

The University of London has also recently 'recognised' the new institution as a 'school' of the University, and four chairs have now been advertised, in medicine, surgery, obstetrics and gynaecology, and pathology. Presumably, assistants will also be needed for each unit, and it may be anticipated that courses will also be delivered from time to time by eminent physicians, surgeons and others not permanently attached to the School.

In addition, the courses in present postgraduate centres will still be made use of so far as possible.

Thus, after many vicissitudes, a postgraduate medical school worthy of the great Metropolis has come into being, which it may be anticipated will in the future raise the standard of professional skill among the great body of medical practitioners, and will advance the progress of medical science by research carried out within its walls.

Obituary

PROF. CAMILLE MATIGNON

ARTHÈME CAMILLE MATIGNON, president of the French Chemical Society, who died suddenly in Paris on March 18, was a leading figure in pure chemistry and a great exponent of chemical technology. Matignon was born at Saint Maurice-aux-Riches-Hommes, Yonne, on January 3, 1867, and entered the Ecole Normale, Paris, in 1886; three years later he became assistant to Berthelot at the Collège de France and commenced a long series of original contributions to our knowledge of thermochemistry. After spending five years at the University of Lille as lecturer and professor, he was appointed as a temporary professor at the Collège de France in 1902, a supplementary professor in 1903 and, on the death of Berthelot, became professor of inorganic chemistry in 1908, holding this post until his death.

Matignon early concerned himself with the great problem of the fixation of atmospheric nitrogen and the synthetic production of ammonia; he studied the direct combination of many of the metals with nitrogen, showing that zinc dust always contains zinc nitride, and preparing the nitrides of a number of the rare earth metals. Certain of the nitrides, such as those of silicon and aluminium, were probably formed during the cooling of the earth and, by the action of water vapour, gave ammonia, the first form in which nitrogen became available for assimilation by plant life. Matignon maintained that the increased use of artificial nitrogenous fertilisers was essential to the development of French agriculture; he followed up the advocacy of this principle by working out methods for the economic production of phosphates and potassium salts for use as manures.

With the aid of the calorimetric bomb, Matignon determined the heats of combustion of a long series of substances and, since many of these were closely related organic compounds, he was able to deduce a number of interesting generalities from the heats of formation. His more extended studies of the part played by heat in chemical reactions led him to the statement of an empirical law of thermodynamics which Nernst termed the 'Le Chatelier-Matignon rule'. This states that for gaseous equilibria in which one gaseous and one or more solid phases are concerned (sublimation of solids, dissociation of calcium carbonate, etc.), the relation $Q/T = 32$ holds approximately

in all cases, Q being the heat evolved at constant pressure and T the absolute temperature at which the gaseous pressure attains one atmosphere. This empirical law is an extension to chemical dissociation of Trouton's law concerning heats of vaporisation. The Le Chatelier-Matignon rule can be stated in several ways and may be used to foretell whether certain reactions can take place and whether they are reversible. Thus, it was foreseen that hydrogen sulphide should react with potassium carbonate, but not with sodium carbonate at the ordinary temperature; these deductions were verified by experiment. Matignon's achievements in these and many other fields were recognised by his election to the Institut de France in 1926.

Matignon was an eloquent speaker and wrote in a lucid, convincing style. He assumed the editorship of the *Journal of the French Society of Industrial Chemistry* at its inception in 1918, and the editorial which he wrote each month until the end of his life was read with interest by the whole chemical world; the last of these articles—on the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Dumas—appears in the March number of *Chimie et Industrie* which was published a few days ago. Matignon's striking personality and his gay, vivacious enthusiasm made him a notable figure. He did much to promote the re-establishment of those normal relations between scientific men throughout the world which had been so rudely shattered by the War; he had many friends far outside his own country who will remember him with respect and affection.

W. J. POPE.

MR. E. G. B. MEADE-WALDO

It is with great regret that we have to record the death of Mr. Edmund Gustavus Bloomfield Meade-Waldo, of Stonewall Park, Chiddingstone, Kent, who died on February 24, aged seventy-nine years. Only son of Mr. Edmund Waldo Meade-Waldo, of Hever Castle and Stonewall Park, he was born at Holly Brook, Co. Cork, on February 8, 1855, and educated at Eton and Magdalene College, Cambridge. His room at Eton was a menagerie of wild animals, and rumour has it that, while at Eton, his overpowering ambition was to kill one of the red-deer in Windsor forest, and that this ambition was fulfilled. In 1880 he married Ada Coralie, a daughter of the