

In this paper no mention is made of work by Boswell and the writer<sup>2</sup> in which investigation was made of the action of fused alkali on a long series of compounds, both organic and inorganic. Some of the results obtained may well be of interest to Professor Fry and his collaborators, and in particular their attention is called to the results of the fusion with resorcinol, which are contrary to their description of this reaction. The experimental results showed that, like a number of other compounds, resorcinol does not take part in this general reaction and does not give off hydrogen until it has first absorbed atmospheric oxygen, and has thus presumably been oxidized to some compound which does take part in the general reaction.

The writer will not touch on the theoretical interpretations of this general reaction (to which it is possible that Professor Boswell may later have something to add) but at present merely wishes to call attention to the previous work in this field.

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RECEIVED MARCH 27, 1925  
PUBLISHED JULY 3, 1925

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**Preparation of Alkyl Sulfides.**—This Laboratory has recently had occasion to use several alkyl sulfides. These sulfides were the purest obtainable. Without exception they all showed the presence of appreciable quantities of mercaptans with the so-called "doctor test" (sodium plumbite solution and free sulfur). It is customary to shake the sulfides repeatedly with sodium hydroxide solution in the final stages of their preparation. This treatment is to remove the impurities including the mercaptans. Due to the ease with which the sodium salts of mercaptans dissociate in aqueous solutions, their removal is never complete with the alkali wash. The complete removal of the mercaptans can be readily accomplished by distilling (preferably under reduced pressure) the alkyl sulfide over finely divided copper. The copper mercaptide is thereby formed and may remain in the residue as such; or if the temperature of distillation is in the neighborhood of 125°, the mercaptide will decompose, in part at least, forming copper sulfide and the corresponding alkyl sulfide. In either case the mercaptans are completely decomposed.

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RECEIVED APRIL 23, 1925  
PUBLISHED JULY 3, 1925

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<sup>2</sup> Boswell and Dickson, *THIS JOURNAL*, **40**, 1773, 1779, 1786 (1918).