

FOSSIL RESINS: A COMPILATION

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Fossil Resins: A Compilation by Clarence Lown & Henry Booth

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CLARENCE LOWN & HENRY BOOTH

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BY

CLARENCE LOWN and HENRY BOOTH.

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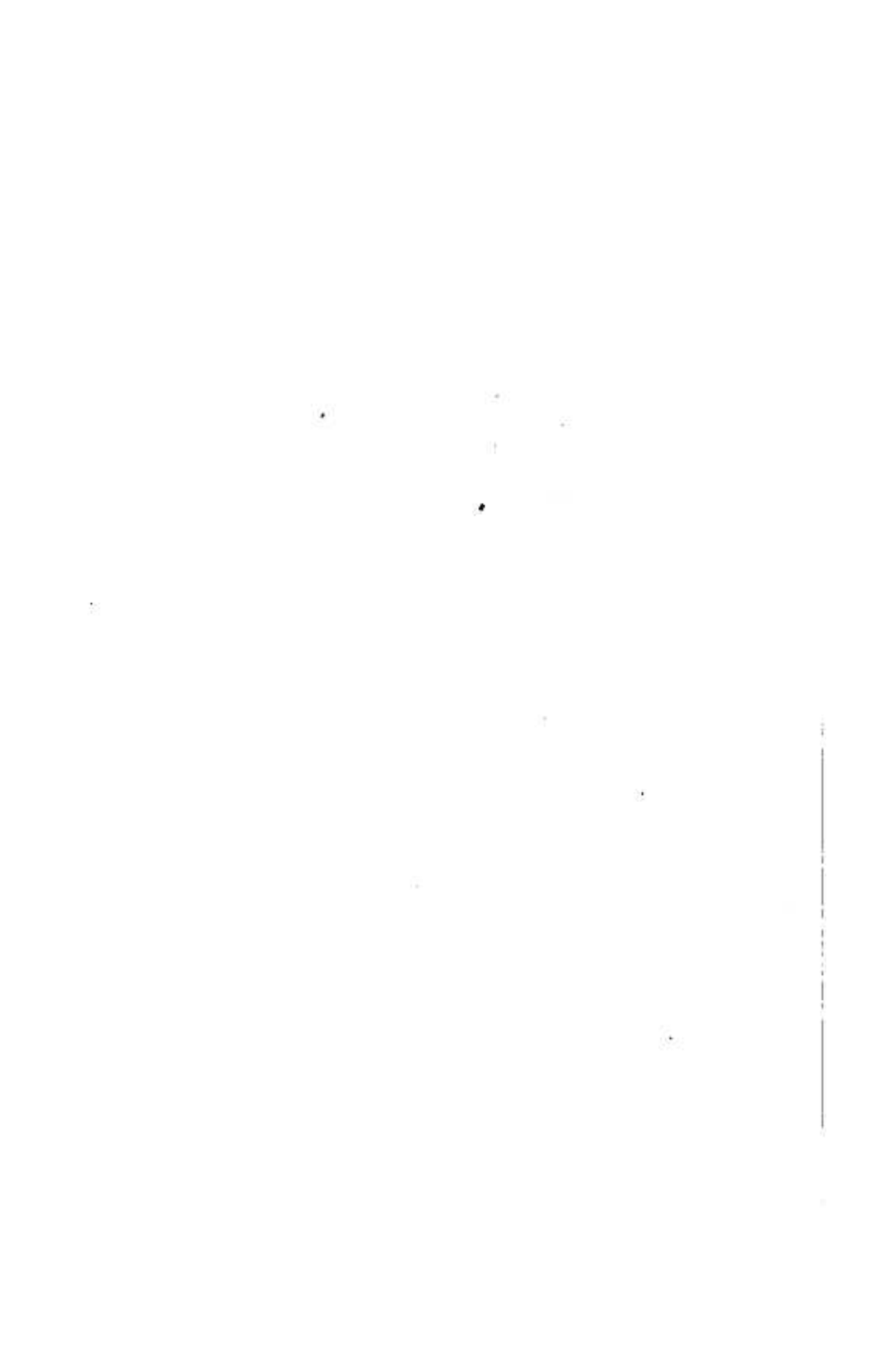
N. D. C. HODGES, 47 LAFAYETTE PLACE.

1891.

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PREFACE.

THIS book is the result of an attempt to collect and put together the scattered notices on fossil resins, exclusive of those on amber. We believe that this has not been attempted as yet, and must therefore give this as an excuse for the various shortcomings which may be detected by the reader.

The articles published on this subject are to be found among the bulletins and proceedings published by various scientific societies. Many of them are to be met with only after a tedious search, and some cannot be found at all, except perhaps in the great libraries of the world, which are inaccessible, save to those who live near them. No attempt has been made to condense the various papers into a whole, it seeming preferable to let each author speak for himself, and allow the reader to draw his own conclusions.

The material here presented is lamentably meagre, but it is all there is.

The very origin of the application of the name "Copal"

to the various varnish resins cannot be pointed out. For instance, —

“The English Expositor, ’ London, 1663, gives

“Copal. A white rosin of much brightness, brought from the West Indies. The people there were wont to make perfumes thereof in their sacrifices.”

“The English Dictionary,” E. Coles, London, 1708, gives

“Copal. A perfume of white rosin, from the West Indies.”

“Webster’s Dictionary,” 1876, gives

“Copal. (Mexican, Copalli, a generic name of resins. Clavigero.) A resinous substance flowing spontaneously from two trees found in the East Indies and in Central or Southern America (*Elaeocarpus copalifera* and *Rhus copallinum*), used chiefly in the manufacture of varnishes. Ure.”

In some cases, notably that of Dalman, the locality from which the insects described have come is not given. This is to be regretted, as it gives no definite habitat to the insects described and figured. An interesting field for the entomologist lies waiting here. Little has been done toward the examination and classification of the insects contained in these resins, although some of them are exceedingly rich in inclusions. It is probably true at this day, as it was when Dalman wrote, that the smaller insects of those countries, wherein the fossil resins are to be found, have escaped the attention of entomologists who have reported on those regions. However this may

be, there is an abundant opportunity for work in a little explored region.

There are but few collectors of these beautiful objects. The pieces in the rough, as they come into the market, are not easily procured, unless especial facilities are granted to the collector, and the labor of cutting and polishing the pieces is very tedious. But when the pieces are properly cut and polished, the reward is commensurate to the labor.

The thanks of the compilers are due to Mr. G. F. Kunz and to Mr. L. P. Gratacap for assistance and advice kindly rendered during the preparation of the book.

CLARENCE LOWN.

HENRY BOOTH.

POUGHKEEPSIE, N. Y., 1891.

