

Dr. Arthur Lyons
1999

COLLECTING MEDICAL BOOKS

History has been described as the use the present makes of the past. And to paraphrase Sir Isaac Newton, to see further, we stand on the shoulders of giants.

The history of medicine has always had a fascination for me ever since I started medical school and has figuratively provided me with those shoulders. As time goes on it has become a more consuming interest. I have always had collecting interests so that it seemed only natural that after going to original writings important in medical history, I would want to own them. I believe I am an example of the adage that collectors are born rather than made. So, my book collection was simply added to my other and earlier collections of stamps and coins which I actually began as a child. Collecting books however has a unique appeal. Aside from the appeal of books as objects, to know the thoughts and ideas of the individuals who have shaped medicine and surgery over the years gives me an appreciation of the present that cannot be obtained in any other way. It is this perspective that gives an added dimension to my life. This paper will deal with some of my experiences as a collector.

As one puts together a collection of any sort, it naturally reflects one's own interests and personality, and collecting books is no different. It is altogether unique to the individual collector. In my case I began to collect the books and papers of Harvey Cushing (1869-1939), the father of modern neurosurgery. Cushing was unusually prolific, the author of over three hundred books and papers. His writings not only cover the gamut of neurosurgery for the first four decades of the 20th century, but also include many of historical, political, bibliographic and biographical interest. He made major contributions in several clinical and basic scientific areas as well medical history. He won the Pulitzer Prize for his biography of his older friend and mentor William Osler. My attempts at collecting every Cushing book and offprint over the past 40 years

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has been largely successful but I continue to haunt bookstores and peruse rare book catalogues for those few missing and elusive items. There is a palpable thrill of the chase here. With each new book catalogue there may be that last bit of ephemera. My collection has given me an insight into Cushing's contentious personality. It has some unusual items, often with revealing inscriptions to his friends and colleagues and particularly to individuals who could help him in his career. The inscriptions also give a rare and intimate glimpse into the author's thought processes and his prejudices that can be gotten in no other way. But Cushing is easy to collect. There is a published bibliography. He was relatively contemporary, his works are accessible and relatively cheap; and he wrote in English. The Cushing collection was only the start of my book collecting career. Collecting other writings is not nearly so easy and it is certainly more expensive.

The drive to collect more and more books can be insatiable. It can be likened to a disease: bibliomania. It is as old as books themselves. The first fiction best seller, Sebastian Brandt's *Ship of Fools*, printed in the 1490's illustrates the book collector as one of the prime fools. He is depicted as an emaciated scholar wearing glasses dusting off his books that are crammed around him; books he can never hope to read. Not that everyone who collects is sick for we all collect things; most often things we use, or mementos such as souvenirs or family photographs. And we all keep books we have read and enjoyed if merely to pass them on to someone else. Frank Siedler gave us a wonderful exposition on collecting some years ago exploring some of the aspects the collecting drive, memorable to all of us. However, collecting old books like collecting other antiques for all my rationalizing, has only marginal utility. There is foremost the aesthetic pleasure gained by the collector. This can be in the satisfaction of a rare possession or merely the thrill of the chase, already

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has been largely successful but I continue to hunt bookstores and garage sale book catalogues for those few missing and elusive items. There is a palpable thrill of the chase here. With each new book catalogue there may be that last bit of ephemera. My collection has given me an insight into Cushing's contentious personality. It has some unusual items, often with revealing inscriptions to his friends and colleagues and particularly to individuals who could help him in his career. The inscriptions also give a rare and intimate glimpse into the author's thought processes and his prejudices that can be gotten in no other way. But Cushing is easy to collect. There is a published bibliography. He was relatively contemporary, his works are accessible and relatively cheap, and he wrote in English. The Cushing collection was only the start of my book collecting career. Collecting other writings is not nearly so easy and it is certainly more expensive.

The drive to collect more and more books can be insatiable. It can be likened to a disease: bibliomania. It is as old as books themselves. The first fiction best seller, Sebastian Brandt's *Ship of Fools*, printed in the 1490's illustrates the book collector as one of the prime fools. He is depicted as an emaciated scholar wearing glasses dusting off his books that are crammed around him; books he can never hope to read. Not that everyone who collects is sick for we all collect things, most often things we use - memoranda such as

convenient or family photographs. And we all keep books we have read and enjoyed it lately to pass them on to someone else. Evelyn Waugh gave us a wonderful exposition on collecting some years ago exploring some of the aspects the collecting drive, memorable to all of us. However, collecting old books like collecting other antiques for all my rationalizing, has only marginal utility. There is foremost the aesthetic pleasure gained by the collector. This can be in the satisfaction of a rare possession or merely the thrill of the chase, already

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alluded to. But books can be exciting on several other levels. For example, who can forget the sequence in Raymond Chandler's *The Big Sleep*, where Humphrey Bogart enjoys the charms of the pretty clerk in a bookshop which she deliberately closes on a quiet rainy afternoon? On the other hand, there have been men burned at the stake and many imprisoned, martyred because of the books they have written or printed. Just recently an American librarian and scholar in China was jailed for four months merely for buying books in a bookstore. For me the excitement in collecting is on an entirely different level. Wherever I go there is always a bookshop where I can have the pleasure browsing with a dealer I know or get to know and there is the excitement of possibly finding a good book. With each mail delivery there is always the anticipation of receiving a new book catalogue hopefully listing a treasure that I fear¹ must have. The fear is that I will have to spend more money than I can afford.

As one builds a collection it becomes unique reflecting the collector's particular interests and his personality. More importantly as his collection expands, he necessarily becomes an expert in his field, more expert than any dealer can possibly be. But encountering a rare book dealer for the first time can be an intimidating experience. John Locke said: "Books seem to me to be pestilent things, and infect all that trade in them". For all^{their} frequent haughtiness and their often superficial knowledge, book dealers are merchants after all. "Minds of scholars, hearts of thieves", to quote Mike Friedman the San Francisco cardiologist who has amassed a world-famous collection of medicine and science who speaks from his experience with book dealers of over 60 years. However, to build a collection one must have a relationship with book dealers and their catalogues. It is only through them can the rare and obscure books be obtained and a library created. In my field I value the relationships I have with the dozen or so dealers around the world who specialize in the rarified air of old

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As one builds a collection it becomes unique reflecting the collector's particular interests and his personality. More importantly as his collection expands, he necessarily becomes an expert in his field, more expert than any dealer can possibly be. But encountering a rare book dealer for the first time can be an intimidating experience. John Locke said: "Books seem to me to be pestilent things, and infect all that trade in them". For all frequent buyers and their often superficial knowledge, book dealers are magicians after all. "Minds of scholars' hearts of thieves", to quote Mike Friedman the San Francisco cardiologist who has amassed a world-famous collection of medicine and science who speaks from his experience with book dealers of over 60 years. However, to build a collection one must have a relationship with book dealers and their catalogues. It is only through them can the rare and obscure books be obtained and a library created. In my field I value the relationships I have with the dozen or so dealers around the world who specialize in the rarified air of old

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medical books. There is always a good conversation about our favorite subject and occasionally a few drinks and a good lunch. But I always remember that they are there to take as much money from me as they can. The rare book market is a little like a Middle Eastern souk where hard bargaining is the rule. There is the challenge to get a good book at a good price and who is there who does not get excited at getting a bargain?

Books in science and medicine are traditionally printed in small numbers as publishers have always recognized the limited size of their audience. Even very important works such as Darwin's *Origin of Species*, was issued in only 900 copies when it was first published in 1859. Older books in medicine and science were issued in even smaller numbers such that today only a handful of even some very important books have survived the vicissitudes of time. Wars, fires, floods and shredding have taken their toll. In the 30 Years War the entire library of the University of Heidelberg was stolen and carried on muleback over the Alps to the Vatican where it remains today. And as libraries continue to build up their collections fewer and fewer books are available on the market. As a result, to find an important medical book over 100 years old such as the *Origin*, in good condition can be a serious challenge. A good copy of Darwin's opus sold for \$75 in 1956. I just saw a copy for sale in a catalogue for \$60,000! And that of course, makes collecting difficult. The expensive book today is likely to be even more expensive tomorrow.

Old books like other antiques need to be in good condition to be valuable and desirable. They should preferably be in their original or near original state. Old books, particularly those that have seen a lot of use may be a severely damaged or missing pages, a kiss of death to the collector. Warren Howell, dean of San Francisco rare book dealers, warned me early on, never to knowingly buy a defective book. I did once, to my regret. I bought a

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very rare and pathetically thin 1539 Italian anatomy book on the brain with remarkable woodcuts that unfortunately was missing a folding table. I accepted the copy, which was not cheap, thinking that I would never again have the opportunity to even see another. Perhaps only another collector can appreciate how it felt. The book sat on my shelf for years like a sore thumb, defective; never giving me the pleasure it should have. There was pleasure but mixed with pain when I ultimately replaced it with a complete copy but only after having to part with a lot more money.

This brings me to the point of content. A book may be old and a book may be rare but it may be next to worthless if its contents are not important. Value is the result of a combination of factors and rarity is only one. Old bibles are a case in point. The only bible that is truly valuable is the Guttenberg Bible, Mainz 1459, the first book printed with movable type. Any page of this bible is worth ten thousand dollars or more because of the book's rarity and its unique place in history. Aside from the first edition of the famous and poetic King James Bible of 1611, no other bible is very valuable, though many are more beautiful and many quite a bit more rare. The Guttenberg Bible and all other books published before 1501 are considered a special breed called incunabula. These are the books which heralded the new learning of the Renaissance and initially included among others the first printing of the Greek classic plays, the Socratic dialogues, the Fables of Aesop and the geometry of Euclid and the writings of the Church Fathers. As the ability to read became more necessary and more universal, more contemporary writers began to appear in print. Printers rapidly spread out over Europe to compete with one another to produce more popular incunables such as histories, novels, romances and schoolbooks in the last years of the 15th

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This brings me to the point of content. A book may be old and a book may be rare but it may be next to worthless if its contents are not important. Value is the result of a combination of factors and rarity is only one. Old bibles are a case in point. The only bible that is truly valuable is the Gutenberg Bible, Mainz 1459, the first book printed with movable type. Any page of this bible is worth ten times its own weight in gold. Aside from the first edition of the famous and poetic King James Bible of 1611, no other bible is very valuable, though many are more beautiful and many quite a bit more rare. The Gutenberg Bible and all other books published before 1501 are considered a special breed called incunabula. These are the books which heralded the new learning of the Renaissance and initially included among others the first printing of the Greek classic plays, the Socratic dialogues, the Fables of Aesop and the geometry of Euclid and the writings of the Church Fathers. As the ability to read became more necessary and more universal, more contemporary writers began to appear in print. Printers rapidly spread out over Europe to compete with one another to produce more popular incunabula such as histories, novels, romances and schoolbooks in the last years of the 15th

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Century. All incunables are sought after and most are very expensive today.

Prior to Guttenberg all books were expensive hand written manuscripts, laboriously copied with pen and ink often by penurious monks. Books were inscribed on vellum or paper in their original language or in translation. They were always difficult to obtain. A library was considered unusually large if it contained even as many as ten books. By the end of the first millennium rolled scrolls or volumes (from the Latin word for roll) had been largely replaced by the much more convenient book of bound leaves, the codex, which refers to the wooden boards used for the book covers. Manuscript and early printed books often had elaborate highly decorated bindings consistent with the value that their owners placed on them. To pick up and handle one of these objects is rare experience. Recently sold at auction, was a copy of the first edition of the famous Vesalius anatomy, 1543, the *Fabric of the Human Body*, that had belonged to the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V of Spain, Vesalius' patron. The *Fabrica* is a valuable book in any state but this copy was unique. It was bound in original Royal Purple velvet over boards and its famous full page Titian woodcuts were all beautifully hand colored especially for the king. In perfect condition, it was truly gorgeous. There are no other colored copies known. This book belonged to the San Francisco psychiatrist and collector, Haskell Norman. I had the privilege of handling this book many times. I never got over the thrill: a supremely important book: the first truly scientific medical book with an unparalleled provenance in a singular state. At the auction of the Norman collection at Christie's last year it did not take long for it to go under the hammer for 2.5 million dollars. The price was not considered excessive. I can only regret that nothing in my collection will ever approach it.

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manuscripts, laboriously copied, written and ink often by penurious monks.

Books were inscribed on vellum or paper in their original language or in

translation. They were always difficult to obtain. A library was considered

unusually large if it contained even as many as ten books. By the end of the first

millennium rolled scrolls or volumes (from the Latin word for roll) had been

largely replaced by the much more convenient book of bound leaves, the codex,

which refers to the wooden boards used for the book covers. Manuscript and

early printed books often had elaborate highly decorated bindings consistent

with the value that their owners placed on them. To pick up and handle one of

these objects is rare experience. Recently sold at auction, was a copy of the

first edition of the famous Vesalius anatomy, 1543, the fabric of the human

Body, that had belonged to the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V of Spain, Vesalius

patron. The fabric is a valuable book in any state but this copy was unique. It

was bound in original Royal Purple velvet over boards and its famous full page

Titan woodcuts were all beautifully hand colored especially for the king. In

perfect condition, it was truly gorgeous. There are no other colored copies

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From what has been said, it is apparent that old books can be appreciated on several levels. From my standpoint the book must primarily contain important material, preferably not having been published before. This may be in the text or in its illustrations. As virtually all scientific books prior to 1750 were printed in Latin, this can be a problem. I have had to get a sort of classical education often with the help of those more knowledgeable than I to solve it. Nevertheless many of my books remain necessarily unread. As Sebastian Brandt wrote in 1490, this paradox has never deterred a true collector! Fortunately, there are many translations available and there are many reference books with valuable descriptions and summaries. Pouring through the contents of an ancient and rare book is very much like a treasure hunt and full of the same anticipation. There is always the chance of finding an unexpected important nugget of the author's original thought.

Any book to have real value except in rare instances must be a first edition. The first time the author's ideas appear in print makes that appearance important and worth paying a premium for. The first edition of Darwin's *Origin of Species* mentioned earlier, has reached a stratospheric price. The second edition identical to the first and published in the same year: 1859, can be had for a mere \$200. If the first edition is in a rare state all bets are off! An example in a non-medical very popular but not so rare twentieth century book: the first edition of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, in good condition is worth around \$1000. The same book as it first appeared in its excessively rare dust jacket if it can be found, would cost in the neighborhood of \$15,000! The desire for first editions by the true collector is legendary. However, it must be tempered by practicality. In my field for example, any incunable edition of an important book dealing with medicine or surgery must be accepted because they

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are all of such extraordinary rarity. A first edition for the book collector is like a mint stamp to the philatelist.

There are examples of book collectors however, who will buy virtually anything and everything they can get their hands on. This is the true pathology of bibliomania. The notorious Sir Thomas Phillips in the early 1800's filled several English country houses with manuscript material indiscriminately bought and stolen from libraries and collections all over Europe. In the process he impoverished himself and permanently alienated his wife and children. The amount of material was so vast that the last of this collection if such an accumulation can be called a collection, was finally disposed of only last year 150 years after Sir Thomas' death. I know of a collector not nearly so wealthy who has bought so many books that he has placed himself in impossible debt. Always running from his creditors, he will never give up his beloved books. He has hidden his books in various parts of the country hopefully to keep them from being repossessed. He must travel thousands of miles just to remind himself of what he owns! The present heir to a European fortune recently sold a city trolley system he had inherited just to buy masses of rare manuscripts. Extremely reticent, he admits when pressed that he now owns two warehouses in London where he keeps them with a full-time staff of cataloguers. It is not unusual for even normal collectors to be self-conscious about their affliction. They may hide their purchases from their wives, to surreptitiously bring them into the house or may even leave them indefinitely with the dealer and never pick them up. Why book collectors are almost always men has never been adequately explained, but they are and they are very frequently embarrassed about their apparent sex-linked passion for books, which they can share with only a few like themselves. As a result, the ardent bibliophile or bibliomaniac may have a lonely reclusive life warmed only by his passion, lifelong and insatiable.

are all of such extraordinary rarity. A first edition for the book collector is like a mint stamp to the philatelist.

There are examples of book collectors however, who will buy virtually anything and everything they can get their hands on. This is the true pathology of didomania. The notorious Sir Thomas Phillips in the early 1800's filled several English country houses with manuscript material indiscriminately bought and stolen from libraries and collections all over Europe. In the process he impoverished himself and permanently alienated his wife and children. The amount of material was so vast that the last of this collection if such an accumulation can be called a collection, was finally disposed of only last year 150 years after Sir Thomas' death. I know of a collector not nearly so wealthy who has bought so many books that he has placed himself in impossible debt. Always running from his creditors, he will never give up his beloved books. He has hidden his books in various parts of the country hopefully to keep them from being repossessed. He must travel thousands of miles just to remind himself of what he owns! The present heir to a European fortune recently sold a city trolley system he had inherited just to buy masses of rare manuscripts. Extremely reticent, he admits when pressed that he now owns two warehouses in London where he keeps them with a full-time staff of cataloguers. It is not unusual for even normal collectors to be self-conscious about their affliction. They may hide their purchases from their wives, to surreptitiously bring them into the house or may even leave them indefinitely with the dealer and never pick them up. Why book collectors are almost always men has never been adequately explained, but they are and they are very frequently embarrassed about their apparent sex-linked passion for books, which they can share with only a few like themselves. As a result, the ardent bibliophile or didomaniac may have a lonely reclusive life warmed only by his passion, lifelong and insatiable.

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My collection, very modest by any standard is restricted to books in the neurosciences. But the temptation is strong; often to go afield when offered a particularly beautiful old book at an attractive price. So far, limited bookshelf space and purse and a usually clear head have prevailed. But it has been a struggle on occasion. A magnificent contemporary vellum bound copy of the first work in English on natural history published in 1516, was recently offered to me at a bargain price. It required an almost superhuman exertion of will power to resist this beautifully illustrated book. For the book addict, adding an important rare book to one's collection provides incomparable satisfaction. This is especially true if it has been sought out for a long time. The first accurate account stroke or apoplexy resulting from brain hemorrhage is an example. This is in a small book written in 1658 by an obscure Swiss physician who was an unusually acute observer as he followed his patients from the bedside to the autopsy table. His discovery made him instantly famous and his book extraordinarily rare. I had been looking for the first edition for at least 30 years when I bid on it successfully at an auction last year in New York; price was no object. I could not wait to get my hands on this treasure which I literally carried home in my pocket to fill what to me had been a yawning gap on my shelves. I once found a very rare elusive but very important book on brain anatomy by an Italian anatomist published just once in 1573. It was an unlikely book, its listing buried inconspicuously in an auction catalogue of books on flowers. I was presented with a real dilemma. The book was famous as it first described a major part of the brain that has been known ever since eponymously as the Pons Varolii. The book had an absurdly low estimate. Clearly the auction house in New York had no idea of its importance. Could I take a chance, bid for myself by mail hoping that the several knowledgeable medical book dealers whom I knew, had not noticed it? If so, I could possibly get this treasure on the

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My collection, very modest by any standard is restricted to books in the neurosciences. But the temptation is strong; often to go ahead when offered a particularly beautiful old book at an attractive price. So far, the bookshelves are and nurse and a usually clear head have prevailed. But it has been a struggle on occasion. A magnificent contemporary well bound copy of the first work in English on natural history published in 1718, was recently offered to me at a bargain price. It required an almost superhuman exertion of will power to resist this beautifully illustrated book. For the book addict, along an important rare book to one's collection provides incomparable satisfaction. This is especially true if it has been sought out for a long time. The first accurate account of stroke or apoplexy, resulting from brain hemorrhage is an example. This is in a small book written in 1858 by an obscure Swiss physician who was an unusually acute observer as he followed his patients from the bedside to the autopsy table. His discovery made him instantly famous and the book extraordinarily rare. It had been looking for the first edition for at least 30 years when I did not successfully at an auction last year in New York; price was no object. I could not wait to get my hands on this treasure which I already carried home in my pocket to fill what to me had been a yawning gap on my shelves. I once found a very rare elusive but very important book on brain anatomy by an Italian anatomist published just once in 1573. It was an unlikely book, its listing buried inconspicuously in an auction catalogue of books on flowers. I was presented with a real dilemma. The book was famous as it first described a major part of the brain that has been known ever since eponymously as the Pons Varolii. The book had an absurdly low estimate. Clearly the auction house in New York had no idea of its importance. Could I take a chance and for myself by mail hoping that the several knowledgeable medical book dealers whom I knew, had not noticed it? It so, I could possibly get this treasure on the

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cheap; an exciting prospect! Or, should I bite the bullet and give my bid to a dealer and pay his commission on top of a possibly higher price. I fortunately chose the latter course. Getting the dealer to bid for me, effectively took him out of contention. He of course, had noticed the book and was prepared to bid for himself. He was successful in the bidding, but at a breath-stopping price well above my limit and at least twenty times the estimate. The book was so rare that without any auction records to rely on, the auction house had been completely out of its depth. I only agreed to the price when the dealer offered to keep it himself for resale at an even higher price. That convinced me that I should splurge but it took me about a year to pay it off. I now have this treasure, one of the only two copies in private hands, owned free and clear. The price is forgotten. My only problem now is keeping track of this tiny, thin book with its magnificent descriptive plates as it sits between larger and much cheaper books. It is the book that one does not get that rankles.

Every collector has a story. My favorite concerns my quest for a copy of Thomas Willis' *Anatomia Cerebri*. This classic in neurology from which we name the arteries around the base of the brain, the circle of Willis, is on every neurologist's want-list. Published the year New Amsterdam was renamed New York in 1664, printed on thick creamy white paper in a large and handsome format it has beautiful full page copper engraved illustrations of the brain drawn by Willis' friend, Sir Christopher Wren. I had always had my eye out for a copy ever since medical school but had never been able find one. On Thanksgiving several years ago, I was visiting family in Los Angeles, and I dropped in on the bookshop of the prominent science and medicine dealer, Jake Zeitlen. Knowing my interest he casually let me know that someone he had not seen before had just offered him an excellent copy of the Willis. He offered the owner \$600 and had been turned down. The person left and that long-sought after book went with him to

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cheap, an exciting prospect. I should have bid the dealer and given my bid to a dealer and pay his commission on top of it. I possibly might have. I fortunately chose the latter course. Getting the dealer to bid for me, I effectively took him out of contention. He of course had noticed the book and was prepared to bid for himself. He was successful in the bidding, but at a steeply rising price well above my limit and at least twenty times the estimate. The book was so rare

that without any auction records to refer to, the auction house had been completely out of its depth. I only agreed to the price when the dealer offered to keep it himself for resale at an even higher price. That convinced me that I

should splurge but it took me about a year to pay it off. I now have this treasure, one of the only two copies in private hands, owned, read and clean. The price is forgotten. My only problem now is keeping track of the tiny, thin book with its magnificent descriptive plates as it sits between lamp and much cheaper books. It is the book that one does not get that rankles.

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parts unknown! I was silently furious to have had Jake let that great book slip through his hands by offering such a paltry sum. I knew the book was worth many times that. The whole next year I obsessed over that damned book. I fantasized about advertising for it in the LA paper. I thought about asking other dealers to keep on the alert for it. Of course, I did none of these things. Exactly one year later, again on Thanksgiving I went in to see Jake Zeitlen. He greeted me with a smile on his face. "Do you remember that Willis book?" Did I! I thought I would never stop thinking about it. "Well, that guy with the book came back just yesterday and I offered him \$700, and he took it! You can have it now for \$900, that is if you want it." It would have been a steal at twice the price! I could not get it fast enough and Zeitlen made a quick \$200 profit. The book is now one of my most treasured volumes. Jake is long gone but every time I take down that Willis and open those nice still crisp old vellum covers, I think about him and how lucky a collector can be at times. There are other stories that do not end so happily, but fortunately I have managed to forget most of them; the agony of recall would be too great!

Over the years through book dealers, auctions and catalogues, I have collected scores of books of varying degrees of rarity important in my field of interest in the neurosciences. Besides the more obvious, they include works in pseudo-science of phrenology, an early 19th century attempt at understanding brain function, as well as early works on gunshot which include the treatment of head wounds. Many of these early works contain wonderful illustrations of patients, their operations as well as early surgical instruments. They are often quaintly graphic and lurid but at the same time frequently very beautiful and artistic. My collection also includes old anatomic atlases, which reveal the progressive knowledge of brain structure over the years since human dissection began in the 16th century. It is fascinating to follow the evolution of knowledge

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through books to see how far we have come in the science of medicine and to put in perspective how far we have to go to fully understand the nervous system.

Every time I look at one of my old books I become lost. There always seems to be something new that I find. The text might reveal an undiscovered insight or describe something previously unnoticed or unappreciated. There can be variations either in the text, binding or collation, which I can compare to other copies. The binding may require treatment or a page may need repair. My partner says that I play with my books. I suppose it is play because it is a lot of fun, but at the same time it is play with a purpose. Creating a library requires more than getting good books. It requires discovering and recognizing what makes each book a significant repository of knowledge. All this as well as preserving these rare books as valued objects, monuments to man's genius, constitute an obligation one has to the books' future owners. I use the word owner conditionally. One can never be a true owner of timeless treasures such as important books. As a privileged but necessarily, only a temporary possessor, I can be no more than a custodian; a custodian, responsible to the next generation that hopefully will love and value these wonderful objects as much as I do.

ARTHUR E. LYONS MD

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thought or describe something I had not noticed or thought of at all. There can
be variations either in the text, binding or collection, which I can compare to
other copies. The binding may require treatment or a page may need repair. My
partner says that I play with my books. I suppose it is play because it is a lot of
fun, but at the same time it is play with a purpose. Creating a library requires
more than getting good books. It requires discovering and recognizing what
makes each book a significant repository of knowledge. All this as well as
preserving these rare books as valued objects, monuments to man's genius.
constitute an obligation not just to the book, future owners, I use the word
owner intentionally. One can own a rare jewel or a time-worn treasure such
as an antique book. As a privileged but necessary, only a temporary possession
I can do no more than a custodian, responsible to the next generation
that hopefully will love and value these wonderful objects as much as I do.

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