

feet and hands comfortably warm, the head cool and at ease, and you do not stop to think about either stomach, lungs, heart, throat, or head, when service is asked of you, than when a headache suggests trouble in some region of the body, and your mental horizon is limited to the particular pain from which you are suffering.

The Nurses' Library.

BY LINA MOLLETT.

IN these days of fourpenny classics, sixpenny standard novels and penny illustrated papers, reading is as natural to most of us as eating, and authors as necessary to our recreation as cooks.

Reading and recreation-rooms will in many cases be the same apartment. It stands to reason, that the Nurse, who is off duty, should find her surroundings here as pleasant, pretty and restful as circumstances will allow. The chairs should be lounges, the etchings and coloured drawings on the walls suggestive of country or marine scenes, freshness, life, and happiness. The book shelves should not be stocked with sweepings from the libraries of the charitable. Generous contributors, who respond to the Matron's appeal, need not imagine that books dull and useless to themselves are likely to be popular with the Nurses they are intended to benefit.

There are so many things a Nurses' library ought *not* to be, that much of the advice concerning it might be given negatively:

A Nurses' library should not be too exclusively professional and scientific.

It should not, of course, be wanting in good reference books, which, by preference, should be modern—in touch with the times.

A propos of medical books, an anecdote was told me the other day of a leading Edinburgh surgeon.

He was asked what books he would recommend for students' use. He began his list with the words—"None that are more than five years old."

Standard works of fiction never will be out of fashion. The immortal Pickwick and Ivanhoe can be purchased for less than a shilling at the stores. (I think 7½d. is now the nett price for each). Even a very poor little Hospital could have a good collection of leading novels, if only *one* energetic visitor would take the matter in hand.

Where a small fund has been collected, it is

usually wisest to leave its investment for library purposes to the discretion of the Matron. She knows what Nurses want like and dislike better than any outsider. Gifts of yearly subscriptions to leading lending libraries are always acceptable.

Disjointed contributing sometimes leads to some such result as the following, culled from a library list:—Five copies of Rudder Grange, but *none* of George Eliot's works; three copies of Pickwick Papers; a double set of Scott's novels; not one of Baring Gould's, and only isolated copies of Besant and Rice, Marion Crawford and Hall Caine; but piles of Missionary Gleaners, fusty from the loft, unbound, tied in dusty packets, with ancient string; odd numbers of *Pearson's Weekly*; the *War Cry*; and a set of horrible little musty volumes (happily out of print), immortalizing the adventures of a number of youthful prigs and reformed reprobates. Where space is valuable, some of these donations would naturally be wasted.

Variety, a fair average of contemporary fiction, works peculiar for their strength or freshness, is what the spirit of the age calls for. Our Nurses have the varied tastes, character, and interests of the ordinary 19th century woman. *As a class* they like at times to get away from their work, and recruit among totally different impressions, quite as much as the members of any other profession. The better educated they are, the more earnestly they are devoted to their duties, the more necessary it is for their mental and physical welfare, that "shop" should sometimes be completely set aside, and actually forgotten among less exacting influences.

As a class, Nurses are much too sensible and in touch with the reality of physical suffering to admire (as some people imagine) the kind of knock-kneed religious twaddle certain tractarians indulge in—sickly egotistical analysis that would have the reader believe genuine Christianity to be a sort of dreary pillory, instead of the main-spring of moral vitality and joyous *action*.

Theological works should be books of religious *literature—literature*, not "word-smoke." They should be *first-rate* in every sense, and not controversial. Our grandest Church leaders, our finest orators only should be allowed place in the library of the noblest class of English working-women, not the leaders of one sect, but the leaders of Christianity, in the broadest and highest sense of the word. Biographies of such men, and others like them—men who were, or are, *thorough* in any walk of life—are sure to be popular with our modern Nurses, staunch advocates, in most cases, of thoroughness themselves.

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