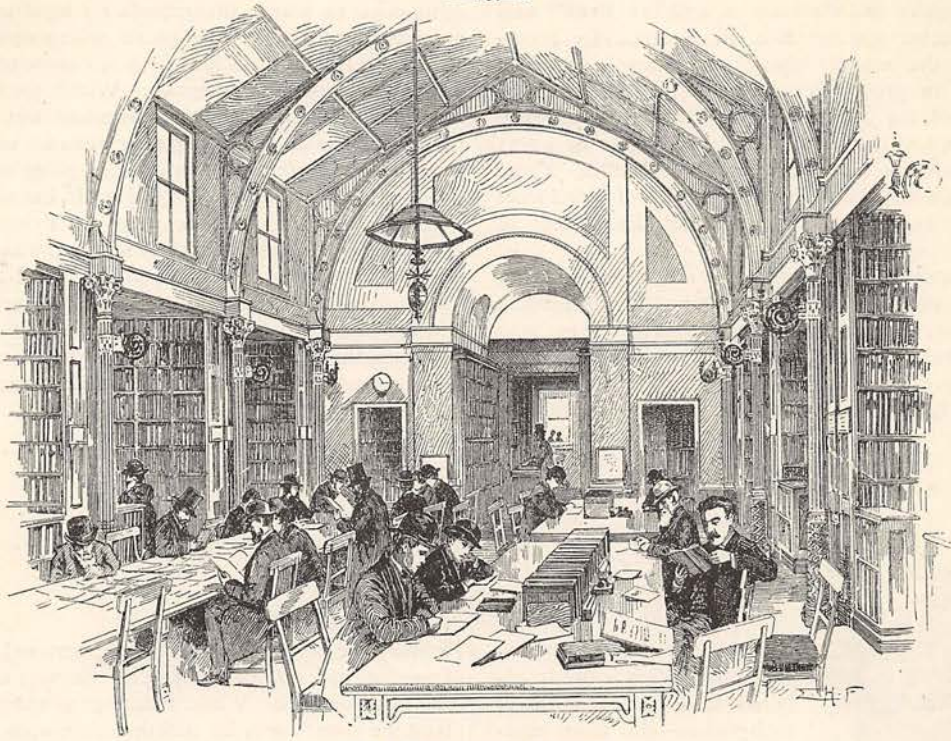


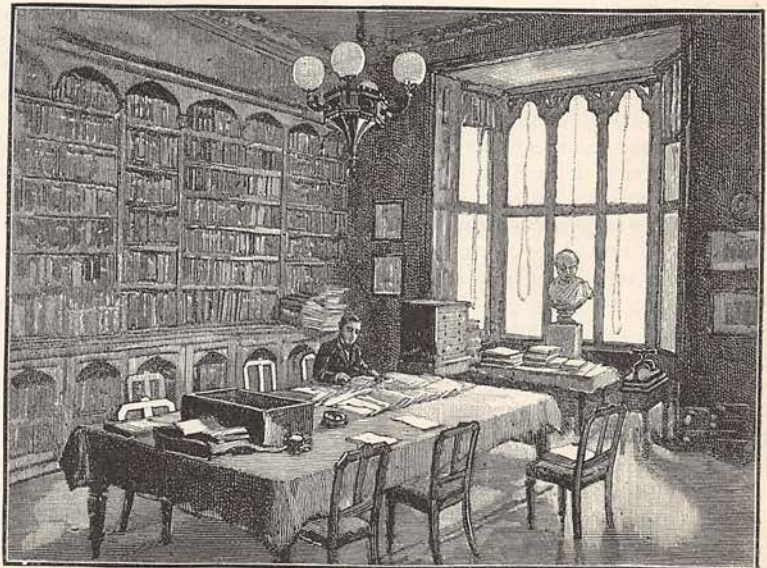
TWO LITTLE-KNOWN LONDON LIBRARIES.



THE PATENT OFFICE LIBRARY.

FEW persons outside the circle of inventors and patent agents are aware of the existence of an excellent scientific library in the very heart of London—namely, the free library of the Patent Office in Southampton Buildings, Chancery Lane. Still fewer know of another which is also open to the public at certain times, and contains the best collection of electrical books in the kingdom. This is the Ronalds Library of the Institution of Electrical Engineers, at 4, Broad Sanctuary, Westminster Abbey. The former is open every week-day from 10 a.m. till 10 p.m.; and the latter is free to visitors unconnected with the institution, from 10 a.m. till 8 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and on Thursdays and Saturdays from 10 a.m. till 2 p.m. This collection was a gift of the late Sir Francis Ronalds, the well-known telegraph inventor, to the Society of Telegraph Engineers, now

the institution above named, and it has been further enriched by a large donation of rare and valuable works belonging to Mr. Latimer Clark, F.R.S., the distinguished engineer. The Patent Office Library



THE RONALDS LIBRARY : PRINCIPAL ROOM.

is really the chief technical library and reading-room of the Metropolis. It contains about 100,000 volumes of a scientific nature, including the best encyclopædias and dictionaries, and the British and foreign patent specifications, all of which are accessible to the visitor himself, for they are simply arranged in groups according to the different subjects round the bays of the hall, and thus no time is lost by a visitor in consulting a variety of works bearing on the same topic. In the middle of the room the home and foreign periodicals of a technical kind are laid out upon tables for the benefit of students.

Quite lately the accommodation of the reading-room has been much increased, for the number of readers is growing, and since the new Patent Act came into force, more space is required for storing blue-books and their indexes. The blue-books are kept apart from the library proper, and the indexes are filed on

writing-tables in the middle, where they are consulted by those about to take out new patents and who wish to find out what has been already patented. Others again come to search the records for legal purposes, in connection with the law courts, where some technical case is being decided. A few come to inquire into the validity of an invention. Within the reading-room proper, there are many inventors who like to read the technical press, to gather hints for some new apparatus, or merely to learn what is going on in the world of applied science. Occasionally, but not often, a well-known man of science pays it a flying visit in order to see some book which is not in the lists of the British Museum or the library of the Royal Society; but for the most part the attendants are regular *habitués* who have found out the merits of the place, and come there either in the course of business, or for their own self-improvement. It is certainly a boon to the evening student.

A CROOKED SPINE.

BY A FAMILY DOCTOR.



It is a generally received opinion—and one which is firmly adhered to—that the heart of a physician—and more especially that of a surgeon—must be a hard one. And yet I take the liberty of differing from those who hold it. The very nature of a surgeon's employment, his experiences in hospital wards, his familiarity with accidents of every sort, that appal all save him, his being constantly a witness to the effects of pain

and sorrow in others, to the contracted brows, the pale, pinched face of the sufferer himself, the teardamp, anxious faces of the friends and relatives near him, would, it may be but natural to imagine, render his feelings callous, and blunt every sense of pity. Yet my acquaintance with some of the greatest operators of the day affords me proof that it is quite the other way, and that surgeons have as often as not to assume a sternness they are far from feeling, and hide the workings of their gentle natures under a cloak of grim imperturbability, which is, in nine cases out of ten, put off and on with the gown in which they perform their unenviable duties.

When ill, one expects quite a fund of sympathy from his family physician, nevertheless; and seldom indeed is disappointment the result of such expectation. In the doctor standing or sitting quietly, thoughtfully by the bedside, something of the unselfishness, self-denyingness of the parson is looked for.

He may be a man who has his own sad burden of troubles and sorrows to bear, but he must not show it by word or look. While listening to the patient's plaint, he himself may be suffering pain—too often is, in these hard-worked times—yet his face must be as calm, though not so cold, as that of the Sphinx. Doctors, it should be remembered, are neither more nor less than human beings, after all, and therefore there are some complaints they listen to with more patience than others—for trouble must be genuine before it touches a chord of pity in the physician's heart. Mere querulousness or peevishness is little regarded: a long story about aches and pains is more likely to weary him than elicit a word of sympathy. Perhaps there is no class of cases that appeals more directly to a physician's best nature than that in which the patients are patient, silent, bed-ridden or chair-ridden children; and many of these, whom we meet down at the sea-side in summer being wheeled about in their out-door cots, are sufferers from the trouble I have a few words to say this month about—a crooked spine.

Well it is, indeed, for such young folks that they have kind friends about them, who can afford them the few luxuries their sad position in life demands, as well as the curative and palliative appliances which modern surgery has invented for their behalf. There are thousands of others, alas! who are not so blessed. Yet, at their very best, the lives of such sufferers are woeful enough to think of. The sun may shine with joy-imparting brightness, but they cannot go and play as do other children; the lawns may be green and daisied, yet the pleasure of rolling upon earth's soft carpet is denied to them; they cannot chase the butterflies nor gather the wild flowers, nor sit on the