

Book Reviews

suspicious and sceptical of Mundinus' work, banned it in some places. Furthermore, it is of interest that most of the few extant copies of the *Commentaria* have clean, un-fingered pages, that there was only one edition, and that Gesner does not mention it in his *Universal Library* of 1545. Could it be, therefore, that the *Commentaria*, unlike the *Isagogae breves*, was rarely consulted by medical men of the sixteenth century and that it thus had less influence on the advance of medicine than the contents deserved?

EDWIN CLARKE

Le Choléra. La Première Epidémie du XIX^e Siècle. Etude collective par LOUIS CHEVALIER.

La Roche-sur-Yon: Imprimerie Centrale de l'Ouest, 1958; pp. xvii, 188. 750 francs.

Cholera to nineteenth-century Europe was what plague had been to it in earlier periods. Although much has been written on the medical aspects of the several epidemics which swept across the continent as part of more extensive pandemics, few serious attempts have been made to place them accurately against their historical background. It is the object of this book to do so with the 1831-2 outbreak, and to show that in the life of a nation a biological catastrophe is just as important as a major upheaval such as a war, because of the social and political disturbances which invariably accompany it.

The disease in Paris, Lille, Normandy, Bordeaux, Marseilles, Russia and England is discussed by ten collaborators, the last-named being dealt with by Professor D. E. C. Eversley of Birmingham. Each section has adequate reference to the literature, and maps and charts are included; there is, however, no index. An interesting introduction deals with demographical, historical, social and political aspects of the subject and then each locality is considered in turn. In Paris, as elsewhere, the lower classes were principally affected so it is natural that the government and *bourgeoisie* were blamed. The industrial city of Lille was attacked very severely by cholera and the authors, in this excellent section, trace social, industrial, sanitary, nutritional and economic factors which probably contributed to this. In Russia, the epidemic led to demands for a more progressive governing body, whilst in England it coincided with the 1832 Reform Act unrest. But of equal importance in Britain was the attention it drew to the need for better sanitary conditions and for adequate control of them. It soon became clear that the State must shoulder these and other national responsibilities, many of which were by-products of industrialization.

The importance of discussing medical events in relationship with other factors controlling or influencing man's existence is obvious enough, yet the approach is not employed with the frequency it deserves. This monograph is a commendable effort to do so and should prove to be of great interest and value to workers in several disciplines.

EDWIN CLARKE

Essays on the First Hundred Years of Anaesthesia (Vol. 1). W. STANLEY SYKES. Edinburgh: E. & S. Livingstone Ltd., 1960; pp. 171. Illustrated. 30s.

This book presents us with a series of essays, connected chiefly by Dr. Sykes's enthusiasm and perseverance in card-indexing hundreds of references from the early journals, which he has ransacked for details of anaesthetic processes.

Dr. Sykes has also made a collection of over five thousand photographs of anaesthetic and other apparatus. Unfortunately, he has reproduced very few of these in his book, merely enough to whet the appetite for more. In this connexion, it would