The best method of guarding against the danger of reading what is useless is to read only what is interesting. . . . He has only half learnt the art of reading who has not added to it the even more refined accomplishment of skipping and skimming; and the first step has hardly been taken in the direction of making literature a pleasure until interest in the subject, and not a desire to spare (so to speak) the author’s feelings, or to accomplish an appointed task, is the prevailing motive of the reader. . . . There are times, I confess, when I feel tempted somewhat to vary the prayer of the poet, and to ask whether Heaven has not reserved in pity to this much educating generation some peaceful desert of literature as yet unclaimed. . . . where it might be possible for the student to wander, even perhaps to stray, at his own pleasure; without finding every beauty labelled, every difficulty engineered, every nook surveyed, and a professional cicerone standing at every corner to guide each succeeding traveller along the same well-worn round. . . . This world may be kind or unkind, it may seem to us to be hastening on the wings of enlightenment and progress to an imminent millennium, or it may weigh us down with a sense of insoluble difficulty and irremediable wrong; but whatever else it be, so long as we have good health and a good library, it can hardly be dull.

If this be so, how long shall we be dullards? For us, salvation is at hand. We can reach it on our shelves. We can find fellowship with the schollars and become again part of a sometimes entrancing company; the noble company of the lettered. And in the words of a manuscript come straight from the Middle Age we can offer a petition:

O Lord, send the virtue of thy Holy Spirit upon these our books; that cleansing them from all earthly things, by thy holy blessing, they may mercifully enlighten our hearts and give us true understanding; and grant that by thy reaching, they may brightly preserve and make full an abundance of good works according to thy will.

Surely we are standing in the need of prayer.

MEMOS FROM MEMBERS

(This caption should be in the singular this issue, but we are eternal optimists.)

Congratulations on a delightful and informative issue of North Carolina Libraries. I enjoyed every page.

—Alice L. Hicks
Woman’s College Library
Duke University

Thanks, Mrs. Hicks. You are our favorite reader. Editors.

TAR HEEL LIBRARIANS

Miss Marjorie BEAL is Acting Librarian of the Haywood County Library while Miss Margaret Johnston is on leave for her ALA Study Award trip.

Miss Lorane GROTKE, Librarian, Lee County Library, was married to William M. RYAN, February 22, 1954, in Dillon, South Carolina.

Mrs. Irene Burk HARRELL (UNC ’49) became director of the Halifax County Library in January.

Miss Ann HILL (Ill. ’46) has been appointed Assistant Librarian of the Fontana Regional Library, Bryson City.

The NCLA Executive Board has appointed Miss Marjorie HOOD, (Library Circulation Department, The Woman’s College of the University of North Carolina, Greensboro) as Corresponding Secretary of the Association. The new Constitution provides for two secretaries. Mrs. Hallie BACELLI is Recording Secretary.

Miss LaRue MCKENNEY (ECC ’54) was appointed librarian of the Farmville Public Library March 1, 1954.

Miss Helen THOMPSON, librarian of the Anson County Library, has resigned to become librarian of the Scotland County Library, Laurinburg, on May 1, 1954.