

**THE ETIOLOGY,  
PATHOLOGY, AND  
TREATMENT OF  
BALDNESS & GREYNESS**

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The etiology, pathology, and treatment of baldness & greyness by Tom Robinson

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ETIOLOGY, PATHOLOGY, AND TREATMENT  
OF  
BALDNESS & GREYNESS

BY  
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LONDON  
HENRY KIMPTON, 82 HIGH HOLBORN  
1882

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## PREFACE.

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I HAVE endeavoured in bringing out this little work on Baldness and Greyness to make the matter as interesting as I could to the student, and at the same time have curtailed as much as possible, consistent with utility, all pathological and descriptive details ; and, secondly, I have avoided expensive illustrations. I am of opinion that careful and plain descriptions, attentively and carefully perused, possess great advantages over engraved illustrations (unless executed with extraordinary skill and at enormous expense), and for this reason I have not added to

the following treatise any coloured or plain drawings.

I can only express a hope that my effort may afford some help to those who are interested in the matter which I have endeavoured to illustrate. There is such a rich store of historical and collateral interest in all medical matters that I fear I shall in some instances weary my readers with matter which may be thought useless.

19 GUILFORD STREET, RUSSELL SQUARE, W.C.

*May, 1882.*

## BALDNESS.

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ALOPECIA (from *άλωπηξ*, a fox, which animal is said to be subject to this affection) signifies the falling off or loss of hair, whilst *calvities* signifies baldness. Thus alopecia may be said to be the beginning or evolution of the disease; and calvities, or baldness, represents the accomplished fact. The lower animals afford us numerous instances of periodical losses and re-acquisitions of hair and feathers. It often occurs that young ladies at certain periods find that they can comb out their hair 'by handfuls,' and both they and the mothers are alarmed lest they become bald. There is generally no fear of that; for baldness seems in the majority to be the special privilege of the ruder sex. There



can be no doubt, however, that if the repair be not equal to the loss, baldness must ensue. The partings by the brush and comb, in these cases, gradually become wider ; and the alarm of young women increases also. The general cause of this kind of alopecia is unquestionably insufficient nutrition of the hair-bulbs, owing either to deficient circulation of the blood through the skin, or imperfect innervation. By proper treatment, by improving the general health, and by attending especially to the restoration of nerve force, the hair will re-appear, and perhaps in a better condition than before.

Alopecia may be congenital or acquired ; it may be local or total ; it may occur without any apparent alteration of the hair-bulb ; it may arise from local inflammation, as in lupus, erythematosus of the scalp, eczema, or burns. Congenital alopecia is very rare, and, if it exists, is commonly only partial. This hairless condition, which may be considered as an arrest of development, may continue for a year or two after birth, or may, in some instances, last during life. Senile baldness is of such frequent occurrence among men of

an advanced age that it almost seems a normal condition of the male head. Let any one, at the meetings of our learned societies, or from the galleries of the House of Lords or of Commons, look down upon the heads of the members of the assemblies, and he will be surprised at the number of shining pates covering so much wisdom. No satisfactory explanation has as yet been advanced why baldness, having arrived at certain points, should be arrested in its advance; for whilst it denudes the frontal bone of the cranium, covering—as is assumed—the intellectual brain, it spares the posterior portion of the skull; for even in extensive cases of baldness, we generally find some hair at the back of the head. May it not be because the back of the head is not so much covered by head-gear as the fore part?

Calvities, as already stated, is of such frequent occurrence amongst old men that it only excites our attention when noticed in a young man under the age of thirty. As a rule, baldness should not commence in a healthy man before the fiftieth year; if it begins much before that time, it is either the

result of hereditary predisposition, or of depressing passions, mental anxiety, constitutional diseases, or is parasitic.

Senile baldness generally commences at the top of the head, where the hair forms a sort of central point from which the hairs depart in different directions. The baldness spreads first in a forward direction. The forehead, being denuded of its covering, now appears of greater height, and imparts an aspect of greater wisdom and discretion to the individual. The hair follicles, in some cases of baldness, are frequently found atrophied, especially those of the scalp; and in such cases there will be several successive crops of hair, each growth becoming thinner and finer—some looking like wool—until the growth is completely arrested. If the falling out of the hair results from a temporary cause, as observed in various diseases, such as typhus or syphilis, the baldness will disappear with the cause that gave rise to it. We may, nevertheless, see baldness occur in comparatively young and otherwise healthy persons; in such cases it is generally due to hereditary predisposition. This kind of cal-