

and means of teaching surgery; or, the no less impressive force and grace of a Hingston, by virtue of which the mental eye of the greatest of all medical associations is persuaded to open widely in amazement and delight, as a system of aboriginal surgery, practised in the wilds of far-off America, is unfolded in language not less remarkable for its simplicity and clearness than for its eloquence and pathos.

Happy, indeed, are the orators who can deliver, and the associations which have the privilege of listening to such addresses. In undertaking to speak of the progress of surgery in our own time, it will at once become obvious that on such an occasion as the present, it is out of the question to attempt to do more than mention a few of the more salient features of the theme as they happen to appear to the individual who, for the time being, has the floor.

To treat the subject exhaustively, or to any extent analytically, endeavouring to set forth in due form and in their proper order, chronologically or otherwise, the manifold steps and processes, and the parts played by different individuals, whereby the results in which we so much delight to glory have been attained, implies an effort transcendentally beyond the most latitudinarian estimate of the scope and aim of my present duty. The utmost that I can presume to attempt on the present occasion, is the presentation of a few of the thoughts suggested to my own mind, by the deliberate contemplation of some of the changes in surgical thought and practice which have taken place during the generation to which we happen to belong.

You and I have been interested spectators of, and more or less active participants in, a great contest with enemies of our common humanity of the most malevolent and uncompromising character. This battle commenced long before our day, and without doubt will continue to rage long after we have individually been forced to lay down our arms and pass over to that vast majority which has preceded us. In the meantime, however, we pause for a brief space in the thick of the fight for the purpose of permitting one of the rank and file the opportunity of recording a few of the impressions made upon his own mind, respecting the progress of events in that part of the eternal struggle in

which you and he have had the great honour of playing some part, each one according to his ability, whether that be greater or whether it be humbler.

In attempting to explain the rapid progress of surgery in recent times, and summing up the most powerful of the agencies by which this progress has been effected, large credit has been accorded to two or three data, which certainly have borne a sort of pivotal relation to the whole subject. These are, first, the discovery of Anaesthetics, the influence of which is unquestionable and incalculable, the second is, in a word, Bacteriology, of which it may be said, I think, that the influence for good has been practically infinite: the third, I have already mentioned, viz., Steam, and of this agency I think it may be truly said that its influence has been at least as great as that of any other, not excepting even those just mentioned.

There are at least three other agencies of a general character whose influence has been, in my opinion, very great, although I don't think that they have always received the recognition to which they are justly entitled.

The first of these might be described as "Our inheritance or birthright." I refer to the great stimulus given to surgery by the life and works and teachings of such men as Sir Astley Cooper, Sir Benjamin Brodie, John Bell, the true progenitor of ovariectomy and all that that implies, Liston and Syme, Langenbeck and Desault, and many others who adorned the generation immediately preceding our own. If the torch of surgery has burned more brilliantly and effectively in our day than in any preceding age, to the inspiration supplied by these great men is due much of the credit. The stimulating and inspiring influence of their characters and labors has warmed into active, earnest and successful effort the Listers, the Senns, the Taits, and all the captains of the hosts of our own great and notable day and generation.

The second is the characteristic spirit of the age, which has had its effect upon other departments of science as well, and on surgery as much as any. I mean that spirit which is so well exemplified in the work and the methods of Darwin and his followers, who once for all demolished that great stumbling block in the way of scientific and philosophical progress, viz., the idolatry of author-