

EIGHTH ANNUAL REPORT.

The past year has been one of continuous growth in all departments of the Library.

The total number of books in the Library at the commencement of the year was 65,846, and 5,499 volumes have since been added, making a total, after deducting all losses, of 70,796 volumes.

The issue of books in the circulating department has steadily increased during the past year at the rate of little more than ten per cent., so that the total number taken out during 1891 was 427,347, or, an increase of 39,867, the largest number ever issued by this Library in one year. It is satisfactory to observe that with the large additions made to the number of books in the Library, and the increase in the numbers issued, that the proportional demand for works of fiction steadily decreases as the following extract from the report of past years will show :—

	Central.	Western.	North.	Total including all the Branches.
1885.....	60·9.....	80·3.....	75·8.....	66·5
1886.....	56·8.....	78·9.....	76·3.....	64·4
1887.....	56·4.....	78·3.....	73·8.....	62·4
1888.....	53·5.....	75·0.....	72·5.....	59·1
1889.....	50·4.....	72·8.....	69·5.....	56·3
1890.....	49·5.....	73·0.....	68·1.....	55·4
1891.....	47·1.....	68·4.....	65·8.....	53·1

These figures amply justify the conclusions at which older Library Boards have arrived, that there is a progressive character in mental culture which is imparted by a taste for reading and which can be fostered by supplying freely the best literature.

In the month of October, the Board acting upon a special report of the Chief Librarian resolved to convert the upper portion of the Library building into a Museum. The Act of Parliament under which the Board