

Foreword

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There is an agreeable custom in the medical academic world of honouring, upon retirement, an important contributor to his discipline by publishing a Festschrift, a collection of papers by his pupils and followers updating those topics upon which his interests had centred in earlier years. Herbert Eckstein was an important contributor to paediatric surgery and in particular to paediatric urology but unhappily he retired early in failing health and died shortly afterwards, so that an opportunity was missed of celebrating his work while he could still appreciate the honour. I was very glad therefore when the proposal came for a Memorial Volume and came very appropriately from the **Journal of the Turkish Association of Pediatric Surgeons** since he had spent some of his childhood and more importantly his first years as an independent surgeon in Ankara. The ready response we have had to invitations to participate in this volume is eloquent testimony to the esteem in which he was held and I think he would have been proud to read of the many advances in the subjects on which he had worked so hard.

Herbert's parents were both paediatricians who left Germany in 1935 to work in the newly established Numune Hospital in Ankara. After some years there, he came to school in Cambridge, going on to Clare College in the University and completing his medical education at Middlesex Hospital. I first met him when he was a senior house officer at The Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond Street and I was glad to take him on as my Registrar in the St Peters Group of Hospitals. His talents, his capacity for hard work and his interest in the surgery of childhood were already evident but he needed to gain experience in general surgery and this he did, very profitably, in Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge. Then came the crucial step in his career, the invitation from Professor Dođramacı in Ankara, a former pupil of his father's, to come out to start paediatric surgery at the new Hacettepe Children's Hospital. The three years he spent there were formative for his later interests since the prevalence of urinary calculi in the local children concentrated his attention on the urinary tract. From then onwards a stream of papers flowed from his pen, at first in Turkish Journals, then in English, German and American publications. I spent two weeks with him during his time in Ankara and was enormously impressed by the Department he had set up.

However it was his ambition to get back to Great Ormond Street, he returned in 1961 and spent almost three years as Resident Assistant Surgeon, after which he was appointed Consultant Paediatric Surgeon to Queen Mary's Children's Hospital at Carshalton ensuring that he got a large experience of the general surgery of children. In 1965 the policy of early operative treatment for spina bifida and hydrocephalus had come strongly to the fore; there was no room in Great Ormond Street itself for a major expansion in this field but it was decided to set up a new unit for this purpose in the country branch at Tadworth. Herbert Eckstein was appointed to take charge of it and the many contributions to the treatment of myelomeningocele and of the neuropathic bladder were the outcome of this opportunity. As the years went on he came to play a greater part in the urological work at Great Ormond Street itself, experience which would show up in his many publications, case reports, analyses, follow ups, reports of new techniques, review articles, chapters in text books and most particularly in his editorship with Rudi Hohenfellner of Surgical Pediatric Urology. This volume is a tribute to his outstanding contribution.