A. Harold Levy

It is with great pleasure that the editorial staff of the British Journal of Ophthalmology and, we are sure, all its readers offer our felicitations and best wishes to Harold Levy on his 100th birthday which falls on 11 December. Levy is the doyen of British ophthalmologists; we think it legitimate so to describe him for, although not autochthonous of these Islands—he was born in Montreal, where he took degrees in medicine at McGill University—he shortly afterwards came to London, taking further qualifications at Barts, and spent the whole of his long, busy, and more than useful professional life working until the age of 85 years in London. It is also fitting that the BJO itself should pay its tribute for with characteristic modesty, remaining behind the scenes, it was due in very large part to his hard work and acumen that the journal survived the tribulations of the second world war, its monthly issues appeared regularly on time, and little if any shrunken in size, and with no increase in subscription rates. The BJO at that time was a Limited Liability Company with Levy as its Honorary Managing Director. After the war with increasing costs and difficulties in production the Company was wound up and the journal came under the wide-spreading umbrella of the BMA Publications under whose aegis it has remained and thrived. Levy was Managing Director from 1932 until 1948 and the journal owes a great debt of gratitude to him.

The majority of the present generation of British ophthalmologists will never have had the pleasure and privilege of meeting Levy. He was, and is, a man of great charm and erudition with a wide-ranging knowledge of the best in art and literature. Those who heard his Presidential Address to the Ophthalmic Section of the Royal Society of Medicine on 'The Visual Appreciation of Fine Art', unfortunately never published, will always remember it, illustrated as it was by examples ranging from the head of Queen Nefertiti to the paintings of Constable and the French Impressionists.

In his later years Levy has suffered the vicissitudes of age, to which we are all subject, increasing deafness and, ironically, some of the troubles in his own specialty for which he had done so much to help so many in the past. He had bilateral cataract operations when he was in his eighties, and another for detachment in his only good eye at the age of 93, with fortunately a good result. All these he sustained with quite remarkable philosophy and equanimity, and with a fortitude somewhat unusual among those who know only too well from experience the implications of their own troubles, arousing even greater respect and admiration for him from his colleagues who knew of his tribulations.

Those of his old friends who would like to visit him in his flat in Campden Hill Road, will be assured of a warm welcome. They would find him as charming as ever with, in spite of deafness and impaired vision, a keen intellect, a memory sometimes even embarrassing, and a strong interest in current affairs and the welfare of his own specialty to which he has contributed so much.

We salute, respect, and again proffer our best wishes to our Grand Old Man.