E. TREACHER COLLINS, *The history and traditions of the Moorfields Eye Hospital. One hundred years of ophthalmic discovery and development,* London, H. K. Lewis, 1929 (reprinted in facsimile, 1974), 8vo, pp. xii, 226, illus. [no price stated].

FRANK W. LAW, *The history and traditions of Moorfields Eye Hospital,* Volume 2, *Being a continuation of Treacher Collins' history of the first hundred years,* London, H. K. Lewis, 1975, 8vo, pp. xvi, 299, illus. [no price stated].

The first volume, written by a distinguished ophthalmic surgeon, surveys the origins of the hospital. It was opened on 25 March 1805 in Charterhouse Square in the City of London and then moved in 1822 to a new building in Moorfields, being known at that time as the London Ophthalmic Infirmary. In 1899 it took up its present location on City Road, having adopted the title of Royal London Ophthalmic Hospital in 1836. Its activities and the famous ophthalmologists associated with it are described in chronological sequence. However, it is not the usual parochial history of an institution, for, as the title suggests, external influences, such as the invention of the ophthalmoscope, the introduction of bacteriology, antiseptics and local anaesthesia, and the work of European ophthalmic surgeons, are taken into account. Unfortunately there are no references, other than occasional rudimentary citations in the text.

Mr. Treacher Collins in his introduction states the now out-moded idea that the act of writing history by a medical man is a sign of senility. He contends that in early life the doctor learns history, in middle life he makes it, and in his later years is best equipped to write it, because of the perspective and comprehensibility he can bring to the task. This suggests that anyone with adequate medical experience can write history, an attitude that is not acceptable today.

The second volume provides evidence in support of this attitude. The author, another distinguished ophthalmologist, has elected to describe only the domestic scene so that in the index there are references to only one or two events or individuals unconnected with the hospital. Whereas Treacher Collins' book was a contribution to the history of ophthalmology this is not, although it gives a detailed account of all matters concerning Moorfields from 1929 to the present day. There are no references.

E. D. PHILLIPS, *Greek medicine,* London, Thames & Hudson, 1973, 8vo, pp. 240, illus., £4.50.

Despite widespread interest in the medicine of Ancient Greece there are very few good books in English on the subject. Dr. Phillips of Belfast here attempts to survey it all, from the misty beginnings to Galen in the second century A.D. The main portion deals with Hippocratic medicine and an excellent survey of it is provided, as is also the case with the medicine of the Hellenistic period.

Phillips' main research studies, however, have been in the Hippocratic period, and he is less of an authority on Galen, which is manifest here. Admittedly Galen is by no means an easy person to assess and his writings are voluminous, diffuse, complex, contradictory and mostly untranslated. Yet Phillips allows him only ten pages, arguing that he really only extended the writings of the Hippocratic physicians. Although this is true, he also "extended" other earlier writers, in particular Aristotle, and he contri-

buted to the corpus of medical knowledge his own highly original ideas and experimental data. As is the case elsewhere in this book the author makes use here of unreliable and occasionally out-of-date secondary sources. Thus Sarton's small book on Galen is well-recognized as treacherously untrustworthy.

Dr. Phillips' book can be strongly recommended to those who seek a reliable and competent account of Hippocratic medicine, but an adequate assessment in English of Galen and his works is still awaited.

JOHN KOBLER, *Ardent spirits. The rise and fall of prohibition,* London, Michael Joseph, 1973, 8vo, pp. 386, illus., £5.00.

A great deal has been written on the remarkable American experiment of prohibition (1920–1934), but less on events that led up to it. Mr. Kobler begins by surveying temperance, 1609 to 1860 (pp. 23–91), and temperance groups 1869–1919 (pp. 95–218). The rest of the book deals with "the Noble Experiment" itself. The latter when seen in the context of its historical background of excessive drinking makes better sense, and it should not be dismissed as a curious aberration doomed to failure. It can almost be claimed that in its early days the nation was built with the aid of alcohol, when its abuse amongst the Indians is added to its widespread use amongst the white men. But there was always a strong force against this evil influence and out of it in the second half of the nineteenth century grew the prohibition movement, and by World War I two-thirds of the states were "dry". Religion, militant women and fanatical individuals helped to create the Women's Christian Temperance Union (1874), the Anti-Saloon League and similar crusading bodies. Their campaign was crowned with success on 17 January 1920.

Naturally, the events of the period ending in the imposition of prohibition and of the "dry" years themselves make a good story, teaming with anecdotes, which Mr. Kobler draws on liberally and with very good effect. His book is an important contribution to social history and although the text is not annotated there is a good bibliography at the end.

NOEL G. COLEY, *From animal chemistry to biochemistry,* Amersham, Bucks, Hulton Education Publishing, 1973, 8vo, pp. 272, illus., £2.20 (paperback).

The author's object is ". . . to trace the development of those parts of biochemistry which have grown from the study of animal matter and functions . . ." and to neglect plant chemistry. In so doing he hopes to place in perspective some of the main biochemical problems of today and to emphasize the importance of historical perspective.

He deals first with early studies in the chemistry of life, beginning with the seventeenth century, and then with founders of animal chemistry and its involvement in physiology and medicine, with vitalism, the contribution of physical chemistry and then again chemistry, with special attention to Liebig, and with Claude Bernard. He gives a well written and competent account of the way in which biochemistry has evolved from an empirical, applied science to a complex, theoretical study embedded in physical and organic chemistry, the main motive force being the demands of physiology and clinical medicine. There are no notes to the text, although there is a useful terminal bibliography.