

## OBITUARY.

It is our painful duty to record the removal by death of another of our number, Mr. N. B. Harris, a member of the Arts class '96, who died at his home in Glencoe, October 6th. Mr. Harris went home for the Christmas holidays. He was somewhat weakened in health. He did not return. The condition of his health made it necessary that his studies should be given up for the present. His health did not improve. His lungs were affected, which resulted in his death.

Mr. Harris was not long among us, but long enough to prove himself an earnest, conscientious student. He endeared himself to all with whom he became intimately acquainted, especially with the men of his own college year. He was looking forward to the ministry of the Presbyterian Church.

The Students of the University extend their sympathy to his parents and family in their sore bereavement.

## CONTRIBUTIONS.

### THE NEW LIBRARY BUILDING.

I have much pleasure in responding to the request of the Editors of this Magazine to give a short description of the New Library Building erected by the munificence of Mr. Peter Redpath, and presented by him to McGill University. It would be invidious in me to express any opinion on the Building, and I must confine myself to a few facts.

I will begin by expressing my gratification at the opportunity afforded me of endeavoring to solve the problems presented in the designing of a building for such a purpose.

Recent developments in University training, especially in relation to its more practical side, necessitate buildings for which we have no absolute precedent, and therefore present intensely interesting and stimulating problems to work out. How to combine utility and beauty in harmonious relations without sacrificing the one to the other, is an interesting study.

First and foremost should come convenience of arrangement, simplicity of parts, ample light, air and commodiousness; then, as far as possible, goodly proportion, beauty in outline, thoughtfulness and suggestiveness in detail with restrained ornament.

At the time of the revival of classical architecture in England it was the fashion for the elevation or exterior to be designed first, and then the interior was made to fit as best it might; now we go on what I cannot but think to be the better principle of making the elevation fit the plan.

There are many famous libraries in the Old World, which have preserved the priceless treasures of knowledge through the centuries, but their general arrangements are not such as fully commended themselves to me for reproduction here under our altered and special circumstances.

Nowhere has modern library planning and architec-

ture been so thoroughly taken up and studied as in the United States, and of recent years such buildings have undergone extraordinary development. There are schools for the special study and criticism of Library designs, and every librarian has his own views on the ideal library, and as a rule is not slow to advocate them. There naturally follows considerable divergence of opinion, but the concensus of opinion in the main is in favor of the stack system, as it is called. This system is briefly as follows: instead of the books being placed in the Reading Room in high book-cases with narrow galleries to reach the upper book-cases, as in most European libraries, the books are placed in a portion of the building separate from the Reading room in tiers of stacks, divided up into floors by gratings or light iron and glass between the cases, just high enough to allow of reaching the top shelf of each tier without a ladder, a light stair connecting each floor. The whole is usually made fire-proof, and shut off by iron doors from the rest of the building. Under this system it is not usual to permit readers access to the books, but on presentation of slips the attendants bring the desired books to the tables.

After studying as carefully as I could the different systems, in which I have the pleasure in acknowledging generous assistance from many librarians in the States, I adopted the stack system with some modification, with the full approval of Mr. Redpath. In working out the multifarious and complex details of the fittings, I have also great pleasure in acknowledging the hearty help and co-operation of Mr. Charles Gould, the talented new principal librarian of the Library, who has devoted much time recently to the visitation and examination of many of the best existing libraries.

The arrangement of the plan of this Library was somewhat influenced by the shape of the site and the different levels of the ground, and also by the desire of the governors to retain for the present the two old adjoining houses on McTavish St., which with the vacant ground adjacent had been previously bought and donated to the College through the generosity of Mr. J. H. R. Molson.

The site of these houses is reserved for future enlargement of the stackroom of the Library, so that intending donors of books need not be dissuaded from their generous impulses by fear of want of room.

We are now prepared to examine more closely the new Building; and if the reader will accompany me on a visit to it, he will the more readily be able to understand its arrangement.

Beginning at the lowest floor, at the McTavish street end of the Building is a wide doorway and a roadway leading to same. This is for bringing in boxes of new books to the unpacking room, where they are relieved from their wrappings and sent upstairs by a lift in the circular projecting staircase, to the cataloguing room above.

Adjoining this on the lower side is the lower portion of the stock room, and on the upper side is the caretaker's house, entering from the foot of the main stairs near the entrance.

At the other end of the Building, facing the campus