

## Book Reviews

interest of completeness, a number of common secondary works and miscellaneous items of little interest are listed with the same care as sixteenth- or seventeenth-century books. We learn, for instance, that Dr Kiefer acquired Volume 1 and Volume 2, nos. 1 and 2, of *Medical History*. We also learn (to our surprise) that Aristotle actually wrote *Aristotle's Masterpiece*. Full bibliographical details are given and most authors are identified by dates. Only Garrison-Morton numbers are included, although no more than a fraction of the titles achieved mention in this more general reference work. Other citations, such as to Wellcome, Osler, or Waller, might have increased the bibliographical value of the catalogue. "Kiefer" is unlikely to become another standard guide, however. It is simultaneously too specialized and too eclectic, and thus to be perused by those primarily concerned with the history of urology or human sexuality. But at its price, the paperback version is good value for money.

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ARTHUR ROOK and RODNEY DAWBER, *Diseases of the hair and scalp*, Oxford, Blackwell Scientific Publications, 1982, 8vo, pp. ix, 571, illus., [no price stated].

This is an important book. There have been previous monographs in English on the subject but never a major work such as this. In the opinion of the reviewer, it will be standard for many years.

It is chiefly concerned with the embryology, physiology, pathology, and the clinical aspects of the hair and scalp, and so is of limited interest to most readers of *Medical History*. However, many disorders described are introduced by a historical account, and it is a mine of information in this respect. We meet with many famous names: Alibert, Brocq, Celsus (alopecia areata), Hippocrates (a bearded lady), Lassar, Sabouraud, Unna, Willan, Erasmus Wilson, and others.

It is of interest to know that 4,000 years ago in Egypt baldness was causing concern, and that women were using mud to wave their hair. The authors support the belief that the hair of both Sir Thomas More and Queen Marie Antoinette turned white during the night before execution.

Some disorders of the hair have appeared in paintings. The rare condition, hypertrichosis lanuginosa, with excessive hair on the cheeks and elsewhere, is portrayed in Paolo Cagliari's 'The Wild Boy', and kings collected examples to entertain courtiers as did showmen to amuse the public. "Shock-headed Peter", a character in a German nursery rhyme, was often shown in illustrations and is an example of the uncombable hair syndrome.

The chapter on psychological factors is of great interest to the social historian, dealing as it does with such matters as punishment by hair-cutting and the significance of beards, long hair in men, and other hairstyles.

This book is written with clarity and smoothness of style. It is authoritative, erudite, and comprehensive. The majority of the many illustrations are excellent.

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JOHN C. SHEEHAN, *The enchanted ring. The untold story of penicillin*, Cambridge, Mass., and London, MIT Press, 1982, 8vo, pp. xvi, 224, illus., £10.50.

Much has been written on penicillin, and its complicated story could not be bettered by fiction. The accounts of its isolation, the determination of its structure, of its synthesis, and of the preparation and commercialization of analogues ensures that the molecule occupies a unique position in the annals of microbiology and organic chemistry. John Sheehan, the author of the present book, has been involved with penicillin chemistry for a large part of his long career. In his account of the penicillin story he has drawn freely on US government files, and he discloses many untold aspects of this remarkable drug. This is all highly commendable, and unquestionably the story is of considerable topical interest, so much so that it is very difficult to put down the book once started. Unfortunately, however, the author takes a highly prejudiced and outspoken stance in his account, and, as many of the people involved in the story are still alive, it is certain that reactions to many of the statements will be strong, and unfavourable.