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independent Arabic medical compendium, and it remained the chief text until supplanted by the later works of al-Razi (Rhazes) and others. The writer deals with the book in some detail, and gives a synopsis of its contents. Its scope extended beyond medicine, as shooting stars, dreams, evil spirits and many other topics are included.

This new approach to Arabic medicine is of much importance today, and it is hoped that Professor Siddiqi's book may have the wide circulation it so well deserves, although, being published in Calcutta, it may not receive the notice and publicity in the West which is its rightful due. At a cost of only 12 rupees, the book is a bargain and well worth the modest price. It is well printed and there is a good index. The seven plates are most informative and well-chosen. Plate III, in colour, is of special interest, since it is the earliest illustration of the operation caesarian section, from a manuscript copied at Tabriz in A.D. 1307, and now preserved in Edinburgh University Library.

DOUGLAS GUTHRIE

Essays on the First Hundred Years of Anaesthesia (Vol. 2). W. STANLEY SYKES.

Edinburgh: E. & S. Livingstone Ltd., 1961; pp. 187. Illustrated. 30s.

It is sad that Dr. Stanley Sykes did not live to see the publication of this, his second volume of essays. His monument is here, in the enthusiastic telling of true stories taken from his card-index, the result of industrious searching of the early journals for anaesthetic memorabilia. Historians of anaesthesia will hope that the index, and the six thousand photographs which Dr. Sykes copied, will finally find their way to some appropriate library or museum, where they will be available for study.

Dr. Sykes has selected a series of topics, and has discoursed on them in the same unaffected and colloquial way which he used in his earlier volume. Each subject brings out facts both of historical interest and practical importance which the modern anaesthetist should not miss reading: in particular, the chapter entitled 'Thirty seven little things which have all caused death' should be compulsory reading for all resident (and non-resident) anaesthetists. Is it generally known that chloroform is lethal in the presence of a naked flame? Or that fainting under nitrous oxide anaesthesia—a present source of controversy—was suggested as a possible cause of death in the first nitrous oxide fatality in 1873?

The chapter on laryngoscopy brings to light much that has been forgotten in the design of endotracheal apparatus and may serve to remind potential inventors that there is little that has not been tried before.

Historically, Dr. Sykes has missed some points which might have assisted his arguments. For instance, in concluding that the case of Charles Thomas Jackson, as inventor of ether anaesthesia, is unconvincing, he might have mentioned Jackson's attempts to steal the credit from Beaumont in the case of Alexis St. Martin, and his efforts to plagiarise Morse's electric telegraph and Schönbein's invention of gun-cotton. Again, Benjamin Brodie's physiological experiments on curare, which antedated Waterton's by three years, and were far more precise, deserve mention, but such omissions are small fare among so much meat.

The total death charts are of great interest, and show enormous diligence and perseverance. Dr. Sykes investigated the Registrar-General's Annual Reports for 100 years, and found that the total deaths due to, or associated with, anaesthesia, in England and Wales, in this period, was 24,378. This, as he remarks, is almost certainly an under-estimate. Work such as this will provide future historians with much

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useful material, and the carrying out of similar investigations of the annual returns in other fields might yield most valuable data as, for example, in social medicine and epidemiology.

As with volume one, the production of this book leaves little to be desired, and the indexing has been improved.

We can only regret the loss of a man of such obvious sincerity and humanity as Dr. Sykes, who could have been relied upon to keep us amused and informed for many a volume to come, had he been spared.

K. BRYN THOMAS

Karolinska Institutet: The Royal Medical School in Stockholm. Stockholm: Almquist and Wiksell, 1960; pp. 102. Illustrated.

The Karolinska Institutet was founded in 1810. It is an independent medical school, having the same academic status as the medical faculties of Uppsala, Lund, Göteborg and Umeå. The Institute has about a thousand undergraduate students, of whom 25 per cent are women. Associated with the Institute are the Serafimerlasarettet, established in 1752, and the Karolinska Sjukhuset. The latter hospital, now in the course of enlargement, will eventually have about 2,500 beds. The fact that the Karolinska Institutet is entrusted with the task of awarding the Nobel Prizes in Physiology and Medicine has encouraged its rapid development in recent years. This well-illustrated and attractively presented souvenir booklet describes all the Departments of the Institute, including its Library of 235,000 volumes. It is interesting to note that from 1907 to 1958 the history of medicine was a compulsory subject for all Swedish students of medicine. Although the history of medicine is no longer obligatory, its study is well provided for. The Chief Librarian of the Karolinska Institutet, Dr. Ruben Eriksson, is a noted medical historian, and Dr. Wolfram Kock, of the Medical History Museum in Stockholm, has published several valuable papers on the history of medicine in Sweden.