

LEWIS WOLFE LEVY

MEMORIAL PUBLISHED BY HIS CHILDREN AFTER
HIS DEATH IN 1885

Dedication.

OUR DEAREST MOTHER,

To you we lovingly dedicate the following pages, containing a short *resumé* of the life of the dear one who has passed away for ever from us in this life. It has not been our intention in any way to extol his virtues, but it has been our desire to place on record, purely for our own personal satisfaction, the high esteem and veneration felt for him, not only by ourselves, but also by innumerable fellow citizens with whom he came in contact.

With loving sympathy for our irreparable loss,

We are, your loving children,

1 MAY.	1 HARRY.
1 RE.	1 BERTHA.
1 BENN.	1 LOUIS.
1 ELIOT.	1 HERBERT.
1 DAVE.	1 SEPTIMUS.
1 CARRIE.	1 OCTAVIUS.
1 ROSSIE.	

Memoir.

LEWIS WOLFE LEVY

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Jesse
 WAS born in London, England, on 13th ^{June} 1815, and at the desire of several of his relatives who had previously migrated to Australia, he decided, in 1840, to leave his home and seek his fortunes in what was then an almost unknown country. It was his pride, as it is the delight of those who follow him, that he was pre-eminently a self-made man. Starting in life with few of the advantages that now are so easily accessible, labouring under disability of creed, he throughout his long life had one object in view—that being not only the desire to advance his position, but further, to be held as the soul of

honour. In his early manhood, when far from prosperous, he was deemed worthy of being considered a man on whose word a house could be built; and after having lived a life of usefulness, such was the universal eulogium passed on him by all with whom he came in contact. On his arrival in Australia, after a very brief sojourn in Sydney, he left for Maitland, and commenced business in that town; but being ambitious of increasing his mercantile transactions, he went further north, and settled in Tamworth. In 1845 he married Julia, daughter of Samuel Solomon, the issue of the marriage being 15 children—8 sons and 7 daughters—13 of whom survived him. About this period he joined the firm of David Cohen & Co., which, from this

time, consisted of his cousins Samuel and David Cohen and himself. After remaining in Tamworth for some years, where he was held in high regard, on the departure of David Cohen for England, and Samuel Cohen for Sydney, he, in 1854 settled in Maitland, where he resided until 1862, when he moved to Sydney, where he remained for the rest of his life. On the occasion of his departure from Maitland an address was presented to him couched in the following terms:—

“TO LEWIS WOLFE LEVY, Esq., J.P.

DEAR SIR,—

On the eve of your departure from Maitland we have much pleasure in presenting you with this address, though we regret that we shall lose you as a townsman.

Your uniform kindness and good feeling which you have evinced towards all, the great assistance which you have given to each benevolent object, the great interest that you have taken in every public movement for the good of the district will make us regret your absence. In bidding you, for a time, ‘Good-bye’ we wish you and your family every happiness.”

For many years the exigencies of his mercantile transactions prevented him from taking any part in public affairs, but in the year 1869, at the solicitation of numerous friends, he decided to enter Parliament as a member for Liverpool Plains in the Legislative Assembly, but, seeing that Sir Charles Cowper was unable to secure a seat, he resigned in his favor, and, for the time, took no further steps in that direction. In 1871, Sir Charles Cowper having been appointed Agent-General, he was returned by a large majority, although he was unable to be present at the nomination. A few months later a dissolution took place, and, finding that he was unable to attend, to his own satisfaction, to the wants of so large a district, he decided not to contest the election, and for the time retired from public life. In 1874 his friend, Mr. B. Lee, having resigned his seat for West Maitland, he contested the election for that town, and was returned as member by a large majority, the numbers being 518 for himself and 129 for his opponent. In the following year another dissolution having occurred, the late hours necessary to his attendance on parliamentary duties not being congenial to his health, he retired to private life. Being essentially a mercantile man, he, about this time, was elected to hold a seat on the Board of the Hunter River New Steam Navigation Co., of which he was Chairman until his resignation, and henceforward he took an active part in various monetary institutions, and acted as Director of the Australasian Steam Navigation Co., United Insurance Co., Australian Gaslight Co., Newcastle Wallsend Coal Co., and

Commercial Banking Co. of Sydney, all of which positions he held at the time of his death, with the exception of the Australasian Steam Navigation Co., from which he had resigned previously, when he received the following letter:—

“Sydney, 9th Feb., 1884.

MY DEAR SIR,—

I submitted at yesterday's meeting your letter of the 6th inst., resigning your seat at the Board of the A.S.N. Co.

The Directors desire me to convey to you their extreme regret that you should have found it necessary to sever your connection with the Company, and unanimously expressed their unfeigned sense of the loss of your services as a colleague with whom they had worked so harmoniously, and whose counsel and advice they so much esteemed. Wishing you continued good health and prosperity, and with the kindest regards from each member of the Board, in which I join.

JAMES EWAN,
Chairman.”

He was also Director of the Prince Alfred Hospital, Indigent Blind Institution, and Trustee of Wynyard Square. In 1877 he, accompanied by his wife, left for Europe, and was absent from the colony 12 months, during which time he took an active pleasure in visiting various parts of England, the Continent, and the United States. In the year 1880 he was nominated to a seat in the Legislative Council, on which the *Jewish Chronicle*, of England, wrote:—

“Our worthy and highly-esteemed co-religionist, Mr. L. W. Levy, of ‘Cahors,’ Sydney, has been appointed by His Excellency the Governor-General in Council a member of the Legislative Council of New South Wales. The appointment, which carries with it the title of ‘Honourable’ is a life appointment, and not dependent on any Ministerial changes. It means, in fact, a call to the Upper House of New South Wales. Mr. L. W. Levy is only the second member of the Jewish religion on whom this great honour has been bestowed—an honour which is but the just recompense of a long irreproachable life, spent almost entirely in forwarding the interests of the colony of which he has been one of the most useful citizens. The appointment has given the greatest satisfaction to all parties and to all denominations. Mr. Levy's unassuming disposition, his sterling business qualifications, and his great, but unostentatious charities have secured him numerous friends, who rejoice in his accession to an honour which they hope he may long be spared to enjoy.”

For some years past he had suffered from bronchitis, but his health was such as to lead those by whom he was revered and loved to hope that he would live to a ripe old age; but in November, 1884, he complained of pain in his right leg, and on medical attendance being obtained, it was found that he was suffering from an ailment termed phlebitis. He was obliged to remain at his house for some time, and apparently had recovered, and in December he was able to be about again; but on December 24 he appeared to collapse, and recognising that his time had come,

with extraordinary composure, he gradually became weaker and weaker until on January 25, 1885, he died, surrounded, as was his particular wish, by his wife and all his children living in Australia. He left this world without any fear of what the future might bring to him. He expressed himself as perfectly content to meet his Maker. He knew that no death-bed repentance was necessary with him. He was buried at Haslem's Creek, and at his funeral, which was numerously attended, the Rev. A. B. Davis preached the following sermon:—

“Surely goodness and mercy hath followed me all the days of my life, and I shall abide in the mansions of God for ever.”—
PSALM XXIII, 6.

“Well might he, whose mortal remains we are about to lay reverently in their last resting place, have made this line of the Psalmist his own. Throughout the phases of his stirring life the goodness and mercy of God have followed him. Under their benign ægis he had a long immunity from sorrow or causes of anxiety. Indeed, until recently he bore almost a charmed life, free from care and every kind of malady. He saw his large family grow into manhood and womanhood, together with his well-beloved sons-in-law, and found them all well placed in worldly matters, full of love and reverence for their fond, and though determined, yet indulgent father—ready at all times, not only to fulfil, but to anticipate his wishes, and occupying positions in commercial circles where their accredited probity must have been to him a constant source of gratification. As the architect of his own fortunes, working his way steadily from small beginnings to large results, he maintained all through a character for integrity and exactness, which, under no consideration, would he forfeit. He was plain of speech and outspoken in his opinions, which, whether always right or wrong, were, at all events, the outcome of a conscientious conviction. As a merchant, the acknowledged, if not the ostensible, head of a considerable firm which he mainly helped to build up and consolidate, he was highly esteemed for his correct dealing and independence of spirit; and by their exercise he raised up for himself many life-long friendships, not only among his co-religionists in Sydney and Maitland, but among men of standing of other denominations. For many past years he served as one of the Directors of a number of the principal banking and trading establishments of the city, where his matured judgment and business tact were not only esteemed and accepted by his co-Directors, but often proved of great value. As an evidence of the general regard in which he was held, he was, with-

out any solicitation on his part, called to a seat in the Legislative Council of the colony. He was always proud of his Jewish origin, had an abiding love for the Jewish religion, observed with strictness the Jewish Sabbath, was a constant attendant at the services of the Synagogue, and



*IN MEMORY OF
LEWIS WOLFE LEVY, M.L.C.
PRESENTED BY HIS FAMILY TO THEIR FELLOW CITIZENS.
1888.*

particularly fond of carrying into practice those forms and customs of Judaism which find their best exponents in the home life. Such a man as this must be missed when his place knows him no more. And he will be missed. He was a characteristic man and a characteristic Hebrew. He was a good friend to many. He helped freely those who were in difficulties not of their own creation, and that

often to a very large extent, and no one knew aught of it. He was ever ready to answer any charitable call in a substantial manner, and never refused his aid when the cause was known to be deserving of support. A change came over him suddenly and unexpectedly. The strong, hale man was brought low at a single stroke. An insidious disease took hold of him, and in a few weeks held entire possession of his stalwart frame. He succumbed at once to the enemy that laid siege to the citadel. But, as ancient Job affirms, "There is hope of a tree if it be cut down that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease." He bore up manfully for a time, but as soon as he took to his bed he gave up all hope (as by a fore knowledge of what was to come), set his house in order, and prepared himself contentedly to resign his spirit into the merciful hand of God. It was then that the true man shone out in strong light. Taking a retrospect of his past life, he found, perhaps, some past prejudices and some hastiness of temper to deplore, but no injustice nor wilful wrong knowingly committed against any human being. His heart knew no fear. He recognised the sublime and mysterious nature of the change at hand, and was ready to meet it hopefully and without trepidation. He reposed his confidence in that goodness and mercy of the Almighty which had followed him throughout his life. To Him he offered his fervent supplication, not in lengthy prayers, but in devout breathings and aspirations, for he was one who believed that a man should not relegate his penitence to his sick bed, but should pray to the Divine Being during his active hours, and rely for his future happiness in a higher region upon a virtuous and well-spent life. May that unspeakable happiness now await him. He will be long remembered by his devoted wife and children. By them his sayings will be treasured. To them his memory will be ever dear, as also to many old friends to whom he had ever been staunch. I will only further add, in conclusion, that in him the community loses another of the few remaining of its pioneer citizens who have contributed to establish the fair commercial fame of our colony. Peaceful and tranquil be his bodily repose in the grave in which we are about to consign his earthly remains, and beautified be his spirit in the new life to which he has been summoned, where the goodness and mercy of the Good God will still follow him, and he shall abide in the Mansions of the Blessed for ever."

The expressions of sympathy at his decease from innumerable friends and strangers were most gratifying to

his family, and proved the high esteem in which he was held by all classes of the community.

For many years he was President of the Macquarie-street Synagogue, but on this being merged into the United Synagogue, he took no active part in congregational matters, but he was ever ready to render practical aid to anything appertaining to charity, and to him it was immaterial to what creed the petitioner might belong, providing the case was deserving. By his will he bequeathed many charitable bequests, amongst them being:—

- Montefiore Jewish Home, £1000.
- Sydney Infirmary, £500.
- Prince Alfred Hospital, £500.
- Randwick Destitute Children's Asylum, £500.
- St. Vincent's Hospital, £200.
- Maitland Hospital, £200.
- Asylum for Deaf, Dumb and Blind, £100.
- Indigent Blind Institution, £100.
- Infants' Home, Ashfield, £100.
- Infants' Home, Glebe, £100.
- Sydney Ragged School, £100.
- Home-Visiting Society of Sydney, £100.
- Tamworth Hospital, £25.
- Armidale Hospital, £25.
- Maitland School of Arts, £25.
- Hebrew Philanthropic Society, £200.
- Sydney Hebrew School, £100.

EXTRACTS FROM NEW SOUTH WALES NEWSPAPERS RELATIVE
TO THE DEATH OF THE LATE HON. L. W. LEVY, M.L.C.

Sydney Morning Herald, January 27, 1885:—

"The death of the Hon. Lewis Wolfe Levy, M.L.C., which took place at his residence in Macleay-street on Sunday, creates another blank in our political and commercial world. Mr. Levy arrived in this colony while quite a young man, and at once turned his attention to business matters. He entered into a connection with the large wholesale firm of David Cohen & Co., of West Maitland, and eventually became the head of the establishment. But, although primarily devoted to commercial matters, Mr. Levy found time to join in all movements of a benevolent or charitable nature. He was especially conspicuous in assisting the sufferers by the floods that for many years devastated the Hunter River district, and the hospital and other institutions of a similar character were often the recipients of his bounty. He first entered Parliament as a member for Liverpool Plains, and subsequently, when a vacancy was created in 1874 by the resignation of Mr. B. Lee, for Maitland, Mr. Levy was elected for that constituency. Like many other business men he could not brook the wearisome talk and the waste of time that generally characterise the Legislative Assembly, and after the next general election he retired into private life. Only a few years ago

he was appointed to a seat in the Upper House, but the state of his health prevented him from devoting his great business abilities to the service of the country to the extent he might otherwise have done."

Sydney Evening News, January 27, 1885.

"Mr. Lewis Wolfe Levy, M.L.C., died at his residence, in Macleay-street, on Sunday. Mr. Levy arrived in the colony a mere lad, and at once turned his attention to business. For many years he was connected with the wholesale firm of David Cohen & Co., West Maitland. He was elected a member for Liverpool Plains in 1871, and represented West Maitland in the Parliament of 1874. At the dissolution of that Parliament in November of that year, he retired into private life, but in December, 1880, he was nominated to a seat in the Legislative Council. Mr. Levy identified himself very closely with all charitable movements."

Maitland Mercury, January 27, 1885.

"Death has removed from the midst of men another old and worthy colonist in the person of the Hon. Lewis Wolfe Levy. For many years Mr. Levy was an active and energetic business man in West Maitland, as resident and managing partner of the great firm of D. Cohen & Co., and the extensive trade of the Company was largely built up by him. He was also for a short time the representative of West Maitland in the Legislative Assembly. He was a faithful friend, an excellent townsman, exemplary in his domestic relations, and a wide sympathy will be felt with the many connections who by his death will be bereaved."

Maitland Mercury, January 29, 1885.

"We mentioned briefly in our last issue the fact that death had removed from the midst of men an old and worthy member of the community in the person of the Hon. Lewis Wolfe Levy. Like many men in all countries who have gained wealth and position, Mr. Levy began life in Australia in a small way, and got on by dint of unceasing industry and perseverance. In conversation Mr. Levy delighted to refer to that period of his life. When this journal was started in 1843, Mr. Levy was a resident of West Maitland. Indeed he sought to influence to some extent (only by advice, of course) the conduct of this paper; for he was among a number of gentlemen who thought that in comment on matters of local public interest, Mr. Richard Jones, the editor, was somewhat too free spoken. It is pleasant to say that Mr. Levy was converted, by conversation with Mr. Jones, to the latter's view, and he was all his life a friend and supporter of the *Mercury*. If we can depend on our memory, Mr. Levy went about this time to Tamworth, where he established a large business. He afterwards joined the great firm of David Cohen & Co. in Maitland, and contributed very much to its progress and stability. The firm has always indeed numbered among its members several very energetic business men, and Mr. Levy was one of the ablest and most vigorous of this order of commercial managers. His share in building up what is now one of the largest and soundest mercantile establishments in New South Wales was very conspicuous. Mr. Levy did not take a prominent part in public life, but no benevolent or charitable object ever lacked his help and countenance. When flood relief was a sad necessity in this district, Mr. Levy was one of

its most active friends, and in many practical ways aided in lessening the distress resulting from repeated inundations. He was frequently besought by friends who appreciated his large views and solid good sense to enter Parliament, but he resisted all solicitations till in 1874 he was elected for West Maitland on the retirement of Mr. B. Lee. In the Assembly Mr. Levy was usually a silent voter, but in discussions on matters bearing on commerce his business knowledge was very signally manifested, and he exhibited an aptitude for dealing with commercial questions which would have made him a very useful legislator. But he was not enamoured of long sittings, or of wordy harangues in which speakers utter an infinite deal of nothing, and he was too thoroughly a domestic man to care for losing the pleasures of his home at the only time of day when he could enjoy them. Therefore, when a general election occurred, he refrained from seeking to re-enter Parliament, and remained in private seclusion till he was chosen, by a discrimination honoring to the Ministers who exercised it, a member of the Legislative Council—a position he still held at the time of his death. In business Mr. Levy displayed, as has been hinted, both shrewdness and ability. He was not a rash man, but on the other hand he was not excessively timid in commercial matters. His natural intelligence was very great. As a husband and father his character stood very high, and he was one of the warmest of friends. Many a man owes a position of competence and comfort to a start generously given him by Mr. Levy; and we rejoice to write—for we have had the assurance from Mr. Levy's own lips—that one of the joys of his life was to contemplate the success of persons who had thus been helped by him in the battle of the world. Few will be disposed to begrudge him such a joy—the delight of meditating in his hours of leisure upon the good deeds he had done in the world, upon the benefits he had conferred on the deserving. And those who enjoyed his intimate friendship could not fail to realise how sincerely religious a man Mr. Levy was. He was a zealous follower of the God of his fathers, but he possessed broad sympathies, and made no distinction of creed in his charities or in his relations with his fellow townsmen. It was his pleasing task not many years ago to lay the foundation stone of the West Maitland Synagogue, and the noble words which he then took occasion to speak were characteristic alike of his devoutness and of his tolerant spirit.”

Maitland Mail, January 30, 1885.

“The news of the death of the Hon. L. W. Levy, which took place at his residence, Macleay-street, Sydney, on Sunday, has been received with very general and wide-spread regret. Mr. Levy was a man well known, not only in the commercial and political world, but also in social life, in which he displayed qualities indicative of a truly benevolent spirit. He came to the colony while quite a young man, and turned his attention to business with such success that he eventually became the head of the well-known firm of D. Cohen & Co. His social career was marked by a readiness to assist in all benevolent purposes, and sufferers by the various great floods in this district owe much to his kindness of heart and liberality. In 1874 he entered Parliament, and was an effective though quiet worker for the public good. Parliamentary work was not, however, congenial to him, and after the following general election he retired into private life. A few years ago he was appointed to a seat in the Legislative Council, where his great commercial knowledge made his presence valuable. He was a valued member of the Board of Directors of the Commercial Banking Co., and the flag at the head

office of that institution floated half-mast high on the two days succeeding his death. The deceased gentleman leaves a large family, several members of which are well known in commercial circles."

"Commercial Banking Co. of Sydney,
Sydney, January 30, 1885.

MY DEAR MADAM—

At the meeting of the Directors of the Bank to-day, the following resolution was adopted by the Board in reference to the loss that has been sustained by the death of your husband, viz.:—"The Board desire to put on record their unfeigned regret at the death of their late colleague and the sense of the loss thereby sustained by the Bank, which he has served so faithfully and zealously". They further wished that a copy of this resolution should be sent to you with an expression of their sincere sympathy with you in the irreparable loss which you and your family have sustained.

T. A. DIBBS,
General Manager."

"Newcastle Wallsend Coal Co.,
Sydney, 29th January, 1885.

MY DEAR MADAM—

I am directed by the Board of Directors of the above Company to transmit to you a resolution which was unanimously adopted at a meeting of the Board this morning. Resolved unanimously: "That the Board deeply regret the death of their colleague, the Hon. Mr. L. W. Levy, and record their sense of the loss of his valuable services, and their sympathy with his widow and the other members of his family. That a letter to this effect be sent to Mrs. Levy signed by the Chairman." To this I desire to add my deep regret at the loss of a good neighbour and kind friend, and to offer my sympathy with you in your bereavement.

M. METCALFE,
Chairman."

"Australian Gaslight Co.,
Sydney, January 28, 1885.

DEAR MADAM,—

At a meeting of the Directors held this day the Secretary reported the death of the Hon. L. W. Levy, whereupon the following resolution was passed unanimously:—"That the Board desire to place on record an expression of their deep regret at the death of their late colleague, and their appreciation of the value of his services while a Director of this Company." In communicating this resolution, the Board desire me to convey to you and your family a respectful expression of their sincere sympathy with you in the irreparable loss you have sustained.

W. JOHNSON,
Secretary."

"United Insurance Co.,
Sydney, January 31, 1885.

MRS. L. W. LEVY.

DEAR MADAM,—

It was with the feelings of the deepest regret that the Directors at their last meeting placed on record the death of their co-Director, the late Hon. L. W. Levy, who for many years has occupied a seat

at the Board, and by his matured judgment and valued counsel and advice has assisted in furthering the best interests of this Company. While sensible of the loss the Company has sustained, it is small as compared with the greater loss that has fallen upon you and the members of your family, and they desire to join in the general expression of condolence and sympathy in this time of your sorrow and bereavement. To the community the death of your late husband will be a loss, and the deservedly high esteem in which he was held by his fellow citizens will, no doubt, be to you and all your family a source of much consolation and comfort. Again expressing warmest sympathy with you in this time of your distress.

JAMES EWAN,
Chairman."

"College-street, February 11, 1885.

MADAM,—

In the name of the Committee of the Industrial Blind Institution, of which I am Chairman, I am to express to you the personal sympathy of the members with you and your family on the death of your husband, the late L. W. Levy, and to acknowledge, with deep regret at his loss, the valuable services, which he at all times, as a member of the Board, rendered to the Institution.

ALFRED STEPHEN."

"January 28, 1885.

Even in their great bereavement it may afford some slight gratification to the family of the late Mr. Levy to know that when reference was made yesterday at the meeting of the Colonial and Industrial Exhibition Commissioners to the loss they had just sustained of his services in his decease, and when his many merits as a man, a citizen, and a legislator were spoken of, there was one general tribute of respect and esteem almost spontaneously and very unanimously evoked, and nothing could have been in better taste, or more kindly and sympathetic in tone and expression than the appreciative remarks of the President Sir James Martin, the Lieutenant-Governor, and Sir John Hay, Sir Patrick Jennings, and, in fact, every leading man there as well as the whole of the rest of the Commission, numbering between 40 and 50, and representing, as they do, the whole community in one way or another. I take the liberty of mentioning this to you because the newspaper account is, of course, merely a bald mention only of it, while such an expression of sentiment by such an assemblage is honoring both to the memory of the one who has gone before, and to the feelings of his kin who remain behind.

R. DUDLEY ADAMS."

"January 29, 1885.

DEAR MRS. LEVY,—

It was with the deepest feelings of regret that I heard upon my arrival in town late on Tuesday evening that your good husband and my much-esteemed friend had passed away from us, and that my being in the country prevented me from paying the last tribute of respect to him. I offer you my warm sympathy in your great affliction, and trust that Almighty God may assist you to bear the stroke which has deprived us all of one we all loved so well.

GEORGE R. DIBBS."

"Sydney, January 30, 1885.

MY DEAR MRS. LEVY,—

I send you under this cover a resolution of the Board of Directors of this Bank, and, while thus joining with them in this official expression of our sympathy for you and your family in your sad bereavement, I cannot allow the opportunity to pass without expressing to you my personal attachment to your dear husband. I have known Mr. Levy for a lifetime, and as his colleague on the Board of this Bank, as his banker, and as his friend, our associations have always been of the pleasantest and kindest; and, believing that our regard for each other was a mutual one, I feel your dear husband's loss to me as sincere and heartfelt as if I were a member of his family.

T. A. DIBBS."

"'Dalwood', Branxton,

February 5, 1885.

I grieve with you over the death of your revered Mr. L. W. Levy. In him I have also lost a dear old friend, one who often gave me a kindly word, and still more substantial help in former days. It must at least be a comfort to you and to all his relations that, in falling asleep for a time, it was at a ripe old age, in the midst of well-deserved honor, and the warm esteem of all who had the pleasure of knowing him.

JOHN WYNDHAM."

TOWARDS DEMOCRATIC REPRESENTATION

THE BOARD OF DEPUTIES

The two articles, "The 18 Signatories" by S. Stedman, and "The N.S.W. Jewish Board of Deputies" by Dr. G. Bergman, form a unit, the second paper in effect being a supplement to the first in as much as it tells of subsequent events and provides a commentary on some aspects of the problems that arose during the period when the Board of Deputies emerged to become what may loosely be described as the democratically elected Jewish representative body. That there will be some duplication is inevitable but necessary to preserve continuity and to place events in proper perspective.