

STARTLING STORIES

Vol. 4, No. 3

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November, 1940

A Complete Book-Length Scientifiction Novel



A MILLION YEARS TO CONQUER

By **HENRY KUTTNER**

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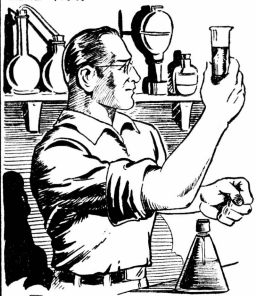
THE LIFE STORY OF SIR WILLIAM PERKIN WHO DISCOVERED THE FIRST COAL-TAR DYE!



"SIR WILLIAM PERKIN"
BORN 1838 DIED 1907



SIR WILLIAM PERKIN DISCOVERED THE FIRST COAL-TAR DYE, IN 1856, AND THEREBY OPENED UP THE VAST COAL-TAR INDUSTRY. COAL TAR, THOUGHT UTTERLY WORTHLESS THEN, IS TODAY THE SOURCE OF MEDICINES, PERFUMES, EXPLOSIVES, FERTILIZERS, RAYON, PLASTICS, SYNTHETIC RUBBER, AND PHOTOGRAPHIC REAGENTS. AS A LITTLE VERSE GOES—"THERE'S HARDLY A THING, FROM SALVE TO STAR, THAT YOU CANNOT MAKE FROM BLACK COAL-TAR."



PERKIN MADE THIS EPOCHAL DISCOVERY AT THE AGE OF 18. AS A BOY OF 14, HE BUILT HIMSELF A HOME LABORATORY, EXPERIMENTING EAGERLY. IT WAS HERE, FOUR YEARS LATER, THAT HE OXIDIZED ANILINE FROM COAL-TAR, AND HELD UP A TEST-TUBE CONTAINING A BEAUTIFUL RED COLOR—MAUVE, THE FIRST LABORATORY DYE!

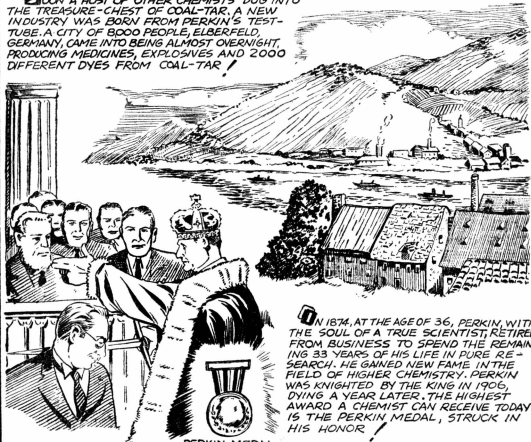
AT 19, PATENTING HIS PROCESS, YOUNG PERKIN REVOLUTIONIZED THE DYE INDUSTRY, MANUFACTURING ANILINE DYES IN QUANTITY. SHEER GENIUS WAS NECESSARY TO DEVISE COMPLETELY NEW APPARATUS. THERE WERE OFTEN DANGEROUS EXPLOSIONS IN THE EARLY DAYS. BUT SUCCESS CAME. PERKIN AMAZED THE WORLD BY PRODUCING TYRIAN DYE, ROYAL PURPLE. IT HAD FORMERLY TAKEN 12000 SNAILS TO DYE A ROBE, AT GREAT COST. AFTER PERKIN'S DISCOVERY THE COMMONEST BEGGAR COULD WEAR THIS ROYAL COLOR!



PERKIN ALSO MADE COUMARIN, THE WORLD'S FIRST ARTIFICIAL PERFUME. LIKE A MAGICIAN, HE HAD EXTRACTED THE COLORS FROM THE RAINBOW, WAS ABLE TO PRODUCE EXOTIC ODORS FROM UGLY BLACK COAL-TAR. AT 23, WORLD FAMOUS, HE WAS INVITED TO LECTURE BEFORE THE ROYAL SOCIETY. AMONG HIS LISTENERS WAS THE GREAT MICHAEL FARADAY, WHOSE PUPIL PERKIN HAD BEEN. !



SOON A HOST OF OTHER CHEMISTS DUG INTO THE TREASURE-CHEST OF COAL-TAR. A NEW INDUSTRY WAS BORN FROM PERKIN'S TEST-TUBE. A CITY OF 8000 PEOPLE, ELBERFELD, GERMANY, CAME INTO BEING ALMOST OVERNIGHT, PRODUCING MEDICINES, EXPLOSIVES AND 2000 DIFFERENT DYES FROM COAL-TAR !



PERKIN MEDAL

IN 1874, AT THE AGE OF 36, PERKIN, WITH THE SOUL OF A TRUE SCIENTIST, RETIRED FROM BUSINESS TO SPEND THE REMAINING 33 YEARS OF HIS LIFE IN PURE RESEARCH. HE GAINED NEW FAME IN THE FIELD OF HIGHER CHEMISTRY. PERKIN WAS KNIGHTED BY THE KING IN 1906, DYING A YEAR LATER. THE HIGHEST AWARD A CHEMIST CAN RECEIVE TODAY IS THE PERKIN MEDAL, STRUCK IN HIS HONOR !