ples and processes, conceptions which still cling to the higher philosophical abstractions.

NATURE AND NURTURE IN MENTAL DEVELOPMENT. By F. W. Mott, M.D., F.R.S., F.R.C.P. Published by Paul B. Hoeber, New York.

This book contains in a small space a great deal of important fact presented in exceedingly interesting form and of practical value for the control of inheritance and environmental factors pertaining to mental life.

It reviews the structure and functioning of the nervous organism in man; by comparison of the normal brain with that in which the higher centers are wanting or have degenerated it shows how dependent mental activity is upon these structures. While doing this, however, the author never confuses the relative importance of mind and its instrument, to serve as which he clearly maintains is the sole function and distinction of the brain. His aim is to show the influence of nature, that is inheritance, and of nurture, prenatal and post-natal factors, particularly of nutrition, which affect the body in its relation to the brain and nervous system, upon mental conditions and character.

He has emphasized with especial clearness several important considerations. He speaks understandingly of the two great instincts which determine activity, the reproductive or racial and the nutritive or self-preservative. The sexual glands are the special organ of the former, as the brain is of the latter instinct. The influence upon both of these of heredity and environment, or nature and nurture, are discussed in view of his practical purpose. Both of these organs are especially protected by nature against injurious effects, but are influenced by prolonged action of certain causes.

This is discussed in the simple, clear treatment of heredity. Inherited tendencies and dispositions occur rather than directly acquired characteristics. There are causes indirectly affecting the germ cells and so modifying the inheritance, accentuating these tendencies or limiting resistance in the offspring and actual invasion of the embryo by the toxic agent as in syphilis.

Of interest is the section on the social inheritance of the individual, in which there is a distinction between external acquisitions of cultured society and the development of the potentiality of the brain which would be preserved to the individual even were all external environment suddenly withdrawn.

These and other significant topics suggestively treated are applied definitely to social questions especially the life of the child and make the book a valuable practical guide to parents and teachers and other social workers.

JELLIFFE.

THE EIGHT CHAPTERS OF MAIMONIDES ON ETHICS (SHEMONAH PERAKIM). A Psychological and Ethical Treatise. Edited, Annotated and Translated with an Introduction. By Joseph I. Gorfinkle, Ph.D. Columbia University Press, New York.

A bit of rare treasure of wholly delightful reading are these eight chapters of Maimonides, the eminently practical philosopher and physician of the twelfth century, one of the number of Hebrews living under Moslem rule. Dr. Gorfinkle having discovered in the course of his study this treasure marred by corruptions occurring as the original work has passed through frequent manuscripts, editions and translations, decided it was worth his while to reconstruct the original and very literal Hebrew translation from the Arabic, in which Maimonides wrote, made by Samuel ibn Tibbon under the advice and with the high esteem of the author himself. This volume contains as a result the Hebrew manuscript and a translation of it into English, together with an introduction giving a brief history of Maimonides's life and ethical writings with an outline of the contents of the Eight Chapters.

These were written as an introduction to Maimonides's larger works on

ethics, which subject for him belongs under the division of practical philosophy. They are written for the laity and are therefore made very simple in statement, avoiding as far as possible philosophical and metaphysical discussion. His aim, however, as in his larger work, is to harmonize the teachings of the philosophers with those of the Talmud, whose authority he venerates.

The short treatise is a direct and practical discussion of the soul and its faculties; to which of these faculties belongs man's choice of virtue or vice; the health of the soul, which depends upon cultivation of the virtues by turning toward them and practising them; and the supreme purpose of the soul toward which all must tend, namely, the obtaining of such knowledge of God and attaining to such nearness to Him as is possible.

Under the rational faculty of the soul belong intellectual virtues and vices. The moral ones belong to the appetitive faculty, which here includes the sensitive. The nutritive and imaginative faculties have no part in voluntary activity as we know from the fact that they work while we sleep.

Virtue is the mean between two extremes which as excesses constitute the vices. In order to acquire virtue or to cure his soul, has a man deviated from the mean of virtue it is necessary for him to turn far toward the opposite extreme from the one in which his vice lies that a proper median adjustment shall be reached. In order to do this it will be necessary to consult the sages just as one physically ill applies to his physician for enlightenment and direction in regard to bodily health. In accordance with this principle Maimonides places the saint, that is, one who has no inclination to evil, above the one who only by severe striving has overcome evil desires. The prophet still higher in honor than the saint is he who has drawn near to God, to whom the barriers between him and God have become few. Moses attained the greatest height, but one partition, that of the material flesh, remaining.

The last chapter is concerned with a discussion of man's free will. Maimonides's conviction of the freedom of choice is firm, but he must reconcile with his assertion the teachings of Scripture and of the Rabbis that God has made it impossible at times for man to choose the right. God has, says Maimonides, as a punishment for former sins taken away man's power of choice, his freedom of will. The subtle sophistry here, which meets us in other places as well, contains, however, deeper truth which belongs also to a humanistic doctrine of free will, where man by ill-doing would himself curtail or destroy his ability to choose. Such deeper truth outreaches and redeems the rationalism of his age and environment which the author seeks to defend.

The subtlety of his thought manifests itself at the close of this last chapter in an exalted metaphysic in which he sets forth the impossibility of attaining to a knowledge of God or the understanding of His essence, for this is God, His knowledge, His essence, all His attributes are God and not comprehensible by human knowledge.

Maimonides's vision was clear. In the practical simplicity of his ethics he shows himself an advance spirit of his age. His adherence to tradition, both of philosophy and the narrower traditions of his native faith, does not obscure the truth of his thought nor destroy the value of his ethics. The Eight Chapters are well worth careful reading. JELLIFFE.

GOETHE. WITH SPECIAL CONSIDERATION OF HIS PHILOSOPHY. By Paul Carus. The Open Court Publishing Company, Chicago and London.

There is rather too much statistical fact compressed in the first part of this book. The details of Goethe's life with his relations to his contemporaries might have been preserved in more vital manner. Beside this the profusion of illustration, while in itself highly interesting and valuable, detracts one's attention from the main interest of the book. But aside from these things the author has succeeded in his aim to make this new work on Goethe a unique presentation of him.