

LXV.—*The Resin of Myoporum Platycarpum.*

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A VERITABLE natural sealing-wax is yielded by a small tree which is found in the interior of Australia; it occurs in the more arid portions of all the colonies, except Queensland. The tree is *Myoporum platycarpum*, R. Br., and it possesses a variety of local names, such as "Sandalwood," "Dogwood," and "Sugar tree;" the latter because a manna exudes from it which is greedily sought after by the blacks, and is likewise much appreciated by colonists. It yields a resin, which is used by the aborigines as a substitute for pitch and wax; for example, they use it either alone, or mixed with fat, to cement the stone heads of their tomahawks to the fibre which joins them to the stick forming the handle. As has been already hinted, it forms a natural sealing-wax, and is sometimes used by people in the interior for this purpose. It would probably serve as a constituent of black sealing-wax; alone it is too soft for keeping in this climate.

It sometimes occurs in great quantities on the stem, is hard and brittle, breaks with a glassy fracture which is at first of a purple or indigo colour, but becomes brown on keeping. Often it may be picked up from under the trees in rounded or globular pieces.

Two samples have come into the writer's hands, and a few notes concerning them will doubtless be interesting. The first, from the Lachlan River, New South Wales, is in small rounded lumps usually weathered on the outside, and having a pleasant empyreumatic odour; these are of a dark reddish-brown colour, fly with the slightest touch of the pestle, and are easily powdered. The resin has a bright fracture, which appears almost black, but shows reddish-brown at the edges. It softens even with the warmth of the hand, and if kept in a bottle, the heat of an average summer day is sufficient to fuse pieces presenting fresh fractures.

It presents some external resemblance to guaiacum resin (especially when that substance comes to market in small lumps), but it is not so green in colour as the latter. It has no taste. Cold water has no effect on it, but if the water be heated the resin melts and floats, forming a liquid much resembling tar, but of a purplish-brown colour. The water remains clear, colourless and almost odourless.

Light petroleum dissolves 46·8 per cent. of a reddish-brown resin, destitute of odour. Alcohol dissolves from the residue 28·1 per cent.

of a deep reddish-brown resin, which is almost black by reflected light.

The residue was boiled in water and 1.7 per cent. of saline matter was extracted, while 23.4 per cent. of accidental impurity was left behind. This is of a chocolate colour, and under a lens was seen to consist of a little ligneous matter, with a large percentage of inorganic impurity. It was quite free from gum.

Summary.

α -Resin soluble in light petroleum	46.8
β - „ „ alcohol	28.1
Saline matters	1.7
Accidental impurity.....	23.4
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	100.0

The crude resin melts at 90.5°. In contains no tannic acid.

The second sample was procured from Netallie, Wilcannia, New South Wales. It presents no marked points of difference, as regards physical appearance, from the preceding one. On treating it with alcohol, the liquid is not so dark as that yielded by the preceding sample, neither is the colour so rich. It resembles tawny port, but is a little darker.

Light petroleum extracts 48.6 per cent. of resin, and alcohol added to the residue extracts 36.4 per cent.
