Date
Page

Class – B.Sc. Part II (Honours)
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Paper – III.C
Dr. Rashmi Sinha
Deptt. of chemistry, H.D.J.C. Ara

Perkin reaction

condensation of an aromatic aldehyde and aliphatic acid anhydride containing at least two α-hydrogen atoms in the presence of the sodium or potassium salt of the corresponding acid to form α, β-unsaturated acid, is known as perkin reaction or perkin condensation.

$$C_6H_5CHO + (CH_3CO)_2O \xrightarrow{CH_3COONa} C_6H_5CH=CHCOOH + CH_3COOH$$

cinnamic acid

During the condensation only α-hydrogen atoms of the anhydride are involved.

e.g.:–

$$C_6H_5CHO + (\overset{\beta}{CH_3}\cdot\overset{\alpha}{CH_2}\cdot CO)_2O \xrightarrow{CH_3CH_2COONa} C_6H_5CH=\overset{CH_3}{\overset{|}{C}}\cdot COOH$$

α-methylcinnamic acid

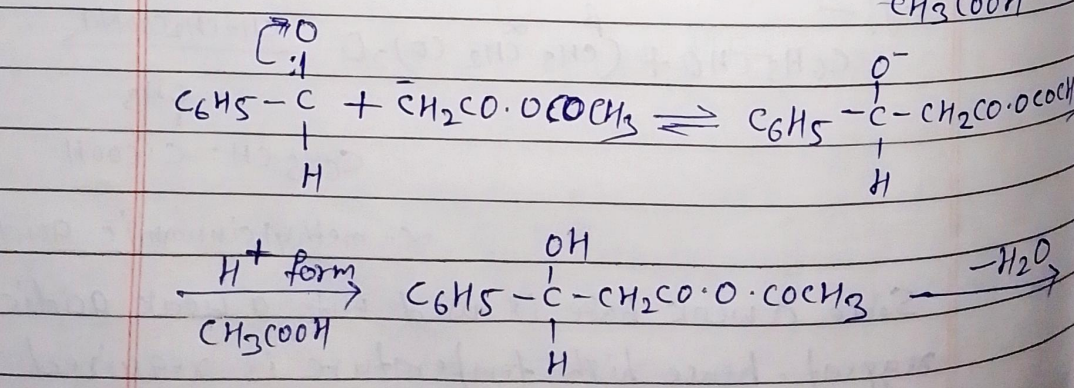
Since a weak base is used with a weak acidic reagent, hence high temperature is required

during the perkin reaction. The catalyst may be replaced by other bases such as sodium carbonate, quinoline, Pyridine and triethylamine.

Mechanism:- According to Perkin the anhydride provides the carbanion under the influence of the basic carboxylate ion i.e. the reaction takes place between the aldehyde and anhydride whereas Sodium salt of the acid functions as a catalyst. Fitting claimed it quite reverse and according to him anhydride but not the salt acts as a catalyst. But the subsequent researches have shown that Perkin was right. i.e the reaction takes place between the aldehyde and the anhydride represented as below:-

$$CH_3COONa \rightleftharpoons CH_3COO^- + Na^+$$

$$CH_3CO{\cdot}O{\cdot}COCH_3 + CH_3COO^- \rightleftharpoons \bar{C}H_2CO{\cdot}O{\cdot}COCH_3 + CH_3COOH$$

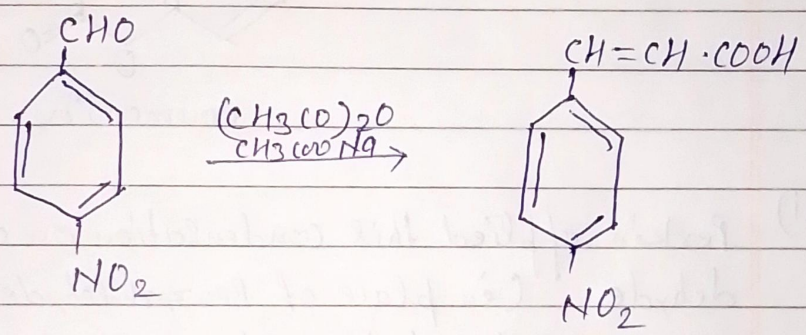


Date
Page

$$C_6H_5CH{=}CHCO{\cdot}O{\cdot}COCH_3 \xrightarrow{H_2O} C_6H_5CH{=}CH{\cdot}COOH + CH_3COOH$$

cinnamic acid

Perkin reaction proceeds more easily when the aldehyde contains an electron-attracting gr. on the aromatic ring. e.g -

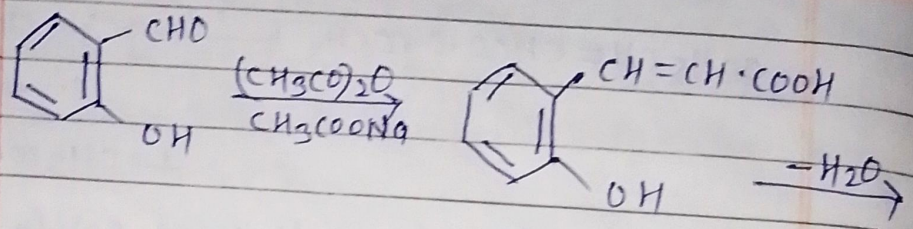


P-nitrocinnamic acid

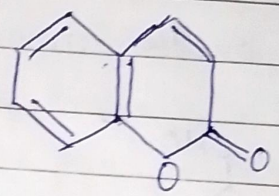
On the other hand, presence of electron-releasing gr. reduces the efficiency of the reaction. e.g :- o-methylbenzaldehyde gives o-methylcinnamic acid only in 15% yield whereas P-di-methylaminobenzaldehyde does not undergo Perkin reaction.

<u>Applications :-</u>

(i) Salicylaldehyde undergoes Perkin reaction and forms trans-o-hydroxycinnamic acid or coumaric acid which on dehydration gives coumarin



coumaric acid



coumarin

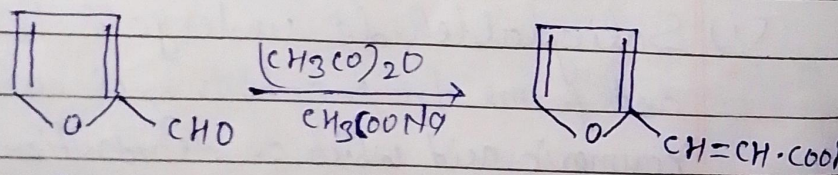
(ii) Perkin applied this condensation on cinnamaldehyde (in place of Benzaldehyde) to form doubly unsaturated acid.

$$C_6H_5 \cdot CH=CH \cdot CHO + (CH_3CO)_2O \xrightarrow{CH_3COONa} C_6H_5 \cdot CH=CH \cdot CH=CHCOOH$$

cinnamylacrylic acid

This principle is used in the synthesis of piperic acid and hence piperine (an alkaloid)

(iii) Furfural may also undergo Perkin reaction to form Furylacrylic acid.



Furfural

Furylacrylic acid