

The Angle Orthodontist

*A magazine established by the co-workers
of Edward H. Angle, in his memory. . . .*

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ALLAN G. BRODIE

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As a Torch Falls Its Sparks May Light Another Flame

TRIBUTES JUSTLY TENDERED upon the death of individuals of attainment often express a conviction that their accomplishment will remain an enduring inspiration for those who follow. The life and works of Albin Oppenheim warrant expectation that they may furnish motivation for the life and works of others. One hopes only that these are not idle expectations that die aborning for the times are in crying need of such lives and contributions.

Years spent in broad and careful studies much perhaps without pre-considered knowledge of the exact fields in which it would eventually find expression; the arduous, persistent, disciplined effort in research; the application of hypotheses developed by experiment to clinical problems in the practice of dentistry and orthodontics; devotion to study and practice rather than acclaim; perseverance in the face of disappointment and persecution; individually, these attributes and conditions which comprise the life of Albin Oppenheim are worthy sparks to light the fire of imagination and determination, in combination they are abundant inspiration. However, there must be the proper tinder.

How many short courses with superficial foundation will be reconstructed to broad fundamental comprehensive sequence of instruction? How many exponents of prematurely expressed theory will withhold publication for the confirmation which the years of clinical test and record can alone furnish? How many do you suppose will withdraw full or half time from remunerative practice to devote themselves to study and teaching? How many will continue in the face of limited funds and unappreciative administrators? How many will do these things because of Albin Oppenheim?

What will you, one of the very few who will read this page, do that will add to the knowledge or excellence of practice because you were moved to do it by the life of this man?

One wonders whether teachers as they require their students to read and study the works of Oppenheim will make similar effort to acquaint them with the man as well as his contributions. It would be encouraging to know that but one of the many applicants to the graduate courses in orthodontics motivated by the impression that the practice of orthodontics is an easy way to affluence would be diverted into a constructive career in teaching or research.

Albin Oppenheim has left the spark, it is the fire only that is lacking.
H. J. N.

Albin Oppenheim 1875-1945

Resolutions on the Death of Dr. Albin Oppenheim*

WHEREAS the Chicago Association of Orthodontists has learned of the death of Dr. Albin Oppenheim at his home in Hollywood, California, and

WHEREAS Dr. Oppenheim's passing removes from the orthodontic scene one of its most outstanding scientific contributors, it seems proper to review briefly the chief events of his life and the influence he has exerted upon orthodontic concepts.

Albin Oppenheim was born in Brno, Moravia, then a part of Austria-Hungary, January 8, 1875, and received his early education in the schools of that city. His medical degree was earned at the Karl Ferdinand's University in Prague in 1899 and his dental degree at the Berlin Dentalpoliclinic in 1904. He was called to Vienna in 1909 by Professor Weiser to assist him in his practice. From 1914-18, the war years, he was the head of the department of facial injuries in Army Hospital No. 1 in Vienna. During this period (1915) he was appointed Privatdozent on the faculty of the University of Vienna and head of the orthodontia department of its Dental Institute. In 1927 he was appointed Professor Extraordinary.

Oppenheim's early researches were brought to the attention of Angle who, in 1911, invited him to give a course of lectures at the Angle College, then in New London, Connecticut. From this time forth Oppenheim belonged as much to the New World as to the Old. He and Grunberg of Berlin became ardent admirers of Angle whom they affectionately called *Der Grosspater*. They took back to Europe the teachings gained here and gave them widespread publicity. It was these two men to whom Dr. Angle en-

* Adopted by the Chicago Association of Orthodontists, May 27, 1946.

trusted the translation of his "Malocclusion of the Teeth." The first German edition, published by H. Meussir of Berlin in 1908 contained a chapter on Diagnosis and the second, published in 1913 a chapter on Physiological Transformation of the Tissues during Retention by these two men. Neither of these chapters appear in any American edition.

Oppenheim revisited the United States in 1926 as a lecturer in the Angle School at Pasadena and it was here the author had the privilege of meeting him first. He was again accompanied by Grunberg who seemed to feel a sort of proprietary pride in Oppenheim and watched over him like a hen over a chick, frequently to Oppenheim's embarrassment. The two men were close friends for many years and this friendship was based on deep mutual respect. Grunberg literally stood in awe of Oppenheim's scientific attainments while Oppenheim worshipped the outstanding clinical skill of Grunberg.

The clouds of war were hovering in Austria when the IX International Dental Congress was held in Vienna in August, 1936, but they seemed remote in that charming city when Oppenheim entertained the orthodontic delegates from all over the world with a series of evening clinics in his beautiful home. By the next year the political situation had become very tense and by 1938 Oppenheim felt impelled to leave the country. Together with his wife he went to Geneva, Switzerland, where they spent six months. It was here that he accepted the invitation of the University of Southern California and he and Mrs. Oppenheim entered the United States on January 2, 1939. Settling in Los Angeles as research professor of orthodontia he became a citizen of this country in 1944. He passed away November 20, 1945.

Between 1908 and 1945, Oppenheim contributed some thirty articles to dental literature. This does not seem like a large number when judged by the output of the prolific "literature stuffer" but practically all of it was based on long, tedious experimentation and microscopic examination. Judged in this light it represents a life of hard work and remitting data.

His first significant publication appeared in 1911 in the *Oesterreichisch-Ungarische Vierteljahrschrift fur Zahnheilkunde* published in Vienna. This article was reprinted in the *American Orthodontist* by the Angle Society before which it had been presented. It was the now famous "Tissue-Changes, Particularly of the Bone, Incident to Tooth Movement."

Until the time of this publication the phenomena involved in movement of teeth had been matters of speculation, some claiming that bone resorption and rebuilding were responsible while others held that it was the natural elasticity of bone. Oppenheim demonstrated conclusively that neither of these concepts was correct and that a complete reorganization of the involved bone tissue took place in accordance with Wolff's Law. He demonstrated further that teeth subjected to the pull of ligatures from a heavy base wire did not act like a post in the ground but rather like a one-armed lever. Because of certain other observations he advanced light, continuous forces as being most physiological.

Although he continued to write and publish on miscellaneous matters, Oppenheim's next significant contribution came in 1922 when his histological findings on the growth of roots of teeth appeared. Then in 1928 came the work that marked his only significant departure from the histological

method. This was his "Prognathism from the Anthropological and Orthodontic Viewpoints" and was conducted according to strict anthropological techniques on large skull collections of various European museums. This paper was at once a defense of the Angle Classification and a heralding of a controversy that was to flare some fifteen years later when typal variations were to be ignored in the extraction of teeth.

While Oppenheim was engaged in this study, Ketcham published his paper on root resorption. The latter's findings seemed to indicate that this unfortunate aftermath of orthodontic treatment could be laid at the door of the so-called rigid appliances. In his characteristically thorough manner Oppenheim began an investigation which culminated in 1936 in his *Biological Orthodontic Therapy and Reality*. In his work he showed that there was apparently no orthodontic management possible, regardless of appliances employed, that did not leave scars in the form of resorptions. These findings were based principally on human tissue reactions.

In 1942 he published his "Human Tissue Response to Orthodontic Intervention of Short and Long Duration" and in 1944 his "A Possibility for Physiological Orthodontic Movement." In both of these he stressed the advantages of gentle forces applied intermittently, with relatively long intervals of rest between. Much of this treatment was carried on through the use of head caps worn at night only.

Oppenheim did not have a happy life in the usual sense of the word. He was of a very serious and sensitive nature and controversies that periodically arose between the different schools of thought in Vienna troubled him out of all proportion to their importance. He devoted much time to the answering of critics who should have been beneath his notice. He was scientifically honest himself and could never understand those who were not.

Because of the careful, life-long efforts of this man, Orthodontia possesses a foundation of scientifically proven facts not often equalled by a young science. We all stand in debt to him. Now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Chicago Association of Orthodontists register its deep sorrow on the death of Dr. Albin Oppenheim and be it further

RESOLVED, that a copy of these resolutions be spread upon the minutes of the Association and a copy be sent to his wife, Emily.

ALLAN G. BRODIE

FREDERICK B. NOYES, *Chairman*