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Dieffenbach on Candy, May 8, 1956

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Candy.

In late winter or early spring, the maple-trees were tapped, and the sweet juice was collected each morning and stored in big crocks in a cool cellar until enough had accumulated so it could be boiled down. In the big sugar-bushes of New England the sap would be boiled as it was brought in.

Much of this was used as syrup; but some of it was boiled in big, shallow pans with a pair of rockers underneath, and the rocking of the pan and its contents hastened the granulation of the syrup. Words fail to describe the delicious flavor of a spoonful of that golden syrup, dipped out of the pan and poured into a depression in the snow. It had the sweetness of honey, the tang of the forest, and a flavor of its very own.

* * * * *

Hore-hound Drops.

These were used for relieving a sore throat or an irritating cough. A quantity of horehound was boiled until the water was quite green, then the herbs were removed, put on a rack, and dried.

Hore-hound Drops. 577-215-15

A quantity of sugar, usually dark-brown, and of-cleft New-Orleans sugar, was now added to it, and again boiled for a few minutes. It was now dropped onto oiled paper, or else it was poured into tins and later broken into small pieces. If boiled too long it would become so hard it had to be cracked up with a hammer. We used to call it - Jaw-breakers, because one could break a tooth on it.

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Birch-drops.

These were made in the same manner as the horehound, leaving out the latter and putting in oil of birch in its stead. Oil of birch was made in the same way as maple-syrup, only the sap came from a big old birch-tree. Some of these old-timers were chemists in the rough, and had little stills to extract the oil, and then dilute and preserve it with spirits.

Birch-drops were not so plentiful as the horehound and mint-drops, owing to the extra labor involved in securing the oil, hence they were mostly consumed in Church or Meeting.

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