

July 9th. The committee of our Interprovincial Convention have been fortunate in securing such an eminent educationist, whose long and honorable connection with the schools of Great Britain so well qualifies him to speak on the subject he has chosen.

The following brief sketch of Dr. Fitch may serve to show how long and important has been his connection with educational work: Born in 1824, he gained his higher education at University College, London, receiving his degree of M. A. from the University of London. From 1851 to 1856 he was Vice-Principal, and from 1856 to 1863, Principal, of the Normal College of the British and Foreign School Society. While in this position, in conjunction with Dr. Cornwell, his colleague, he was the author of "The Science of Arithmetic," a book designed to aid teachers in explaining the *rationale* of arithmetical processes. In 1863, on the recommendation of Earl Granville, he was appointed one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools, with charge of the Yorkshire district, but has since been repeatedly detached from that office on special and temporary service of a highly important nature. This service has for the most part consisted in making inquiries into the state of primary and secondary education in England, and reporting thereon. He was for ten years examiner in the University of London, in English language, literature, and history, and for twenty years was one of the special examiners for the civil service. He is now the senior Inspector of Her Majesty's schools.

He is the author of numerous articles on literary and educational topics, and his "Lectures on Teaching" has been largely circulated in Great Britain, the colonies, and especially in the United States, where it has been reprinted and is regarded as, perhaps, the best single book for teachers in elementary schools.

As to the field of higher education he is a member of the governing bodies of St. Paul's School, Girton College, Cambridge, and Cheltenham Ladies' College. In 1885, the University of St. Andrew's conferred upon him the honorary degree of LL.D.

CANADIAN TEA.

Our scientific editor has been at a five o'clock Labrador tea. The beverage was a success—rated by some as superior to China teas. It was prepared simply as follows: Leaves of the present season. Boiling water poured on, and kept covered for about twenty minutes; kept nearly to boiling point—but not allowed to boil. Sweetened with refined sugar. Cream or milk added. The dried leaf of *Ledum latifolium* could be put on the market, allowing the widest margin, at ten cents per pound.

CANADIAN TREPANG.

In the waters surrounding the Atlantic Provinces, a holothurian, *Pentacta frondosa*, Jaeger, very similar to the trepang of the Malay and Chinese coasts, is found in great abundance. It is called by our fishermen the "Sea-cucumber" or "Sea-pumpkin." A few experiments have been made on it as an article of food, and it has been pronounced good, with the flavor of lobster-meat. Trepang, in the East, is prepared by dipping the live "Sea-cucumber" for two minutes in boiling water, then cutting open, then throwing into a second cauldron of boiling water and mimosa bark. It is finally dried in the sun, and pressed for stowage. The market value has been quoted at from five to six dollars per hundred pounds; and the fisheries are considered of industrial importance. Will not some of our ingenious fishermen, or fish dealers, make a thorough test of our own "Sea-cucumber," and settle the question whether there is to be any Canadian trepang or not.

CANADIAN EDIBLE FUNGI.

Thousands of dollars' worth of edible fungi, nutritious and delicious when properly cooked, are spontaneously produced by nature, and constantly going to waste in these Provinces, from a lack of knowledge. The common mushroom, *Agaricus campestris*, is only one of a great number of species, on which the poor farmer might occasionally dine as a lord, did he know the possibilities under his hand. Some species are poisonous, others are offensive or inedible. But little training would be required to distinguish one from the other, and to discover a method of cooking which would develop all their deliciousness.

At some future time—not the present year—we expect to give some plain account of the more common edible fungi, with figures, to enable our teachers to introduce a more complete knowledge of this interesting class of vegetation into all districts of the country. In the meantime the teacher should be always a close observer of nature on every hand. Never should he neglect careful examination of anything coming under his attention, because he thinks he may not be able to name it or classify it. Such a teacher may well be said to be a blind leader of the blind.

On account of the absence in Europe of Dr. Th. H. Rand, Sir Wm. Dawson will, if he reach St. John in time, open the Convention, on the topic, "Reminiscences and Prospects of Education in Canada," a theme which, in the hands of this distinguished educationist, will prove of the greatest interest.