

often heard him say that he did his best reading as he drove from patient to patient.

It is not so much a question of *when* but of *what* and of *how*. What sort of reading will best help a man in his education, will help him to keep up with the times and to develop into a thinking, reasoning practitioner? Let him get rid of the notion that much has to be read; one or two journals, a good weekly—the *Lancet* or the *BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL*—a good monthly—the *Practitioner* or the *American Journal of the Medical Sciences*—suffice; but let them be read thoroughly. Then each week strip the husk of advertising sheets, and keep on the desk a file of reasonable proportions, and to the articles which have been of interest refer again and again. At the end of the half-year bind your journals and insert slips where you have found articles bearing directly on your cases.

Carefully studied, a couple of journals are the very basis of post-graduate work, and year by year the files on the shelves become not simply the nucleus of, but actually a good working library, and, well marked in his mind, he has in them volumes on every special disease and a complete summary of the progress of medicine.

Let him follow the same practice with books. Buy with discrimination, and not too many, as here again it is a question of reading. If, as is said, the man of one book is dangerous, the man of a few books is more useful and more apt to keep the open, plastic mind. A good "System" of medicine and of surgery, an occasional monograph or work on special diseases, a new edition of a favourite textbook (when you can trust that it is really an editor's, not a publisher's, edition!), should suffice, and do not mean a large annual expenditure.

It is much simpler to buy books than to read them, and easier to read them than to absorb their contents. Too many men slip early out of the habit of studious reading, and yet this is essential to a man if he is to get an education. To be worth anything it must be associated with concentration—with that mental application which means real effort. Of the new Allbutt and Rolleston "System" I can read comfortably about twenty pages in an hour—sometimes of a tough author not more than fifteen. Half an hour a day would finish the six volumes already published within a year.

More than once I have referred to the three essentials in the house of the general practitioner—the library, the laboratory, and the nursery—and of these the first is much the easiest to get, as he starts with a nucleus in his students' textbooks. Effort and system gradually train a man's capacity to read intelligently and profitably, but only while the green years are on his head is the habit to be acquired, and in a desultory life, without fixed hours, and with his time at the beck and call of everybody, a man needs a good deal of reserve and determination to maintain it. Once the machinery is started, the effort is not felt in the keen interest in a subject. As Aristotle remarks, "In the case of our habits we are only masters of the