

BOOK REVIEWS

LYDIA J. ROBERTS AWARD ESSAYS. *A Compilation of Essays by The American Dietetic Association.* \$4.00. Chicago, 1968, pp. 128.

The fourteen award winning essays compiled in this volume have been written by graduate students, dietetic interns, and members of The American Dietetic Association as a tribute to Lydia J. Roberts, Ph.D., who was recognized internationally for her pioneer work in improving the nutrition and health of infants and children. The book was published at the time of the 50th Anniversary of The American Dietetic Association.

The first award winning essay appeared in 1952. The present volume includes the essays from 1952-1965. Each essay covers a different subject and the reader will find a wide range of topics.

The amount of research in obtaining records of the past makes the book very interesting and easily read. One is also made aware of how recently accurate information has been made available despite the history of scientific interest in the past. Discussions of dietary standards and practices are referred to as far back as 1753. Records found in the Papyrus Ebers and from the Chou Dynasty (1155 B.C.) are mentioned in the essay on "Changes in Beliefs and Food Practices." Then there is the essay on the "Use of Liver Through the Ages" which highlights many old superstitions. One is also brought up to date on changing attitudes on obesity, but also informed that changes have been going on for many, many years.

There are not many illustrations, but those which are included are most informative. Pictures showing antique baby feeding bottles are of greatest interest.

These essays may be read and reread for entertainment as well as for study. The book provides excellent reference material, and can be recommended as a reference book in the libraries of nurses, doctors, as well as dietitians in all fields.

INSULIN, MEMBRANES AND METABOLISM, *Peter Rieser, Ph.D., Baltimore, Williams & Wilkins Co., 1967, pp. 150.*

During the five years since the publication of M. E. Krahl's *Action of Insulin on Cells* an enormous amount of

information concerning insulin structure and function has accumulated. Hence the justifications for the monograph *Insulin, Membranes and Metabolism*. Perhaps the title suggests a particular bias on the part of the author. For this limitation, if it may be judged so, he offers no apologies. Quite to the contrary, however, the book offers an appealing arrangement of information starting with the origin of the insulin molecule within the beta cell, coursing through its effects upon intermediary metabolism and finally terminating with a theoretical consideration into the mechanism of insulin action.

The first third of this three-sectioned book, entitled insulin metabolism but more appropriately the metabolism of insulin is perhaps the weakest portion of a generally good review. Although the beginning of this section, concerning biosynthesis and secretion of the hormone, is clearly stated with but minor omissions, the oversimplified almost primitive illustrations of some very meaningful and elegant contributions detract from its general quality. In addition, within this section, a discussion of plasma insulin appears limited to a comparison between the various bioassayable insulin like fractions and that of immunoassayable insulin. Perhaps these pages might in addition have allowed a more intensive search into literature involving the plasma immunoassayable insulin level under varying metabolic conditions, all of which has been accumulated during these five years since the immunoassay explosion.

These objections aside, the text appears to improve in quality as it progresses. The section concerning insulin effects is well organized and, in general, fairly presented. The final section deals with insulin action and attempts to dissociate the insulin effects previously noted from its mechanism of action. Although one might question this subdivision, it does allow a separation of that which is observable and its theoretical implication.

The book has been carefully limited in size to fewer than 150 pages of text. There is a fairly extensive collection of references for those who choose to go further. Dr. Rieser's *Insulin, Membranes and Metabolism* appears to fill successfully that void on the shelf for which it was intended.