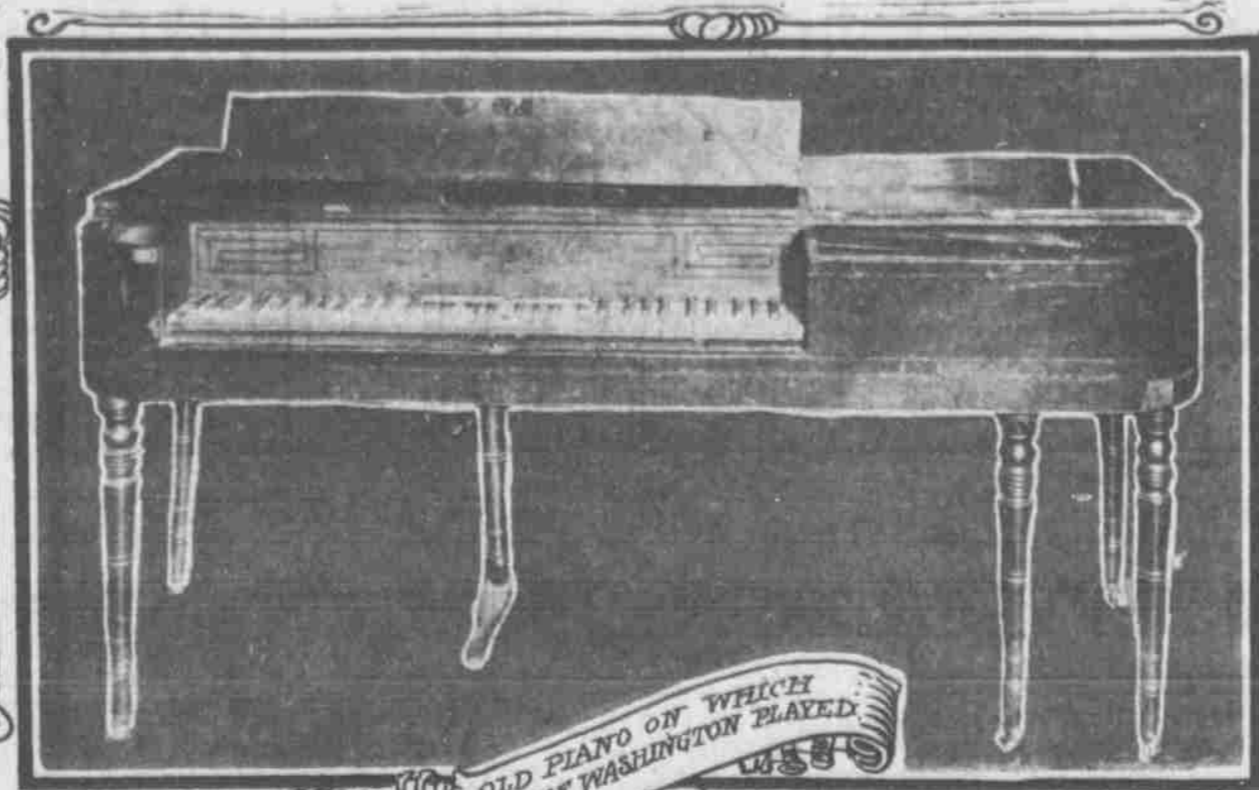


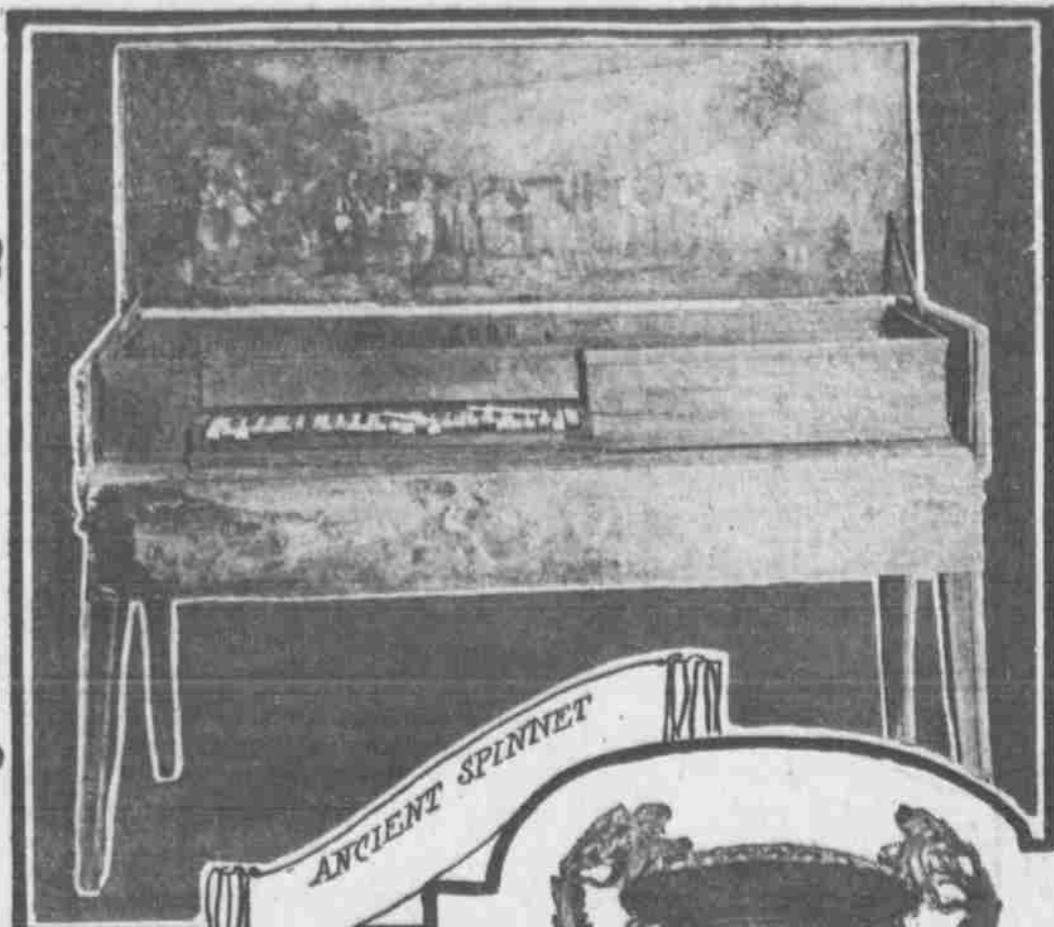
# Good Material for Students and Artisans in Public Library



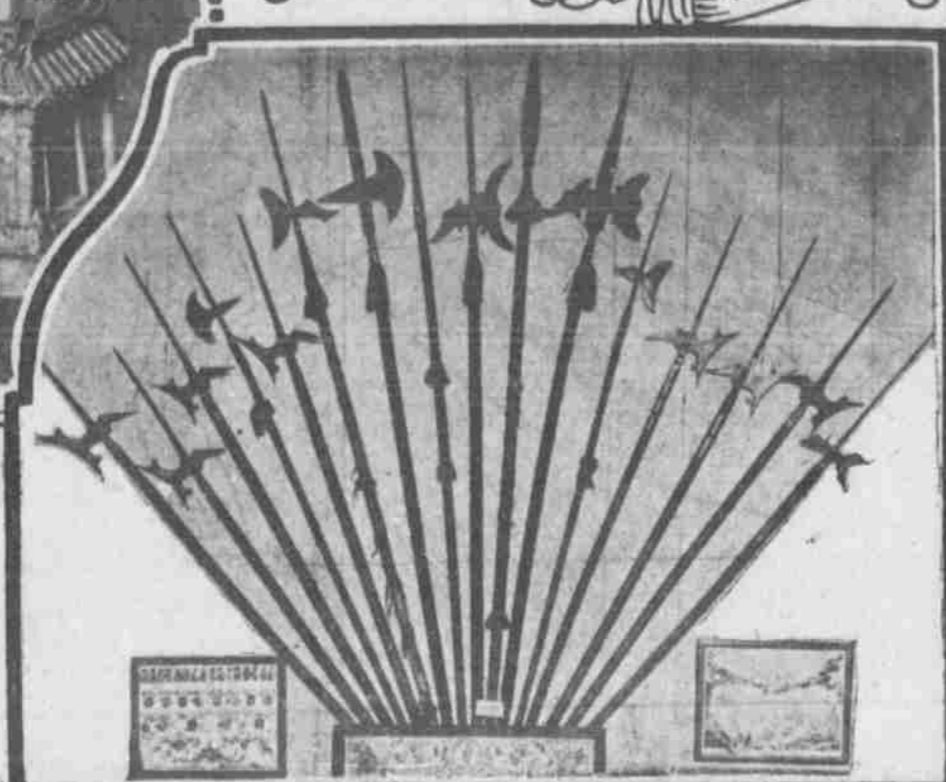
SEVRES VASE



OLD PIANO ON WHICH GEORGE WASHINGTON PLAYED



ANCIENT SPINET



SPEARS AND BATTLE-AXES 12th CENTURY  
MARBLE STATUE OF JAEL



SUITS OF PLATE ARMOR 15th CENTURY



SEVRES VASE

high class; but how many know that there are also the very best volumes touching sign painting and lettering? Such a collection seems of the kind that would be popular and much in demand, since this branch of craftsmanship has been elaborated to an astonishing extent in recent years. The public library can be of very material aid to painters and decorators if they will but become acquainted with its capabilities, and then use them.

The same remark can be applied to the groups of books on home building, plumbing, engineering, wood-working and similar lines. If a man have need of such things and will make his desires known Librarian Tobitt and her assistants will gladly give advice and co-operation in finding, or buying if necessary, the right thing.

In architecture, too, a reasonably wide range is covered. Raguet, in ten volumes, little used, is among the best helps to the person studying architecture. Many other standard and current publications are kept for the use of architects and students in that line.

As a matter of fact, the Reference room of the library could be used much more extensively than it is, by students and artisans, and by teachers and other professional people in many lines. It is a part of the library that deserves investigation and consistent advertising because of its excellence; and, necessarily, a more busy life for its component volumes would give very definite pointers on whatever weakness it may have.

The belief held in some minds that the library exists for the fiction reader almost solely is to be dispelled. Falling branch libraries in outlying sections now quite heavily populated, distribution of books is made through the public schools as far as possible, through some of the factories, the Old People's Home, the Young Men's Christian association, the Park Wilde home, the Social Settlement and Westminster chapel. But the distribution thus effected is limited and the means are not at all satisfactory.

### Gifts and Public Documents.

The library has received as gifts during the year 1,478 volumes, of which 444 are from the United States government.

A department which is not sufficiently well known is the public documents department. The public is not generally aware that the books and pamphlets issued by the government contain valuable material on almost every subject within the province of the government.

The public also is not aware, seemingly, that the library attempts to carry the publications of many of the learned societies of this country and England. These publications contain the best material published

An unusually fine collection of law books was received from Judge John D. Howe of this city and many valuable art books from C. N. Dietz. The physicians of the city have given generously to the medical department. The Bohemian societies of the city have presented books in the Bohemian language and the Danish society has presented books in the Danish language.

The Daughters of the American Revolution have united with the library in the purchase of books relating to genealogy. It is the custom of the daughters to make an annual appropriation for this purpose.

### Museum Has Attractions.

Omaha folks who have not yet made the acquaintance of the old young-looking Chinese God of the Smiling Countenance should do so with the opening of the new year. He holds forth on the museum floor of the library, close by the mummy cases and his beaming smile is a sure antidote for grumpiness. This god of the ancient nation is youthful, as Chinese annals go, since he dates back only about 600 years; and alongside him stands a pagoda supposed to be of the same age. Unlike the ancient Egyptians, who keep him company in the long nights, this cheerful Chinaman is unwrapped, stands erect, and Bret Harte could have done worse than pick him out as a simon pure example of the smile that is "childlike and bland." His real name has been forgotten, but the library people say he represents the god of plenty, of the bounteous harvest, and one can well believe it. He is distinctly cheerful, bright and polished, clad in close fitting clothes of beautiful colors. He is, in fact, the Beau Brummel of the Omaha museum. When he took form the land in which he now finds himself was an undiscovered, savage wilderness, and if anybody had mentioned Omaha he would most likely have lifted his eyebrows in polite astonishment.

Coily peeking over her left shoulder at the ancient effigy of the gladsome piece of chinaware is a marble maiden of the great days of Pompeii, probably. Her countenance is cast in serious mold, but is beautiful, withal, as beauty goes in art.

Close by the two sharply contrasting figures is a sarcophagus old enough, in all likelihood, to tell most remarkable things, could its story be properly interpreted. A conversation between the former occupant of this stone coffin and the two persons now reposing in the mummy cloths, with their burial boxes near at hand, would be entrancing to modern ears, could they but hear understandingly. And yet the vanished personalities would very likely have as much difficulty understanding each other as the moderns would in understanding either of them.

### Interesting Subjects for Study.

In the museum of the Omaha public library are dozens and scores of the most interesting subjects for study that spare-hours could be given to. Histor-

ical, numismatic, dramatic, archaeological and geological specimens of more than ordinary significance are to be seen, as in the Reed, the Savage, the Gilder, the Morris, the Cleburne and other collections. But there are, besides, old articles, precious antiques, of many different kinds, from spinning wheels to pianos, household utensils, manuscripts, books, ornaments of various sorts, carvings, curiosities, statues, queer pieces of apparel, mechanical contrivances, ancient implements of war and of peace.

George Washington has laid his competent fingers on the keys of the old time piano pictured above, according to authenticated records. This instrument bears an inscription, "Square piano manufactured by W. T. Collard, London, 1798, formerly owned by James L. Cathcart, U. S. consul to Tripoli, the bearer of messages, May 5, 1796, from Vizier Hassan, Bashaw of Algiers, to George Washington, President of U. S."

Dr. Peabody, who gave the piano and the spinet to the library, was a nephew of the woman who, as a child, sat on the knee of the first president as he strummed on the piano long ago; and the doctor was also a grandson of the Cathcart mentioned. The ancient spinet was made in Holland in 1620 and was decorated with hand painted pictures on both box and cover. These pictures have now almost faded away, and the spinet gives every indication of having been made many generations since.

### Armor of Ancient Warriors.

Investigation proves the two suits of armor that stand guard at one of the museum doors could not have been made later than the end of fifteenth or beginning of the sixteenth century; and they show wear. The armor is of heavy plate inlaid with representations of St. George and the dragon. In the iron gauntlet of one rests a long cross-handled sword, while the other carries a lance and shield. There are shaped guards for the feet.

The library has recently acquired, by gift, two very handsome vases of Sevres, which have a high value. They are about four feet high and of proportionate diameter, bearing reproductions of famous pictures in the Louvre gallery.

Another recent acquisition is a life-size marble statue of "Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite." Jael it was who enticed into her tent Sisera, the captain of the hosts of Jabin, king of Canaan, and after she had given him drink, covered him with a robe, as he supposed with intent to hide him from his enemies. Then, when he slept, Jael took a nail and a hammer and killed Sisera by driving the nail through his temples. The account of this tragedy can be found in the fourth chapter of Judges.

Several very good pictures are the property of the library, but the art gallery is yet in its infancy. It may be that, in years to come, the few pieces of real art in the library will form the nucleus for an art gallery of liberal proportions. Minneapolis is today moving, through certain public spirited citizens, to secure funds, by bonding and otherwise, for the erection of such an institution under city control.

WHILE no boast can properly be made that the Omaha Public Library is notable in any particular way, or for any particular feature, yet the citizens can afford to take a reasonable pride in what is being done for public enlightenment and education through this medium. It may be admitted that the library is not used as liberally as its capacity warrants. It is not called on as the people's daily university extension course to anything like the measure of its promise or possessions. Its location is bad, if we judge by results, and its work ought to be broadened by some means, if the library board can manage it. The appropriation is small, compared to similar appropriations in other cities of Omaha's class. Still, the good things that may honestly be said about the institution are not a few. First and foremost, perhaps, is the fact that, in a comparatively new western city of 125,000 population, something over 93,000 volumes are issued to the people to a total of 275,811 volumes in a year. This fact, according to statistics, puts it ahead of some eastern cities which have many private and subscription libraries.

The general public is, it appears certain, uninformed about many of the collections and readily available helps to be found in the library. Departments which are of a superficial nature, broadly speaking, are well known and rather extensively used; but the really educational and solidly helpful features are not in this category. These neglected departments are not in any sense unusual, and the portion of the citizenship which needs what they contain, and which could profit most liberally from their use, seems to be overlooking chances for easily increased efficiency by a freer use of the material provided. It follows that some way is yet to be found by which the library board can make these better known and popularize their use. For instance, while text books are not made a feature of the library, it should be more widely known that many other volumes are kept, on every live subject, that will supplement the text book of the student in any line.

### Some Helpful Features.

Take the question of music. No effort is made by the library to carry a line of elementary books on music, but a very decided effort is made to keep on the lists those books which will be of practical benefit to the advanced student. Anybody with ambition to study and progress may have the use of these books.

Interested people know that the Omaha library has on its list, and open to public use, art books of a

### Volumes On Mechanics.

More books have been purchased during 1910 pertaining to mechanics and engineering than to any other branch of latter-day activity, proportionately. And the Omaha Public Library holds membership in many of the best societies in the country, such as American Society of Mechanical Engineering, American Society of Civil Engineering, American Railway Master Mechanics' association and Master Car Builders' association.

Omaha is a railroad town, a town of workers, of builders, of practical things and useful endeavor in every active line of life, which makes it seem a trifle strange that the units in the various classes of population do not take a fuller advantage of the things offered for their advancement and profit at the public library, free of cost. The unhandy location of the building and the lack of proper branch libraries is probably to a large extent responsible for non-use of such excellent opportunities.

In another field it will probably surprise a good many readers of The Bee to learn that a collection of stereopticon pictures, up to date, is kept for general use by the Omaha library. In the Christmas season just ended considerable use was made of this collection by Sunday schools, indicating that a much more extensive and varied collection of such pictures would very likely prove a very popular feature if widely known and kept up to the minute as to essentials.

At present the most profitable department of the Omaha library, in the matter of creating a taste for healthy reading, is the Children's room. Naturally, too, the very widest scope is offered here for popularizing use of the solid treasures of the institution as the years pass.

### Books in Foreign Languages.

Of the books added to the library during the last year, aside from fiction, the greatest number was in the class of foreign languages. Foreign-speaking people now living in Omaha can find in the library a very good collection of books in all languages, and the policy is to keep this department to the front, if the use made of the material in hand warrants it.

Almost 7,000 volumes have been added to the lists of books in the year, which is above the average. The primary object has been to gather here the best and latest material on all subjects in which the public in general is interested. Many of the books, of course, may seem quite valueless to the people who read fiction alone, but, as Miss Tobitt says, "They all have their place far in advance of the fiction collection."

## License for Servants

A MOVEMENT now being started in New Rochelle, N. Y., succeeds, servant girls in that state may have to secure a state or city license. Mrs. Aubrey Beattie, head of the new organization, says:

"The new plan of dealing with the servant problem will provide for a bureau which shall inspect the references of servants when they are applicants for employment. Registry cards bearing the photographs and 'pedigrees' of these persons, it is suggested, should contain a brief reference by the last employer, the reason for the servant leaving or for discharge and wages paid. Through such means when a servant asks for employment his or her capabilities and responsibility can be established at once and the worry over the possibility of the new employe entering upon duties which he or she is incompetent to perform or the probability of dishonesty would be practically eliminated.

"If a law can be passed making it a misdemeanor for a servant to draw up a fraudulent registry card or alter one that has been prepared by the proper authorities, the likelihood of deception will be reduced to a minimum.

"The adoption by the city of a plan of this kind would not only be a protection for the housewives, but for the honest and capable servants as well, because it would give them an incentive to live up to the set standard.

"Hardly a day goes by that you do not read in the newspapers of a maid who has decamped with jewels or other valuables belonging to her employer, when only a few days previously she was engaged on the best of references supposed to have been bona fide. Municipal control of the situation would practically eliminate the danger of such an evil. If a servant can prove by the registry card that she has satisfied a former employer as to her competency the security of the new mistress is all the more assured." on the subject with which they have to deal.