

# ANNUAL REPORT

OF

## THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD.

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*Gentlemen of the Public Library Board :*

You have before you the annual report of the Librarian, which demonstrates that the Library is not only always increasing in popularity but improving also in general utility. A glance at the list of works added during the year will show that we have increased the number of books and added to the value of the Library in so far as our limited means at our command would allow.

The electric light is shortly to be introduced into the building, and I trust that it will result in rendering it more comfortable and the ventilation of the reading room better than heretofore.

Although in his report for the last year the Librarian invited all those who had so far not made use of the advantages the Library offered to do so, there are I believe a few persons in Hamilton who have never yet taken a book from its shelves. Some of these have refrained from fear that diseases might be introduced through the medium of the books into their families. I consider this a most foolish and senseless objection, for, though Circulating Libraries are now in every country and nearly every city, it has not been found that they have been a medium through which diseases spread. It is said that if we understood how fearfully and wonderfully we are made that any human being would be afraid of moving for fear he would break something inside, and if people have no other reason than the fear of disease which they may contract in the Public Library, let them remember that most dangers are imaginary, and that no persons employed in this Institution have ever contracted any disease by handling the books.

As Mr. Lancefield points out, Fiction continues to hold the first place in public favor. Some people deprecate the reading