

BENEFITS OF A PUBLIC LIBRARY

Yesterday afternoon Miss Mary Frances Isom, librarian of the public library of Portland, delivered an address before a small but enthusiastic audience at the public library in this city.

Miss Isom is a graduate of the Brooklyn School of Librarians, and has occupied her present position in charge of the Portland Public Library for three years, so that she has her facts well in hand. Her address follows:

Public Library Today.

The public library today like other institutions, is the result of a long evolution. Since the invention of characters to express ideas and things there have been collections of books brought together, but before the 18th century these collections were simply storehouses of books, an instrument not for its conservation. A store house to preserve these sacred volumes from destruction, not to make them available for the student; not a public library, as we understand the word.

Today, a collection of books "of the people, by the people, for the people," but established in court and palace as part of the royal possessions; such were the inscribed bricks, found in rows and tiers of shelves under the sands of the Assyrian desert, the royal library of Asserbanipal and his successors; such were the rolls and tablets of Greece and Rome. Then came the collections clustering about an educational institution as the dome what mythological one at Alexandria, the collections of the monasteries, and of the ancient universities of the continent and the British Isles.

Franklin the Pioneer.

The idea of a library for the people, not for one class alone, but for all, for the rich and the poor alike, was due to a man of Pennsylvania, Benjamin Franklin. In his philosophic brain was conceived the thought of a public library for the diffusion of knowledge, a library where men at large might gather for study, for research, for comparison, so that they might become capable of self direction and better fitted for civil and political independence. Franklin was as ready to execute as sagacious to plan, and in 1732 was established the Library Company of Philadelphia, as Franklin called it; the mother of all subscription libraries.

It is usual to look upon the late movement by which libraries came to be supported by taxation as marking the beginning of the modern public library. In one sense this is correct, but when one considers the truly democratic spirit in which this first subscription library was organized, that people for the many, not for the few, to provide books, not for those of comparative leisure and ease of circumstance, but for those who, in order to obtain books to any extent, must associate themselves together, that one recognizes how naturally, how inevitably, Franklin's success of the library was largely due:

"I would establish a literary which differs from all free libraries yet attempted; I mean one in which any popular books tending to moral and intellectual improvement shall be furnished in such numbers of copies that many persons can be reading the same book at the same time; in short, that not only the best books of all sorts, but the pleasant literature of the day, shall be made accessible to the whole people when they most care for it; that is, when it is fresh and new. I would thus, by following the popular taste—unless it should demand something injurious—create a real appetite for healthy reading. This appetite, once formed, will take care of itself. It will, in a great majority of cases, demand better and better books."

Mr. Everett and other equally thoughtful and public spirited men, doubted the wisdom of this principle, but, fortunately, it prevailed, and is the basis of the free library of today. Today, too, we can more clearly see wisdom, and the public library growing upon these lines has become an institution which every community once enjoying its advantages has been willing to support as cheerfully and with as much pride as it has the public school.

In addition to this state support, no other public object has attracted the gifts and bequests of the wealthy as has this. Boston has been constantly aided by private munificence, in the erection of its magnificent building and in the purchase of books, and in nearly all our towns and cities the fund from taxation has been augmented by similar gifts, sometimes covering the entire cost of the building, making the library a free gift to the people; sometimes by the purchase of special classes of books, sometimes by aid in undertaking plans for the furtherance of library usefulness. All this brings it about that the public library in an intelligent center of educational effort, maintained by the collaboration of the rich and poor, the educated and the uneducated. In pursuit of the highest ends, can it be that the solution of some of the vexed social questions of the day may be found within its walls?

First Public Library.

The first public library, according to the modern sense, was established in the city of Boston in 1847.

The Legislature agreed during that winter that Boston might lay a tax upon her citizens to establish and maintain a public library. This was probably the first library legislation the world had ever seen. In 1851 other cities and towns demanded like permission, and the law was made general.

Thirty years after this first legislation in Massachusetts nearly every Northern state had taken similar action, and it is not too much to say that library progress since that time has been greater than any other, except scientific discovery and mechanical invention.

In 1850 there were in the United States 644 libraries, aggregating something over 2,000,000 volumes; in 1901 there were 8,000 libraries, aggregating over 40,000,000 volumes, and owning property valued at more than \$60,000,000, and the growth continues.

The Boston Library.

The Boston library has been from the first an object lesson which other communities were glad to study. Conceived on the broadest lines, it took its place at once as an essential factor in the civic life. Let me quote from a letter of Mr. George Ticknor, written to Edward Everett in 1851, both men to whose judgment and far seeing policy the success of the library was largely due:

"I would establish a literary which differs from all free libraries yet attempted; I mean one in which any popular books tending to moral and intellectual improvement shall be furnished in such numbers of copies that many persons can be reading the same book at the same time; in short, that not only the best books of all sorts, but the pleasant literature of the day, shall be made accessible to the whole people when they most care for it; that is, when it is fresh and new. I would thus, by following the popular taste—unless it should demand something injurious—create a real appetite for healthy reading. This appetite, once formed, will take care of itself. It will, in a great majority of cases, demand better and better books."

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State Library Laws.

The next step in the public library movement was the passage of state library laws. In 1835 laws for the establishment of district school libraries were passed in New York state, a scheme which promised well, but proved unfortunate, the school district proving a small unit for library work. This legislation hampered New York, and kept her behind the other states in library development for many years.

The next experiment took the town as a unit and the passing of laws enabling towns to establish and maintain libraries by taxation. In 1847 New Hampshire passed a law of this character, Massachusetts followed in 1851, Maine in 1854, Vermont in 1865, Ohio in 1867, and after 1870 the movement became general.

Illinois has the best law of this kind on a sliding scale, permitting towns to tax themselves two mills on a dollar, cities over ten thousand one mill and the largest cities one-fifth of a mill. The Oregon law before amendment allowing in all communities only one-fifth of a mill made the maintenance of libraries in small towns utterly prohibitive. In Portland we found all development stopped by lack of money to carry out our plans, until the increased tax from the county added to our funds. The library law also usually provides for the appointment of the board of directors, terms of service, rendering of the annual report, and matters of like detail.

This state law is a permissive law merely. The next step was the passing of laws looking to direct encouragement and assistance of libraries by the state. This kind of a law prevails in some twenty-two or twenty-three states. The first law of this kind was passed by Massachusetts in 1890.

The first annual report of the committee contained a history of all the public libraries in the state, with illustrations of the library buildings. Every town was listed in alphabetical order, and after those having no public library a crisp announcement: "This town has no public library." Great interest was excited throughout the state by this report. Civic pride was aroused, and the next year saw the founding of thirty-six libraries. In 1892 only fifty-three of the 352 towns of Massachusetts were without public libraries, and today there is not one.

Libraries differ in the various states widely in methods, but their common aim is to inspire communities with a desire for library service, to foster and encourage libraries already established, to simplify methods of administration, and to act as an agency for the application of public spirit and private bounty in the direction of library interests.

It is rather interesting to note that in spite of this state aid few libraries owe their existence to deliberate adoption of it. Most of them have grown up from humble beginnings. An association is formed, a small fee is charged, books are valued and a library is in a few years, the library has become a power in the community, demanding better quarters and better service. The council is petitioned and the books are presented to the town, provided it will assume control and future expenses. Such a proposition has seldom been rejected by an intelligent community. If the library has won its way into the hearts of the people they will be ready to undertake its support on condition of its becoming public property.

I never hear of a small beginning of this kind without thinking of that winter day many, many years ago, when a few Connecticut craftsmen, clad in meagre black, came with a well worn volume under his arm, met together and solemnly laid the foundation of Yale College library, now one of the best and largest of New England libraries. No—state aid is an excellent thing, but don't wait for state aid. If you want a library, start it.

Small Beginnings.

It was not long after public libraries were under way that the need was felt for co-operation and the help that exchange of thought and discussion of plans might give. In 1855 the first meeting for this purpose was held in

New York City. Fifty-three persons were in attendance as though one responded for each year of the century. The meeting was so interesting and so successful that it is scarcely incredible that the committee appointed for the purpose should not have called a meeting for the following year, but it so happened and the project was not developed for many years later.

In 1876 the Centennial Exposition gave an impetus to all good works and largely through the efforts of Mr. Ureloit Dewey, then librarian at Amherst College, the national association of librarians had its birth. The first meeting was held in Philadelphia during the summer of 1876. Justin Winsor was its first president and Mr. Ureloit Dewey acted as secretary for the first year. Since that time the conference has met yearly in different parts of the country. In 1877, twenty-one librarians went to England and their visit resulted in the organization of the L. A. U. K. In 1897 a second conference was held in England.

In the meetings of the A. L. A. one object is constantly kept in view, the co-operation among librarians in the interest of better and more economical administration, looking to a more efficient and satisfactory service of the public.

Subjects Discussed.

Among the subjects usually discussed are: The best library legislation; how to further the establishment of libraries in every community; library buildings; the wise selection of books; the best methods of cataloguing and classification; library records and book keeping; and, above all, the education of the young people through the schools and the older people by means of traveling libraries, branches and delivery stations. Perhaps its work may be summed up in its motto: "The best reading for the least cost." You can readily see what an inspiration it is to a community to have this body of earnest and experienced men and women meeting within its boundaries.

Practical Value.

I have had the privilege, since I have been in library work of attending three of these conferences, and I can speak for their practical value as well as the stimulus to enthusiasm and energy. Wherever the A. L. A. goes great interest is excited, people interested in good citizenship wake up to their opportunities, feel the force of example and argument, act upon it and libraries naturally follow; soon the desert blossoms like the rose.

Conditions in Portland.

We are very fortunate here in the Northwest that this national body of librarians is to visit us next summer, and I can promise that you will none of you regret it if you set aside now those few days next July for a visit to Portland. I want every man and woman interested in the library work, every man and woman interested in the educational growth of our state, to be present at those meetings. He cannot fail to return home inspired, strengthened in his convictions and filled with an indomitable purpose to give to Oregon the advantages which other states are blessed with.

Need of Libraries.

We do so need libraries in Oregon. Think of this vast country with its scattered population; think of the need for books; there should be a library in every town in Oregon, and every library should be in a center; should have under its care the surrounding country, so that every small settlement should have its box of good books; books to relieve the deadly dullness of a treadmill life in the pursuit of bread and butter and sometimes of little else; books to inspire, to warn, to encourage; books to provide this reading circle and that with material for the winter's work and thought; books to help the young people at the schools, to put a little life and color into their textbooks, to illuminate the pages of history and geography; books that will arouse the ambition of the restless boy and discover for him that he has a turn for mechanics or electricity; books that will broaden the thought of the minister and the teacher; books that will so add to the culture of the community that the work of the minister and teacher will be lightened seven-fold, for we all know how hard it is to point the Way, the Truth, the Life, both in spiritual and mental things to those whose opportunities have been so restricted.

Those of us who have been reared in a world of books, have no conception, I suppose, except as our sympathies help us, of how dreary life must be without them. People are pouring into Oregon. They are building up the towns; they are opening up the country; it is a long, expensive journey, many are bringing little with them; they are coming without books and they are finding no books here. Their children are the coming citizens of our state, very few of them will ever go beyond the grades in their studies; few or yet beyond the high school. We must depend upon home education, it is after all the foundation of all education. Our strong men have always come from the country. With a few good books in the home of each family we need not fear for the future.

Home Field Work.

But while we are thinking of these lonely ramblers, these distant mining settlements, we must not forget that it is the wisdom of charity to begin at home. I hope the next time I come to Salem I may congratulate you upon your model public library. Never mind if you haven't a building—a building is a useful adjunct, but you can have a library without it; books, and the right handling of them constitute a library.

A library cannot fail of support if it bears the welfare of the people in mind. Buy the books the people need, select such children's literature that a careful mother may send her small daughter down to the children's corner, freely, without fear. Buy live books of adventure for the boys. You must compete with the shocking stuff sold at newsstands, for boys will read. Buy a few up to date books that will help along the ambitious workman. He will come and use them and your town will be the gainer for it.

Value of Good Books.

Good books mean good brains and good brains are never a drain on the market. Keep your teachers as well

AN UPHEAVAL IN PORTLAND

SENATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS EXPECTED IN FRAUD CASES.

INVOLVING HIGH OFFICIALS

General Land Commissioner Richards From the Way from Washington to Expose Congressman.

Hermann Is Alleged to Have Personally Passed On and Issued Patent for Fraudulent Land Entries Forming Basis of Present Prosecution.

PORTLAND, Nov. 25.—When the land fraud cases opened this morning A. W. Barber, who testified that he had surveyed certain of the grants now claimed by the accused persons and had discovered no evidence of residence or improvement, as sworn to in the "proving papers" was recalled and repeated his testimony. Cross examination followed in corroborative evidence.

One witness, Edward Hobson, began to talk of Maria Ware, of Puter and McKinley and their business relations. Counsel for the defense began to object, two at a time. In the midst of it all Judge Bellinger adjourned court to give the counsel time to prepare on their objections, and left the jury and audience charged with intense anticipation that will pack the room tomorrow.

The line of prosecution has changed. The old, dry story of geography, that has taken all of the week in the telling, has given way to a story of the business and other relations of the defendants, and some startling tales are looked for at tomorrow's session. The past life of the defendants; where they have been together, what they have done and what relation each bears to the other in business and private life will be the burden of testimony brought out for the knowledge of the court and jury.

The effort of the defense today was directed towards casting a cloud of doubt upon the testimony of Barber and his companions, but apparently little was accomplished in the way of breaking down testimony.

W. A. Richards, commissioner of the General Land Office, is enroute to this city from Washington to appear as a witness. It is desired to prove by Richards that C. E. Loomis, formerly special agent of the Government, and S. B. Ormsby, also a Government official, were empowered to administer an oath, a right which the attorneys for the defense deny they possessed.

Commissioner Richards will report to Prosecutor Henri and sensational developments involving officials high in the councils of the Government are looked for. The Oregonian is authorized for the statement that Richards will bring with him documentary evidence that Congressman Binger Hermann, while Commissioner of the General Land Office, personally passed upon the alleged fraudulent entries forming the basis of the prosecution, to patent.

as your children in mind, make your library a necessity; buy the best books you can for all classes of people and, believe me, people that read books will want more books. See that you have an attractive reading room, well lighted and supplied with a few of the best magazines.

Andrew Carnegie said recently at a literary dedication:

"I think the free public library maintained by the people is fruitful in the extreme, because it gives nothing for nothing, because it helps only those who help themselves, because it does not sap the foundations of many independence, because it does not pauperize because it stretches a hand to the aspiring and places a ladder upon which they can ascend only by doing the climbing themselves."

Doesn't Respect Old Age.

It's shameful when youth fails to show proper respect for old age, but just the contrary in the case of Dr. King's New Life Pills. They cut off maladies no matter how severe and irrespective of old age. Dyspepsia, jaundice, fever, constipation all yield to this perfect pill. 25c, at D. J. Fry's drug store.

NO ACTION TAKEN.

Russians Are Worried As to What Decision Emperor Will Make on Memorial.

ST. PETERSBURG, Nov. 26.—The result of the conference of the Zemstovists remains a matter of speculation. In bureaucratic circles the opinion is that the conference is a farce and will lead to nothing. But the majority of the intelligent class are convinced that it has placed upon record the desire of the country to change its present form of government. The conviction prevailing in many quarters, however, is that no change will be made.

Warrior is Rewarded.

London, Nov. 26.—A dispatch to the News agency from St. Petersburg, says the Imperial rescript is issued which relieves Admiral Alexieff from the office of Viceroy in the Far East, dwells on the Admiral's past services and awards the decoration of the order of St. George's third degree.

A Runaway Bicycle

Terminated with an ugly end on the leg of J. B. Orser, Franklin Grove, Ill. It developed a stubborn ulcer unyielding to doctors and remedies for four years. Then Bucklen's Arnica Salve cured. It's just as good for burns, scalds, skin eruptions and piles. 25c, at D. J. Fry's drug store.

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Call and see him. Consultation free. Patients out of the city write for blank and circular. Enclose stamp. Address Dr. C. Gee Woo Chinese Medicine Co., 333 Alder street, Portland, Oregon. Mention this paper.

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The doctors of this institution are all regular graduates, have had many years' experience, have been known in Portland for 15 years, have a reputation to maintain, and will undertake no case unless certain cure can be effected.

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All our best suits, \$25.00, \$27.50 and \$35.00 suits, priced in one lot closing price. Your choice

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10x4 Gray wool blankets, colored borders, \$6.00 values, closing price

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Underwear

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One lot of 27-in. coats, \$8.50 values. They are made for a good quality of Kersey cloth; Tan, Castor, Brown and Black. Closing price, your choice

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Ladies' Waists

One lot of Ladies' Waists, about 50c as-sorted lot values up to \$3.50. Closing price, your choice

50c

39c

Men's Underwear

Heavy fleece-lined undershirts and drawers, grey, blue and flesh colors, 65 and 75c values, closing price

39c

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