

Annual Report, 1898.



The termination of the fifteenth year of the Toronto Public Library lays on me the duty of reporting its progress during 1898.

As has been the case with my predecessors in this chair I have much pleasure in calling the attention of the Board to the continued steady increase which has taken place, both in the number of books issued and of readers, an increase the more remarkable as in each successive year we seemed to have reached high-water mark. By referring to the tabulated statement, which is appended, you will see that the number of readers in the Central Circulating Library and its branches have increased from 25,304 to 29,054 and the circulation of books from 557,984 to 608,424, an increase of 50,440. While no information can be furnished as to their profession or occupation, it is satisfactory to know that all classes avail themselves fully of the advantages of the Library, from the Judge upon the bench to the humblest individual who can get a neighbor to vouch for him. When we remember that in the fifteen years in which this Library has been in existence no less than 900,000 books in Science, Fine and Mechanical Art, History and Biography have been taken out for home reading, and judging from the appearance of the volumes carefully read, we can hardly estimate the value of their educative influence.

The Reference Library also, which has grown up to be the most important part of the institution committed to your charge, has become so necessary a resort for consultation that it has almost reached the limits of its space for both books and readers.