

reading room and which is now one of the leading features of the Library, if not the most popular.

The efforts of the Commissioners to obtain a suitable home for the Library began very early in its history, but were not successful for many years. On several occasions they brought the matter to the attention of the Common Council, in their reports to that body, but no action was taken on their representations. As the number of patrons of the Library increased and its usefulness became apparent the annual grants for its maintenance were increased, but these were never more than sufficient to meet the increased running expenses of the institution. In 1897 Messrs. James R. Ruel and James Manchester, both members of the Library Commission succeeded in acquiring the title to a lot on Prince William street, a very central situation, and only a block from the present site, which they tendered the city in a letter to the Common Council, which was submitted at a meeting held on April 6th 1897. This was referred to a public meeting of citizens called for the same evening. At the instance of the Commissioners the Common Council had obtained legislation authorizing a bond issue for the construction of a Library building. At the meeting held in the Opera House, to which the letter of Mr. Ruel was referred, there was a very free discussion of the affairs of the Library, in which several of the aldermen took part. No definite conclusions were reached, and nothing was done by the Council towards carrying out the object of the legislation, until May 29th, when Mr. Ruel's letter on motion of Alderman Christie was referred to the new Council. This decision did not meet with favor from the donors of the lot, who thought themselves unfairly treated, for on May 6th, another letter was read from