

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

At an early stage the authors found that the schematic students' ophthalmic texts were of limited value in the real world, but Henry Stallard in his books always 'seemed to have been there before' and his practical advice gave great relief and encouragement to the reader faced with the needs of his patients, especially if isolated. Accordingly, the authors in turn have attempted what he achieved and this has been the spirit in which they have written this book, sensible always of the debt they owe their teachers and colleagues.

All books of instruction are a compromise and a practical textbook must make concessions to brevity. However, the authors are convinced that statements without attempted explanations merely add to learning without comprehension so that by selection they have tried to invite the medical student, the general practitioner, the optometrist and the ophthalmologist, especially when in training, to consider with them what is essential in ophthalmology. They hope that it will not be necessary to remember what is written, but merely that it will be incorporated in a reasonable, general medical approach to patients who present with eye problems or in whom the eyes share in general disease. The carefully chosen section on Common Ophthalmic Problems will summarise for the medical student what is most important for examination purposes and will indicate to the family doctor how to deal with eye problems, which can be so worrying in practice. This 'book within a book' extends its use by cross references beyond the limitations inevitable in a short student text and the authors hope this will make it a familiar book to which students will refer in their subsequent practice of medicine. It is frustrating when consulting a medical book for information about a disease or treatment to find that it is not even mentioned, accordingly they have tried to ensure by careful cross references and indexing that a reader can rapidly find at least a short description of a wide range of ophthalmic conditions.

The relevance of eye conditions to general medicine is emphasised by the section 'Systemic Ophthalmology', but in addition there were some aspects peculiar to the eyes which required consideration separately as Regional Ophthalmology. Finally therapeutics is presented as a separate section for reference and for examination purposes. The first edition of the book owed much to the work of Roger Trimble MRCP, FRCS, FRCOphth. and although sadly he is no longer with us, his influence is still strong in the present edition and tribute is paid to him as both friend and colleague and in the dedication of this edition which is even more widely collaborative. In view of accelerating advances in ophthalmology the authors are greatly indebted to a number of highly qualified ophthalmologists, who have special research and practical experience in particular aspects of ophthalmic work, for their collaboration as sub-editors, as described in the title pages. This ensures that while retaining the original aims of the book, those sections reflect the most modern concepts and practice. Ever increasing international communication and travel means that a study of medicine must embrace a global range of disease and this we have tried to emphasise, including relevant tropical and deficiency diseases, accepting that medical facilities are scarce in many parts of the world, so that methods of examination and treatment which require less equipment have also been described.

There are two advances regarding the illustrations in this 3rd Edition. Instead of being confined to colour sections they are now distributed throughout the text and there are more of them which results in a well illustrated book. In addition to this we have collaborated with Professor Arthur S Lim FRCS, FRACS, FRACO FROphth and Dr Tien Yin Wong FRCSE, MMed (Ophth) MPH of the National University of Singapore and Professor Ian Constable FRCSE, FRACS, FRACO, of the University of Western Australia by giving LCW cross references by number and page to illustrations in the new 4th edition of their Colour Atlas of Ophthalmology. If the two books are used together, our book is enhanced by many more excellent colour illustrations and their concise text appropriate to an Atlas, can be broadened by rapid reference to a reasonably comprehensive text.

For those facing the prospect of ophthalmology degrees and diplomas, an entirely new book, the Ophthalmological Examinations Review, written by Dr. Tien Yin Wong, would be invaluable for martialling their knowledge for presentation, thus completing a trio of basic volumes for the ophthalmologist in training, as a foundation for their study of subspecialist monographs and papers.

Stereoscopic pairs of certain conditions in the semi-transparent tissues of the eye make an appreciation of their true nature so much clearer that in relevant cases they have been included and we are indebted to Martin Pitts Crick FRCS, FRCOphth for them. We thank David Dorrell FRCS, FRCOphth for most of the informative line drawings of surgical technique reproduced by kind permission from his book 'The Surgery of the Eye' (Blackwell Scientific Publications). The authors also thank Adrian Pitts Crick BA Hons (Fine Arts) for the majority of the other line drawings, Jonathan Pitts Crick PhD FRCP for many of the black and white photographs and Peter Wright FRCS FRCOphth for many of the colour plates of external eye disease. The sources of other illustrations are gratefully acknowledged on page xi .

We are greatly indebted to Scientific Editor, Ms Lim Sook Cheng, and Senior Editor, Mr Steven Patt of World Scientific Publishing Company, and subsequently, Ms Nee Phua, Manager of the London office, for their invariably helpful collaboration. At the International Glaucoma Association our special thanks are due to Jane Eastick, General Manager for re-typesetting the book and to David Wright, Chief Executive for his continued cooperation. We have also appreciated the help of Jennifer Murray, Medical Secretary at the Institute of Ophthalmology for coordinating the Sub-Editors contributions.

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