

### Library Notes and Queries.

---

“We consider ourselves, as librarians, city reformers next to Parkhurst.”

The idea that the Public Library is an ally of the School has not escaped the attention of some educators. At a meeting of the New York Library Association, Miss Mary Merington read a paper touching on this very point. Theoretically, the co-operation of the Teacher and the Librarian is a delightful idea. Nevertheless, the discussion which followed brought out the fact that, in the minds of some, too much was expected of the teacher. It is true that in the hours between nine and three the teacher's time is not her own, and after she has drilled her class in a given quantity of “Reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic,” with sundry other subjects added, she has little enough time to read to her class, or even to direct them what to read. It is chiefly because the question is a question that it seems to me worthy of consideration and discussion by teachers themselves.

How can the boys' teacher unite with the librarian to stimulate the boys to good reading?

Down in the crowded tenement districts the question assumes an importance which it does not possess in some other parts of the city. Home life, as an educational force, is practically *nil*. The child's life is circumscribed, narrow, bare of new ideas. The School and the Free Library are the two institutions which make for progress and uplifting. The School can do much; but the child, in such environment, misses—it is needless to say—the culture of general reading and intelligent conversation at home. Here steps in the Free Library, with its new magazines and opportunity for really good books, without cost to the borrower.

But the school children need guidance. The librarian does what she can, but too seldom does she have a call for a book on the ground that “the teacher told me to get it.”

Special advice and guidance are needed in the case of girls whose tastes are not yet formed, who are beginning to look toward Mary J. Holmes, Mrs. Southworth, and Augusta Evans Wilson. Occasionally when the applicant is at a loss in the choice of a book, the librarian finds an opportunity to suggest, and thus lead the reader one step higher. We have even succeeded sometimes in palming off Oliver Wendell Holmes on unsuspecting readers devoted to the works of Mary J. Holmes and “The Duchess.”

There is another class of readers which claims attention. It is composed of the vast army of “operatives”—factory girls, working girls—many of them little more than children. They are beyond the School, and their tastes are too often set in the directions

above indicated. If, perchance, we have the opportunity to advise, what shall we give these young people, who like their books full of snap and interest? It is not, of course, advisable to soar too high, and offer them Thackeray or George Eliot. Blanche Willis Howard, Mrs Burnett, Mrs. Barr, Jessie Fothergill, may all be made substitutes for the trashy authors so much beloved. Dickens is generally received with avidity.

There is another question which forces itself upon the librarian. It cannot easily be answered by the teacher; neither does it belong to the province of the librarian. But to the student of Sociology, whatever be her vocation, it will appeal with force, especially if she be a student of Physiology also. What are we to do with the undersized bodies of our boys; with the spindling legs, the stooping shoulders, the contracted chests? Is the time to come when the subject of Physical Training will receive, in our public schools, something like the attention which is bestowed upon it at Yale and Harvard? What are we to do with our anæmic factory girls? Are the ideas set forth in Dr. Cooke's chapter on "Sex in Industry" ever to be embodied by employers in the rules of their establishments?

LOUISA M. DITHRIDGE.