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### GOOD BOOKS.

Bridge, auction bridge, poker, and other such devices of Satan, are as wasteful of time and energy in mining camps as elsewhere. Excessive card-playing is a misdirection of time, energy and money. It also softens the moral fibre.

Good books are the most satisfactory substitute for cards. And of good books the supply never fails.

The technical books that are turned out to-day are of high average merit. They are more carefully written, better printed, better illustrated, and are much cheaper than ever before.

A good book is stimulating. No thoughtful man can read Hoover's "Principles of Mining," or Finlay's "Cost of Mining," without profiting thereby. Surroundings and circumstances render most intensely interesting, treatises that in themselves may be arid. For instance, books dealing with metallurgical calculations may prove more exciting than an "Old Sleuth" yarn to the worker who is looking for assistance. The pleasures of recognition are of the keenest. A geological monograph may contain descriptions of rock associations that fit exactly a new district. The mine manager may find in an unpretentious volume a hint that will enable him to save the price of hundreds of books.

But it is not well to look upon books from a commercial point of view. That is best left to the publisher. The blessing of books is that they induce thought, they fertilize the mind, they soothe whilst they inspire.

Reading only books devoted to professional subjects invites mental dry-rot. Every mining man's library should be liberally sprinkled with sound, secular literature of his own choosing. The last two words are most vital. Books lose half their meaning if they are not of one's own selection. The pleasures of discovery should not be neglected.

Books gather more meaning as they mature on our shelves or in our boxes. Throughout life the reader contracts a few high literary friendships. We remember one prospector who carried a battered Keats, wrapped in silk, on all his trips. Never a night passed on which that pocket friend was not produced. Another of our bush acquaintances always puts in his pack a volume of mathematical tables and the latest text-book on certain abstruse problems. His chief delight was to test the clearness of his mental processes by tackling horribly involved mathematical questions. We doubt if the result was as beneficent as a course of Keats.

The better class of novels is not to be despised. Unfortunately few of them can be read more than once. But there are books of many kinds that are never-failing storehouses of pleasure and of profit. As pure liter-