



Preston Duncan

LOUIS ROSENTHAL
The sculptor who designed the
DICKEY CENTENARY MEDAL

One day in 1898, the little Lithuanian village of Plungyan buzzed with excitement. A genius was in their midst! Little Leon Chatel, the 9-year-old son of the wealthy mill owner, had amazed his father and his father's expert German mechanic by solving a problem in cog-

wheels over which they had worked many despairing hours. Surely little Leon would be a great engineer—a great factory builder—a great industrialist.

¶ But Leon had other ideas. He wanted to carve—to reproduce in tiny forms with his sharp knife the

beautiful things of life and of dreams. And so, despite his father's illness and death and the ruin of the family fortune, Leon Chatel chose the long, hard road to art.

¶ Today, Leon Chatel has become Louis Rosenthal (because a younger brother legally changed the family

name), and here in the United States, where he came at 19, he has achieved unquestioned recognition as the foremost sculptor of miniatures in the world!

¶ The Fates who spin our twisted threads of life must have looked down and smiled when the mill owner's son,

who had deserted his mills for art, was chosen to create a medal commemorating the 100th Anniversary of one of the earliest textile mills in the United States. And if Louis Rosenthal did not participate in the Industrial Revolution which took place in the century spanned by the Dickey

enterprise, it was fitting indeed that he should be chosen to immortalize it in the brilliantly conceived sculptural masterpiece which appears on the reverse side of the Dickey medal.

¶ Perhaps there was romance in the old-time hand loom, but there was back-breaking, nerve-wracking labor

as well—and Rosenthal depicts Father Time, with his right hand snuffing out the candle at the hand-loom, and with his left hand throwing on the switch which starts the modern power-loom that makes it possible for more people to wear better clothes at lower prices than at any

time in the history of civilization.

¶ *This medal is a true masterpiece of art, a worthy work of Louis Rosenthal, member of the Royal Society of Miniature Painters, Sculptors and Gravers, one of America's great artists whose works are enshrined in many prominent collections.*

