

MONTREAL NOTES.

The beginning of May as usual set in motion a considerable volume of building operations, the first step in which is in many cases the demolition of old properties. This fate has overtaken an interesting group of little old stone buildings at the corner of Craig street and St. Urban streets, where the Montreal Light, Heat & Power Company are about to build. The appearance of Victoria Square is to be altered by the erection of two ten storey blocks. At the corner of Craig street and the square, Mark Fisher Sons & Company are to have a new fire proof building, with frontage of 83 feet and 77 feet, faced with Grey Canyon stone upon a granite base. In design the building follows the type of the Bank of Ottawa and the Sovereign Bank, in St. James street, and many other tall buildings. That is to say it consists of a series of five plain stories, set upon a pedestal which includes the three lowest floors and surmounted by two more ornate stories, the windows of the lower of which occupy a frieze below the main cornice, whilst those of the upper form an architectural 'attic' above the cornice. In streets of ordinary widths this type has the defect that the component parts of its design can never be seen together. It is more suited, as in this case, to a square where there are points of view from which the eye can take in the whole design at once. A more serious defect in the design of tall buildings generally however is that they are almost always built with only one or two faces even endeavoring to shew any beauty of form. They stand up like towers among the older buildings—towers of a lopsided and maimed description—and cropping up spasmodically as they do, each flaunting this same painful vice, the total effect, as exemplified in New York City, is jerky and untidy. Is it perhaps too much to expect of modern human nature to make the back of a thing decent even when it is as much in evidence as the front.

The other tall building about to be erected in Victoria Square is the Eastern Townships Bank at the corner of St. James street. This also is to be of ten stories. It is proposed to spend about \$500,000 upon it.

The plans of the new building on Drummond street, for the Natural History Society's Museum, have been prepared by Messrs. Taylor, Hogle & Davis. Besides the museum rooms there is provided a lecture hall to accommodate seven hundred people, a smaller lecture hall, and committee rooms and offices. A praiseworthy decision of the society is to employ in the construction only material of local origin. It is a refreshing piece of good sense in these days when there is a sort of craze to ransack the earth in search of something no better than what is to be had at home,—to resolve to make the best of the good things that are at our own doors. When Solomon or whoever is responsible for the proverb spoke of the eyes of a fool being in the ends of the earth he surely wished to inculcate some such homely wisdom as this.

It is understood that the question of the mountain outlook is now on the eve of being definitely settled; if so, credit is due to the action of the P. Q. A. A., whose committee on civic improvements has been using its influence in the matter. It is true that the scheme has not yet passed the stage so often fatal to schemes of the kind, that is to say, the calling of bids for contract. The work has, however, been arranged with extreme simplicity, being simply a semi-circular terrace walk

supported on a rubble retaining wall reinforced at intervals by rusticated piers, whose long and short courses bond into the rubble wall. The parapet is a balustrade, apparently of stone, with dies over the wall piers. There is no roof; but a small covered shelter is provided not far from the northern end of the promenade. The roof has been dispensed with in order that 'carriage people' may not have their view impeded by what could only benefit the inconsiderable pedestrian. Accepting the expediency of this dispensation, it is to be earnestly hoped that existing trees will not be too vigorously cleared away. Their shade would be grateful and they would successfully temper the too rigid formality of a purely architectural arrangement. Messrs. Marchand & Maxwell have collaborated on the design for this outlook.

There seems some prospect of an abatement to the overhead wire nuisance. The Bell Telephone Co. is applying for a large increase of capital, and Mayor Ekers has suggested that the compulsory placing of all wires under ground would be an appropriate accompaniment of an extended scope in their operations. Further, the City has taken action against the Montreal Light, Heat & Power Company for unlawfully placing poles and wire on Cote street. Preliminary objections raised by the company have been overruled, and the Recorder has directed that the city's action be inscribed for proof. In some cases, as for example in Notre Dame street between McGill street and Bonaventure station, the air is fairly darkened by wires. No matter how excellent the architecture may be, streets can hardly look respectable with masses of cobwebs overhead and poles of many sizes and at many angles lining the way.

On the 29th of April there occurred a collapse of a floor in the Librairie Granger, Notre Dame street, the cause assigned being one of a particularly insidious nature. The building is a pretty old one, and several rooms of perhaps 25 feet by 50 feet directly over one



STORE IN PHILLIPS' SQUARE.

another had floors carried on single flooring joists across the shorter dimension. Mr. Granger having the intention to place heavy loads of books on these floors prudently took the precaution to have the floors strengthened by trussings. Yet when the increased load was placed on the topmost floor it collapsed, not apparently by the failure of either joists or trussing but by the failure of the wall on which they rested. The circumstance was then revealed that this, the division wall between two properties, had been built in two