THE GROCERY TRADE.

James Austin & Co.	E. Maitland, Tylee & Co.
I. Buchanan, Harris & Co.	J. A. & H. Mathewson.
Bacon, Clarke & Co.	H. J. Gear.
H. Chapman & Co.	Mitchell, Kinnear & Co.
Converse, Colson & Lamb.	William Nivin & Co.
Jas. Douglas & Co.	Rimmer, Gunn & Co.
Forester, Moir & Co.	Robertson & Beattie.
Fitzpatrick & Moore.	David Robertson.
Gillespie, Moffatt & Co.	Havilland Routh & Co.
Jeffery, Brothers & Co.	Sinclair, Jack & Co.
B. Hutchins.	Jos. Tiffin & Sons.
Law, Young & Co.	David Torrance & Co.
Leeming & Buchanan.	Thompson, Murray & Co.

WE cannot report any increased activity in Groceries since our last review of the market, and the week has been void of any large operations or speculative demand for goods. We note arrival in the market of a few general dealers from the West, chiefly engaged in the dry goods trade, who purchase limited parcels of groceries. The late rapid thaw is no doubt the commencement of a break up of the roads in the country, and we do not now anticipate much improvement in this branch of trade until opening of navigation, which this year promises to be early.

TEAS.—Our market exhibits no variation from last week's review, and may be reported dull; at public sale on 22nd of Messrs. Jeffery Brothers & Co., about 200 Half Chest Japans were sold, ranging from 41 to 52½ cts., and balance all withdrawn, views of sellers and buyers appearing to be wide apart. By our advices from China up to 7th January, we observe that business has been restricted in Green Teas at that Port to a slight demand at stiff prices for the Canadian market, 6 chops of 5489 Half Chest of fair to good Moyune Teas having been purchased, at prices ranging from Taels 35½ to 41 cts. per Picul proportion, and three small chops of 726 Half Chests of Shanghae parked Teas at from Taels 33¼ to 37 cts. per Picul proportion. The Eastern Chief sailed for this port on 6th January, her cargo consists of Blacks 27620 lbs. and Greens 393340 lbs.; the "Shelburne" 372 tons, is reported as chartered to load teas for Montreal, which with the "Princess Wales," comprise the three direct cargoes to arrive this spring. There is no change in the English market, the large stocks of Black Teas held there and arriving has weakened the market, and a farther decline in prices of certain grades has been submitted to. The New York market is so completely unsettled by the rapid decline of gold, and the uncertainty of the advance or farther decline of the precious metal, that values of goods are difficult to be arrived at, transactions are of the most limited kind, and quotations, in the absence of a base for operations, entirely nominal.

Annexed will be found an interesting article upon Tea, extracted from an English periodical devoted to the Trade.

SUGARS.—We have had one or two very small shipments of the new crop, *via* Portland; but the market is yet very bare. A cargo for Montreal was recently lost off Portland, and another, also for this market, somewhat damaged. However, as we are apprised several cargoes are following, prices here are not likely to be affected by this casualty, the deficiency of stocks to meet all requirements being quite improbable. At the Auction here on the 22nd, a limited quantity of fair Cuba was sold at $8.70 to $8.75; but prices not being satisfactory, balance was withdrawn. We quote Cuba from $8.75 to $9.25; Porto Rico $9.10 to $9.40.

TOBACCOS.—Firm, without much activity, but considered by holders excellent stock; we do not alter our former quotations.

COFFEE.—Stock exceedingly light, and demand limited; no sales to report.

RICE.—Dull, without animation. At auction on the 22nd, prices ruled from 16s. 6d. to 16s. 9d., for inferior.

FRUIT.—Raisins somewhat in demand, but scarce in market. We quote M.R's. at $1.75 to $1.80; Layers $2 to $2.10; Currants dull at 5½c. to 6½c.

WINES AND SPIRITS.—Demand limited, and only small lots taken for immediate requirement.

We shall now consider the composition and qualities of tea, both green and black. In regard to the qualities, it is well to disabuse the mind of the notion so commonly entertained that infusion of tea, unlike alcoholic liquors, is wholly harmless, no matter in what quantity consumed. Contrasting the experience of European tea drinkers with that of Chinese tea drinkers, in respect to the constitutional results of over indulgence in this liquor, the two do not quite agree, and the cause of discrepancy becomes on examination apparent. The Chinese testify to the occurrence of a certain sort of brain disturbance very similar to that known here as "*delirium tremens*," and being with us the result of over indulgence in alcoholic intoxicating liquors. In Europe the occurrence of delirium from over doses of tea was perhaps never met with, but an approach to this finality is common enough to warrant the belief that Chinese accounts represent correctly enough the extreme effects of over use of tea infused whilst yet new. The "*Malé*" or "*Yerba*" drinkers of South America are also often affected with the same sort of symptoms; and probably, owing to the action of a constituent very similar to that existing in new Chinese tea, and to which the head symptoms are referable. In manufactured tea three distinct active chemical principles, at least, are recognisable, through the conjoined effects of which the physiological action of tea is produced, and of these first in order as the cause of the delirium adverted to is a certain volatile oil. Every person who has at any time infused commercial tea leaves, as in the ordinary practice of tea making, knows that the steam or vapour involved is very highly charged with odorous matter, and if chemically versed, yet unacquainted through experiment or testimony with the composition of commercial tea, the observer might be led, from general considerations, to refer this odor to the presence and evolution of a volatile oil. Experiment amply confirms this suspicion; for by submitting tea leaves mingled with water to distillation, considerable portions of volatile oil pass over, and may thus be separated. Different qualities of tea yield varying relative quantities of tea oil, as might have been anticipated *à priori*; but pronouncing generally, it may be said that to obtain 1 lb. of tea oil, 100 lbs. of dry commercial tea leaves are necessary. Being, like all other volatile oils, readily prone to evaporate, we have in the consideration of this quality an explanation of the fact that, whereas delirium from over tea drinking is not so very uncommon in China, it is very rarely met with amongst us. Perhaps no volatile oil is wholly devoid of a certain intoxicating power. In oil of turpentine this quality exists in a very remarkable degree; and the oil of absinthe, so much used by the French lower urban population, has only to be named to impress upon the memory a similar deduction in regard to it. So deleterious is the intoxication sometimes produced by absinthe, according to recent deductions of certain French physiologists, that, quite recently, the military authorities of the French imperial Government have interdicted the use of it to soldiers of the French army. No very extensive scientific investigation of the physiological properties of the volatile oil of tea has yet taken place; but that it is capable of exercising a powerful influence, no one practically acquainted with tea doubts. Thus, for example, tea-tasters are subject to headaches and giddiness; and in the course of years men employed in packing and unpacking chests of tea are very liable to be affected with paralysis. So well aware are the Chinese of the intoxicating and otherwise deleterious affects of new tea, that they seldom consume the manufactured article until it is at least one year old. It may be—though we profess to offer no certain testimony as to the point—that the volatile oil we have been treating of is the *most* important constituent held by tea; and to which its chief effects, as recognisable upon the human system, are referable: notwithstanding that a different conclusion might seem probable from considerations of the word "*theine*"—a term applied in designation of another chemical constituent of tea; the next, indeed, to be spoken of. If a portion of dry tea leaves be laid upon a hot plate, and surmounted with a conical cap, a process of dry distillation will be established, and the paper cap will ultimately be found studded internally with a layer of white silky crystals.

This is the simplest way of obtaining theine, but it is not the process by following which theine can be extracted in largest quantities. A better method consists in substituting a dried extract of tea leaves for the latter themselves. Very curiously, as we have mentioned already, this crystalline material "*theine*" may be also called "*caffeine*" with equal propriety, being identical with the white crystalline material evolved by distillation from coffee. As in regard to the volatile oil, so in regard to this constituent, the percentage quantity is not the same for *all* varieties of tea. The teas most commonly in use yield from one to two and a-half pounds the hundredweight, but certain chosen varieties of tea are said to be capable of yielding no less than six pounds from the same quantity.

The taste of theine is slightly bitter, and it is wholly devoid of smell; it can contribute little or nothing, therefore, to the *flavour* of tea. Theine, nevertheless, is a remarkable substance, and has set physiologists speculating not a little as to the exact function performed by it on the human organism. Its chemical constitution regarded, theine is remarkable for holding an enormous amount of the element nitrogen—enormous, that is to say, for a vegetable body; it being the characteristic of nitrogen to belong, with few exceptions, to animal tissues amongst organized bodies. Some 29 per cent. of theine is referable to this principle. For nitrogen to be found in vegetable bodies is, as we just remarked, comparatively rare, yet, whenever it is found, then does the vegetable body holding it produce some marked effect upon the human body when swallowed. Prussic acid, morphia, quinine, the poisons of hemlock and tobacco, mustard, the onion and garlic tribe, are all nitrogenous. Viewing the highly nitrogenous constitution of theine, and remembering that nitrogen enters into the composition of all flesh-forming food, it would be reasonable to assume that theine conduces practically to the formation of flesh when entering the stomach in the ordinary course of tea drinking. The extremely small quantity of theine ingested, however, is incompatible with this assumption. Physiological experiments seem to warrant the conclusion that theine is of value through a certain effect it has of diminishing the wear and tear of the animal economy. The introduction to the stomach of even so small a quantity as three or four grains of theine daily sensibly diminishes the quantity of solid matters thrown off from the body by excretion, and, as an attendant consequence, sensibly diminishes the amount of solid food necessary to be eaten. Tea, therefore, should, having regard to its physiological effects, be a food economiser, and practically this is known to hold good. According to physiologists, the use of tea serves another purpose, as follows:—At a certain advanced period of life, the stomach fails in digestive power, whereby the body cannot receive the materials of nutrition it requires to compensate for natural wear and tear. Now, the quality of tea is such that, without directly supplying nutriment, it economises that which the stomach, through ordinary articles of food, receives. "No wonder, then," wrote Dr. Johnston, "that tea should be a favorite, on the one hand, with the poor, whose supplies of substantial food are scanty; and on the other, with the aged and infirm, especially of the feebler sex, whose powers of digestion and whose bodily substance have together began to fail. Nor is it surprising that the aged female who has barely enough of weekly income to buy what are called the common necessaries of life, should yet spend a portion of her small gains in purchasing her cherished ounce of tea. She can live quite as well on less common food when she takes her tea along with it, and she feels lighter at the same time, happier, more cheerful, and fitter for her work, because of the indulgence."

The quantity of three or four grains of theine is that which may be assumed as appertaining to a little more than half an ounce of good tea. It is a quantity that may be taken daily, not merely without harm, but with advantage to most systems. If the amount be doubled, then constitutional disturbance sets in. The heart beats quicker and irregularly; the pulse flutters; the body trembles; and the head is unpleasantly affected: a train of symptoms, in short, is induced which most tea-drinkers will at some period or another have experienced.

We next come to the consideration of a somewhat important principle of tea so far as quantity goes; but whether it have any beneficial action or otherwise upon the body experiment has not conclusively determined. Tannic acid is the principle we here advert to: or more correctly speaking, a mixture of tannic and gallic acids. Most of us will have remarked on one occasion or another, how a knife blade or other piece of iron or steel becomes black when brought into contact with tea infusion; and how, if allowed to stand long enough in contact, it tinges the whole lot of infusion with the black color of ordinary writing ink. Now this coloration can only be attributable either to tannic or to gallic acid, or else a mixture of both. Tannic and gallic acids constitute some 15 per cent. on an average of dried tea leaves. Owing to these acids it is that tea exercises an astringent action upon the body. The three substances now described are the really active agents in tea; but, nutrition regarded, the principle "gluten," constituting at least one-fifth of dried tea leaves, is still more important.

BRITISH MARKETS.

ADVICES up till 9th March, report the market favorable, and money plentiful at from 4 to 4½ per cent. The Joint Stock Banks have reduced their terms for deposits from 4 to 3½. The London and Westminster only giving 2½ per cent. on sums below £500 stg., and discount establishments allowing 3½ per cent. for money on call. The amount of Notes in circulation by the Bank of England is £19,933,285 stg., and the stock of gold bullion is £14,801,367 stg.

There had been no silver purchased by the Bank during 1864. From the prospect of Government drafts on India diminishing, large shipments of silver will likely take place to the East. £100,000 stg. of silver in Mexican dollars at 5s. stg. per oz. had been taken.

There was a moderate consumptive demand for good samples of Wheat at previous prices. Fresh arrivals of Breadstuffs at Liverpool, but moderate. The total imports of Wheat into the United Kingdom during the first eight weeks in 1865 was 809,955 qrs. While for the corresponding period 1864, 247,707 "

Shewing a deficiency this year..... 563,248

The stock of Cotton has considerably increased the present year at Liverpool, for the first eight weeks being,..... 81,400 bales.

In the corresponding period of last year shewed a decrease of..... 31,334 "

Total increase.....112,734 "

a larger amount than has been since 1861. While stocks have accumulated, it has been the policy of manufacturers to work only to order, and Warehousemen have only kept on hand bare assortments.

It is worthy of remark, however, that exports of Cotton have been during the last few years on the increase, as per the following statement:—

Exports of Cotton in	1855,	124	million lbs.
" "	1856,	146	" "
" "	1857,	131	" "
" "	1858,	149	" "
" "	1859,	175	" "
" "	1860,	250	" "
" "	1861,	298	" "
" "	1862,	214	" "
" "	1863,	241	" "
" "	1864,	244	" "

Boots and Shoes.

We have no particular change to note in regard to this article. We quote Upper Canada at 82½ to 85c., and firm at that.