

## PREFACE

The occurrence of the XVII International Congress of Ophthalmology in Montreal and New York in September 1954 provided the Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences with the opportunity to organize one of their periodic symposia on an ophthalmic topic. The subject chosen was Primary Glaucoma, and this monograph is a record of the proceedings. It contains the formal papers as well as the discussions which followed them; it thus has a special character and, dealing essentially with new work of immediate interest and its relation to established knowledge, can in no sense be regarded as a comprehensive textbook on the subject.

In view of the importance of the early availability of a volume of this type dealing with the impact of recent work on a rapidly developing subject, some of the finer points of editing have been sacrificed to attain early publication. The editing of the formal papers was easy; that of the discussions more difficult. At the Symposium we talked a lot because we enjoyed it and got to know each other well; of necessity, therefore, the irrelevant and the repetitious have had to be omitted as well as much of our verbal crossplay; some of the drama may thereby be lost, but the average reader might misinterpret our exchanges if reduced to the nakedness of print, not realizing how friendly we were. In these pages, however, I have tried to include everything of importance; in this I hope I have succeeded. To me, however, the astonishing thing was the wide area of our agreement, for much that seemed to separate us before turned out to be a different expression of the same thought. That, indeed, was the most satisfying aspect of the Symposium; in this, as in every other respect, it was great fun.

A symposium is, and always has been, a delightful type of meeting; and we chose to interpret it in the literal classical meaning of the word — a 'drinking together'. But the ancient Greeks, who were a cultured and intelligent people, derived inspiration from their wine-cups and the philosophy that characterized their meetings produced some of the masterpieces of literature — among them Plato's Symposium. We could not equal these; but we tried to go back in spirit to the time when the mind of man

remained open and eager to weigh argument and was free from many of the prejudices and preconceptions which today so often enter into scientific discussion; and thus we sought to elucidate a problem about which many conflicting views are put forward in contemporary literature, some of them by ourselves, many of them presented as if each were absolute truth. And although we left most of our major questions unanswered, we at least saw our problems more clearly and gained much in perspective.

Ophthalmology owes a great debt to the C.I.O.M.S. for the opportunity of allowing twenty clinicians and scientists to meet together in an informal atmosphere to discuss the problems of one of the most enigmatic and interesting diseases that affect the eye. Such a meeting which provides a rare opportunity for scientists of different disciplines to pool their ideas with clinicians of wide experience could be productive of nothing but good. I hope that this book will disseminate to a wider sphere something of the stimulus which the Symposium gave to those who participated in it. The value of the meeting was much enhanced by the efficiency of the secretary, Dr. Harold Hodgson, and the two official recorders, Doctors R. K. MacDonald and J. A. Halliday, of Toronto. And its success was ensured by the beauty and tranquillity of the surroundings in which it was held — at the hospitable Alpine Inn at Ste. Marguerite, in the midst of the Laurentian mountains in Canada.

STEWART DUKE-ELDER.