



# Perspective

By JAMIE BUCKINGHAM

Someplace I read an old proverb that went something like: "Blessed is he who goes around in circles, for he shall be known as a big wheel."

I can't vouch for the big wheel bit, but I can state that I've sure been going in a lot of circles recently. Yet, after having been over the same ground several times I'm coming to realize that it's the circular quality of life that makes it effective. So for all you dreary housewives, tired businessmen, discouraged salesmen, and bored professional men I want to say, "Take heart." It may seem that going around in circles produces nothing; but remember, our capacity and skill to perform comes only through repetition.

The work of the world cannot be done by grasshoppers. It is done by bees. The bee goes around in circles, but it's a big circle, and he always returns with something sweet. The grasshopper, on the other hand, does nothing but jump up and down, going in all directions and bringing back nothing.

Oliver Gogarty, the Irish poet, was a physician before he became a poet. When someone asked him why he gave up medicine for literature he said in typical Irish fashion, "Well, I just got tired of looking down people's throats and listening to them say 'Ah—Ah.'"

So, he got tired. Who doesn't, occasionally? Did he imagine that the practice of medicine would be an endless succession of fresh and bewildering surprises and challenges. The true physician says, "Disease is a circle, and circles are my business." And I'll tell you this, when I'm rushed to the hospital with an acute pain in my stomach I want to have a doctor around who has been over

this same territory a thousand times before he begins to carve.

One of my recurring nightmares is of lying in an operation room with my stomach already sliced open and a fuzzy-faced young intern standing over my exposed insides, scratching his head and saying nervously to the nurse, "Now, which one of these here knives should I use next."

No sir, when I get to that place I want a fellow working on me who has been around that circle so many times he could almost do it with his eyes shut. And whether it's cutting out appendixes, cleaning kitchen cabinets, selling insurance, pulling teeth, playing golf, or even praying, it's the repetition that gives it quality.

As a boy, I would occasionally follow my father's business partner, John W. E. Wheeler, around the golf course. Uncle John, as we affectionally called him, was never long off the tee. A diminutive man, he just didn't have the power to sock the ball very far. One afternoon, however, he connected just right and the ball sailed far out past the 200-yard marker and rolled to a stop just inches from the pin. Mopping his bald head, Uncle John turned and said with his dry wit, "Now remember that shot, Jamie boy. That's the true me."

I learned something that day from Uncle John. I learned that even though the next time he played, he would go hole after hole and never hit the ball more than 100 yards, that he would keep at it because he knew that sooner or later the "true him" would emerge once again.

Take heart. Going around in circles isn't so bad because sooner or later you'll meet yourself. And that's a grand experience.