

most progressive surgeon, but there still remain a number who unwittingly jeopardise the life of the patient by failing to appreciate the importance of calling in the services of a surgeon at a sufficiently early date. It occurs to me, therefore, that, when certain definite conclusions are arrived at concerning the necessity or otherwise of early operation, the surgeon should not wait to emphasize his opinions over the bedside of the patient, but should state his views with no uncertain sound, bolstering up his arguments by reference to his own experience as set forth in his clinical records. The responsibility must be shouldered in individual cases by the physician and surgeon conjointly and whilst it would be an impertinence on the part of the surgeon to suggest to his colleague that, prior to the consultation, the treatment had been in his opinion along wrong lines, yet some opportunity must be taken to impress the profession with the logical conclusions which have been arrived at from the surgeon's standpoint and which would in his belief have changed the issue in many instances had the facts been appreciated by the medical attendant at an earlier stage in the case. There is another class to whom we owe a duty in this respect. I refer to the general practitioner in outlying districts in poorly settled portions of the country, where often, because of the distance to be travelled, or the expense which would have to be incurred, it is impossible to call a surgeon in consultation, and where the general practitioner himself must undertake the operative procedure when it becomes necessary. I believe these practitioners in country districts will sooner or later come to realize that in the cases to which I refer, early operation is not only the safer procedure, but is always a simpler undertaking and is more likely to succeed if proceeded with before serious complications have arisen. Lastly I may point out that where surgical interference is undertaken late and fails, it is surgery that is blamed for the result when often the responsibility should actually lie with the medical attendant who has not realized that operative procedure was indicated at an earlier date in the case.

When one embarks on a consideration of this theme, one realizes that the whole field of surgery might come under review and generally speaking the moment any operation is demanded, then the sooner it is carried out the better. My object however is to deal mainly with a class of cases concerning which there has been considerable controversy in the past, but about which there should now be absolute agreement. If that agreement is to be reached however, it must be arrived at by careful study of the results obtained by the surgeon along with those obtained by purely medical means.