

I am pleased to have to say that the chain tax is being gradually taken off books in Canada.

But herein lies the difference between ancient and modern mediæval Public Library and the Free Public Library of to-day. The Library of to-day is for all, with no conditions or restrictions except those designed to secure the greatest good to the greatest number.

The British Museum ranks in importance before all the great libraries of the world with the single exception of the *Bibliothèque Nationale* at Paris, and far excels that institution in the management and accessibility of its contents.

Evelyn writes in 1680 lamenting that "this great and august City of London, abounding with so many wits and lettered persons, has scarce one Library furnished and endowed for the public." To-day London contains thirty Libraries that are public in a broader sense than Evelyn dreamed of. Free to all people, without cost, distinction or difference, and issuing over three million volumes annually. The City of Manchester has a system of Free Libraries which last year issued to the people of that city, young and old, rich and poor, one million five thousand volumes in round numbers—one million to read in their homes and five thousand for reading and consultation within library rooms. The City of Boston has the most perfectly equipped Library that it has ever been my pleasure to see. Chicago is not far behind. Coming to our own cities, we find Hamilton very proud of her handsome and commodious building, which was opened for public use by Their Excellencies the Earl and Countess of Aberdeen in October, 1889. To quote from Mr. J. Edwin O'Reilly, chairman: "Their presence gave an eclat to the occasion which largely contributed to bring the Library prominently into public notice." Quoting again from the report of 1890: "Since the opening of the Library in this building the number who have availed themselves of the privilege of taking out books has far exceeded the expectations of its warmest advocates, over 800 books having been issued to borrowers in one day." In the report for 1893 Mr. Samuel Lyle says: "The growth of the institution has been steady; a better class of books asked for in 1893 than in former years." This he thinks due largely to University extension lectures, Ladies' College, Literary and Scientific clubs, etc. The increase in numbers of volumes in three years is very gratifying; in 1890, total volumes, 14,597; in 1893 19,823. These accessions have been from various sources; I notice a great number by gifts.

Toronto Free Library—I received from Toronto the tenth annual report and find that library to be doing great work. Mr. William Ward, chairman, gives a short review of the growth in ten years. He says: "In 1893 the Library and Reading Rooms were commenced in what, at that time, seemed large and commodious quarters, being the old Mechanics' Institute, but the continually increasing number of readers has forced us step by step to add to our accommodation and to part