

the hymenium which is distinctly polyporoid. It is closely adpressed to the substratum and extends up to a foot in length. When fresh, the fungus is of dark ash-grey colour with a shining lustre which no one can afford to overlook.

Prof. Burt to whom the specimen was sent has also identified it as *Grammothele cineracea* Bres. He further writes to me to say that this species was first described from specimens collected in Cuba, under the name of *Kneiffia grisea* Berk. and Curtis.<sup>2</sup> Its inclusion in *Kneiffia* was, however, unfortunate. It was next collected by Rev. Rick at Sao Leopoldo, Rio Grande du Sol, Brazil, South America. These specimens were distributed in the exsiccati of Theissen Decades *fungorum brasiliensium*, No. 5. The same species was again reported from the Philippines and described by Bresadola as *Grammothele cineracea*.<sup>3</sup>

The name *Grammothele grisea* Berk. and Curtis should have been the proper nomenclature for this species. But as it is already pre-occupied by another species of the same authors, the type specimen of which was also collected at Cuba and a description published along with that of *Kneiffia grisea* Berk. and Curtis,<sup>2</sup> the comparatively recent nomenclature adopted by Bresadola has been retained for this species. It is very near to *Poria hydnopora* Berk. which, according to some, is a species of *Grammothele* but differs from it in having smaller sub-angular pores and other characteristics.

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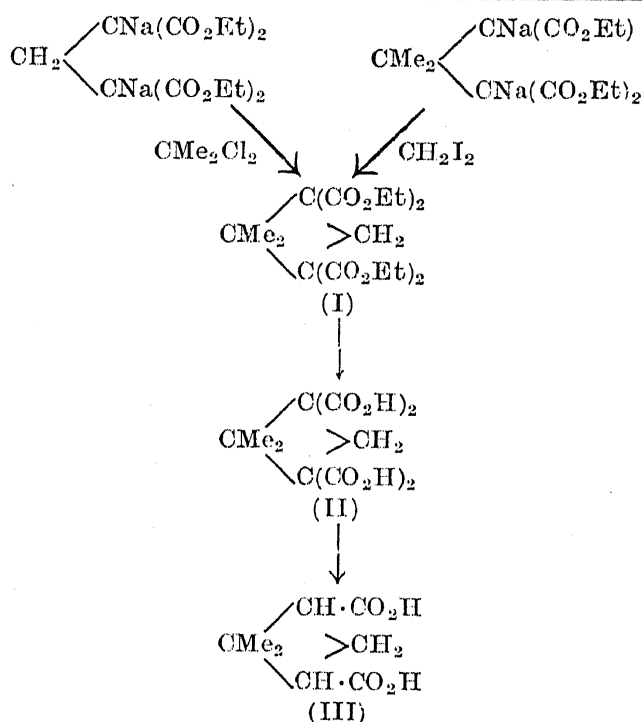
May 30, 1934.

### Two New Methods of Synthesis of Norpinic Acid.

THE synthesis of norpinic acid has been achieved by the following two new methods, namely, (1) by the condensation of sodium methylene dimalonate and  $\beta\beta$ -dichloropropane, and (2) sodium derivative of isopropylidene dimalonate with methylene iodide.

<sup>2</sup> *Journ. Linn. Soc.*, X, p. 327, 1868.

<sup>3</sup> *Hedwigia*, 56, p. 299, 1915.



The tetracarboxylic ester (I) suffered hydrolysis and decarboxylation simultaneously on being boiled with 50 per cent. sulphuric acid yielding *trans*-norpinic acid (III) m.p. 145-146° softening at 136°. The tetracarboxylic acid m.p. 200° (II) obtained from (I) by hydrolysis with alcoholic potash was decarboxylated by heating at 220-240° or by boiling with 50 per cent. sulphuric acid. The yields of II and III are poor.

As a result of a large number of experiments conducted under varying conditions, it has been possible to effect considerable improvement upon the methods of preparation of isopropylidene malonic (yield 1315 g. from 1170 g. of malonic ester) and dimalonate (yield 42 g. from 80 of isopropylidene malonic ester) esters described by Clemo and Welch (*J. C. S.*, 1928, 2621).

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### Conversion of *Mesotartaric* Acid into an optically active form by Walden inversion under asymmetric conditions.

ORGANIC compounds, containing asymmetric centres in their molecule, but inactive due to internal compensation, are generally supposed to be non-convertible into the active