

LIBRARY COMPANY OF PHILADELPHIA.

MAY, 1885.

The Directors respectfully refer the members to the report of the Librarian for detailed statements of the practical working of the library during the past year. It shows a marked increase in the attendance of members and other persons at the Locust Street branch over that of the preceding year. Indeed, the Directors have been much impressed of late by the large and constantly growing use which is made of it as a reading room. At no time in the day are there usually fewer than from twenty to thirty people quietly reading here, and frequently in the afternoon the number is much greater. On some occasions, and especially on Sunday afternoons, the room is uncomfortably crowded. These people invariably conduct themselves in an orderly manner, and for the most part manifest, by the character of the books they ask for, a desire for self-improvement. It is evident that increased accommodations will be required at no distant day for this class of visitors. This can only be provided by enlarging the present building. The lot to the rear of it, which the Company owns, affords more than sufficient space for this needed improvement, which the Directors are, however, prevented for the present from undertaking by the want of sufficient funds.

On the other hand the Librarian's report shows a decided falling off in the attendance of members and in the number of visitors at the Ridgway branch. On Sunday the character of the visitors is not so satisfactory, many being attracted solely by curiosity to see the building, and others resorting to it as a lounging place, and the number of readers is so small that the Directors have been seriously considering the question whether it is well any longer to open it on that day.

