



A Gift of Life: Observations on Organ Transplantation

R.Y. Carne

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In the past few years the transplantation of organs in man has received publicity unprecedented in medical history. The first heart grafts were covered by press, radio, and television on a scale equivalent to the news of the outbreak of a major war. Unwarranted and extravagant optimism has been followed by bitter criticism. This has undermined public confidence in the medical profession and seriously impeded progress in an important endeavour aimed at reducing human suffering. This unfortunate situation has arisen from widespread ignorance amongst the public and the medical profession of the background, present achievements, and future potential of organ grafting. Short statements by experts, frequently misquoted or cut short by television interviewers, and misinformed derogatory pronouncements by prejudiced medically qualified men, with no knowledge of the field, have produced a sorry state of confusion. It is the purpose of this book to attempt to clarify organ transplantation. The principles of organ transplantation are common to all organs but I will confine most of the discussion to transplantation of four vital organs, namely the kidney, liver, heart, and lung.

ROY CALNE Cambridge January 1970

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