

Advertiser, June 21/12

### THE MAWSON ANTARCTIC EXPEDITION.

It is some time since any communication from the Mawson Antarctic Expedition has been received, and the public have anxiously been awaiting news of how the expedition is progressing. Owing to the great anxiety of the relatives of the men who accompanied Dr. Mawson, Professor Henderson yesterday made the following official statement:—"No wireless message has been received from Dr. Mawson in the Antarctic concerning the movements of the expedition, which is due to the fact that when the stores were being landed at Macquarie Island excessively rough weather was experienced and the Aurora was slightly damaged. Two dynamos for the wireless work were landed. One was for use on Macquarie Island to communicate with Hobart, and the other was to take on to the Antarctic. Both these were damaged in transit. Dr. Mawson did not think the damage was considerable and proceeded from the island to the Antarctic, taking with him the damaged dynamo intended for use there, but it was knocked about more than was anticipated, and this has prevented them from communicating with Macquarie Island, whence messages would have been sent on to Hobart."

Register, June 21/12

### ARTIFICIAL INDIA-RUBBER.

COMMENTS BY PROFESSOR RENNIE.

Professor Rennie, of the Adelaide University, writes:—"The cable announcing the artificial production of indiarubber by Professor W. H. Perkin is one of more than ordinary interest. It is stated that he has succeeded in producing this substance, with starch as a starting point, starch being successively converted into fusel oil, isoprene, and indiarubber. Starch is readily converted into glucose, which in its turn, by ordinary fermentation, is converted into alcohol, but this alcohol always contains some fusel oil, which, if the alcohol is required for human consumption, is removed as far as possible by the process known as 'rectification.' This fusel oil in some places is almost a waste product, but it forms only a small proportion of the alcohol produced. Moreover, only a part of the fusel oil, so far as one can guess without knowing the details of Professor Perkin's process, would be available for conversion into isoprene, but it is possible that a method has been found of converting a much larger proportion of glucose into fusel oil. The details of the method of conversion of fusel oil into isoprene will be awaited with great interest by chemists everywhere, as it is this which constitutes the important factor in the process. It has long been known that indiarubber is convertible, at least in part, into isoprene, and conversely that isoprene can be converted into indiarubber. The difficulty has been to get the isoprene in any quantity and sufficiently cheaply from some other source, and this problem has apparently been solved.

The inventor of this process is a son of the late Sir W. H. Perkin, whose name is a household word among chemists, not only on account of his discovery of the method of converting coal tar products into the so-called aniline dyes, but also because he distinguished himself by other brilliant researches in pure and applied chemistry. Professor Perkin now occupies the chair of chemistry in the Victoria University, Manchester, and was a fellow-student of the writer at the Royal College of Science, South Kensington. He was then 18 years of age, but attracted the attention of everybody in the laboratory by getting through an enormous amount of work with great speed and accuracy, and there were not wanting those who prophesied for him a great career as a chemist. Since those days he has carried out and published many important investigations, chiefly in the realm of organic chemistry, and of recent years he has specially devoted himself to the study of substances closely allied to isoprene. It would be almost safe to say without knowing the details of his discovery that it is closely connected with this recent work.

"In this purely chemical and scientific aspect the discovery is an important one, and if it should prove to be possible to carry out the process as cheaply as is forecasted in the cable, it will be a great triumph for British chemists, especially as it is known that chemists in other parts of the world have been at work with the same object in view, but with only partial success. Incidentally, also, it is another example of the enormously important practical results which may arise out of purely scientific work, for the investigations which have led up to it are of a kind which at one time seemed to be utterly useless from the point of view of the 'practical man.' Considering the recent tremendous increase in the price of rubber, the prospect of considerable reduction in cost will be welcome, except, perhaps, to shareholders in rubber plantations."

Advertiser, June 27/12

### MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY.

A PROPOSAL REJECTED.

Melbourne, June 26.

For some time past the Senate of the Melbourne University has had in prospect a scheme for changing the constitution and powers of the senate, with the object mainly of reducing itself from the unwieldy number of 700 to about 75. So few members attend the meetings that a difficulty sometimes occurs in securing the necessary quorum of 20. Under the proposed scheme the senate would consist of a limited number of doctors and masters and bachelors of three years' standing, and civil engineers of the University, each elected for five years by graduates and holders of a University certificate of civil engineer. Each school in which degrees were conferred would be represented on the senate in proportion to the number of graduates in it, with a minimum of three for any one school. This would provide a senate of about 75. With the scheme is coupled a proposal that the senate should have equal power with the council in respect of all proposed statutes and regulations, provided that no alteration should be made in statutes and regulations without the approval of the council. The scheme was discussed to-day by the senate, but it failed to pass, the voting being 4 in favor and 16 against.

Register, June 26/12

### —Conservatorium Orchestral Concert.—

Probably the finest orchestral concert heard for years in Adelaide was that given before a crowded audience in the Elder Hall on Thursday night. The Conservatorium Orchestra was under the able and magnetic baton of Mr. H. Winsloe Hall; and that fine musician has every reason to be proud of the occasion. The forces at his disposal were practically as complete and representative as possible, while the character of the programme was also of an unusually important bearing, in that certain immortal works were heard for the first time within that home of music. Tschai-kowsky's glorious symphony in B minor (the "Pathetic") called forth an ovation. Every component of the instrumentalists responded to the historic occasion, and a generally excellent ensemble was the result. The moods of the composer were faithfully and always artistically expressed; both the clashing, surging, movements of inspiration and the sombre lament evoked thrills. It would appear that in the composition of this Symphony Tschai-kowsky had some premonition of his approaching end. It was the outcome of a period of divine inspiration and self-revelation, and is permeated with deep emotion. It was wrung from his heart, with tears and anguish of spirit, and when it was completed, his joy was in like measure. "I have put my soul into it," he said, and was satisfied. It speaks of the tragedy of existence, of the restlessness of inactivity, of the yearning for love, of desolation and the effort to forget. Then, passing from the personal note, it depicts the rise of a young and vigorous nation, united by a common aim. There is a certain militarism in it. But after the glory of conquest and national development sombre thoughts follow. The Symphony was first conceived in February, 1883, and Tschai-kowsky died in the following November, after a short attack of cholera. Dr. Ennis gave a splendid solo performance in Beethoven's "Emperor" concerto. This unapproachable work of the master musician was presented with appeal and power by the Director of the Conservatorium, while the orchestra rendered its heavy and important role with complete satisfaction.

Other items were the overture "Hansel and Gretel," a first hearing; an intermezzo for strings (a delicious arrangement by Dr. Ennis on an old Irish melody), and the introduction to the third act of "Lohengrin." Madame Delmar Hall scored a popular recall following her rendering of the scena, "Elizabeth's greeting" (from "Tannhauser").

Register, July 1/12

The Angas engineering scholarship for 1912 in connection with the Adelaide University has been awarded to Mr. H. T. M. Angwin, B.Sc.

Dr. W. Ray, B.Sc., has accepted the invitation of the council to represent the University of Adelaide at the bi-centenary festival of the University of Dublin, to be held in July, and Dr. C. H. Reissmann has agreed to represent the University at the congress on pathology to be held in Paris.

The council of the Adelaide University had before them on Friday an invitation to nominate a representative to serve on the general committee of organization of the International Historical Congress which will be held in 1913. It was resolved to invite Professor Henderson to represent the Adelaide institution. An invitation was also received to send a representative to the celebration of the 250th anniversary of the Royal Society, to be held in July. It was resolved to invite Professor Lamb or Professor Bragg to attend.

Register June 29/12

### MUSICAL NOTES.

[By Veloce.]

### MR. CAWTHORNE'S REMINISCENCES.

For nine years (continues Mr. C. Cawthorne in his interesting recollections) I managed Herr Heinicke's grand orchestra. The nucleus was about 20 members of my own orchestra. This was added to, and we had nearly 50 performers. Herr Heinicke and I lent the music, and I financed it for the first three years. It was uphill work at first. It was suggested that we should give five concerts to create a fund. These turned out a great success. All the members put their shoulders to the wheel. Then a portion of the orchestra wanted the profits divided. We had some trouble, but it was eventually agreed to make a small dividend, and keep a substantial amount for the fund. Each year after, a series of concerts was given, always successfully. The Conservatorium engaged Herr Heinicke as violin teacher, and refused to allow him to conduct. We amalgamated with the students of the Conservatorium, and gave a series in the Town Hall, but these were not financially a success. Mr. C. J. Stevens took the baton, and afterwards Herr Hopf was conductor; but, alas, interest was lacking, and further concerts could not be given. It is to be hoped that in the near future another similar orchestra will be formed. The time is right, and with a little work and energy success could be obtained.

Register, July 1/12

At a meeting of the University Council on Friday the council had before them an invitation to nominate a representative to serve on the general committee of organization of the International Historical Congress to be held in 1913. It was resolved to invite Professor Henderson to represent the University on the committee. An invitation was also received to send a representative to the celebration of the 250th anniversary of the Royal Society to be held in July. It was resolved to invite Professor Lamb or Professor Bragg to represent the University. Dr. W. Ray, B.Sc., wrote accepting the invitation of the council to represent the University of Adelaide at the Bi-Centenary Festival of the University of Dublin to be held in July. Dr. C. H. Reissmann also wrote accepting an invitation to represent the University at the Congress on Pathology to be held in Paris.

At a meeting of the council of the Adelaide University on Friday the Chancellor congratulated Sir John Duncan upon the distinction recently and deservedly conferred upon him.