

Note on the Occurrence of what may prove to be a new Mineral Resin.

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THIS resin is found in small quantities in the coal from pits at Fauldhouse, Midlothian. It usually occurs in layers not more than $\frac{1}{8}$ th inch thick, accompanied by much mineral charcoal, from which it is nearly impossible to separate it perfectly. The colour is dark reddish brown, the streak being somewhat paler. As it does not melt without decomposition, its fusing point cannot be determined. When heated on platinum foil, it froths up, burns with a smoky flame, and leaves a large carbonaceous residue. When burning, the smell recalls that of incense. The resin, when distilled in a closed tube, yields a black thick viscous distillate, with a strong aromatic smell.

It is but slightly soluble in shale spirit and absolute alcohol, readily soluble in benzol, ether, and chloroform, and on evaporation of the solvent it is left as a dark brown brittle substance. Solution in chloroform and subsequent evaporation is, in fact, the best means of separation from the mineral charcoal with which it is so intimately mixed.

The resin, purified by solution in chloroform, gave when distilled with soda-lime indications of the presence of traces of nitrogen. It is also soluble in strong sulphuric acid; from which, on dilution with water, it is precipitated, apparently unaltered, as a slimy mass.

The identification and classification of many of the organic minerals is a matter of such great uncertainty, that I submitted a specimen of the resin to Mr. Fletcher, who reported "that on comparing it with the resins in the National collection, there is a difference in its appearance. It most nearly resembles Schraufite, Pyroretinite, and Ajkite. It may be a constituent of one of the known resins: indeed the resins are really so 'mixed' that the existence of species may be doubted." From my own examination it most closely resembles Schraufite, and as Schröckinger¹ seems to include several nearly allied resins under this name, it would be premature to consider the Fauldhouse specimen as a new variety, at least until a more thorough examination has been made.

¹ *Verh. Geol. Reichs.* 1875, 134.