

simple or complex ; and from chicken pox to peritonitis, bunions to compound fractures ; the application of forceps to an offending molar, or to a head which refuses to come through the maternal pelvis, his experience may range within a short period of time. With the advantages of a many-sided experience it would be natural to expect that the Country Practitioner would develop a readiness to deal with difficult cases arising in his practice, and thus become endowed with that confidence which, tempered with sound judgment, makes a medical man successful. But I hold that only a small fraction of those who spend their lives in the remote parts of the field ever reach the heights they bid fair to attain when they left college, and further, it seems as if in the domain of surgery do we most conspicuously fall short. Well equipped hospitals with skilled attending surgeons offer a tempting way out of the responsibility of doing work not in itself very difficult, and many members of our profession are thus led to hand over cases they might very well treat themselves, to others. The result is inevitable : from not using the skill with which they are endowed at the outset they either degenerate, or become at least examples of arrested development. As one who readily admits the personal application of the criticisms these remarks may contain I make no further apology for specially addressing the Country Practitioners, except to say that the object sought is to stimulate them to greater confidence in the possibilities lying around, so that by embracing their opportunities they will not only advance themselves but raise the general average of professional ability and counteract the tendency to quackery, which in its many forms is rampant even in this enlightened age.

If surgery has made marvellous strides in the past it has been as a result of hard work and patient attention to details on the part of those who devoted themselves to its study. Naturally we look to the cities with their many advantages for our leaders, but we must not forget that not one whose name is prominent as a surgeon to-day but worked his way by doing even the minor work thoroughly ; and for our encouragement we can recall not a few who with all the drawbacks of a country environment gave the world some of the most startling revelations in medical science. But while we may all agree that determination to succeed will be crowned with honour, no matter what the difficulties are, we must all bear in mind there are limitations to what any man should attempt, and all surgical operations have the elements of danger sufficiently strong to forbid their being entered upon either as an amusement or experiment.