

THE HISTORY OF A CATASTROPHE.

THE LIBRARY.

ITS NEW BUILDING.

To extend the facilities of the library means to enlarge the general usefulness of the whole institution. No department touches more people than does this one. In fact, besides being a department by itself with its own work to perform, it constitutes a large factor in every other department. What cripples one cripples all. Of course what the library wants chiefly is its new building, the most casual observer must know this. Twice as many people as there should be are crowded into these two rooms, jostling each other, breathing the foul air and straining their eyes because of the poor light; they no more than half accomplish what they might in an ample, well lighted and perfectly ventilated reading room, such as the new building provides. In the present cramped quarters the library attendants cannot adequately serve the students who assemble there for work. Much of the difficulty arising from mislaid books arises from lack of space.

To state that more room is needed for shelving books is stating a very patent fact. The accessions to the library average nearly 500 volumes a month, and every available space in the two rooms has been built up with shelving. If the new building is granted by the legislature all available shelves will be full before it is ready for occupancy, and the library staff have not had the courage to face the state of affairs should the building be refused. We need, of course, more than shelves enough to hold the books. We want more return shelves which would vastly facilitate the reference work. We want shelves for the new books, that students and professors may see what books on various subjects are coming into the library. We want shelves for books on topics which special occasions bring up. Then we want more room for books in their

regular places, so that a half dozen new books may be added in a subject without the moving and shifting that is now necessary to accommodate them. Then we want work rooms. The office of any institution must be away from the general commotion of business. Where the cataloguer can work uninterrupted, new books can be placed in the hands of readers much more promptly. In the new building with ample work room, even the small force now employed will be able to accomplish more and better work. In the present quarters there is no opportunity for seminar work in connection with the library. In the new building ample room is provided in which classes may meet at any time of the day, in rooms adjoining the library where they may enjoy all the facilities of the catalogs and reference books besides the work devoted to special subjects.

After the new building comes more assistance in our list of needs. In our present quarters we have as large a staff as we have room for, but it is not large enough to accomplish the work circumstances demand. In a library of a few thousand volumes it might be possible for one person to become so familiar with the works as to dispense with a catalogue. But in a library rapidly approaching 30,000 volumes, it is manifestly bad economy not to index them in some such way that their valuable contents are available. Hence a catalog complete in every detail is an absolute necessity. Unless more assistance is granted for the coming biennium than has heretofore been employed, much of the work must continue undone. The departmental libraries are needing attention which can not be given at present. Up to this time the chief work of the staff has been confined to the main library, but the departmental libraries are an integral part and can not long be neglected without serious detriment to the whole. Some of the work bestowed upon them by the departments might be more economically