

beginning, their growth by gradual stages being imperceptible, like the growth of a disease"; and so it is with this habit of reading, of which you are only master at the beginning—once acquired, you are its slave.

So far as the library is a factor, the greater part of a man's post graduate education must be at home. In this country no man practises very far from a county town in which there is a medical society or a general hospital with a library attached. A notebook for special points to look up, or for certain books of reference, will get him into the habit of frequenting it, and he should become a subscriber, as in this way not only does the library widen its influence, but finds means for its support. The county library, wherever situated, should be the much-esteemed consultant of the general practitioner.

But it is in the towns of 20,000 in population and upwards that the library is of the greatest value, and where it becomes a factor of the first importance in the development of the progressive man. These are days of great opportunities, when we have discovered other ways to the top, toilsome all the same, than up the old rungs of the academic ladder, or the weary climb of the stairs of a London hospital. We are waking up to the fact that the man may make his own environment, and may make it just what and where he pleases; he may even perform a miracle—the mountain may come to Mahomet. Let me give you a notable illustration.

A few years ago when two young Irish-Americans called Mayo began to frequent the surgical clinics of Europe, no one knew where they came from; no one had ever heard of Rochester, Minnesota, and when informed that it was on the "Prairies," about 1,000 miles north-west of Chicago, there was a shrug of the shoulders and "Oh!" Self education, post-graduate study, books, journals, laboratory work, have enabled these remarkable men to build up one of the largest and in some respects the most important surgical clinic in the world, and a town of less than 20,000 inhabitants has become the Mecca of all surgeons.

To the man who is ambitious to use his opportunities in a town or city, a well selected library is essential, and whether he be surgeon, physician, or specialist, he needs as a rule more than his own shelves supply, often indeed a good deal more than the library can offer. As I have already stated, the library of the British Medical Association is offering great facilities to its members. In England, too, he can and should join the Royal Medical Society, from which monographs and special journals may be had, but he cannot always wait, and there is no reason why in the larger towns there should not be a library which ministers to the ordinary wants of all ranks. The journals at once become a serious consideration—French, German, and American—but a few of the best suffice when supplemented by the admirable German *Centralblatte*. By means of an exchange this association can render great assistance, while in the thickly populated districts a system of exchanges between libraries would cut in half