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### Editorials.

PROCEEDINGS are afoot by which a public library is to be established in Montreal. The wish to increase means of innocent pleasure and instruction is laudable in the highest degree, and now that the leading cities of the Old World and of this Continent are busying themselves in looking after the wants of the working classes—their bone and sinew—Montreal should show itself alive to its true interests. We do not know how much sympathy will be enlisted in favor of the scheme, but even in a country so young as this, and one in which the race for wealth seems to absorb every effort, it is high time that a modicum of life be devoted to the quieter and more enduring influences that are to be gained only by contact with the best thought of the age. Canada does not lack national idols of a showy and transitory kind, and she spends time, energy, and a great deal of money in their worship, but her monuments which shall be more lasting than brass or marble have yet to be raised. The people who are conscious of the value of reading, even if they do not regard life as a grand merry-making, have a claim on the public ear and purse and can adduce very substantial reasons for indulgence in what is sometimes called eccentricity. Many a man alive to the vital worth of a good book as a source of temperate yet abiding pleasure, has

little or no opportunity of indulging his tastes; to him the establishment of a public library would be a boon indeed, as also to those whose daily duties lead them to frequent use of the literature relating to their respective avocations. A large and wealthy city like Montreal ought soon to boast of a library better equipped in all departments than those of the numerous institutions only now feeling their way towards stability. Our own University library although not very large—it contains about 20,000 volumes—is used as well by our Graduates and Undergraduates as by a portion of the general public. The systematic completeness of our card-catalogue makes reference an easy work, and it is one of the best signs of the internal vigour of McGill that its book-room contains a fair share of readers at all hours of the day. We hope and expect that our store of literature will grow with the increasing power of the University of which it forms so essential a part, but this does not prevent us from discerning the incalculable benefit to be derived by Montreal from the existence of a public library in its midst. From the nature of things the University library is open to a comparatively small class, although we must own that those who enjoy its advantage make excellent use of the material to which they have access. Moreover the books on our shelves are, many of them, of such a technical character as to disqualify ordinary readers from appreciating their real value. A public library ought to have an honourable career in Montreal. Were Canada a reading country, or Montreal a reading city, the success of the scheme long mooted and at last on the point of realization, would be emphatically assured from the commencement. Be that as it may, there is room in Montreal for a public library to exert its influence unchecked; indirectly, it will forward the cause of education and the institutions connected therewith, whether elementary or advanced. What is required for the community is a building centrally situated, which shall contain all the standard words on literary and scientific subjects. The facilities for reference should be as generous as might be consistent with the legitimate needs of the public, and in the selection of new books from time to time a thoroughly liberal spirit should be exercised. There is nothing more gratifying than to see artisans spending their evenings amid the quiet of books instead of frequenting places militating against temporal and spiritual welfare. The large towns of England afford such spectacles at the close of the day of labour, and in some instances the public libraries in provincial districts of that country have accumulated such a wealth of book-literature as to be the literary workshops of all classes. "It is better to advance the knowledge of the world one inch than to win the long jump with two-and-twenty feet," a recent novelist writes. Both are necessary, both the inch and two-and-twenty feet, but the neglect of either, especially the inch, is not to the credit of an enlightened country. We must exercise our bodily powers with assiduity if we desire to win admiration with arms or legs, whether in the arena of physical contest or artistic design, but the brain lives on all the while quietly and unobtrusively, lends itself with the greatest ease to the mode of life its pos-