

Podocarpus spicata (Matai or Black-pine).—Kirk states that the bark is occasionally used by the tanners, but only to a small extent.

Dacrydium cupressinum (Red-pine or Rimu).—Skey* (1886) states that rimu-bark as received contained 3·8 per cent. of tannin. Kirk† states that rimu-bark is often used by the tanner, and is valued for certain qualities of leather, although it imparts a red colour to the skin. Its percentage of tannin is low, being only 4·3 per cent., and he suggests that an extract should be made.

Phyllocladus trichomanoides (Celery-topped Pine, Tanekaha, Toa-toa).—This is a rather rare tree, of which one hears nothing but good both from the arboriculturist, the timber expert, and the bark-merchant. Of great beauty as a young tree, it is of very quick growth, under favourable conditions making about 2 ft. a year in height. The following account of its value suggests to the author that experiments might be made in planting this tree artificially, or at all events some consideration might be given to the matter. Skey‡ (1883) reports as follows:—

No. 3399 is the bark of the tanekaha. It is exported to Germany in considerable quantity as a dyeing-material by Messrs. Krull and Co., who were anxious to know something of its chemical nature, and to make public such knowledge for industrial purposes. The following is the report furnished to this firm: This bark contains 25·30 per cent. of tanning-material in the state in which it was received. In this state it contained 11·33 per cent. of water. The amount of tanning-material, therefore, upon the dry bark is 28·66 per cent. This material is principally catechuic and allied acids, tannic acid forming the remainder. The dyeing property of the bark is to be referred to this acid (the catechuic) and its allies. This substance is of considerable value in commerce, being, as Dr. Muspratt states, “used for compound colours as black, green, brown, drab, and fawn,” and is, he further states, in “high estimation on account of its permanency.” In practice I find the extract of this bark in hot water gives reddish and pink-coloured compounds with zinc, tin, and alumina; and these seem durable, being very insoluble in water, and unchanged in the air or light.

Kirk† states that the bark contains 23 to 28 per cent. of tannin, and is therefore highly valued by the tanner. It possesses a special value as an organic mordant in the preparation of basils for kid gloves, and has realized from £30 to £50 per ton in London for this purpose; but the demand is intermittent, as it is dependent on the caprice of fashion with regard to particular shades of colour. Skey§ (1885) reported on another sample of reputed tanekaha-bark from Nelson (No. 3638), which contained 24·34 per cent. of tannic and catechuic acids soluble in water and precipitable therefrom by gelatine.

* Twentieth Col. Lab. Report.

† “Forest Flora of New Zealand.”

‡ Eighteenth Col. Lab. Report.

§ Nineteenth Col. Lab. Report.