

## Book Reviews

We assume that this reference book will be a necessity for every medical and many general libraries for it provides ready access to information which would otherwise be very difficult or impossible to obtain. In a fairly thorough search we found only one or two typographical errors. The book is well printed in clear type, stoutly and tastefully bound, and of handy size so that it should be a pleasure to handle.

ZACHARY COPE

*The Collected Letters of Antoni van Leeuwenhoek.* Edited, illustrated and annotated by a Commission of Dutch Scientists. Vol. VI. Amsterdam: Swets and Zeitlinger Ltd., 1961; pp. 12, 425; 34 plates. £8 15s. od.

The great project of publishing the collected letters of the celebrated Dutch microscopist, Leeuwenhoek, was launched as long ago as 1931, largely through the initiative of Dr. A. Schierbeek, whose last editorial work appears in the sixth volume just published. The preceding volumes—the first came out in 1939—have made us familiar with the high standard of scholarship which makes this monumental work an indispensable guide, not only to Leeuwenhoek's life and work, but also to the early history of microscopy and to one of the most eventful and formative periods in the history of modern science. Leeuwenhoek's intimate contacts with the Royal Society and its founders, and the interest which his work aroused in England and among scientists all over Europe give these volumes a more than specialized value. The letters throughout are printed in the original Dutch with English translations facing and with most useful notes. The admirable plates give an excellent idea of the very wide range and the high quality (considering the instrument) of Leeuwenhoek's microscopical work.

F. N. L. P.

*The Famous Pathologist, or, The Noble Mountebank.* THOMAS ALCOCK and JOHN WILMOT, Earl of Rochester. Ed. V. de Sola Pinto. Nottingham University Miscellany No. 1. Nottingham: Sisson & Parker, 1961, pp. 42: port., front. 5s.

This little book tells of an amusing episode in the life of the famous Earl of Rochester when, some time in 1675–6, he was in trouble at Court and hid himself in the City, where he masqueraded as an Italian quack by the name of Alexander Bendo. He had a bill printed to advertise his skill. In 1687 Rochester's daughter, Lady Ann Baynton, apparently asked her father's former servant Thomas Alcock for a copy of his bill. Alcock had only one, and that almost obliterated, which he kept as a relic and did not wish to lose. He therefore transcribed the text carefully and prefaced it with his own account of what seems to have been a highly successful masquerade, writing it out in a little book which he sent to Lady Baynton. It is this MS. copy which was purchased for the University of Nottingham Library in 1949 and which is edited here by Professor de Sola Pinto. It gives a revealing glimpse of medicine in seventeenth-century England and should not be overlooked by anybody interested in the subject.

F. N. L. P.

*Toward the Conquest of Beriberi.* ROBERT R. WILLIAMS. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1961; pp. xxii, 338.

Dr. Williams has divided the story he has to tell into three main parts. He deals first with beriberi as a deficiency disease and gives a fascinating account of early inquiries into the aetiology of the condition, and the accumulation over the years of data regarding its effects on the adult and the child. In his preface he says that his book