

The starting materials for this synthesis cost \$250, "so that," says Fischer, "it has not yet made its appearance on the dining table!"

These glorious researches were still in full blast in 1902 when Fischer was awarded the Nobel prize in chemistry.

There seems to be some foundation for the fact that the opening up of our Rockefeller Institute in New York City gave German scientists some very unpleasant moments. They were afraid that an institute, devoted entirely to research, and manned by talent second to none, would soon outstrip any university, where of necessity teaching, aside from research, required much attention. This led Ostwald, Nernst and Fischer to start an agitation for the endowment of some similar institute in Germany, with the result that the research institute in Berlin-Dahlem was founded.

Fischer's researches into the carbohydrates, purines and proteins, is of such enormous importance that, at the repeated requests of the scientific public, they were published in book form in three bulky volumes, the first, "*Untersuchungen über Amino-Säuren, Polypeptide und Proteine*" (1899-1906), dealing with the proteins, the second, "*Untersuchungen in der Purin Gruppe*" (1882-1906), with the purines, and the third "*Untersuchungen über Kohlenhydrate und Fermente*" (1884-1908), with the carbohydrates and enzymes. It is certain that in organic chemistry no three volumes of such far-reaching influence have ever before been published.

Fischer's most recent work dealt much with the tannins, substances that play an important part in leather manufacture.

Fischer's work, his influence as teacher and inspirer of men, raised the Berlin Chemical Laboratory to the first position among the chemical laboratories of the

world. His fame attracted students from every quarter of the globe, and these flocked in such numbers to him that they soon counted in the hundreds, and special *privat-docenten* had to be appointed to take care of them. It thus came about that many of the men who had gone to Berlin to work under Fischer in reality worked under some of Fischer's *privat-docenten*, and, outside of the lectures, probably did not see Fischer himself more than two or three times during their three or four years in the German capital. At one time or another H. Gideon Wells, that excellent pathologist of Chicago University, T. B. Osborne, of the Connecticut Experiment Station, and the foremost authority on vegetable proteins, and P. A. Levene and W. A. Jacobs, the well-known physiological chemists of the Rockefeller Institute, were his students. Of his many pupils Fischer considered Emil Abderhalden, now the professor of physiology at Halle University, a Swiss by birth, the most gifted.

Fischer's death is an irreparable loss to science. He is so much of our generation that one hesitates to use superlatives, but one is sorely tempted to speak of him as the greatest organic chemist of all times.

BENJAMIN HARROW

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

DESTRUCTION OF ELEPHANTS IN CAPE COLONY

A SPECIAL correspondent of the London *Times* writes that the provincial council of the Province of the Cape of Good Hope has passed a decree authorizing the destruction of the herd of elephants in the Addo Bush Forest Reserve. Unless this Union government take action promptly, this hitherto carefully-preserved remnant of a species that once ranged all over South Africa will be utterly destroyed. The last elephant in Zululand, an old male, was recently killed. The elephants of South-

ern Rhodesia have been exterminated. In the Eastern Transvaal, near Portuguese territory, a few survivors of a small troop occasionally are seen, but they are being attacked from both sides and are on the verge of extinction. It is possible that there may be a few individuals left in the Knysna Forest, Cape Colony, but the game warden is extremely doubtful about this.

The Addo Bush, near Port Elizabeth, until recently was a waterless scrub of little value. In its center an area of approximately 6,000 acres has long been a reserve for the elephants. The land is not fenced off, and farms at first of small value, but now being developed by irrigation works from Sunday's River, surround it. The herd numbers between 100 and 200 individuals, the only surviving examples of a distinct variety, characterized by a strongly arched forehead, enormous ears, roughly square outline, short fore-legs and a very hairy body.

The proposed action is not a case of wanton destruction. The Provincial Council has given long consideration to the matter, and has passed the decree only after careful investigation by a special committee, whose members were fully alive to the zoological calamity that their recommendation involved. The elephants sally out of their reserve in quest of food and water. They break down fences, stampede cattle, destroy crops, and frighten human beings. They assume that the irrigation canals are intended for their benefit and in taking their baths they destroy the banks and dams.

The committee reported that the elephants could be confined only by the erection of a fence 13 miles in length, and a structure sufficiently strong to contain elephants would have cost at least £20,000. It would have been necessary, moreover, to provide a water supply, and it is more than doubtful if the area enclosed would have provided natural food in sufficient quantities.

AN AMERICAN HOSPITAL FOR GREAT BRITAIN

THE *British Medical Journal* reports that plans for the establishment of an American

hospital in London are now in so advanced a stage that a meeting of the governing council had been arranged at the house of the Royal Society of Medicine, at which Lord Reading (who has accepted the presidency of the hospital) and the American Ambassador promised to be present. Upon the signing of the armistice last November it was considered that the moment was ripe for bringing the project of an American hospital to the consideration of the medical profession in Great Britain as well as of the American colony in London. The promoters were of opinion that the need of the foundation of such a hospital was obvious, and that the exceptional opportunities of the moment were never likely to recur. The scope which should be given to the hospital was discussed by a Medical Executive Committee, consisting of Sir William Osler, Sir Arbuthnot Lane, Sir Humphry Rolleston, Sir John Bland-Sutton, Mr. J. Y. W. MacAlister, and Mr. Philip Franklin. At the meeting of the American Medical Association, in Atlantic City, in June, Sir Arbuthnot Lane notified officially that the hospital would be established. He pointed out that no more fitting monument could be raised to those who had fallen in the war, and that the hospital was designed to form the headquarters for American medical men who visited Europe for the purpose of post-graduate study. At the meeting the plans of the committees, as described by Sir Arbuthnot Lane, were received with enthusiasm, and he was assured by distinguished members of the profession that the medical men of America were keenly alive to the great value of such an institution in England as a center for study and research. A committee was then formed to ensure the cooperation of American doctors upon a definite footing, and to act in conjunction with the executive committee in London, and, if desirable, to work under the National Research Council at Washington. This American committee consists of Dr. George W. Crile, of Cleveland; Dr. W. J. Mayo and Dr. Charles H. Mayo, of Rochester, Minnesota; Dr. Albert J. Ochsner, of Chicago; Dr. Rudolph Matas, of New Orleans, and Dr.