

Reviews of Recent Books



Recent Advances in Human Nutrition, by J. F. Brock, Little, Brown & Co., Boston, 454 pp., \$11.50.

In my opinion, this is one of the most important books on clinical nutrition in recent years. There has long been an acute need for a critical summary of the rapidly advancing development in human metabolism and nutrition, not only to collect in one convenient place the data being obtained all over the world, but also to summarize and place them in proper perspective. This is done by Professor Brock and his fourteen experienced contributors.

The editor himself has written about half the book. Others, including György, Holt and Scrimshaw from this country, cover certain specialized topics. Of special interest is the editor's chapter on "Some General Trends and the Future" with its discussion of the population explosion and nutrition education in medical schools and hospitals. Our readers will also be interested in Jackson's comment that "There appears to be no good evidence in favor of supplementing the calcium in the diet of any normal healthy person in any circumstances whatever. Habituation to a low calcium intake may even be of value to the organism."

Much new work is cited (some references are from 1960) and there is a brief summary of review papers presented at the Fifth International Congress on Nutrition (September 1960).

According to the authors, "constitution" is determined in part by the habitual diet and this must be considered in discussing the etiology of the degenerative diseases of middle life. "This may be the most important lesson coming from the study of clinical nutrition to influence thought in the 1960's." This is reflected in the multiple references to our nutritional standards, particularly as they relate to so-called underdeveloped areas. The obvious importance of these concepts makes them, and this book, indispensable to all who are interested in human nutrition, health and disease. A vote of thanks and a word of appreciative congratulations to the authors for undertaking the task and producing such excellent results. S.O.W.

Human Pituitary Hormones. Ciba Foundation Colloquia on Endocrinology, Vol. 13, edited by G. E. W. Wolstenholme and C. O'Connor. Little, Brown & Co., Boston, 1960, pp. 336, \$9.50.

This book does an admirable job of bringing a major portion of the field relating to pituitary hormones up to date with particular reference to material obtained

from human glands. Evaluation of fractionation techniques indicates that those which have been successful for animal pituitaries do not give adequate separation and yield of specific fractions in human material. Growth hormone and the gonadotropins appear to have been separated in a reasonably adequate fashion. The use of immunologic techniques for assay of growth hormone appears to have promise. A variety of metabolic effects of growth hormone are considered, including regulation of lipid metabolism, protein metabolism, carbohydrate metabolism, and mineral metabolism. All these areas appear to be affected in some measure. Significant differences are observed in the degree of response between different subjects. The relationship of urinary gonadotropin levels to remissions following oophorectomy in patients with cancer is considered, as well as the use of this procedure for other purposes. Human corticotrophin appears to have the same amino acid composition as ovine and bovine material but differs from porcine. Interesting considerations regarding blood levels of the thyroid-stimulating hormone are presented.

In general, the book is a very worthwhile addition to the library of anyone with more than a passing interest in endocrine and metabolic disease.

L. W. KINSELL

Annual Review of Medicine, Vol. 12, edited by David A. Rytand. Annual Reviews, Inc., Palo Alto, 1961, pp. 408, \$7.00.

We have come to look forward to the "Annual Reviews" as one of the best sources of critically evaluated summaries of research progress. This 1961 volume is no exception. Although nutritional topics *per se* get rather little discussion, malabsorption and iron metabolism are competently evaluated. Oral hypoglycemic agents and endocrine tissue transplantation are two of the new topics covered. This reviewer has found his collection of the Reviews a most useful aid for a quick search of the literature. No doubt their success is the consequence of fulfilling a widespread need. We look forward to next year's book.

S.O.W.

The Encyclopedia of the Biological Sciences, by Peter Gray. Reinhold Publishing Corp., New York, New York, pp. 1083, \$20.00.

As the book jacket of this one-volume encyclopedia says "If it falls between abiogenesis and zoogeography

you'll find it in the valuable new reference work." This book of over 1,000 pages consists of more than 800 articles written by experts from many corners of the world. With numerous illustrations (but relatively few references) it is a remarkable collection of data for anyone interested in any biologic science. Some biographic sketches are presented, but emphasis is given to taxonomic, developmental and ecologic aspects. Obviously all of biochemistry, biophysics and the applied biologic sciences, including medicine, could not be included. Indeed, the sum total of man's knowledge is beyond the limits of books—and perhaps beyond electronic computers. However, the able editor explains the scope of this enterprise in the introduction and one must agree that the objective was fully realized.

There is a general discussion of nutrition (Stare) and a brief description of fat-soluble vitamins (Hodges) and the water-soluble group (Aaronson). No doubt the fact that the Pangolins (anteaters) receive more space than phospholipids reflects not the relative importance of the subjects, but rather the objective of the encyclopedia. Many currently "hot" topics appear in its pages, including biologic warfare, space biology, enzymology and genetics. Selkurt's discussion of renal function, for example, includes the new countercurrent concept.

For whom is the book intended? Apparently the objective was "to provide the maximum amount of information for the greatest possible number of people." This ambitious goal includes biologic scientists as well as nonprofessionals who desire information beyond the accounts in general encyclopedias. Librarians, graduates, college and even high school students and their teachers will find this a true gold mine of biologic information. S. O. W.

Inter-African Nutrition Conference, Third Session, Vol. II, Inter-African Conference of Nutrition, Angola, Portugal, 1956, pp. 889.

The appearance of the proceedings of this conference in 1956 attended by representatives of many, perhaps all, of the countries south of the Sahara emphasizes the tremendous political events in recent years. Some of the countries represented have disappeared with a greater number being formed, a number of the speakers are no longer associated with Africa and undoubtedly all have had their lives and work influenced markedly by events in recent years.

This is the second volume of the papers presented.

Many are published in two languages, either French, Portuguese or English, and summaries are available in all three languages. This results in a volume of 877 pages, a discouragingly large number. As with most conferences the quality of papers varies from excellent to very poor. The range of topics covers practically all areas of nutrition and these can be indicated only in general terms. A number of papers deal with the "protein problem," including studies on the biologic value and amino acid composition of protein sources, feeding trials with infants and clinical studies of kwashiorkor. Nutrition and agriculture and the utilization of local resources, nutrition education and the role of nutrition in public health programs, biochemical findings in various areas and in association with different nutritional deficiencies and nutrition surveys are other topics covered by several speakers. Perhaps the primary value to U. S. readers will be to provide and insight into some of the major nutritional problems of Africa and to indicate the kind and caliber of work being performed although some of the papers represent solid scientific contributions.

The long delay in publication is extremely unfortunate. One suspects that much in this volume is history. D. M. HEGSTED

BOOKS RECEIVED FOR REVIEW

Books received for review by *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* are acknowledged in this column. As far as practicable, those of special interest are selected, as space permits, for extensive review.

Recent Advances in Human Nutrition, by J. F. Brock. Little, Brown & Co., Boston, 1961, pp. 454, \$11.50.

Foetal and Neonatal Physiology, British Medical Bulletin, Vol. 17, No. 2. The British Council, London, 1961, pp. 176, \$3.25.

The Encyclopedia of Biological Sciences, edited by P. Gray. Reinhold Publishing Corp., New York, 1961, pp. 1083, \$20.00.

Fish. The Great Potential Food Supply, by D. B. Finn. FAO, Rome, 1960 (Columbia University Press, American Agents), pp. 47, \$0.50.

Essential Hypertension, An International Symposium, F. C. Reubi, Chairman, edited by K. D. Bock and P. T. Cottier. Springer-Verlag, 1960, pp. 392.

Toward the Conquest of Beriberi, by Robert R. Williams. Harvard University Press, 1961, pp. 338, \$7.50.