

LIBRARY HOSPITALS

A QUIET CORNER WHERE MAIMED AND AGED BOOKS ARE DOCTORED.

Delicate Operations Are Often Necessary For Injured Volumes and Much Ingenuity Is Required at Times—How Book Surgeons Work.

In every up to date public library there is a quiet corner used as a book hospital, where worn, aged and maimed volumes are sent for treatment and often surgical operations. The women and children of the library—that is, the novels and juveniles—are found in the hospital the most frequently, and often they are beyond cure. But the skillful library worker has all sorts of devices for making broken down books appear fresh and new again, and often a remarkable cure is effected.

If a book were cast aside the minute its back was broken or were not given proper treatment when a leaf became loose, the library would soon find itself doubling expenses for duplicates of old volumes and with little money for new works. Careful treatment, on the other hand, will add years to the life of a book and will materially lessen the expenses of a public library.

This hospital is fitted up in a very simple manner. There are shelves upon which the invalid books are placed until treatment can be given them. Then there are other shelves where they are placed to convalesce and sometimes to regain consciousness after a serious surgical operation. There are operating tables and neat little boxes in which there are rolls of black percale and yards of white percale, sheets of paraffin paper, long strips of thin but fine quality paper, narrow rolls of gummied paper, bundles of grass cloth, balls of string, sandpaper, coarse thread and white mull.

In snug little compartments is the medicine, consisting of glue and paste. The surgical instruments in a little case consist of a pair of forceps, a small wooden paddle, a thin wooden board and papers of needles. Then there is an instrument of torture—a heavy press which is generally applied at the close of an operation.

There are all sorts of complaints among the books, and the most prevalent is the broken back. This comes from the book assuming an unhealthy position, such as leaning up lazily against other books, resting on its front edges or lying flat on its side. A vigorous use of paste and glue often cures this complaint, but in some cases a delicate operation is resorted to.

Then the cover is stripped entirely off the back, and the title is carefully cut out. Next the paper back of the book is peeled off. A piece of grass cloth is then applied and firmly glued into its place. The old cover, with the exception of the title, is pasted on again, and then the book is tied up with strings and left on the shelf to recover a little. When strong enough, a black percale back is carefully fitted over the old back, and the old title is pasted on the outside.

Small fingers injure the complexion of the books greatly, and sandpaper is used a great deal on juvenile fiction invalids. The edges of the book are rubbed with this rough paper, taking off the dirt and the yellow appearance. Rough edges of leaves are frequent also in this branch of literature. These leaves are carefully trimmed off, and a thin strip of nice quality paper is pasted on to make a clean, regular edge.

"Butting" is a method of operating that is not used by all book surgeons. This consists in placing with the wooden paddle a thin line of glue on the edges of a torn leaf and then pressing them tightly together. It has been demonstrated thoroughly that this butting holds the torn leaf just as firmly as and is much more satisfactory than the old method of pasting gummed transparent paper over the torn places. The loose leaves are a frequent source of annoyance to the book doctors. The remedy for these bothersome leaves is a hinge of percale or paper, which holds the unruly page in place after the heavy press has been brought to bear on the book. In such cases the thin board is always used to slip into the volume, so that it will keep its shape properly.

The operation which requires the most skill is the sewing of the signature or division of a book back into place. The needle and coarse thread are pushed in and out of the holes in the signature and the binding, and when it becomes awkward to use the fingers the slender forceps are used to draw the needle in and out.

It is part of the work of every public library employee to take a hand in the hospital department, and ingenuity supplies means to remedy every complaint that is conjured up by even the most erratic book. The book doctor trusts wholly to her own wit and skillful fingers to effect a cure, and there are few cases that are hopeless.—New York Mail and Express.

Cut Off.

"Poor child!" exclaimed Mrs. Goodart, who had been touched by the appeal to the extent of a quarter. "And how did this accident happen to your father?"

"Why," replied the bright little girl, "he begged so much money one day that he got drunk and was sent to jail."

"But you told me his arms were cut off."

"Oh, no, ma'am! I said 'alma.'"
—Philadelphia Press.

By Their Crests, Perhaps.

She—So you have crossed the ocean sixty-four times. You must be getting used to it.

He—Yes, considerably. I have lately got so that I recognize over half the waves we meet.—Town and Country.

LOOK LIKE FLATIRONS.

Curious Stone Implements of Our Aborigine Prehistoric Scientists.

Among thousands of curious objects of utility, weapons, etc., of the races that peopled North America in prehistoric times that one sees in the cases and cabinets in the Smithsonian Institution are some five or more curiously wrought stone objects from mounds in Tennessee bearing such a close resemblance to modern flatirons that many people have thought that such might have been their use among their prehistoric makers, although it would be hard to imagine what the primitive aborigines of this continent had to iron.

The shape and appearance of these objects in every way correspond with a modern flatiron, handle and all, and thus far scientific men have been unable to discover what they were used for. It is, however, just a little singular that wrought stones, similar to the ones from the Tennessee mounds, have been found in Peru among the tombs of the Incas and at the necropolis of Ancon. The old Spanish writers, men who accompanied Pizarro in the conquest of that country, state that the ancient Peruvians, who were great builders, used these wrought stones, or so called flatirons, as trowels in plastering walls with mortar.

The objects found in one of the Tennessee mounds are the only ones that were ever found in the United States, and the only way to account for their presence in that locality is to suppose that in pre-Columbian times a great deal of Peruvian material reached countries far to the north of the isthmus by means of intertribal trade.—Washington Post.

NATURAL HISTORY.

Some of the caterpillars found in the vicinity of the Darling river, Australia, are over six inches in length.

The leaders of a flock of migrating wild geese become tired sooner than others and are frequently relieved by their fellows.

The gray buzzard is said to be the heaviest bird that flies, the young males, when food is plentiful, weighing nearly forty pounds. The bird is nearly extinct.

The terrapin lives largely upon crabs. He never eats his food, but bolts it. His favorite tidbit is the crab's claw, which he swallows whole with the greatest relish.

The glowworm lays eggs which, it is said, are themselves luminous. However, the young hatched from them are not possessed of those peculiar properties until after the first transformation.

A whistling moth is an Australian rarity. There is a glassy space on the wings crossed with ribs. When the moth wants to whistle, it strikes these ribs with its antennae, which have a knob at the end. The sound is a love call from the male to the female.

Repaid in Kind.

At a certain ball in the country the other evening a gentleman undertook to introduce a companion to a young but somewhat stout lady, who seemed to be pining for a dance.

"No, thanks, old fellow. I don't care to waltz with a cart."

A "cart" is understood in the district referred to as a partner who does not do her share of the dancing, but has to be drawn around.

A few evenings later the same young lady, who had overheard the conversation, beheld the young man seeking an introduction and asking if he might have the honor, etc.

"No, thank you," she replied. "I may be a cart, but I am not a donkey cart!"
—London Tit-Bits.

The Scepter.

The scepter was the emblem of power. As the silver wand, so familiar in cathedrals, was once hollow, containing the "virge" or rod with which chastisement was inflicted upon the choristers and younger members of the foundation, so the royal scepter represented the right to inflict punishment. Hence the expression "to sway the scepter" implied the holding of regal dignity. The scepter with the dove possessed the additional signification of the Holy Ghost, as controlling the actions of the sovereign. The same idea was conveyed at Reims by the beautiful ceremony of letting loose a number of doves at the coronation of the French kings.—Good Words.

Crushed.

"You talk mighty glib about the corruption in this ward," interrupted a sallow faced man in the audience. "What business is it of yours? Have you got any permanent investments in this ward?"

"Yes, I have!" thundered the orator. "Fellow citizens, I once lent that man a dollar."

He was not interrupted again.—Chicago Tribune.

Much For Little.

McJigger—I saw Markley blowing off that theatrical manager to a ten dollar dinner yesterday.

Thingumbob—Yes, a scheme of his, and it worked beautifully. He was working him for a couple of passes.—Philadelphia Press.

Marital Confidences.

Mrs. Benham—Don't you think I grow better looking as I grow older?

Benham—Yes, and it's really too bad you can't live as long as they did in Bible times. You might then become a veritable beauty.—New York Times.

Cool.

Briggs—It isn't the man who cuts off the most coupons who cuts the most ice.

Griggs—He doesn't have to. His cool thousands answer well enough for him.—Boston Transcript.

THE GOLDEN POPPY.

Dazzling, Blazing Blossoms That Greeted the California Pioneers.

Far out at sea gleaming sheets of dazzling gold arrested the gaze of the early explorers of California. Blazing along the Pacific coast, embracing the green foothills of the snow capped Sierra Madres, transforming acres and acres of treeless plains into royal cloth of gold, millions of flowers of silky texture and color of gold fascinated the Spanish discoverers. An eminent botanist, Eschscholtz, at once classified the plant, and his followers conferred his name upon this the only native American papaver.

Dreamlike in beauty, fascinating from sheer loveliness, spreading in soft undulations over the land, the California poppy bloomed above the richest views and arteries of gold the world has ever known, all unsuspected. A Circe, with powers to please, dazzle and charm by its enchantments, while it allures, lulls and mystifies, this flower of sleep seemed to draw by some occult process from the earth the elixir of gold, unfolding its blooms of gold as beacons proclaiming, "We are blooming above rich mines of gold."

There is ever a mystery about the poppy. It is a weird flower. It is almost sentient, with a life unknown to human kind. "While glory guards with solemn tread the bivouac of the dead" stealthily a sea of gore creeps over the old battlefields. Blood red, the poppies in waves and billows hold high carnival above the soil that covers the slain. Lord Macaulay says of the battlefields of Neerwinden: "The summer after the battle the soil, fertilized by 20,000 dead, broke forth into millions of blood red poppies. The traveler from St. Trond to Tirlemont who saw that vast field of rich scarlet stretching from Landen to Neerwinden could hardly help fancying that the figurative description of the Hebrew prophet was literally accomplished; that 'the earth was disclosing her blood and refusing to cover her slain.'" Bayard Taylor in "The Lands of the Saracen" says he contemplated with feelings he could not describe "the old battlefields of Syria, densely covered with blood red poppies, blooming in barbaric splendour, gloating on the gore of soldiers slain."

However interesting the poppy may be to men of science and to lovers of the beautiful, it is yet more so to the people of California. This beautiful, weird, gold colored flower of gossamer texture belongs to California alone. Nowhere else in the world has it ever made its habitat. There it is naturally so profuse that it is related as a fact that, coming on a turn full face upon a blooming field of yellow poppies, dazzling in the sunshine, horses have been put to flight as from flames of fire.—Home and Flowers.

Foods and Appetite.

In some good advice given in print by a physician the theory held by faddists in special foods, warranted to perform marvels of health and restoration, is exploded. "Don't," says this writer, "imagine that you can grow strong on foods that you dislike. Better fried ham and chocolate cake with a good appetite than a health cereal with milk and disgust."

One would hesitate, perhaps, to follow strictly the fried ham and chocolate cake dictum to the letter, but it is undoubtedly true that at the moment many persons almost starve themselves because they have no appetite for the various so called health foods, which alone they fancy they can eat. Above and beyond the choice of food is moderation in partaking of it and relish for what is eaten.—New York Post.

The East and the West.

A man from the west who was recently visiting Maine fell into conversation with a quiet old farmer on a train. He was full of the greatness of the west and talked about the big farms and big crops of his particular section and wound up by saying, "I suppose you do manage to pick up a living on these little Maine farms."

The old Maine farmer smiled sadly and replied: "Yes, and a few years ago some of us invested money in your section, and it is there yet. It was a permanent investment, I guess."

The western man changed the conversation.—New York Tribune.

A Poison Without an Antidote.

Some persons are advocating a substitute for death by electricity and hanging. They have advocated poisoning. Well, nothing could be more effective or painless than execution by means of a capsule filled with hydrocyanic acid. It might be served without the knowledge of the convict, and death would be so sudden and so certain that there could be no resurrection. A single drop placed on the tongue of a big dog causes instant death. A half teaspoonful taken by a man will cause him to drop as if struck by lightning. There is no antidote.

Truthful Debtor.

Long—Say, Short, I'd like to have that \$10 you borrowed of me three months ago.

Short—Sorry, old man, but I can't give it to you at the present writing.

Long—But you said you wanted it for a little while only.

Short—Well, I gave it to you straight. I didn't keep it half an hour.—Chicago News.

His Bill.

"Your young nephew William appears to think he knows much more than he really does know."

"Yes, he is a Bill that is stuck up, but not a Bill that is posted."—Boston Transcript.

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