

age in the range of civilization. The Public Libraries are numerous and respectable, and notwithstanding the activity and energy exhibited by her citizens in every department of life, the statistics of these institutions prove beyond controversy that they are at the same time essentially a reading people. Not physical alone, but mental activity is a prominent characteristic of our population.

In addition to these libraries, several of the hotels of the city are provided with large and well-selected collections of books for the use of guests. That belonging to the What Cheer House numbers about seven thousand volumes of well-selected works, connected with which is an extensive cabinet of specimens in natural history, and a large number of paintings, with a marble bust by Powers, copied by that artist from his statue of California, and a fancy head in marble by Gault, an eminent sculptor.

Want of space prevents a reference in detail to the numerous public libraries in this city, prominent among which may be named the Mercantile Library Association, containing thirty thousand volumes; Odd Fellows', twenty thousand; Mechanics' Institute, eighteen thousand; San Francisco Law Library, four thousand; Young Men's Christian Association, four thousand; California Pioneers, two thousand five hundred; San Francisco Verein, four thousand.

MERCANTILE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION.

The spacious and well-arranged rooms of this association are located in the Mercantile Library Building, designed for the purpose, on the corner of Montgomery and Bush streets. The Society was organized January 24, 1853, by the election of the following officers: President: David S. Turner; Vice-President: J. P. Haven; Treasurer: C. C. Bowers; Recording Secretary: Dr. Henry Gibbons; Corresponding Secretary: W. H. Stevens; Directors: E. P. Flint, E. E. Dunbar, D. H. Haskell, and J. B. Crockett.

The Library contains 20,500 judiciously selected and well arranged and classified volumes of standard and miscellaneous works, of which 3,788 have been added since January 1870; the Library for reference numbering 8,000; to which important additions have been added during the current year—several copies of each popular work being purchased for the Library immediately after its issue from the press. The number of members is 2,020 of which 337 are Life, 78 Honorary and 1,605 Subscribing. The average number of books taken from the Library each month, amounting to 6,880, clearly sustains the assertion previously made that the citizens of San Francisco are essentially a reading community.

In the commodious, convenient and comfortably fitted-up Reading Room attached to the Library are to be found all the leading local, domestic and foreign newspapers and periodicals, magazines and reviews—neither pains nor expense being spared to render this department an attractive resort to members and visitors. The walls are adorned with a number of fine paintings, portraits of distinguished individuals, and historical pieces. Adjoining this is the Chess Room, where members partial to this healthy and invigorating mental exercise meet for a trial of skill, and to indulge in their favorite pastime. Although the rooms are thronged nightly with a crowd, everything is quiet, orderly, and decorous—all the affairs of the Association moving along like clock-work. The admirable management of the librarian's department is due to the ability and attention of the Librarian, Mr. Alfred Stebbins, whose uniform urbanity, in connection with his assistants, renders a visit to the rooms of the institution both pleasant and agreeable.

The financial embarrassments, which at one time

almost threatened the permanency of this most useful institution, have been entirely removed by the results of the Gift Entertainment, held in October last, by authority of legislative enactment and its affairs placed upon a firm and prosperous basis that must insure for its future a position as one of the most prominent literary institutions in the country.

ODD FELLOWS' LIBRARY ASSOCIATION.

This Library was organized December 30, 1854, with but about one hundred volumes. It now contains over 18,000, among which are a large number of rare and valuable works on the history of this coast. The greater part of the works of the old Spanish writers on this subject have been collected with great care and research, and form a very attractive feature of this collection. Agents are now employed by the Association, both in the Atlantic States and in Europe, collecting all that is extant upon this important and interesting subject.

Connected with the Library is a reading room where all the leading journals of the day are to be found constantly on file, and also an extensive Cabinet of valuable curiosities, embracing various specimens of the mineralogy, botany, conchology, ornithology, entomology, and zoology of California, in fact a miniature museum of the wonderful resources of our Pacific home. The value of the Library and Cabinet is upwards of \$14,102. When we consider that the Library is supported only by Odd Fellows, it speaks well for the literary taste of its members. A great deal of the success of the Association is due to the untiring energy and unwavering interest in its progress manifested by its deceased and honored President S. H. Parker, under whose fostering care the Library and reading rooms became models of neatness, elegance and utility. The administration of his successors has contributed to advance the interest of the Association and at the present time the Library and Cabinet are regarded as one of the most valuable on this coast.

Under a recent change in its organization, this Association will be in receipt of greater resources than it has heretofore enjoyed, by which its conductors will be able to carry out the ambition of its much respected and deceased founder to make it one of the leading literary societies of the Pacific Coast.

MECHANICS' INSTITUTE LIBRARY.

This Library, organized in 1855, contains 18,000 volumes, of which 2,500 are arranged as a reference library consisting principally of sets of Reports of Learned Societies, viz: the London Agricultural, the Zoological, the Geological, the Institute of Civil Engineering, etc. Connected with the Library is a reading room well supplied with the leading scientific, and literary periodicals of the day and an interesting cabinet containing several hundred specimens of interesting objects in natural history, models of machinery, and other interesting and curious matters. This library occupies the main hall of the elegant building of the Association on Post Street between Montgomery and Kearny.

SAN FRANCISCO LAW LIBRARY.

Organized 1865. Reorganized March 9th, 1870. The importance of an extensive and suitable library of reference to meet the growing demands of the legal profession of this city and vicinity has been recognized by the enactment of a law by the Legislature of the State at its last session, providing a revenue for the support of this Library which already contains nearly 5,000 volumes of standard works in every department of legal science, together with complete reports of American, English, Irish and Scotch decisions. The rooms of the Library, located in Montgomery Block, are commodious, well arranged, and are provided with all the standard legal publications of the day.