Dr. Henry M. Stratton—70 Years

IT SEEMS APPROPRIATE, in this issue of Blood, to take note of the 70th birthday of Henry Stratton. During the past 30 years, Henry’s relationship with hematology has grown ever stronger, and he has come to occupy a unique role in this important area of medicine and research. His interest in hematology began in his youth in Vienna. For many years it lay dormant, but during the Second World War it entered “active cycle.” With characteristic enthusiasm and vigor, he began to provide support in the development of hematology as we know it today.

His formal entrance into the field of hematology was to initiate the first English-language journal devoted to the study of blood. Together with Bill Dameshek, he launched Blood: The Journal of Hematology in 1946. He gave the journal his personal attention and enthusiastic support, but, as Bill Dameshek stated and as this writer can attest, “He wisely kept his hands off its editorial policy.” This has been characteristic of him in publishing both books and journals. Shortly after Blood was started, Henry Stratton began to publish books on hematology. Many have become classics, and indeed some, such as Hemolysis and Related Phenomena by the late Eric Ponder, remain as standard reference books. In 1956, together with the late Leandro Tocantins, he published the first of a series of review books entitled Progress in Hematology. This innovation provided, in one volume, reviews of the important developments in hematology during the preceding 2–3 years. Since Dr. Tocantins’ death, this series has been edited by Elmer Brown and Carl V. Moore and continues to provide an easy and ready reference for keeping up to date in hematology. More recently, he began the publication of Seminars in Hematology, edited by Peter Miescher and Ernst Jaffé. The Seminars are also of a review nature but are subject-oriented rather than providing a broad overview as does Progress. The popularity and high quality of these publications offer testimony to his insight.

As Henry Stratton became more deeply involved in hematology, he recognized that there was limited opportunity for hematologists to exchange views and
formally present their data. The Blood Club provided a partial solution. Initially this was held in Atlantic City on the Sunday before the "Young Turks" meeting. It rapidly outgrew its modest beginning, and soon more than 600 people were attending. It appeared to have become a popular fixture on the Atlantic City scene. But in the 1960s, it fell on troubled times and was in danger of going under. In 1965, there was no meeting. However, the following year the Blood Club resurfaced on Saturday night, as healthy as ever.

When the International Society of Hematology met in Boston in 1956, Henry Stratton took the opportunity to bring together 10 American hematologists to discuss a more formal American society devoted to hematology. Although some of their distinguished colleagues questioned the need, this group formed the American Society of Hematology. Within a matter of a few years, the Society had grown rapidly, and at its last meeting more than 2000 people were registered, clearly demonstrating the foresight of the founders. Henry has continued an active and close association with this Society, and last year he established the William Dameshek Lectureship in memory of his close friend and colleague. He has been equally active in the International Society where he has provided wise counsel and help over the past two decades. In 1956, he founded the Henry M. and Lillian Stratton Lectureship of the International Society. Recipients of this honor form a Who's Who of Hematology: Waldenström, Heilmeyer, Bessis, Amano, Moore, Dameshek, Dacie, and Dausset.

During his career, Henry Stratton has received many honors, of which the most coveted, perhaps, was the honorary degree of Doctor of Medicine conferred upon him by the University of Freiburg in Breisgau, Germany, on the occasion of its 500th Anniversary in 1957. He has been elected an honorary member of numerous societies, both in the United States and in Europe. In 1955, he established the Henry M. and Lillian Stratton Foundation, which has become an important resource for investigators in hematology as well as other fields of medical research.

Henry and his devoted wife, Lillian, are familiar figures at local, national, and international meetings. One looks forward with anticipation to renewing acquaintances with this warm and charming couple at such meetings and hearing the latest about their activities and their ever-present dachshund, Pretzel. We trust that we will have many occasions to see them again, and we wish him our best on this, his 70th birthday.
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FREDERICK STOHLMAN, JR.