The Journal of Bone and Joint Surgery

HARRY PLATT BIRTHDAY VOLUME

“ The days of our age are threescore years and ten; though some men be so strong that they come to fourscore years. In his hands are all the corners of the earth: and the strength of the hills is his also.”

With the psalmist we sing our own praise of a strong man who must know the strength of the hills if he reflects on the regard and respect with which he is held by surgeons in every part of the world. Whether or not he knows it, we do. We pay honour to Sir Harry Platt, Baronet, on this memorable occasion. After a full and sometimes difficult life of courageous endeavour we celebrate almost the youngest of all his birthdays—the eightieth.

Let us look at this life for a moment. He was the first to begin the organisation of a fracture service in Great Britain, at Ancoats Hospital, Manchester, and thereafter the first to await a sabbatical year in Boston to achieve a first appointment in England. He was the first secretary of the British Orthopaedic Association while still in young officer's uniform. He was the first professor of orthopaedic surgery in the University of Manchester. He was the first orthopaedic surgeon to become president of the Royal College of Surgeons of England. He was the first president of the newly formed International Colleges of Surgeons.

It is customary in commemorative issues of Journals to make a special invitation of contributions. We have not done this. It is true that we have invited appreciations from five, and only five, of those who represent his life: his students represented by Osmond-Clarke; his American colleagues and friends represented by Professor Philip Wilson; his endeavours in the Royal College of Surgeons of England represented by Sir James Paterson Ross; his early presidency and later associations with the Société Internationale de Chirurgie Orthopédique et de Traumatologie by Professor Matthias Hackenbroch; and his still wider endeavours with the International Federation of Surgical Colleges represented by Professor J. F. Nuboer. Many others wanted to contribute their personal attributions, but we have restrained them.

For the rest, we have chosen only clinical and academic contributions already accepted for publication in the Journal and tried to publish a series which reflect on the one hand the work of his own students and colleagues, and on the other the particular subjects of orthopaedic surgery in which his interest was greatest. We think this is what Sir Harry would have wanted; he will be honoured in the routine publication of those he has stimulated so much.

Quite deliberately we have chosen as the portrait published in this special issue of the Journal the one that was specially commissioned by every fellow, member and associate of the British Orthopaedic Association. We thus hope, that Harry Platt will understand that this issue of the Journal dedicated to his youthful age will give honour to him not only from all corners of the earth, but from those who are youngest among the members and associates of the British Orthopaedic Association.

Reginald Watson-Jones