The Carlisle Free Public Library.

THE "Public Libraries Acts" were adopted here at a public meeting, held in the Town Hall, on 9th June, 1890, under the chairmanship of the Chancellor of the diocese, Alderman R. Ferguson, F.S.A.; and the committee who were appointed have since then been taking steps to secure for Carlisle a Free Library and kindred institutions worthy the "Border City."

A sum of £4,700 was privately subscribed, and in August of the above year the committee were able to offer to the Corporation the historic "Tullie House" and grounds, in Abbey Street, and other property in Castle Street, together with a cash balance of £675 to be utilised for the purposes of a Free Library, Reading Room, School of Art, Science and Technical Schools, Museum, and Picture Gallery, while the members of the Mechanics' Institute also offered their property in Fisher Street, together with their library and all fittings, for the same purpose. The Corporation accepted these gifts, and instructed the City Surveyor, Mr. Howard-Smith, to prepare plans and estimates for the requisite buildings and fittings. These shewed an estimated cost of £10,000 for buildings, and £2,000 for fittings, towards which a grant of £900 is expected from the Science and Art Department on account of the Art School, and a sum of £580 from the County Council. The sale of the building and site of the Mechanics' Library, and the capitalised value of the annual cost of maintaining the present Museum would still further reduce the amount, leaving a sum of £7,000 or £8,000 to be provided by the Corporation. Fortunately the "City Fathers" are both wealthy and liberal in their views. A sum of £5,000 has recently been received by them from the Court of Chancery, and this, with the proceeds of a small sale of land, and, possibly, the disposal of the "Malt Shovel," of which they are the proprietors, and as to which one councillor put it "they proposed to endow a house for clearing their brains instead of muddling them," the funds will be provided without imposing any burden on the ratepayers. The site is an

admirable one, extending as it does from Abbey Street to Castle Street, with an entrance from each, and comprising an area of 4,158 square yards.

The offices and out-buildings of "Tullie House" have been pulled down, and the new buildings, which will be in the same style of architecture as the old mansion (*i.e.* about 1690), are being rapidly proceeded with.

The accommodation (in square feet) shown on the plans, is as follows:—

BASEMENT.—Boys' Reading Room, 1,776 square feet; Store Rooms, Work Rooms, &c., 1,585 square feet; Staircases, Subway, &c., 977 square feet.

GROUND FLOOR.—Librarian's House, 378 square feet; Caretaker's House, Offices, &c., 900 square feet; Covered approach, 1,280 square feet; Entrance Halls, Lobbies, &c., 2,916 square feet; Library portion, 3,774 square feet; Lecture Theatre, 1,749 square feet; Modelling, Store, and Technical Class Rooms, 1,353 square feet; Museum, 3,486 square feet.

MEZZANINE FLOOR.—Cloak Rooms, Lavatories, &c., 328 square feet.

FIRST FLOOR.—Librarian's House, 910 square feet; Caretaker's House, Offices, &c., 918 square feet; Picture Galleries, 2,282 square feet; Science and Art Schools, 3,888 square feet; Museum (Tullie House), 1,370 square feet; Staircases, Corridors and Lobbies, 1,311 square feet. Total floor area, 31,231 square feet.

"Tullie House," which is ultimately intended to be used as a Museum, has meantime been opened as a temporary reading room, and has a weekly attendance of 1,300 to 1,400 readers. The library of the Mechanics' Institute, already referred to, consists of 3,000 to 4,000 volumes, and, with a unique collection of nearly 3,000 volumes entirely relating to the district of Cumberland and Westmoreland, bequeathed by the late Wm. Jackson, F.S.A., St. Bees, will form a valuable nucleus for the Free Library, while the Museum will receive large additions to the present collection; amongst which are a number of Cumberland and Westmoreland antiquities and curiosities from Mr. Ferguson, of Morton, and a very large collection of English birds from Mr. Harrison, of Cockermouth. The penny rate will yield about £670 annually, and it is anticipated that a sum of about £580 per annum will be received from the County Council, while a further sum of £100 per annum may be ex-

pected from the Hon. Trustees by way of scholarships for technical education, so that the citizens of Carlisle may be congratulated on the educational facilities which they have secured for themselves, thanks to the energy and enthusiasm of such men as Chancellor Ferguson, and the enlightened liberality of their representatives.

D. WATSON.