

## BRUE OR SOAP BERRY.

My attention has been directed to an article which recently appeared in one of the eastern papers headed "Where they eat soapsuds." Evidently the writer of the article in question was not well informed and it always seems to me a pity that people should publish any information of doubtful authenticity which if properly enquired into might really prove at least interesting if not of scientific importance.

The berry from which the so-called soapsuds are made is that of a shrub, botanically known as *Shepherdia Canadensis*, called by the French Canadians "Brue" and in the Chinook jargon "Soap Oolalie," i.e. Soap Berry, and from which latter name I presume the writer of the article has arrived at "Sapoliti," a term quite unknown in this province. I am not aware that it is used by the natives on festive occasions but it is used as a common article of food. It has really a very pleasant flavour and is relished by almost everyone when properly prepared. The mode of preparation is shortly as follows. The berries, if fresh, are strained through a cloth so as to separate the seeds from the juice and if dried they are first soaked and then strained. The juice is placed in a bowl, earthenware by preference, and sweetened with sugar, it is then beaten up either with a bunch of twigs or an egg-beater until it attains the consistency of ice-cream of a beautiful light pink colour, when it is fit for use.

From the fact that all utensils used in the preparation must be scrupulously clean and free from any taint of grease to ensure success, it is obvious that the remark that it is prepared "in a not over clean manner" is to say the least not strictly according to fact.

The brue berry is about the size of a red currant and generally of about the same colour, but many are of an orange colour. It has the peculiarity of being sweet, acid, bitter and aromatic all at the same time. To some people it is disagreeable but many acquire a liking for it both in its natural and prepared state.

Before concluding let me set another fairy tale at rest, viz, the use of a fish for light. I have no doubt the fish alluded to is the Oolahan or Oolachan which is about the size of a smelt, very fat and when dry it will burn for a time, but that it was ever used for a light