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MUNIFICENT GIFT OF A FREE LIBRARY AND MUSEUM IN LIVERPOOL.

By WILLIAM BROWN, Esq., M.P., a LIVERPOOL MERCHANT.

One of those splendid gifts to the public, for which the Merchant Princes of England have become so very justly famous, has just been made to the city of Liverpool, by William Brown, Esq., M.P. for South Lancashire, and senior partner in the mercantile firm of Messrs. Brown, Shipley, & Co. The gift in this instance consists of a magnificent FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY AND MUSEUM, erected by Mr. Brown at a cost of £40,000 sterling, or \$200,000, and presented to the city, with fitting ceremonies, on the 17th October. In size and architectural style this building was designed to be a fitting companion, as it is a close neighbour, to the noble Hall of St. George, of which Liverpool is so justly proud. From the London *Times* we make the following extracts descriptive of the building and of the inauguration ceremonies.

DESCRIPTION OF THE BUILDING ITSELF.

This edifice, in connexion with which an extended series of festivities and displays has been observed, is a very elegant as well as an extensive and commodious building. It is placed on the north side of Shaw's-brow, in close proximity with the north end of St. George's Hall, and on a level corresponding with the general features of that structure. Externally its principal front consists of a hexa-style portico of Corinthian architecture, surmounted by a pediment. At each side of the central portico there is a wing. Interiorly the chief archi-

tectural feature of the edifice is a noble central hall, entering from a vestibule of moderate dimensions and tasteful decoration. The hall spoken of is 96 feet long by 55 feet wide, and 70 feet high. This hall is divided into two portions in its height by a gallery, on the front of which a handsome stone balustrade extends completely round the hall. The ceiling, which is richly ornamented, is pierced by three square apertures filled with ground glass, which transmit a copious supply of graduated light, further augmented by the light of seven large windows on the east and west sides of the hall, so high as to be almost top lights in all cases. The lower portion of this fine hall it is proposed still further to enrich by the introduction of statuary. Its upper portion, or gallery, is to be appropriated to the purposes of a picture gallery, for which its mellowed light and great extent admirably fit it. Access to this gallery is obtained by a beautifully-arranged staircase, which in itself constitutes an important and pleasing architectural feature of this principal portion of the whole edifice. The aspect of this arrangement is at once rich and satisfactory, the varied lines of which it is composed being sufficiently complex to produce richness without in any degree suggesting the idea of being crowded. As a whole, this hall and its complementary portions—the hall and the staircase—together with their numerous columns, long straight lines, and sharply conflicting curves, form an architectural combination of great and varied beauty, happily adapted to a variety of purposes, both ornamental and useful.

The wing portions of the edifice contains the really working or practically useful apartments of the institution. The right hand, or eastern, part of the building is devoted exclusively to the purposes of the library; the left, or west, to those of the museum. The leading feature of the former is a large and commodious reading-room 108 feet long, 49 feet wide, and 50 feet high in the ceiling. This is completely and copiously lighted from the ceiling. To the south-east of this is a "reference" reading-room, in which books of a more valuable class may be consulted. This room is 40 feet long by 28 feet wide. Both of these reading-rooms have immediate and private communications with the general library, an apartment 73 feet long by 23 feet wide. These last-named apartments are on the first floor, and a repetition of similar apartments on the second floor. The museum portion of the building consists of numerous apartments for the reception and display of objects of natural history.