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It would be a good thing to buy books if one could also buy the time to read them; but one usually confuses the purchase of books with the acquisition of their contents. To desire that a man should retain everything he has ever read, is the same as wishing him to retain in his stomach all that he has ever eaten. He has been bodily nourished on what he has eaten, and mentally on what he has read, and through them become what he is. As the body assimilates what is homogeneous to it, so will a man \_retain\_ what \_interests\_ him; in other words, what coincides with his system of thought or suits his ends. Every one has aims, but very few have anything approaching a system of thought. This is why such people do not take an objective interest in anything, and why they learn nothing from what they read: they remember nothing about it.

\_Repetitio est mater studiorum\_. Any kind of important book should immediately be read twice, partly because one grasps the matter in its entirety the second time, and only really understands the beginning when the end is known; and partly because in reading it the second time one's temper and mood are different, so that one gets another impression; it may be that one sees the matter in another light.