

We have enough of the plant around the shores of Halifax harbor to supply our own wants, and all Massachusetts too, if the old taste should happen to return.

Your obedient servant,

GEORGE LAWSON.

Chemical Laboratory, Dalhousie College, Halifax, Feb. 14.

P. S.—Mr. Fox properly mentions two species of *Ledum*. This suggests a further inquiry: are both used for tea? The one credited by Sir John Richardson as yielding tea is the northern or arctic, narrow-leaved species, *L. palustre*, the Ka-ki-ki-pukwa of the Crees. The broad-leaved species, *L. latifolium*, which grows in the wooded districts, is not credited as a tea plant by Sir John. This, however, may be an omission. The species we have in Nova Scotia is *L. latifolium*.

To the Editor of the Chronicle:

SIR,—In reply to Professor Lawson's letter, published in your issue of yesterday, on the so-called "Labrador tea plant," requesting some further particulars in reference to the proper season for gathering the leaves and mode of preparing the tea, etc., as observed by me during my residence at the Magdalen Islands, I beg to say that the leaves should be gathered during the summer months, when the blossoms of the plant are fully expanded. The younger leaves are to be preferred, and should be dried quickly either by being lightly strewn in a dry warm place in the open air, or indoors, subject to a gentle heat, and after drying put away in paper bags for use.

The tea may be made either by boiling or infusing the leaves; I prefer the latter as a less quantity of the resinous matter of the plant is extracted. The quantity to be used for an infusion depends upon the strength required and may be found by a little practical experience as in case of Chinese tea.

The "French Acadian" family with whom I resided for some months, who used this tea as a daily beverage, had two modes of preparing it. One was by simply infusing the leaves in a tea pot, by pouring boiling water over them, as is usually done with other teas, and the other way was by making an infusion in the ordinary way and straining it into another vessel; then adding milk, sugar or molasses, to suit the taste, and boiling all together for a few minutes before using—this latter I found to be very palatable.

Notwithstanding that Sir John Richardson has mentioned but one species of *Ledum* as yielding tea (*L. palustre*), both varieties are used; that partaken of by me, as referred to above, was prepared from the broad leaved *Ledum* (*L. latifolium*), which is found so abundant in Nova Scotia. It is possible that in the cold arctic region and Labrador the effects of these plants may not be the same as in our milder climate. I do not know if they have been examined chemically. To those who may be disposed to test their qualities I would suggest their using a mild infusion, and not condemn it from simply "once tasting." It is not to be assumed that the Labrador tea plant is about to supersede the Chinese; nevertheless it may be satisfactory to many to know that in case of necessity we have a substitute for it within our own Province.

Your obedient servant,

Halifax, 16th February.

J. J. Fox.

SPELLING REFORM.

The *Educational Journal* of Toronto had a capital paper on the spelling reform last month, from which we make a few extracts:

"A few years ago, Prof. Zupita, of the University of Berlin, in the course of his lectures on English Philology, having fully discussed the origin and development of all the old English or Anglo-Saxon vowels and consonants, before proceeding to the next division of his subject, uses the following remarkable words: 'I shall now proceed at once to deal in the same way with Modern English sounds, as I have been doing with Old English, passing over entirely the period known as Middle English, for the simple reason that Middle English and Modern English orthographically are practically identical.' On another occasion the professor told his students that English pronunciation had so greatly changed since Elizabeth's time, that if Shakespere and Lord Tennyson could meet in the streets of London, and should speak English as they had respectively been taught to speak it in the schools of their day, they could scarcely understand each other. And yet Lord Tennyson's orthography is almost exactly the same as Shakespere's. In other words, the same spelling, symbolizing, in one age, one system of articulate sounds, is made in another age, to represent what, as far as mere sounds are concerned, is almost an entirely new language."

"The London Times, having discovered that its persistent adherence to the extra letter of the old spelling *our*, cost it about \$2,500 a year, is about to give it up and come over to the majority."

"It ought to be a source of gratification to all students of our noble English tongue, to all who desire to see it speedily become the universal language of commercial intercourse, to know that the ablest scholars in England and America have for years been making our spelling a subject of profound study, and seeking the simplest and most effective way of removing the multitude of needless difficulties that meet at the very threshold and tend to discourage every one who tries to learn our written language."

TEACHING GONE MAD.

Will the reader please cast his eye upon the following questions: 1. How can it be proved that nicotine is a poison? 2. Why are cigarettes especially harmful? 3. Is alcohol a food? 4. What is the effect of disuse upon the muscle? 5. Under what names is opium sold? 6. Under what names is alcohol drunk? 7. What is the difference between a food and a poison? 8. Is anything gained by changing from one narcotic to another? 9. What is the effect of beer as a drink? 10. How does cheerfulness help the muscle? These are the questions given as a test in physiology in the public schools of a prominent eastern city. They are not addressed to young men about to leave school. No, they are asked of little boys and girls of from eight to ten years of age. This is the examination