

## Book Reviews

*Anesthesia from Colonial Times: A History of Anesthesia at the University of Pennsylvania*, by JAMES E. ECKENHOFF, Montreal and Philadelphia, J. P. Lippincott; London, Pitman Medical Publishing Co., 1966, pp. 95, illus., 35s.

The history of a great clinical, teaching and research department mirrors in its development that of the speciality which it embraces. This little book traces the use of anaesthesia at the University of Pennsylvania from the early tentative days, through the ether v chloroform controversy, to those when a few far-sighted men—a surgeon or two, and a handful of pharmacologists—laid the foundations upon which modern anaesthetic practice is built. Disappointments there were: surgeons on the whole appear unsympathetic. In 1938 ‘nurses had administered most of the inhalation anesthetics for the previous 30 years, surgeons gave all spinal anesthetics . . . and the Bronchology Department inserted all the tracheal tubes.’ Since the war, however, advance has been progressive and great.

Professor Eckenhoff gives an interesting account of these developments. W. P. C. Barton, whose *Dissertation . . . of Nitrous Oxide Gas*, 1808, followed the line of Davy’s observations, was Professor of Botany. Benjamin Rush gave lectures on ‘clinical gases’. Though Crawford Long was a graduate (1839), his indifference to his discovery was almost paralleled by his University, and to some extent by America as a whole, where ‘etherization’ till the end of the century was regarded as hardly worthy of a qualified man. A few names stand out, none more so than Horatio Wood, Professor of *Materia Medica* 1862–93, who left a lasting mark on anaesthesia. The experimental tradition in the department stems from him.

Late advances—and setbacks—are sketched in, and a bibliographic list (from 1943) of 309 titles shows the magnificent contribution made from this renowned department by such pharmacologist-physiologists as Carl Schmidt, Julius Comroe and Robert Dripps, to whom the book is dedicated.

K. BRYN THOMAS

*Pharmacology at the University of Virginia School of Medicine*, by CHALMERS L. GEMMILL AND MARY JEANNE JONES, Charlottesville, University of Virginia, 1966, pp. 134, ports., \$3.00.

*Materia medica*, direct ancestor of pharmacology, began to be taught at the University of Virginia in 1825 when Robley Dunglison, contracted as the first medical professor, arrived from London. From that date until 1945 when the current professor and co-author, Dr. C. L. Gemmill, was appointed, it is surprising to find that the chair has been held by local men who apparently were never exposed to the influence of the Buchheim-Schmiedeberg school. It is generally acknowledged that this influence was due to the work of J. J. Abel who trained most American pharmacologists of the last generation and was responsible for the growth of pharmacology in the U.S.A. The biographical account of the eleven professors at Virginia’s Medical School, embracing their background, training and teaching aims, portrays clearly the pattern of evolution during the last century of a branch in the medical sciences which enjoys considerable prestige. Everyone interested in education and pharmacological training must read this book in order to appraise the educational results of