

Book Reviews

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-