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Editorial Comments.



ONE of the saddest events connected with our great fire was the destruction of the fine old library. Many a volume that would be a treasure to the enthusiastic book lover perished that night amid the smoke and flame. Kind friends, however, held out to us a helping hand. Donations of books were received from almost every part of the civilized world. The universities of the older lands sent us contributions of valuable books, distinguished scholars presented us with copies of their own works, and even those in high places manifested a flattering interest in our concerns. Thus in various ways a new library was gradually formed, but a fire-proof building to contain it was still wanting. In the year that followed, the plans for such a structure were drawn up and some time later work was begun. During the past year everyone has watched with interest the progress of building operations in the picturesque spot chosen as the site among the trees on the west side of the ravine. It is with feelings of genuine pleasure that we find the building very nearly completed. In external appearance and in the beauty and commodiousness of its interior, it is one that is indeed creditable to our University and constitutes no unworthy addition to the number of beautiful and costly buildings in and about the Queen's Park. The entrance is on the west side and above it rises a handsome tower. Passing in we find ourselves in the entrance hall. On one side are the stairways leading to the basement and to the seminary rooms above. On the other side is the main reading-room. We enter it and notice that a large number of the students have found it advantageous to study here even now when the almost ceaseless noise of hammers and saws pervades the building. For the present the books most required by the students have been arranged on temporary shelves in this room. Beside them is one of the courteous assistants explaining some perplexing point to an inquiring sophomore. The upper storey does not extend over this portion of the building, so that the eye ranges unobstructed to the roof above. The northern wall is semi-circular in form and contains a number of windows sufficient to afford abundance of light. The room is furnished with tables and chairs, and will comfortably seat 200 people. One thing that cannot well escape the observer's notice is that the women students are also studying in this same room. This probably denotes that the policy of seclusion has been to some extent abandoned in this building at least, and that all students will be placed on an equal footing. On the east side of the reading-room are situated the cataloguing room and the office of the librarian, Mr. Langton. On the south is the railed-in space to be occupied by the assistants. Immediately behind this lies the part of the building that is technically known as the "stack," the

many-windowed room where the books are stored. It is shut off by fire-proof doors and is capable of containing on its shelves 120,000 volumes.

Ascending to the upper storey we find seven rooms which are intended for the seminaries. Four of these are situated over the stack and on opposite sides of a corridor that runs north and south. In the basement are found the conversation, cloak and furnace rooms. The building will be lighted by the electric light. Gas will be only used on those rare but inevitable occasions when through accident to the machinery the electric light cannot be supplied. New cases of books, on being received, are first brought into the basement where they are unpacked. They are then raised to the cataloguing room by means of a "lift," are there entered in the catalogue and finally transferred to the stack. The total number of volumes now possessed by the library is, as Mr. Langton has kindly informed us, about 43,000. Of these quite a number have never been unpacked, as the rooms till lately occupied by the library in the School of Science were not large enough to contain them all. The labor entailed in moving such a large quantity of books into their new home and in cataloguing them is very great, and it will be long before the work is all finished. For those who have wrestled, like Jacob, with the strange old catalogues belonging to the old library, it will be of interest to know that the books will be catalogued on more modern principles.

It is intended, as soon as the arrangements for lighting the building in the evening have been completed, to have the library open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and from 7.30 to 10 p.m. This we believe to be a step in the right direction. A large number of the students will no doubt avail themselves of the privilege of studying in the evening amid such pleasant surroundings and within easy reach of valuable books of reference. Thus the library will become what it ought to be, to a large extent the centre of University life. Of course the new arrangement means the loss of an ancient privilege which was possessed by the student, that of keeping out books over night. Obviously there would be little advantage in having the library open in the evening if the privilege were continued. In this connection we are forced to deplore the inadequate provision made for the access of the students to the heart of the books, so to speak. There is something inspiring in a loving look, even at the backs of our tomes, while to handle them is almost equivalent to a divine afflatus. We hope the facilities for this intimacy between the student and the books will early be afforded us.

In each of the seminary rooms will be found besides a number of books of reference, also those required for the work that is being taken up in the seminary at any particular time. As the character of the work changes, new books will be brought up from the main library and the old ones returned, in order to be more accessible to the general