On the fossil wax of gallicia

M.P. Walter

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than any metallic solution, and fortunately the nitric acid, being commercially manufactured, is sufficiently cheap for the purpose.

The battery excited on this occasion was probably the most powerful ever seen, although of very small size; it consisted of 100 pairs of zinc and platina plates two inches by four, with interposed burned pipe clay diaphragms, and was charged with concentrated nitric and dilute sulphuric acid; its superficial relation to the great battery of Davy was as 1 : 40.

The arc of light was from three to four inches long and of great volume; its prismatic spectrum was of extreme brilliancy, and it was polarized and dipolarized by Mr. Grove, showing its identity with solar light.

[We understand that Mr. Grove has received the appointment of Professor of Experimental Philosophy in the London Institution.—
EDIT.]

XL. *Intelligence and Miscellaneous Articles.*

ON THE FOSSIL WAX OF GALLICIA. BY M. P. WALTER.

SEVERAL years since a fossil wax was discovered at Truskawietz, in Galicia, or Austrian Poland, in beds of grit and bituminous clay, at a depth of two or three metres. I procured this substance, but want of leisure has prevented me from examining it: it is with regret that I feel it necessary to publish the little that I know respecting it; and I have decided to do so only in the hope that I shall hereafter be enabled to examine it completely.

This fossil is of a brownish black colour; its smell is penetrating and bituminous; it is slightly soluble in alcohol and æther; it fuses at 156° Fahr. When heated in a retort by means of an oil-bath, it first fuses, and at 212° it loses a little water; at 572° nothing whatever distils; above this, ebullition begins to occur, and continues up to 662°: oils first appear, afterwards a yellow-coloured substance, which forms the greater portion of the distilled product. This matter, freed from the empyreumatic oils by pressure through cloth, and dissolved in boiling æther, precipitates on cooling in the state of a beautiful white pearly substance.

It yielded by analysis,

Carbon	85.85
Hydrogen	14.28

This therefore is the composition of bicarburetted hydrogen and paraffin; and what induces me to believe that it is actually paraffin is, that sulphuric acid appears not to exert any action upon it. The examination of oils, formed by the distillation of fossil wax, may throw great light on the formation of naphtha and analogous compounds, which are probably derived from the decomposition of this kind of bodies.—*Ann. de Chim. et de Phys.*, 75, 212.