

BATH BUILDINGS.

In regard to the baths, I have reluctantly to report that most of them are structurally unsound, not only are they not up to modern requirements, but some of them, the Pavilion Bath more especially, are in an advanced state of decay. In addition, the Priest and Postmaster Baths are built over the springs, which is not only an uncleanly arrangement, but has also the disadvantage that bathers are apt to be overcome by the fumes evolved from the springs.

Appreciating the fact that the building of new baths was a large question, involving much thought and a great expenditure, I advised that temporary measures should be taken to improve the comfort and attractiveness of the old baths. With this idea the Pavilion and Blue Baths were painted in light and attractive colours, and such minor structural repairs done as were absolutely necessary. In addition, in order to be enabled to use those modern douche methods for which the Rotorua waters are so admirably suited, I advised the erection of a temporary building to house the Aix Massage Baths. This was completed and fitted up at a cost of under £400, and the baths have already proved of enormous utility since their installation in February. The hot water is delivered under a pressure of 40 lb. to the square inch. Water from the town main is used to drive a Pelton wheel, which pumps hot and cold mineral water into cylinders, in which an elastic air-pressure is maintained. Thence the waters pass through a mixer into the hoses of the douches under a pressure of from 30 lb. to 40 lb. to the square inch. By means of the mixer both the temperature and pressure of the water can be varied as desired. By an ingenious arrangement suggested by Mr. White, our electrical engineer, the whole pumping machinery has been made to run automatically, so that no engineer is required to watch it, an arrangement the economy of which it is unnecessary for me to dilate on. I have to acknowledge my great indebtedness to Mr. White for his kind assistance in the designing and perfecting of this machinery. To insure cleanliness, the walls of the bath-rooms were lined with plate glass. In addition to various douches and needle baths, the bath-rooms have been fitted with apparatus for medical gymnastics. I know of no similarly equipped building which has been completed at anything like so low a figure. The whole is in charge of a masseur and masseuse, and I consider myself fortunate in obtaining the services of two such capable and efficient manipulators.

In December a little-used part of the Pavilion Baths was set apart for mud baths, the material being obtained from hot springs in the Sanatorium grounds. These baths have been of incalculable benefit to many sufferers who failed to obtain relief from the use of the waters alone. On the male side they have been extensively patronised, while on the female side they have been comparatively little used. This remark applies, though in less degree, to the massage baths.

An alarm of fire drew my attention to the desirability of taking greater precautions where such large wooden buildings were crowded together, and not only were fire-buckets placed at central and conspicuous points and kept full, but all the baths, the Sanatorium, and the medical residence were fitted with Rex chemical fire-extinguishers.

For the sake of cleanliness, all the couches in the various waiting-rooms have been covered with holland coverings, which can be taken off and washed at regular intervals. With the same idea summer washable uniforms, white with blue facings, have been issued. These are as smart as they are cleanly.

While compelled to find fault with the immersion baths and with the buildings in which they are situated, I have nothing but praise for the excellent and popular hot swimming-baths, which I think will meet all requirements for many years to come.

Realising, then, that the Pavilion Baths were out of date from a balneological point of view, and were also decaying and structurally unsound, I set about the task of designing new bath buildings. I felt that to build baths to meet only our present needs was not sufficient. To judge by the past the number of bathers increases year by year, and I feel sure that with better accommodation and better appliances the number would even more rapidly increase. My original design, which I forwarded some time ago to Wellington, has been so improved by the patient labour of the architect at work ever since upon it that I feel it is a building not only eminently suited to its purpose, but one of which any health-resort in Europe might be proud. With such baths and with such splendid waters as we possess in Rotorua, we might confidently anticipate an enormous increase in the number of visitors. I have had the opportunity of examining a large number of the most celebrated bath buildings of Europe, of noting where they excelled and where they seemed to me defective, and I could not help being struck by the fact that it by no means followed that the most expensive and pretentious buildings were the most comfortable to the bathers. In the plans I have aimed at a building which shall be (1) suitable for all ordinary balneological purposes; (2) pleasing in appearance; (3) replete with solid comfort for the bather; (4) as economical as is consistent with first-class workmanship and material.

It is the custom to build such a structure of stone and marble, materials which lend themselves so admirably to a classic style, but as we are obliged for many reasons to make great use of wood, I felt it better to frankly acknowledge the nature of the material, and not try and make it look like stone by building in a pseudo-classic style. With this end in view, I adopted in my plan the old English style of architecture, modified to meet modern colonial requirements. Such a style, while lacking, perhaps, the dignity of the classic Greek or Roman, is eminently comfortable and homely, and I venture to think it will appeal more sympathetically to the eye of English wanderer and colonial settler alike than would the architecture of an alien race.

In the main scheme of the building I have kept certain points always before me. In the first place, it was essential that the building should be equally suitable for summer and winter use, for I look forward to the time when the Rotorua season will extend throughout the winter. Then came the consideration that we must look forward to the future, and not merely build to satisfy the requirements of the present. Next, the complete separation and duplication of the male and female halves of the establishment. This is an arrangement which has not been carried out in