

Migraine, and some surprising cures

PAPERBACKS

Peter Bowler

NEUROLOGIST Oliver Sacks, famous for *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*, is the author of *Migraine* (Picador, 338pp, \$16.95), an enlarged and updated edition of a book first published in 1970. It covers every conceivable form of this prostrating affliction. Symptoms (many of them quite bizarre), possible causes and cures are detailed, with much fascinating speculation on the way. Some of the cures are surprising, including strong coffee and violent exercise; one of Dr Sacks's patients, "a mesomorphic Italian of violent temperament, employs coitus to terminate his migraines if he is at home, or arm-wrestling if an attack comes on when he is at work."

■ *THE LAST Empire*, by Stefan Kanfer (Coronet, 452pp, \$17.95) tells the story of those who grew unimaginably rich from the South African diamond industry, including not only the famous Oppenheims but Barney Barnato, the cockney "Jew d'esprit" who graduated

from fairground conjuring and boxing to multi-millionairehood, and precious-metal magnate Charles Engelhard. There is much interesting technical information too: did you know that dia-

formation, too: did you know that diamond deposits are shaped like underground tornadoes with mile-wide tops?

■ I AM the kind of travelphobic who gets the jitters even at the thought of a plane trip to Sydney, and so, confronted with a travel book called *In Ethiopia with a Mule*, by Dervla Murphy (Flamingo, 286pp, \$16.95), my instinct is not to read it at all, but to shut my eyes and curl up till it goes away. Steeling myself, however, I discovered that Dervla Murphy, an otherwise apparently sane Irishwoman, decided to walk

across Ethiopia with a backpack and a mule, and has written a book about the trip. She tells us about the hotel in the brothel quarter of Massawah where her flushed toilet discharges its contents into a cess-pool in the middle of the kitchen floor; the 2400m climb to Asmara and the "suppurating mess" this makes of her left foot; her nightmare descent down a 600m precipice; her encounter with a notorious cut-throat who steals her belongings; and much more. The countryside, she tells us constantly, is exceedingly beautiful, but she isn't fooling me; I'm not going any farther than Sydney.

■ FINALLY, two quintessentially American works of non-fiction. *You Belong to Me*, by Ann Rule (Warner, 461pp, \$12.95) is an exhaustive account of the behaviour of a psychopathic traffic cop who murders a motorist and then turns into a pathetic Raskolnikov when a hint of suspicion falls on him. Some other ripping yarns of murder and

other ripping yarns of murder and

mayhem make up the book. Ms Rule specialises in this kind of subject matter, and her approach is to lay out the human-interest background to the murders with such oriental elaboration that readers who are just looking for the nasty bits will, I am happy to say, give up long before they find them.

The Truth about the UFO Crash at Roswell, by Kevin D. Randle and Donald R. Schmitt (Avon, 314pp, \$11.95), tells a tale which will generate in its readers the same open-mouthed sense of the miraculous that we all experience on receiving a *Reader's Digest* sweepstakes circular through the mail. The cover blurb tells us that this book is an "explosive expose" of "earth-shattering events", hitherto the subject of "fear-induced silence" and a "shocking governmental cover-up". There are strange blue lights in the desert sky, a crashed spacecraft, alien corpses ... Fear-induced silence prevents me from saying more.
