

Secondly, the medical libraries proper, among which those of the Royal Colleges of the three capitals are the most important. Easily first in extent and in the wide sphere of its influence is that of the Royal College of Surgeons of England, which is a model of good management. The library of the Royal Society of Medicine is the largest, I believe, connected with any medical society, and with the new organization is rapidly growing. The libraries of the Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow, of the Medical Institution of Liverpool, of the Birmingham Institute, of University College, Bristol, the Worth Library of the Steevens Hospital, and the Manchester Medical Society, form collections of the first rank. One of the most valuable of professional libraries is that of the British Medical Association, under whose auspices, so to speak, we meet to-day. Founded in 1889, it now possesses more than 20,000 volumes, with a card catalogue. The books are chiefly modern, with a large proportion of monographs and valuable sets of foreign periodicals. It receives also, and this is a very important point for borrowers, the theses of the French universities. Through it the Association has already done good work by aiding in the formation of local libraries, and between 6,000 and 7,000 duplicates have already been distributed. An important step has recently been taken to make this a lending library for members of the Association, who will be able to borrow expensive works and periodicals such as are only occasionally required for consultation. Having frequently visited the library in the old building, I very gladly bear testimony to its usefulness and to the admirable way in which it is managed by the librarian, Mr. Honeyman. I am not surprised to hear that the annual number of readers is very large, more than 6,000 in 1906. In the new building the arrangements are excellent, and I have no doubt that provincial members visiting London will more and more resort to this library. In all matters of management and detail these large libraries will be able to guide and assist us with their experience. Certainly we shall get much more from them than they from us, but theirs will be the richer blessing of the giver. With a well-managed exchange we may be able to help them fill the lacunae on their shelves, and it should be our aim to make these national collections more and more complete.

By far the best work we can do is in the organization, preservation and extension of the smaller libraries already existing in the provincial cities and towns. Many of these are already well housed and well arranged, as for example the Reading, York and Norwich libraries, to speak of those which I know personally. There are scores of hospitals with good collections, some of the greatest value, as those of Exeter and Bath and the Brackenbury Library, Preston. Some of them have associations of exceptional interest. I have always been an admirer of Caleb Hillier Parry of Bath, type of the old naturalist-physician, more common a few generations ago than now.