

The General Infirmary at Leeds. Volume I. The First Hundred Years 1767-1869. S. T. ANNING. Foreword by Sir GEORGE W. MARTIN, *K.B.E., LL.D., J.P.* Edin. and Lond. E. & S. Livingstone Ltd. 1963. Pp. v + 107. Price 30s.

The difficulty in writing a history of any individual hospital is to make the story sufficiently interesting to the wider public who are not necessarily familiar with it or its neighbourhood. That it is possible to write a history of a local hospital which is of general interest has been occasionally demonstrated in the past. McMenemy's *History of the Worcester Royal Infirmary* and Broomfield's *History of St George's Hospital* are examples of how local topography may be welded into the wider framework of the history of the country as a whole. Now Dr Anning has also succeeded in producing such a work. The General Infirmary at Leeds, founded in 1767, is one of the oldest of the provincial voluntary hospitals. Its development during the period when the growing industrial activity in the wool trade caused a rapid expansion of the city of Leeds makes interesting reading. The hospital, always crowded with patients could never catch up with the demands placed upon it. Dr Anning skilfully paints the picture of the building, enlarging, and rebuilding of the hospital during its first hundred years. He uses the less conventional method of taking each section of the establishment and describing each separately. Thus chapters are devoted to the old building and the new, to the consultants, the apothecaries, the matrons, the nurses and the infirmary servants, and one interesting section describes the patients. The rise of early medical education in Leeds and the administration of the infirmary are also discussed. The book is lavishly illustrated and reasonably priced.

“ On Epidemic Diseases . . .

. . . The evident diversity of diseases is palpably shown, both by the difference and the peculiarities of their symptoms, and the variety of treatment that they require. From all which it is perfectly clear that, although the disorders in question may to a certain degree, both in their external characters and in several symptoms common to many of them, appear to the careless observer to coincide, they are in reality, if we attend closely, of wholly different characters, as little like one another as coin counters. I am not prepared to say that a very careful examination (such a one, however, as the brief life of a single mortal would be insufficient for) would not give us the fact of certain epidemics succeeding each other regularly and in series, forming as it were a circle. On the other hand, they may attack us indiscriminately, irrespective of any regular order, dependent only upon the inscrutable constitutions of the atmosphere, and the mysterious successions of time ”.

R. G. Latham—*The Works of Thomas Sydenham, M.D.*