

# THE VARSITY

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## Editorial Comments.

### THE NEW LIBRARY.



EST there be any doubt as to the meaning of this heading it may be laid down at the outset to refer both to the building and the books which that building is designed to contain.

As for the building, it must be a source of the greatest satisfaction to the staff and the students alike to watch the progress of a building worthy of the University and worthy of the generosity of those friends and institutions which, so far as the number of volumes are concerned, have almost replaced the old Library. The new building will be a credit to the University in every respect. Already it gives promise of being very beautiful, nestling among the trees. It is quite in harmony with the main building, and at the same time it does not detract in the least from the massive grandeur of "old Varsity."

One may even now form some idea of the interior arrangement and the uses to which the various parts of the building are to be put. The southern part, with its high, narrow niches, which are practically one long window, and the projecting alcoves stamp it at once as the home of the books. This is in striking contrast to the old Library, with its beautifully-carved oak fittings, its lofty, panelled ceiling, its roomy alcoves, each with its table, where the privileged ones might sit and read to their hearts' content—a privilege, however, which was to the student what the promised land was to Moses.

This southern portion is technically known as "the stack," and when filled will accommodate 120,000 volumes, arranged on three floors. Above the stack will be four seminary rooms. The western wing will contain the entrance hall and the periodical room; the corresponding one to the east, the Librarian's room and the cataloguing room. Above these again are two more seminary rooms. The semi-circular part contains the main reading room, at the south end of which is the distributing room. In the basement are cloak rooms for the men and women students, a fairly large conversation room and unpacking and boiler rooms. We understand that the contractors hope to have the building under cover by Christmas. The remarkably fine weather has given them every chance to do so, but several very vexatious delays have occurred, and it may be impossible to carry out their wish. If the roof is on by that time they expect to have the building completed by July 1st, 1892, which would leave three months to transfer the books from the present quarters, and have all ready for the opening of the session of '92-93. It must be the earnest wish of all interested that this be accomplished, as the present inadequate accommodation, and the necessity of packing away so many thousand volumes, seriously impair the usefulness of the Library.

On enquiry we have learned that there are now in the Library between 35,000 and 40,000 volumes, while almost every week cases are arriving containing the works which Mr. Brebner has been engaged in ordering during the past summer. This must have been a task of no small magnitude, when one remembers that the Senate authorized the expenditure of \$23,000 in the purchase of the books recommended by the staff. These purchases, together with the gifts, will amount, by the time the Library is ready for occupation, to between 40,000 and 45,000 volumes, so that there will in all probability be 10,000 more volumes, to say nothing of several thousand pamphlets, in the new than there were in the old Library.

With all these advantages of suitable quarters and increased number of volumes it is but a fair question to ask whether the student is to have a similar advantage in the use of these books. One great advantage will arise from the extension of the seminary system. We understand that in the seminary rooms the works of most value in the various departments will be placed on shelves to which the student will have constant access; a somewhat similar privilege will be possible in the main reading-room, where it is said that the encyclopædias and dictionaries will be found in a low bookcase in the middle of the room. If this be so it will lessen the work of the delivery clerks and give greater freedom to the students.

A report, too, has gone the rounds that the building will be open all day until 10 p.m.; this, from the student's standpoint, has great advantages as well as disadvantages. Many of those who use the Library will be glad to have a comfortable place to spend the long winter evenings in the pursuit of their studies with the Library at their command. The adoption of such hours will almost necessarily put an end to the taking out of books over night, since those who would read in the evening would need the books which are taken out at night, and the inability to obtain these would be no advantage but would rather bring back the old order of things and necessitate closing the Library, say, at six o'clock. If books are to be allowed out they must be returned as soon as the Library is open, and then, as now, men would forget, and bring them in a good deal after time.

This taking out of books had one good feature, in enabling a student to file for a book for a certain night, and then devote himself solely to that for the time he has it out; if books are not allowed out under the new arrangement, this sort of work will cease, as one can never count on finding the work he wants for a certain time, but must take his chances of securing the much coveted work. Here is a suggestion, however, to meet that difficulty: Let there be in each seminary a goodly number of drawers in which a student could keep his books, and then if one work could not be had, another might. This would practically make the Library the study for all students, and put an end to