

that lend support to the duplicity theory, and suggest that in the dark-adapted eye both rods and cones function and influence colour vision simultaneously within a wide range of intensities.

The first and last of these studies are in English; the one on glaucoma is in German, and the remaining two are in French. All the contributions carry extensive reviews of the literature and bibliographies.

ARNOLD SORSBY.

## Neuroendocrinology

**Neuroendocrinology.** By Ernst Scharer and Berta Scharer. (Pp. 289 + xiv; illustrated. 63s.) New York and London: Columbia University Press. 1963.

A book from the pens of such eminent endocrinologists as the Scharers should be important. In this instance it is certainly so, for while a great deal of attention has been paid to the nervous system in other fields less has been given to its interrelation with the endocrine system. This latter subject has therefore fallen more into the sphere of the endocrinologist rather than the neurologist. Since the transmission of nervous impulses at synapses by humoral agents is a local and transitory process, this aspect is reasonably excluded from the subject of neuroendocrinology.

The authors' object in this volume is to examine the interplay between the nervous system and the endocrine glands in a general way and to elucidate the underlying principles on which it is based. The first part of the book succinctly discusses the afferent and efferent pathways involved and their mode of integration. The important secretory role of the nervous system is beautifully illustrated with electron photomicrographs of neurosecretory tissue of invertebrate origin.

To most readers of the *B.M.J.* the neuroendocrine mechanism in the supraoptico-neurohypophyseal pathway will be most familiar. Here they will find that, though this is discussed, the authors take a broad view and draw freely from the field of comparative endocrinology.

The major part of the book deals in detail with biological processes, such as reproduction, growth and development, and metabolic processes, which are under neuroendocrine control. The importance of neurosecretion is rightly stressed, for among the conclusions it is stated that "throughout the phylogenetic series the central nervous system has retained the capacity to exert direct control over peripheral targets by hormones of its own manufacture." To the physician the concentration of this capacity in man in a small area of nervous tissue can be of special importance in human disease.

The essay style of the book has its own appeal; it is wisely supplemented with diagrams that clarify the interactions involved in the processes described. For the research worker there is an excellent bibliography.

F. T. G. PRUNTY.

## Treatise on Asthma

**The Medical Writings of Moses Maimonides: Treatise on Asthma.** Edited by Suessman Muntner. (Pp. 115 + xxiv. 40s.) Philadelphia and Montreal: J. B. Lippincott Company. London: Pitman Medical Publishing Company. 1963.

Moses Maimonides, Jewish physician and philosopher, was born in Cordova on 30 March A.D. 1135. His father was a learned judge. When a Muslim sect called Almohade invaded Cordova the Maimonides family had to choose between Islam and exile. In 1160 they went to Fez in Morocco and five years later to Cairo. Here Maimonides became a

famous physician. He died in 1204 and is buried at Tiberias in Israel.

His philosophical writings include *The Guide for the Perplexed*, an erudite treatise; another on the art of logic; essays on the unity of God, on happiness, on resurrection, and on other themes. His medical works, consisting of ten manuscripts in Arabic, have hitherto reposed in the Papal Library in Rome and in other great European libraries. The task of translating them has now begun under Dr. S. Muntner's editorship and the auspices of the Israel Torah Research Institute, Jerusalem.

The *Treatise on Asthma* is Volume I of the first English edition. The original was a command book written for the son and successor of Sultan Saladin of Egypt, whose bronchial asthma was initiated by the common cold and attacks of rhinitis. The latter condition also occurred separately from the asthmatic attacks. The book describes the aetiology of the patient's malady, and then proceeds to give instruction concerning preventive measures, hygiene, climate, diet, medication, and personal behaviour. These are detailed and reinforced by references to Hippocrates and Galen and the physician's own experience. It is noted that the Sultan was better when he moved from Alexandria to Cairo, and the healthiness of the dry Egyptian climate for asthmatics is emphasized, as is the role of emotional and psychological conditions in provoking attacks. Indeed, the treatise is full of wisdom about the treatment of asthma, and the dietetic regimen advised could hardly be improved upon to-day. Maimonides wrote: "My intention is to serve humanity as a whole, so that your Highness as well as the rest of mankind may profit by it." The editor's translation will help to this end.

Other medical writings of Maimonides deal with accidents, poisons and their antidotes, haemorrhoids, sexual intercourse, and a pharmacopoeia of the period.

ARTHUR S. MACNALT.

## Books Received

*Review is not precluded by notice here of books recently received.*

**The Electrocardiogram and Chest X-ray in Diseases of the Heart.** By Arthur M. Master, M.D., Richard P. Lasser, M.D., Isadore Rosenfeld, M.D., and Ephraim Donoso, M.D. (Pp. 565; illustrated. £7 17s. 6d.) London: Henry Kimpton. 1963.

**Drugs in Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy.** By Mortimer Ostow, M.D. (Pp. 348. \$8.50.) London: Basic Books. 1963.

**Modern Drugs for the Treatment of Mental Illness.** By Donald Blair, M.A., M.D., Ch.B., D.P.M., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P. (Pp. 327. 50s.) London: Staples Press. 1963.

**Etude Ultrastructurale de la Cellule Acineuse du Pancréas Humain Normal et Pathologique.** By Dr. Robert Fedou. (Pp. 80; illustrated. 30 F.) Paris: Librairie Arnette. 1963.

**Physical Diagnosis. A Physiologic Approach.** By Richard D. Judge, M.D., and George D. Zuidema, M.D. (Pp. 387 + x; illustrated. 42s. 6d.) London: J. & A. Churchill Limited. 1963.

**World Health and History.** By W. Hobson. (Pp. 252 + xii. 45s.) Bristol: John Wright and Sons, Limited. 1963.

**Principles of Neurological Surgery.** By Loyal Davis, M.D., M.S., Ph.D., D.Sc., F.A.C.S., F.R.C.S., F.R.C.S.(Edin.), and Richard A. Davis, M.D., M.S., F.A.C.S. (Pp. 608 + viii; illustrated. £5 5s.) London: W. B. Saunders Company Limited. 1963.

**Works of the Pavlov Institute of Physiology. Volume 10. Problems of Physiology of Higher Nervous Activity and of the Nervous System.** (Pp. 432; illustrated. £5.) London: Oldbourne Press Limited. 1963.

**Das Oeffentliche Gesundheitswesen. Volume 11. Berufe und Einrichtungen des Gesundheitswesens.** Edited by H. Lehmkuhl and F. Purchkauer. (Pp. 534 + xvi. DM. 69.) Stuttgart: Georg Thieme Verlag. 1963.

**Strahlenpathologie der Zelle.** Edited by Eberhard Scherer and Hans-Stephan Stender. (Pp. 390 + xi; illustrated. DM. 90.) Stuttgart: Georg Thieme Verlag. 1963.

**Intrauterine Toxoplasma-Infektion.** By Priv. Doz. Dr. med. Heinrich Langer. (Pp. 55; illustrated. DM. 13.80.) Stuttgart: Georg Thieme Verlag. 1963.

**Symposium on Lymphoreticular Tumours in Africa.** Edited by Fred. C. Roulet. (Pp. 429 + viii + ii; illustrated. DM. 60.) Basle, New York: S. Karger. 1963.

**Contraception Through the Ages.** By B. E. Finch, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., D.C.H., and Hugh Green, Ph.C., M.P.S. (Pp. 174; illustrated. 25s.) London: Peter Owen Limited. 1963.

**Venereology for Nurses. A Textbook of the Sexually Transmitted Diseases.** By R. D. Catterall, M.R.C.P. (Pp. 146 + xiii; illustrated. 8s. 6d.) London: English Universities Press Limited. 1963.

**Magic and Medical Science in Ancient Egypt.** By Paul Ghalioungui, M.D., M.R.C.P. (Pp. 189; illustrated. 30s.) London: Hodder and Stoughton. 1963.

**Human Endocrinology.** By Herbert S. Kupperman, Ph.D., M.D. Volume 1. (Pp. 424; illustrated.) Volume 2. (Pp. 426-802; illustrated.) Volume 3. (Pp. 804-1,191; illustrated.) £14 per set. Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications Limited. 1963.

**Acta Secundi Conventus Medicinæ Internae Hungarici. Cardiologia.** Edited by Professor G. Gottsegen. (Pp. 768; illustrated. £7 10s.) Budapest: Kultura. 1963.