

ten. Here, it is only necessary to point out that the enjoyment of these pleasures combines perfect mental refreshment with bodily quiet and comfort, in a way acceptable to none more than the practitioner of medicine, fatigued with the rounds of a day. To adopt from the outset a recreation of necessarily in-door nature to the total exclusion of others more beneficial physically, would be a course far from sensible. There are few of the sports, however, which do not make calls on the time soon certain to be felt too great for even the commencing practitioner, and prosperity bringing with it as it must, more open air activity, can look in no more profitable direction for pastime than the ever present book shelf.

In respect of the actual practical value of general reading to the busy medical man, let us first look into the characteristics which make a writing great, be it novel, essay or poem. As an illustration may be used the novel, because the essence of what can be said in regard to it will be found to apply also to the others. In works of fiction we find a story running connectedly throughout, and at different junctures scenes of more than ordinary interest. In a novel of exceptional merit some of the success is due no doubt to the construction of the story, and the way in which the scenes are colored, but these do not form the true substance of the work at all. The true substance is the exhibition of human nature. This must be done in a way that will appeal to all, and must have for its characters genuine representations of actual men and women, acting, thinking and speaking as people do, or have done.

The writer of such must be a person of no mean ability. His insight into human nature and human motives must be extraordinary. He must be a man of the world, having had wide experience of actual happenings, and must be a careful student of the past. Most of all, however, we are told he must possess a unifying principle. This, attained to only by deep reflection on life, enables him to see, no matter in what sphere he may be placed, the very core of life in all its sides, the very first principles of human tragedy and comedy.

Now are not the powers which such an one displays the very ones which every young medical man who intends to build up a practice should strive to acquire? Coming into relationship with our fellowmen of the utmost intimacy possible, what class of men can require more, that this great human nature shall be an open book? The meeting half-way of delicate questions from embarrassed patients, the preservation of dignity in trying circumstances, the judicious handling of grave forecasts, are a few examples of occasions demanding of the physician a careful previous study of like situations. In other words, he too must possess a unifying principle, and nowhere can he acquire it more readily than in the works of the masters.

A decision of the utmost importance for a young man to make once and for all, is that as to whether conscience or selfish ambition shall have the right of way in his actions. For us young medical men this problem assumes most serious proportions, for grave indeed, for humanity at least, must be the consequences of the adoption by any of no definite constant course, and graver one of personal advantage entirely. To the help of all in this great determination, comes reading. Biographies pleasurable to read, readily to be obtained, state actual facts of the lives of men of both modes of action. Essays place within the reach of all, the thought of great minds who have been confronted with the same

question. One may read the life-story of a Mirabeau or a Talleyrand, and estimate for himself the measure of success which in these cases attended the annihilation of moral self. (It is significant that in other pages than those of British history must we seek to find lasting conspicuous figures of this type.) Again, one may read the biography of the cruelly ambitious Napoleon and then that of the conscientious Cromwell, and finally in an essay by one of the world's greatest thinkers, see the motives, actions and success of these very two contrasted. These men all shine forth as having individually given one or other course the best trial possible to human soul. We may with but slight trouble learn of their every step. What folly then for any to map out his course without taking advantage of the fund of information which literature silently offers.

It is interesting to note that whichever course one may select, he will still find reading indispensable. Among others, the very characters above referred to found it so, and it is told of the great Napoleon that he never travelled any considerable distance in his coach without being literally surrounded by a fresh stock of works of value, which were eagerly devoured, and then, to allow of ordinary comfort, had to be thrown out of the window.

In still another direction, may reading be said to yield practical value to the physician. No matter how excellent a man may consider his methods of working to be, he must always acknowledge the possibility of better ones. If it be impossible to have the advantage of personally observing such, he may at least learn of them from the literature. In connection with work in medicine, there is plenty of biographical material to be procured containing information of this very nature, and the fact that it comes necessarily from the old world, where medicine is more classical, in no way detracts from its usefulness. A description of the marvellous capacity of work, and the great versatility, of some master must forever leave its impress on the memory to be a stimulus to higher attainment.

If any, on careful consideration, cannot see in such advantages sufficient inducement to give literature systematic attention, let him now look at the necessity for doing so, which is coming to stare him in the face.

The position of the medical man has always been one commanding a more than ordinary amount of respect. Few men, even in public positions come in during their daily rounds, worthy as they may be, for display toward them of deference from so many individuals, as the busy practitioner. Till the present age, the condition of the mass of the people with regard to education has been poor. Nowadays however, there is a chance sweeping over all civilized communities. Well-read men abound everywhere. Merchants, financiers, and men in humble walks of life, are finding the advantages for their actual business of being men of knowledge. Their sons and daughters are early making strides into even scientific knowledge. Books are coming more and more within the reach of all. Technical schools abound where even the poor may make inroads into learning of all sorts. Minds formerly engrossed in small things are now, as a result of this change, and of the wider familiarity possible through the style of magazine now current, the freedom of the press and not a little through such modern inventions as the cinematographe, coming to comprehend life in all its sides. No matter to what extent civilization may advance, the acquired practical skill of the medical man must command at all times, considera-