



DR. NATHAN ROSENTHAL

OBITUARY

Dr. Nathan Rosenthal died on June 29, 1955, at the age of 65, following a brief illness. He was one of the pioneer hematologists, and as such internationally known. His was an original mind combined with an ever present enthusiasm and ability to inspire. And yet, with all his achievements, his extreme modesty and gentleness are the aspects of the man which will always be cherished.

Dr. Rosenthal was graduated from the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Columbia University in 1913. His internship at the Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City began an association which was to endure for forty-two years. It was during his early medical training under Drs. Nathan Brill and Emanuel Libman that Dr. Rosenthal's interest in hematology began. This was interrupted by World War I in which he served in France as Captain, Army Medical Corps, with the Mount Sinai Hospital Unit. In 1926, he established at the Mount Sinai Hospital one of the first hematology laboratories and departments at a general hospital in this country. This soon became a mecca for young physicians desiring training in the new field of hematology. The increasing number of hospital patients with disorders of the blood provided the material for the many basic, clinical hematologic stud-

ies which were characteristic of Dr. Rosenthal's chief interest. The blood bank he organized in 1938 was the second in existence in the United States.

While his early interests centered on the leukemias and purpuras, his writings and contributions encompassed every aspect of hematology. He was one of the first after Kaznelson to recommend splenectomy in 1923 for idiopathic thrombocytopenic purpura. His early studies (1917 to 1928) on the classification, blood picture, bleeding and coagulation findings, treatment and course in the various types of thrombocytopenic purpuras are basic to our present knowledge. In 1917, with Dr. Reuben Ottenberg, he described the method of direct platelet counting, using sodium citrate as the diluent.

Dr. Rosenthal's interest in the clotting mechanism and hemorrhagic diseases dates back to 1921 and 1922, with studies on the effect of pancreatic rennet on blood coagulation and the paradoxical shortening of blood coagulation after intravenous administration of sodium citrate. This work led to various studies of hemophilia. In 1937 and 1950, he described, with his associates, unusual cases of hemorrhagic disease in the female. In 1953, he and his son Robert announced the discovery of a new hemorrhagic disease and clotting factor—plasma thromboplastin antecedent (PTA) deficiency.

His researches in leukemia and related diseases began at an early stage of his career with a report in 1917 on the oxidase reaction of the cells in normal and in leukemic blood. Discovery of a "new" lymphomatous disease, giant follicular lymphoblastoma, was reported in 1925 with Drs. N. Brill and G. Baehr. Dr. Rosenthal retained a constant interest in this disease and subsequently described its course and treatment. This interest culminated in the identification of the "hematogone," an abnormal type of lymphocyte, as the specific abnormality in giant follicular lymphoblastoma. Other studies contributed to the classification, course and treatment of the various leukemias and lymphomas. In the past few years, he characterized another leukemic disease, "reticulum cell" leukemia.

His papers on polycythemia vera, myelofibrosis and myeloid metaplasia were basic contributions to the understanding of the multiplicity of courses manifested by this disease. Among his many published articles were significant papers on agranulocytosis, leukopenias, aplastic anemia, hemolytic anemias, multiple myeloma, infectious mononucleosis, bone marrow aspiration and blood transfusion.

In addition to his affiliation with the Mount Sinai Hospital, Dr. Rosenthal was attending hematologist at Harlem Hospital and consulting hematologist at French, Beth David, Bronx, Methodist, St. Joseph's, Long Beach Memorial Hospitals and N. Y. Infirmary for Women and Children. He was consultant in hematology to the First Army District and Associate Clinical Professor of Medicine at Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons, belonged to many medical societies and was Chairman of the Medical Advisory Board of the American Red Cross in New York City. Among the many awards, citations, and honors presented to Dr. Rosenthal were L'Ordre de la Santé Publique, presented by the French Government in 1948, the Carlos Finlay Medal, given by the Cuban Government in 1951, and the first Harlow Brooks Medal, awarded in 1953 by the New York Academy of Medicine.

For several years he was an associate editor of *BLOOD* and served in an advisory capacity on the staffs of other publications. Dr. Rosenthal's quiet, simple, unassuming manner gained the confidence of his patients who held him in warm regard. He was a deeply religious man, devoted to his family and proud of their accomplishments. It was a source of profound satisfaction and happiness when his only son followed in his footsteps and became associated with him in his practice. His sudden death came while he was in the midst of much unfinished work. It is hoped that through the many students he influenced and trained, his work and ideals will be perpetuated. He leaves his wife, Anna Batt Rosenthal, a son, Dr. Robert L. Rosenthal, and a daughter, Mrs. Ann Lee.—*William Dameshek.*