

"We may discern, unseen before
A path to higher destinies."

One would wish, were it possible, to review the advances of the past year in the field of medical science, but a few illustrations are sufficient to show us that "The old order changeth, giving place to new." Of necessity we see most prominently the increased intensity exhibited on all sides in enquiries into the origin of disease. Bacteriology has made the origin of yellow fever a practical certainty, and to Freire belongs much credit. Klein has pushed still further his enquiries regarding the *micrococcus scarlatinae*, and has been upheld by other workers of prominence. Salmon has cultivated with success the bacterium of hog cholera, and numerous workers attest the permanency of Koch's experiments regarding the origin of tuberculosis. The lecture of Sir James Paget, elsewhere summarized, still further indicates the scientific direction toward which the clinician is looking for aid, both as to the origin of, and remedies for that terrible class of diseases. Similarly in the treatment of disease we witness the unwearying endeavors to find in germicides and antiseptics the potent elixir of life. In the knowledge of electricity and its practical uses in Medicine, the past year has shown a very marked advance which gives every indication of wider development in 1888. The direction of much useful work is very admirably outlined in the article by Dr. Small, in this number. When we see the splendid results in sanitary work attained by the systematic work of the Local Government Board of England, we look, and we trust not vainly, to the time when a systematic collation of the many clinical facts relating to disease in Canada, shall bring strong support to the experimental work, carried on elsewhere, and still more to the prosecution here, alongside of such collation, of experimental enquiry into the causation of disease. The experience of Montreal two years ago, of Ottawa within the past three months, and of many more limited municipalities, tells us that epidemic diseases are not dead, but in a fitful slumber; and to our noble profession, filled in so large a measure with the scientific spirit as well as of charity, we commend as aptly illustrating the position of the true worker, Longfellow's words:

"We have not wings, we cannot soar;
But we have feet to scale and climb,
By slow degrees, by more and more,
The cloudy summits of our time!"

CANCER AND CANCEROUS DISEASES.

ON November 11th, at the Royal College of Surgeons, England, the Mortonian lecture on the above subject was delivered by Sir James Paget; and, were more than the name of the illustrious lecturer necessary in order to interest us, it would be the fact that the much-disputed question of the origin of cancer was discussed from a standpoint which compared with that of even fifteen years ago, marks in sharpest outline the influence which bacteriological research has had upon the previous mode of medical thought as regards the origin of diseases. How crude have been the views regarding cancer can well be illustrated by its etymology, due, we are told, to the resemblance of the spreading veins, often seen in the cancerous breast, to the extended claws of the crab (*cancer*). That existing views regarding its origin are hazy, is seen in the discussions which from time to time appear, as to whether it has a local or general origin, the former believed in by a class who with bacteriological evidence complete, still dispute the constitutional character of diphtheria.

Referring at the outset to the hope, which he thinks is not a vain one, of finding the means, perhaps both for preventing and even curing cancer, Paget believes it will most probably be realized by the constant careful study of the likeness of these diseases to others of which we already have means of useful treatment. We may be the more hopeful because the nearest likeness of cancer and cancerous diseases is to two other groups of diseases concerning which there have been in recent times very useful additions to our knowledge. "In one direction we have their likeness to the simple or innocent tumors, in the surgical removal of which the risk to life has been diminished . . . and in the other direction we have their likeness, which I believe, to be much more intimate, to some of the specific and micro-parasitic diseases, a group in which there has been progress towards preventive and remedial treatment."

At the outset he states that we can only accurately talk of cancerous diseases as a *group* with no definite limiting boundaries for its individuals. All tumors, he says, grow with some likeness to various natural structures of the body, but seem to grow "as with a self-possessed power of maintaining and increasing themselves." This "purposeless