



Other Teas

SASSAFRAS bark and various fragrant-leaved herbs may make a bid for the favor of American housewives, as they did at their Revolutionary great-grandmothers' tealess tea-tables, and again in pioneer cabins beyond the reach of easy transportation.

Even when uninterrupted sailings brought tea to early American harbors, our foremothers did not depend entirely on this exotic delicacy. They treasured varied stores of dried herbs and barks, and were able to tickle guests' palates with a wider range of flavors than their descendants can offer. Mulberry flowers, raspberry leaves, and an array of plants now almost forgotten, like Oswego tea, New Jersey tea and Labrador tea, all had their proper place in the well-stocked early American cupboard.

To be sure, many of them were considered medicines. But then, so were tea and coffee, and even tobacco, at first. The frontier between medicine and beverage after all is not a sharp one. Some of the herbs do have medicinal properties, and are still listed in the pharmacopeia; but on the whole their action as drugs is so mild, even so vague, that they probably served chiefly as pleasant ways of smuggling quantities of hot water into the system.

Some of these native American tea-plants, notably sassafras, achieved favor in England. Several of the early exploring voyages brought back cargoes of sassafras roots as a profitable commodity. In one of his most charming essays, Charles Lamb tells of providing treats of sassafras tea to young London chimneysweeps.

If we do take to using sassafras again, there is plenty of it available. It is one of the most common woody plants of the eastern United States, from New Eng-

land and the Lakes to the Gulf, growing either as a tree or a large shrub. The part used is the bark of the roots, peeled off and dried.

In the South there is another shrub or small tree that may come to figure more or less seriously in the American beverage picture. It is a near relative of holly, known regionally as yaupon. Because its leaves have a relatively high content of caffeine, it was considered seriously as a commercial possibility during the first World War, when shipping shortage nearly cut off cheap sources of caffeine, needed in the production of one of our

most popular soft drinks. In this respect it resembles another holly-family relative, the famous yerba maté, much used as a tea in South America.

Science News Letter, April 11, 1942

Australian housewives are experimenting with a scorched wheat substitute for tea; Australians drink 10 times as much tea as Americans.

A tiny pictorial map on a cigaret case guided 17 American airmen piloting several U. S. flying boats in an escape from the Philippines to the Netherlands Indies.



Miracle in a Quarter-Ounce of Glass

THIS is an ophthalmic lens, designed for the correction of vision. It measures 43x40 mm, 2 mm thick. It weighs 6.23 grams. Its refractive index is 1.5230, its mean dispersion, 0.00895. Its physical characteristics are matters of scientific fact, but they are no measure of the effect it may have on a human life.

For, through the achievements of modern optical science, imperfect eyes are no longer a handicap. The school child, whose mind might otherwise have been dulled by faulty vision, today faces life undaunted, his eyesight defects corrected. Business men, and housewives, go about their daily affairs with eyes equipped for today's tasks. Older men and women, reaching the age when their eyes can no longer accommodate for vision near and distant, need

have no fear of loss of visual efficiency. Modern bifocal lenses, skillfully designed and fitted, restore comfortable youthful vision, extend years of useful working time to aging eyes.

So, in addition to its many contributions of scientific optical instruments for gun-fire control, research and industrial production, Bausch & Lomb is filling a vital need as America arms for defense. Workers with properly fitted glasses have vision of top efficiency. That means fewer errors in work, less fatigue, greater production.

BAUSCH & LOMB

OPTICAL CO. • ROCHESTER, NEW YORK

ESTABLISHED 1853

AN AMERICAN SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTION PRODUCING OPTICAL GLASS AND INSTRUMENTS FOR NATIONAL DEFENSE, EDUCATION, RESEARCH, INDUSTRY AND EYESIGHT CORRECTION