of application of mineral water used in Europe.

The great importance and popularity which now attach to the scientific mode of using the water are proved by the fact that at Aix-les-Bains there are appliances to give 2,000 douches and 200 inhalations and pulverisations in the day, whereas they have only appliances to give 1,200 immersion baths of every description.

J. G. Douglas Kerr, M.B.C.M., in a paragraph of his report to the Bath Committee, Bath, speaks in terms which are so applicable to our own case that I cannot do better than to quote them here. He says, "In speaking to a leading London physician on this subject before leaving England, his words, as nearly as I can recall them, were, 'Go straight to Aix-les-Bains: there you will see the best mode of applying thermal treatment in the world. Study it, introduce it at Bath in the same luxurious style in which the immersion-baths are conducted, and you need fear the rivalry of no thermal spa of Europe. Neglect it, and you must in the near future be left behind in the competition for bathing-patients.' At the same time he told me that he could only send one out of twenty rheumatic patients to Bath, because, in his opinion, the others required the massage treatment, for which we had no accommodation. This I believe to be the opinion of most of the leading men in the medical profession, both in London and the provinces. The time has come when thermal treatment, combined with massage and shampooing, will take a prominent place in medical practice in all diseases in which it is applicable; and I feel certain that, if we want to hold our own in the race, and increase our field of usefulness, the Corporation must extend their bathing-establishments in a direction to meet the demand."

This perfect system of special thermal treatment has been the slow development of many years of careful study and experiments, and is the one which universal experience pronounces to be most efficacious.

Beside the ordinary swimming-bath, sitz-bath, family-bath, and single bath, with cold douches, the same as we have here, there are thermal-water douches in the form of jets, sprays, waves, circular sprays, ascending and descending column, bouillon or mineral vapour-bath, vapour-bath for local application, inhaling-room with pulverisators, rooms for the administration of spray and pulverised mineral water for the treatment of diseases of the mouth, throat, nose, ears, and eyes; all of which could be introduced here at no great cost, and all or any of them would tend to relieve the pressure on our present existing bath. It would likewise fill a great want in New Zealand and in the Australian Colonies, and bring this place into repute as the first bathing and therapeutic establishment of the southern Pacific.

With regard to the attendants, *doucheurs* and *doucheuses*: The success or failure of these special treatments greatly depends on the care and skill of the attendants, of which those trained at Aix-les-Bains have the name of being the most proficient, great care being taken to have only well-trained and capable attendants in that establishment. Every attendant undergoes three years' apprenticeship, and has to serve for two years in the position of assistant *doucheur* or *masseur* before receiving a certificate of competency or being allowed to administer