



TORONTO'S FREE LIBRARY.

FACTS FOR THE CITIZENS.

WE are all anxious for the future welfare and good government of our city, and a very important agency by which this result may be attained is intelligence. Ignorance, if not the parent of crime, is a very near relation, and any movement that will hold in check the degrading tendencies of the times must merit the attention and support of all good citizens. This scheme of a free library has special claims upon the public on account of its non-sectarian character. Within its walls the Jew and Gentile, Catholic and Protestant, may fraternize, and on its shelves their various views will have a place. With this necessity before us I refer you to what has been done elsewhere. The city of Boston has perhaps

THE LARGEST FREE LIBRARY IN THE WORLD,

and it is to the general use of it that her citizens attribute her superiority in city government and general intelligence over New York. Such a hold has this idea of free reading on the Americans that in January, 1880, there were 3,776 public libraries in the United States, containing over 300 volumes each—the total being 14,500,000 volumes. Even in Texas—that semi-civilized State—they have availed themselves of a recent enactment whereby they can tax for library purposes at the will of the Council. Down in the Southern States, where one would naturally look for a limited reading public, they are provided with civic machinery for establishing libraries, and many cities have well chosen and increasing collections of books for the free use of every ratepayer. In Mexico, even, this civilizing agency is an institution, and every publisher is by law compelled to supply the national library with two copies of every book published free. In Great Britain five libraries retain this privilege, and it has become a custom with the leading publishers to give a copy of each new book to the leading libraries.

IN THE UNITED STATES

they have ceased arguing the question. They accept the necessity of a free library, as they do gas works, in every town (for the fact is accomplished before it becomes a city), and assess and build accordingly. Here are a few cities taken at random, showing how maintained, &c.: