

dividuals with whom he had been brought into collision, but the traditions and habits of thought from which those individuals had not been able to emancipate themselves. The triumphant result of his labours is that for fifty years the history of the Lancet has been the history of the profession of medicine, of its struggles after higher truth and deeper knowledge, of its gradual emancipation from the shackles of prejudice and error, of the increasing pride of its members in their calling, and their increasing respect for themselves and sense of duty towards each other. We are no longer alone in the great work in which we still claim to be leaders; and we gladly recognise the services which our contemporaries render to the common cause which we established, and which they have subsequently espoused; but none the less do we remember that our columns are the direct representatives of those which first rendered possible the formation of a public opinion in matters of medicine. The retrospect over fifty years, in any undertaking, must always be attended by thoughts which temper elation with sadness; and in our own case we have to regret many losses by time and death, some promises which have remained without fulfilment, and a few instances in which those who were friends in outward seeming have proved unworthy of the trust we have reposed in them. Notwithstanding these things, we remember with no common satisfaction how many of our chief contributors have been men who have afterwards attained the highest honours in the profession; or, in other words, to how great an extent the work of the Lancet has been that of some of the best brains that have been devoted to the medical calling.

But over and above its purely professional relations, the Lancet has performed a rôle on which we cannot forbear to touch—that of an auxiliary, nay, in some respects a pioneer, of sanitary and social reform. No account of its work would be complete which failed to notice its efforts, constantly maintained and ultimately successful, for the abolition of flogging in the army—a form of discipline which was carried to an utterly inhuman excess, and acted as a positive deterrent to the recruit. The Commission for the detection of Food Adulteration was another movement to which society is indebted for much of the legislation which is now directed against fraudulent traders. The thorough exposure of the imperfect qualifications with which candidates were in many cases allowed to enter upon practice led to the enactments of 1858—enactments which, provisional as they are and susceptible of much modification, were yet a great step in advance of the traditional state of things. The inquiries into the management of workhouses and workhouse infirmaries opened up a vast field of reform, the cultivation of which is yet in progress, but of which we can already anticipate the harvest in a wiser, more humane, and more efficacious treatment of the poor and the invalid pauper. Hospital Sunday is another and cognate movement, the effects of which are, even in this its elementary stage, of the most gratifying kind, and are giving earnest of a systematised and successful mode of sustaining our medical charities in practical efficacy and in public confidence. The suc-

cess of these and of many similar efforts, and the spirit of co-operation in which they have been met by the community, are at once our justification and our encouragement in continuing the policy which the founder of the Lancet initiated, and of which he lived to see some of the fruits. The past, indeed, inspires us with full confidence in the future; and we do not doubt—nay, we determine and will ensure, we or our successors—that the history of the journal, for the half-century that is to come, shall reflect no discredit upon that of the half-century which has passed away.

#### THE TENDENCY OF MODERN SURGERY.

The tendency of modern surgery is undoubtedly to become more and more conservative—conservative in the good sense of preserving life and diminishing suffering. Although it is not possible to dispense altogether with the knife, yet its use has been curtailed in many directions of late, and the most recent innovation has robbed the majority of operations on the limbs, and especially the great amputations, of the whole of the sanguinary horrors which surrounded them, whilst directly favouring the recovery of the patient by preserving several ounces or even pounds of his vital fluids. The ancient method of simply constricting a limb, with a view both of arresting the flow of blood and benumbing the nerves, was improved upon by Petit, who, in the early part of the eighteenth century, originated the tourniquet which still bears his name. This tourniquet has never, however, been perfectly satisfactory, for the reason that the constriction of the veins it induced gave rise to considerable loss of blood from the engorged vessels; and it was with the view of obviating this mischance that the instruments of Signoroni and Skey were introduced. Liston, who prided himself on the rapidity of his amputations, never employed a tourniquet, preferring the pressure of an assistant's hand on the main vessel at the moment of the operation; and both he and other writers have condemned the use of an instrument on account of the venous hæmorrhage.

It was only in 1860 that the most formidable of all the amputations—that at the hip-joint—was rescued from the fatality which seemed almost always to attend it by the introduction of the abdominal tourniquet—an invention due equally to Professor Pancoast and Professor Lister. Previous to that date the surgeon had either trusted to the hands of his assistants, who grasped the flaps to arrest the flow of blood, or had to lay aside the knife, after fashioning one flap, in order to secure the vessels before proceeding to complete the disarticulation. It is curious, in the light of our present knowledge, to come across an account of an amputation performed in the latter manner fifty years ago by no less able a surgeon than Sir Astley Cooper, and to find a surgical critic of that day upholding a method which prolonged the agony of the operation for some twenty minutes against the former proceeding adopted by Mr. Syme about the same time, while sharply criticising the statement that Mr. Liston was able to

pass his fingers beneath the flap and control the femoral artery, the disarticulation being accomplished in less than two minutes!

The method of Esmarch is but a scientific expansion of the old plan followed by many surgeons of raising limbs or tumours before removal, in order to drain them of their blood. The Indian surgeons who have removed the enormous scrotal growths met with in hot climates have long insisted upon this practice, which has very great advantages. Few surgeons nowadays would recommend loss of blood as a salutary accompaniment of any large operation, and though we have heard the doctrine enunciated that preliminary bleedings are advisable prior to the removal of large ovarian tumours, we know of no facts which can be brought forward in support of the practice. To operate *cito, tuto, et jucunde*, has long been the surgeon's aim, and to have a bloodless, or wellnigh bloodless, proceeding would seem an element strongly in favour of the last requirement.—[Lancet.

#### CINCHONA IN INDIA.

A parliamentary paper on the progress of India in 1872 gives information respecting the cultivation of the cinchona plant, which was introduced into the hill districts in 1860. The total expenditure of the experiment was £61,719. There are now 2,639,285 plants in the government plantations on the Neilgherry Hills alone, without counting those of private planters in this and other districts. The largest trees are 30½ feet high, and over three feet in girth round the trunk. The area covered by the plantations amounts to 950 acres, and is being added to every year. The bark under cultivation is stated to be much richer in quinine and other alkaloids than the wild bark of South America. During last year 7295 pounds of excellent bark were sold in the London market, while 65,688 pounds were supplied to the local manufactory. This year 20,000 pounds will be sent home. The alkaloid is manufactured on the spot in an exceedingly cheap form for the use of local medical stores, and hundreds of fever-patients are thus annually cured. The object of providing an abundant supply of the febrifuge at a price within the means of the population at large is rapidly being realized.—*British Medical Journal*.

That a provincial town should give birth to three medical men of great eminence, at the same period, is not an ordinary circumstance. This, however, is the case with the city of Tours, in France. Bretonneat, Troussseau, and Velpeau were born at Tours.

We (Lancet) hear that a large number of medical officers—about forty in all—have been placed under orders, or are already on their way to the Gold Coast, in connexion with the forthcoming campaign. About one hundred men of the Army Hospital Corps will also take part in the expedition, and be distributed among the hospitals at the base of operations and in the field, and on board the floating hospitals and various steamers that may be utilized in conveying the sick homeward.