

## Public Institutions.

**BLIND INSTITUTE.**—The full title of the building is "The Institute for the Blind, and the Deaf and Dumb," but its work is to-day almost exclusively connected with the blind. The work of assisting the afflicted commenced about the year 1867, when premises in Wellington Road South were taken, and the blind employed in the workshops. The movement went on successfully, and on September 14th, 1872, Miss Louisa Walthew (the blind daughter of the then Mayor of Stockport) laid the foundation-stone of the present premises in St. Petersgate. The building, which is in the Italian style, was built from plans by Mr. T. H. Allen, and with fittings cost £3,500. In the list of donations to the institution we find the following bequests:—Mr. James Ollershaw, £2,000; Mr. H. A. Marsland, £500; and Mr. John Walthew, £500. There are now nearly twenty blind people employed, under the care of Mr. Thomas Allott. Recently we had the pleasure of making an exhaustive inquiry into the working of the institution, and found that a good and useful work was being done, while the operations are almost self-supporting.

**GRAMMAR SCHOOL.**—The Stockport Grammar School is an institution of which we may well be proud, for it has for five centuries educated the youth of our ancient borough. The school was founded in 1487 by the Right Hon. and Worshipful Sir Edmond Shaa, some time Mayor of the city of London, and who was the son of John Shaa, of Donkonfield, in the parish of Stockport. Both Sir Edmond's parents were buried in Stockport Parish Church. The knight was jeweller to three successive sovereigns—Edward IV., Richard III., and Henry VII. The foundation-stone of the new schools was publicly laid with much ceremony on September 8th, 1830, by the Prime Warden, Mr. John Brogden, Mr. James Reddish at that time being Mayor. After 27 years' supervision the Goldsmith's Company desired to place the school under local management, and the Corporation accepted the Company's offer, appointing governors to carry on the work. The school to-day provides a thorough and practical public school education at a moderate cost, and hundreds of Stockport boys, now holding high and responsible positions, received their early training at the old school. The present headmaster is the Rev. W. A. Pemberton, M.A., Oxford, his appointment taking place in 1888.

**LADS' CLUB.**—The handsome brick and terra cotta building adjoining the Stockport Sunday School in Wellington Street, and almost opposite to the "County News" Offices, is known as the Stockport Lads' Club, and is to-day used as a place of recreation for the working class youths of the borough. Here, under competent instructors, the body and mind are improved, and one could wish that all the lads in the town could be drawn into such an institution instead of loafing around the street corners. The site of the club was given by Mr. Thomas Kay, J.P., and the memorial-stone was laid by Sir Joseph Leigh, J.P., on September 14th, 1889, he then being Mayor. The building, which is in the Elizabethan order of architecture, can be entered from either Wellington Street or London Square, the spacious gymnasium lying at the rear. The opening took place in June, 1890, and a membership of 600 boys soon resulted. The total cost was £3,000, Mr. Josiah Briggs being the architect. Many important alterations have since been made. Mr. J. A. Fletcher is the secretary.

**MECHANICS' INSTITUTE.**—The first Mechanics' Institution for Stockport was formed at a public meeting held on September 8th, 1825, but the experiment proved unsuccessful, and ceased in May, 1827. The present handsome buildings at the junction of St. Petersgate and Wellington Road South, was opened on September 22nd, 1862, by Lord Stanley (afterwards Earl of Derby), but prior to that the work, which was somewhat slow in progress, was carried on in the Old Theatre in Park Street, and then at Fowden House (the site of the present Reform Club). The stock of books in the Library of the Institution has been added to, while the Reading-room is all that could be desired. The Evening Continuation Classes are carrying on very successful work, but, although

they inculcate a sound commercial and useful education, they do not enable the authorities to chronicle the brilliant successes which were recorded in the days of the Mechanics' Institution successful science classes.

**MUSEUM.**—That charming and unrivalled public space, the Vernon Park, was opened with much eclat on September 20th, 1858, and two years later Mr. James Kershaw and Mr. J. B. Smith, the two borough members of Parliament, presented the town with a building for a Museum, at a cost of £1,000. The opening ceremony took place on October 22nd, 1860, by Mr. Geo. Chapman, Mayor, but although large numbers of people annually visit the interesting institution, we should be pleased to hear of many more doing so. The situation is delightful, while the learned curator (Mr. E. Hewitt) is ever willing to impart instruction, though the thousands of specimens and curios are so clearly labelled, that a guide is really unnecessary to the ordinary visitor. The loans of art objects obtained from South Kensington from time to time give additional pleasure, while the visitor would be well repaid if he saw nothing but the famous Blue-John spar window, constructed, after infinite labour, by the late Mr. Tym. Since February 24th, 1884, the Museum has been opened on Sunday afternoons, upwards of 9,000 people visiting the place on the first five Sundays.

**PUBLIC BATHS.**—Stockport is singularly fortunate in regard to its Public Baths, for not only is the St. Petersgate building an ornament to an important thoroughfare, but the appointments and accommodation are remarkably good. Indeed the city of Manchester has not such a smart set of baths. The Stockport Corporation Baths include a gentlemen's plunge bath (30yds. by 10yds.), a ladies' plunge bath (13 yds. by 6yds.), a boys' bath (17yds. by 11yds.), 33 private baths, and 3 Turkish baths. The system for the last-named is most complete and luxurious, and the handsome new smoke-room will be much appreciated. The value of these baths to the residents in the borough is enormous, as all classes are catered for. Public baths in Stockport were first opened in 1858, the people having called upon the Council to carry the work out at a cost of £1,500. The present buildings were erected in 1885, from designs won in competition, and were opened on July 1st, 1886, by Mr. William Leigh, J.P., the then Mayor, who was presented with a gold key, suitably inscribed. The superintendent is Mr. Robinson.

**STOCKPORT SUNDAY SCHOOL.**—We doubt if to the true Stockportian there is any public building more dear and familiar than the "Big School"—the world-famous S.S.S. The term "Stockport Sunday School" seems first to have been used in 1804, when an earnest appeal was made for the erection of a building on a site of land already procured. The estimated cost was £4,000, and the school was to be founded on "the broad basis of universal philanthropy, and intended to concentrate, as much as possible, the piety, charity, and talent of all parties." The foundation-stone was laid on June 15th, 1805, and the opening took place on Sunday, December 21st, 1806. The organ, the gift of Mr. Robert Parker, of Heaton Mersey, was built in 1810, while in 1834 a new wing was added to the building at a cost of £2,500, and with accommodation for 2,000 scholars. Important items connected with the school, and in which the town evinces the deepest interest, are the annual procession of past and present scholars and teachers, and the annual sermon. From the 1901 report we find that the number of the last registered scholar was 107,423 and the last registered teacher 6,170, but these numbers will now have been considerably increased. The auxiliary schools are Heaton Mersey, Brinksway, Lancashire Hill, and Heaviley. The list of distinguished divines who have preached at the school is ample proof of the high esteem in which the grand work is held.

**THE INFIRMARY.**—The foundation-stone of the main building was laid on June 18th, 1832, in the presence of 20,000 persons. The land was given by the Lady Vernon of that period, and the cost of erection was publicly subscribed, Lady Vernon contributing £250. The South Wing was added on October 16th, 1871, and the North Wing gives the building a finished and artistic appearance. The foundation-stone in connection with the