

**Perkin jubilee of the coal-tar industry / The Committee of Fifteen, Chas. F. Chandler, chairman ... [et al.]**

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**Publication/Creation**

New York : The Committee, 1906.

**Persistent URL**

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# Perkin Jubilee

of the

## Coal-Tar Industry.

New York, July 20th, 1906.

DEAR SIR:

The year 1906 marks the Fiftieth Anniversary of the epoch-making discovery by William Henry Perkin of the dyestuff "Mauve" by which the foundation was laid for the coal-tar industry and a mighty stimulus given to the study of chemistry. To commemorate the event a movement was originated in England by the appointment of a Committee, which is now supported by similar organizations in Germany, France and Switzerland. The date of the English commemoration is to be July 26th and 27th, 1906, and it has been decided to make an appeal for subscriptions to carry out the following objects:

1. The presentation to Dr. Perkin for his lifetime of an oil portrait of himself, executed by an eminent artist, the portrait to become the property of the nation at his death.
2. The execution of a marble bust of Dr. Perkin, to be placed in the rooms of the Chemical Society.
3. The establishment of a "Perkin Research Fund" for the promotion of chemical research, to be administered through the Chemical Society.

The Committee organized in the United States for this purpose believes that the Americans in general are, perhaps, not duly impressed with the achievements of chemistry and, therefore, do not fully realize the importance of Perkin's discovery, and that in consequence thereof, they would not contribute liberally to a fund for the above memorial. In order to make the occasion a public tribute to Dr. Perkin for the immense service he has rendered to chemical industry and science, it has therefore been decided to hold a separate American celebration at a date in the late fall, in which the whole American nation would probably join, if it is made to appreciate what Perkin did for humanity. Such a celebration would confer a greater honor upon Dr. Perkin than contributions to the English fund by a few American chemists who are especially interested.

With this object in view the Committee submitted to a public meeting, held May 28th, 1906, the following program:

1. To invite Dr. W. H. Perkin to be present at the American celebration as the guest of the Americans, the date of the event to be October 6th, subject to the approval of Dr. Perkin, and to consist of a banquet and symposium on the coal-tar industry.
2. The presentation to Dr. Perkin of a personal token.
3. The foundation of a Perkin medal to be awarded annually to an American chemist for distinguished work in applied chemistry.
4. The establishment of a *nucleus of a fund* for the foundation, at the Chemists' Club, in New York City of a reference and circulating library, covering the entire field of theoretical and applied chemistry, which is to be in charge of a salaried librarian and to contain duplicate sets, one of them to be used for circulation among American chemists.

It is estimated that \$5,000.00 will be amply sufficient to cover the expenses of the personal token and the Perkin medal, while the sum of at least \$50,000.00 will be necessary for placing the library on a permanent basis.

The reason why the idea of a research fellowship proposed by the English as well as the American Committee met with so little favor is due to the fact that there already exist ample provisions for research work in this country. Any promising investigator can obtain adequate assistance, and for this purpose the sum of \$400,000.00 annually is at the disposal of scientists from the Carnegie fund alone.

### The Importance of the Perkin Discovery.

The discovery of the dyestuff "Mauve" gave birth to an industry of such dimensions that neither the discoverer nor any man of his time could have foreseen. Besides the enormous economic value of this industry the discovery brought about an intimate co-operation between science and technique unknown up to that time, and emancipated not only the chemical arts but all allied branches from their former rule of thumb methods, transforming them from empirical arts to branches of applied science. The evolution of the coal-tar-color industry has been felt in many divergent fields. It was soon found that some of the coal-tar chemicals possessed medicinal properties, and products were originated which have proved of great value for the relief of pain, the reduction of fever, and the production of sleep. Other substances from the same source are used largely as developers in photography. Some of them yield such delicate odor that perfumes are made from them, and one substance, saccharine, a product of American ingenuity, was found to be 550 times sweeter than sugar, and is to-day largely used as an artificial sweetener. Others of them were so constituted as to possess explosive properties, and when properly harnessed by chemical skill are used today by the armies of the world as smokeless powder and by miners as safety explosives.

By the artificial production of alizarine and indigo from coal-tar, which heretofore were only obtainable from the vegetable kingdom, millions of acres have been made available for the raising of food products, thus indirectly cheapening the cost of living of a very large part of the population of the globe.

The distillation of coal-tar has been developed to such a degree that all by-products are utilized and one of them, sulphate of ammonia, is produced so economically that it is commonly used as a fertilizer to increase the wealth of the soil. Again cyanide of potassium which is manufactured cheaply in an allied branch of the industry, is used for extracting low-class gold ore, which were hitherto useless, making it possible for American miners to work with profit the poorest kind of ore. Hence this substance has played an important part in the monetary system, as its cheap production has disposed of the fear that there would not be sufficient gold metal to maintain the gold standard of the civilized nations.

The Committee invites your subscription for the objects set forth in the above circular, and a form is appended, which kindly fill out and return to the undersigned treasurer, specifying how much of your subscription should be allotted to the English fund, etc. We would ask to make your subscription a liberal one, for any surplus, as has been stated above, will be used for the proposed chemists' library. It is hardly necessary to accentuate the importance of such a library, but it may not be amiss to say that its foundation as planned by the Committee, will be of the highest importance to the chemical profession. It has been estimated that there are 8,000 chemists living in the United States, the great majority of them being scattered, remote from libraries, so that it is impossible for them to take up the study of any special subject. Now, if such a circulating library can be established these men will at once be placed within reach of modern science, and will be able to consult not only the latest publications but also the older works, many of which are not even to be found on the shelves of our greatest libraries. Through the knowledge thus gained, the manufacture of new articles will be

started, new works will be built, and the industries of the country will be promoted. New employment will be thus found for the American working men, and other industries, such as shipping, etc., will be benefitted. Therefore, by helping us to create this library you will further not only the chemical industry but increase the economic wealth of our country.

Yours very truly,

THE COMMITTEE OF FIFTEEN:

CHAS. F. CHANDLER, Chairman. ADOLF KUTTROFF, Treasurer. H. SCHWEITZER, Secretary.  
Columbia University Continental Color and Chemical Co., 128 Duane Street,  
New York. 128 Duane St., New York City. New York.  
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MAXIMILIAN TOCH, of Toch Bros., Manufacturers of Dry Colors, Paints and Varnishes.

Perkin Jubilee.

MR. ADOLF KUTTROFF,  
Treasurer of Perkin Fund.

Dear Sir:

Enclosed please find my contribution of \$\_\_\_\_\_ for the Perkin Jubilee Fund.

I desire that this sum should be distributed as follows:

For the English Perkin Memorial Fund, \$\_\_\_\_\_

For the American Perkin Jubilee Fund, \$\_\_\_\_\_

At the discretion of the American Committee, \$\_\_\_\_\_

Name.....

Street.....

City and State.....

(Please make checks payable to the order of and mail same to ADOLF KUTTROFF,  
Treasurer, 128 Duane Street, New York, N. Y.)