

exclusively as a tree peculiar to Turkistan and Persia. The correct identification of the tree is *Populus balsamifera*, var. *genuina* Wesm.¹ The easternmost boundary of this tree is presented by the hills of Kumbum east of the Kukunōr, which geographically is part of Central Asia. The same species occurs also in Siberia and North America; it is called *liard* by the French of Canada. It is met with, further, wild and cultivated, in the inner ranges of the north-western Himalaya, from Kunawar, altitude 8000 to 13000 feet, westwards. In western Tibet it is found up to 14000 feet.² The buds contain a balsam-resin which is considered antiscorbutic and diuretic, and was formerly imported into Europe under the name *baume facot* and *tacamahaca*³ *communis* (or *vulgaris*). WATT says that he can find no account of this exudation being utilized in India. It appears from the Chinese records that the tree must have been known to the Iranians of Central Asia and Persia, and we shall not fail in assuming that these were also the discoverers of the medical properties of the balsam. It is quite credible that it was efficacious in alleviating pain caused by carious teeth, as it would form an air-tight coating around them.

¹ MATSUMURA, Shokubutsu mei-i, No. 2518.

² G. WATT, Dictionary of the Economic Products of India, Vol. VI, p. 325.

³ The *tacamahaca* (a word of American-Indian origin) was first described by NICOLoso DE MONARDES (Dos libros el uno que trata de todas las cosas que traen de nuestras Indias Occidentales, Sevilla, 1569): "Assi mismo traen de nueva España otro genero de Goma, o resina, que llaman los Indios Tacamahaca. Y este mismo nombre dieron nuestros Españoles. Es resina sacada por incision de un Arbol grande como Alamo, que es muy oloroso, echa el fruto colorado como simiente de Peonia. Desta Resina o goma, usan mucho los Indios en sus enfermedades, mayormente en hinchazones, en qualquiera parte del cuerpo que se engendran, por que las resuelue madura, y deshaze marauillosamente," etc. A copy of this very scarce work is in the Edward E. Ayer collection of the Newberry Library, Chicago; likewise the continuation Segunda parte del libro, de las cosas que se traen de nuestras Indias Occidentales (Sevilla, 1571).