

are properly steeped it makes a liquid, which, with sugar and milk in proper proportions, has a flavor that cannot be described, and which, when once tasted, will never be sought for again."

This latter is a valuable remark, as it emphasizes the danger of coming to a conclusion from simply "once tasting." Imagine the gustatory properties of half a pound of China tea cooked like a vegetable in a sauce-pan, a real historical experience in Nova Scotia on its first introduction in at least one settlement—and the soundness of the verdict on its desirability as a beverage from such a crude experiment!

An intelligent series of experiments should be made with the infusions. And more than that. Experiments should be made on the best time for collecting the leaves, and on their manipulation and treatment to develop desirable qualities.

There are three species of this plant—*Ledum*—in Canada. There is the "glandular *Ledum*" (*Ledum glandulosum*, Nutt.) of the Rocky Mountains and Southern British Columbia. The "marsh *Ledum*," (*Ledum palustre*, Linn.) which is the narrow leaved and arctic form, common also to the north of Europe and Asia. And the "broad leaved *Ledum*," (*Ledum latifolium*, Ait.) the Labrador tea proper. It belongs to the Heath Family, the *Ericaceæ*, and is a low shrub, with oblong leaves, their edges rolled back, and their lower surface covered with a fine, dense, rusty colored wool. The flowers are white, in terminal umbel like clusters. The foliage, when bruised, has a fragrant odor. The surest distinction between *L. latifolium* and the narrow leaved *L. palustre*, is that the latter has uniformly ten stamens and oval pods, while the former has commonly five stamens (never ten) and oblong pods.

Infusions of *L. palustre* are stated in the United States dispensatory to be considered as efficacious in a number of cutaneous affections. *L. latifolium* is considered to be pectoral and tonic. The indications are that Labrador tea may tend to beautify the skin, strengthen the lungs, and invigorate the assimilative functions. It is said that during the American war of independence, Labrador tea was used to some extent in the United States. If they continued emptying all the foreign teas into their harbors as the Bostonians commenced, the Americans to-day might be a better looking and stronger people. Perhaps so, perhaps not.

However, when the probability of securing a more healthy general beverage, and at the same time, developing a new industry within our country, is indicated, both science and patriotism suggest a

patient and complete investigation of the facts. Our teachers can do their share by giving an *object lesson* of fifteen or twenty minutes on the plant in every locality in which it may be found. We have had good specimens of it from various quarters of the country for identification during the past two or three weeks. A hunt for the Labrador tea plant in January will be as good an athletic exercise for the boys as "Hare and Hounds," and probably just as interesting for the first occasion. The scientific editor will always be glad to get and store up well authenticated facts and experiments in this connection.

A WORK ON ECHINODERMS.

We are glad to announce that W. F. Ganong, A. B., has in course of preparation a work on the Echinoderms (star-fishes) of our coast. Mr. Ganong, in addition to a practical study and observation of these forms along our coast, extending over several years, has made a special study of them in connection with his zoological course at Cambridge. The work is especially designed for students and teachers. The subject will be treated under the following heads:

1st, An analytical key which will enable any one to identify an Echinoderm of our coast; 2nd, A brief description of each, together with an account of its habits of life, habitat, etc.; 3rd, A cut to illustrate each of the genera; 4th, A brief account of its life history so far as known; 5th, A list of known localities, (a) showing its distribution on the surface of the globe, (b) of places in New Brunswick where it is found, in order that students may have their interest aroused by adding new localities. These are some of the prominent points which Mr. Ganong will take up. In addition to these there will be found in the work simple experiments to interest classes, which will be illustrated; how and where to collect, and how to prepare specimens for class work, with interesting particulars of their habits and surroundings.

Our teachers and students, especially those of our summer schools, will be glad to know that Mr. Ganong has this work in view. It will be published in a cheap and neat form, and may serve as a manual to zoologists, not only of New Brunswick, but also of the other Maritime Provinces, and Maine. Mr. Ganong's growing reputation as a naturalist, and the happy faculty he has of making every subject clear and interesting to those who come within range of his teaching, will cause this little book to be looked forward to with interest.

This, we understand, is to be the first number of a series of monographs on New Brunswick zoology, which will be looked forward to with interest by students.