

Tea Plantations of the Himalayas Whence Comes Drink for the World



THREE LITTLE TEA PICKERS

Dounties of from 2 to 7 cents a pound upon all green tea exported, and they have created their crop within the last few years, so that it now amounts to millions of pounds. I understand that the Chinese government is alarmed at the situation and that the Chinese tea planters recently sent a commission to India and Ceylon to investigate tea conditions and the tea-curing process.

How to Make Tea.
Before I begin let us start the water to boiling. It should be fresh from the spring and should not bubble over ten minutes before used for brewing. We will put the tea in a porcelain pot and let the hot water remain upon it not more than eight minutes, and it will then be ready for drinking. Tea should never touch metal and it should never stand in the pot after brewing. It should never be boiled in the pot and it should be drunk clear, for milk makes it poisonous. Good tea does not need sugar, although a slice of lemon will add to the flavor.

India Drinks the World.
You remember the temperance landlady's remark to her bibulous boarder: "I will sleep you and eat you, but I be blest if I drink you." In that sense India bids fair to soon drink the world. Her black teas have practically monopolized the markets of Europe and more of them are consumed than of the teas exported from all other nations. A generation or so ago about the only teas known to commerce were those of Japan and China. The India teas are now driving the Chinese teas out of the markets and Japan has to rely almost entirely upon the United States for the sale of her surplus. We drink \$2,000,000 pounds of tea every year, and of this \$1,000,000 pounds come from Japan and about \$8,000,000 from China. We get only \$300,000 pounds from East India, but this amount is increasing from year to year. The exports of Indian teas are mostly to Europe. They go to Great Britain and thence to the colonies. Some are sent to the continent and big shipments are made to Australia and Canada. The British are the greatest tea drinkers of all mankind. Their consumption amounts to six or seven pounds per head every year, while our people each drink less than two pounds and the Russians less than one. The Germans and French lead themselves with coffee and wine or beer, sipping tea now and then. The Chinese and Japanese drink tea throughout the day. The Chinese will not drink water unless it is boiled, and they favor the water with tea. The consumption of these two nations is probably greater than that of all the rest of the world put together, but the lack of statistics no one knows what it is.

How Advertising Pays.
The exports of Indian tea now amount to over \$50,000,000 pounds per year. Of this more than \$20,000,000 pounds are from Hindustan and about \$30,000,000 pounds from the island of Ceylon, over the way. The trade has grown up within the last thirty years and it is largely based upon good advertising. When I was here twenty years ago it was in its infancy and the planters were discussing how they could get the American market. They concluded to advertise in the newspapers and they raised a fund to begin that work in Europe and the United States. At the same time they organized a sales bureau and they saw to it that Ceylon and India teas could be had in all the large stores, and that they were on tap at every state and national exposition. As a result the demand for these teas steadily grew, and today their exports are almost twice those of China and more than five times those of Japan. Within the last few years the East Indian planters have decided to enter the green tea markets, and they are now advertising such varieties in the same way. Ceylon alone has already spent in the neighborhood of \$1,000,000 on green tea information, with such a result that the Chinese and Japanese are alarmed, fearing that they may lose this trade, of which they still have the monopoly.

Clinching the Argument.
The late Nell Burgess used to clinch with an anecdote, his claim that atheists were always ignorant. "I am a Unitarian," he would begin, "declared in a barber shop; I don't believe in no hereafter. You live and die and that's the end of ye."

Fighters in the Majority.
Representative Harry Maynard of Virginia tells the story of how a religious old negro in his district put a stop to the exercise of Christian charity in the congregation of which he was a member. It seems that it was a practice in the church to excommunicate for one year any member who had been guilty of a "blood fight"—that is, any man who had attacked another with a pistol or a razor.

The Cold Young Lawyer.
Mrs. Sol Smith, the veteran actress whose 80th birthday was celebrated by a dinner of the Professional Women's League in New York, said of the modern spirit at this dinner: "The modern spirit is more mercenary than the spirit of the 20s. I know a very beautiful girl—in my day she'd have been married off at 15—but, though she is now 25, her matrimonial prospects are dark and gloomy."

How Uncle Joe is Like Deacon.
Apropos of Speaker Cannon and his difficulties in the house, Jerome S. McWade, at a dinner, said: "At a tea I pointed the beautiful creature out to a young lawyer and said: 'There's nothing sweeter and lovelier than that girl in America. Why don't you try for her hand?'"

Where Looks Don't Matter.
Apropos of a titled foreigner's recent marriage to a rich and rather ugly American girl, Paul A. Sorg said at a dinner in New York: "The count has no cause to complain. The ethics of such a marriage as his are but the ethics of the matrimonial agency."

It Finished the Doctor.
A gaunt and killed Scotchman made his appearance in a country village, and was endeavoring to charm the locals to charity with selections on his bagpipe. A shaggy haired man opened the front door of a house and beckoned to the minstrel.

A Disappointing Discovery.
Any one who imagines that life is lacking in amenities among the newsboys in the big city should listen occasionally to their talk. When these two—each with his pack of newspapers under his arm—met, one appeared somewhat glum and disgruntled; whereupon the other benevolently essayed to cheer him up.

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PICKING TEA NEAR DARJEELING

Tea Raising in China and India.
I have traveled extensively through the tea fields of Japan and China and know something about them. The methods of cultivation and curing are different there than they are on these big plantations of Hindustan. In the former countries the tea is raised in small patches. The ordinary tea garden of Japan is not much bigger than a city lot and that of China would not be larger than the ordinary American garden. The tea is raised by a multitude of small farmers, each of whom works after his own rule and in his own way. When the leaves are picked there are districts and up the crops. They sell to other traders and one crop may go through a half dozen different hands before it is shipped to Hankow, where it gets one of the big steamers for Europe. Here in India the plantations are large. Some of them are hundreds of acres and employ thousands of men and women as laborers. They are handled after business methods. The soil is studied and carefully cultivated. At present there is more than \$100,000,000 invested in the business and in the neighborhood of 600,000 people are employed upon the plantations. The area under cultivation is steadily increasing and it is said that the crop may be raised all along the southern slopes of the Himalayas at an altitude of about 3,000 feet above the sea. The plantations here are 6,000 or 7,000 feet up and there are some tea fields which are a full half mile above sea level. The most of the land used is flat or rolling and the best soil is a reddish sandy loam with a free subsoil. The tea seeds are first planted in beds. After they have sprouted and reached the age of a year, they are set out in rows a few feet apart. They are carefully cultivated and trimmed, in order to make them grow

bushy. The soil is often top dressed with wood loam, and artificial manures are frequently used. As to the droppings of cattle, none are to be had in India, for the people pick them up and use them for fuel. After the plants are three years old they are ready for plucking. The leaves are carefully pulled, a certain number being left to keep the plants growing. It takes five or six years for a shrub to mature, and at that time it should produce a pound or more of tea every year. Some of the trees about here are forty years old and there are some in China whose age is so

great that no one knows when they were planted.

How a Tea Plant Looks.
But let me tell you how tea looks in the plantations about here. In the plantations about here the plants range in height from one's waist



WEIGHING TEA AT HANKOW

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LEPCHAS OF THE HIMALAYAS "THESE PEOPLE CHURN TEA AS WE CHURN BUTTER"

his head. Some have trunks six inches in diameter and others mere stems. The leaves are like those of the willow tree. They are small like tea when you crush them. The shrub is a species of the eucalyptus. It is an evergreen not unlike the maple, and the leaves are beautiful. The plant is supposed to have come originally from China, but there is no account of its having been cultivated until about 300 A. D. It grows wild on this side of the Himalayas and there are certain varieties of it which reach the height of small trees. The planters are crossing the various varieties in their attempts to make new and better teas.

I passed through many of these plantations on my ride up the mountains. The shrubs rise in terraces up the sides of the hill, looking not unlike well trimmed box-wood hedges. Here and there one sees gaily dressed women picking the leaves, their black skins and bright colored gowns showing out against the green, while their jewelry flashes in the sun. Each woman has a basket which will hold about two bushels on her back, kept there by a band which rests over the forehead. The leaves are plucked with the hands and thrown into the baskets, which, when full, are carried to the factory. I am told that the planters usually have five pickings a year, and on the best lands they have seven. This is far ahead of China and Japan, where the shrub that will yield three pickings is good.

The tea planters here are chiefly British. Many of the estates are owned by companies. The planters live in fine bungalows surrounded by lawns and gardens. Many of them are the second sons of noble families in England.

Making Tea by Machinery.
The processes of making tea in India are different from those of Japan and China. In the latter countries nearly everything is done by hand and their methods are unsanitary to an extreme. In China the leaves are withered and dried by treating them with bare feet. They are rolled over and over on bamboo trays with the hand and are fired in red-hot pans by half-naked, perspiring workmen.

It is the same in Japan. I once visited a large firing establishment at one of the resorts where they were preparing green tea for the American market. They were curing it by what is known as pan-firing. Imagine a long row of ovens filled with copper pans each twenty inches wide and thirty inches deep. The tops of the ovens were at about the height of a man's waist or just high enough to enable one to stir the contents about with the hands. There were at least thirty of these pans, and over each bent a Japanese woman, her dress pulled down to her waist and the upper part of her body as bare as the Venus de Medici. Each was stirring and kneading and rolling the drying tea. The fires were not and the steam rose. Pearl drops of perspiration stood upon the backs and the faces of the workers, and it seemed to me as though the tea might be brewed by the sweat. It took those women almost an hour to finish each lot and after that the teas were put up by hand.

Here in India the tea is all rolled by machinery. Every plantation has its factories, where the leaves are withered and rolled between steel plates so carefully graduated that they do not injure the tea. The drying is done by hot blasts and revolving fans, and the result is that the tea comes out perfectly pure and clean. It is carefully graded and packed while warm in lead-lined chests for shipment abroad.

The Hindus Do Not Drink.
The chief tea drinkers of Asia are north of the Himalayas mountains. On the other side of those hills the natives do not drink tea in tea, and in Tibet and the other Asiatic highlands the people make tea soup, mixing the brew with milk, butter and other fats. Down here in Hindustan the Hindus drink almost no tea, and the Mohammedans but little. The custom is increasing somewhat among the townspeople, but there are millions in India who have never seen a tea leaf or sipped a tea cup. Over in Burma they have a way of sipping tea, but it is not the tea we know. The leaves are thrown into boiling water and left there until soft. They are then rolled on mats by hand and rammed into a tube of bamboo cane, which is stopped up and buried in the ground until the tea has become pickled, when it is ready for sale. The leaves are also prepared with a mixture of oil and salt, and sometimes flavored with asafoetida. It smells like limberger cheese, but it is said to be good for digestion, and is considered a dainty. It is used upon ceremonial occasions. Another method of preparing it is to throw the leaves, after they have been steamed and flavored, into pits of masonry or well lined with plank or bamboo, and then to press the tea down with a heavy weight. The Burmese are now making 500,000 pounds of pickled tea every year.

How Brick Tea is Made.
I was shown a whole process of brick tea making. The tea is first ground to a dust and then sifted by half-naked coolies, who stuff their nostrils with cotton batting to keep the dust out of their lungs. These men are naked to the waist, and the perspiration stood out on their yellow skins. The air was like a Russian bath and the sweat poured. I took up a handful of the tea dust and tasted it. It was rather sweet, but there is but little tea flavor about it. It is as thick as granulated tobacco. The men scoop up the tea dust with brass shovels, each of which holds about two pounds, or enough for a brick. The tea is poured into a brick mold and steamed over boiling water. When it has become damp a little more dust is added and the whole is emptied into a rough wooden bowl about a foot square. It now goes to the press, and a great weight packs the tea dust into a brick almost as hard as one of burned clay. The bricks are left in the mould for two hours to cool and then taken off to be dried. They are of different sizes and shapes and of many grades. Some bring as high prices as the costliest teas we have in America. They are made of the first pickings of the tea, ground to a dust and steamed and pressed into shape. Another quality is made of later pickings, and still another of the refuse of the factories, consisting of coarse leaves, broken tea and the dust from the tables and floors of establishments where they put up tea in chests. Both green and black teas are used. The bricks of the former looking for all the world like plugs of tobacco, while the latter are a deep chocolate brown. The bricks are beautifully stamped, sometimes with the figure of a dragon and always with the name of the firm which sells them. FRANK G. CARPENTER.

In a Russian Tea Factory.
During my recent stay in China I went through some of the factories at Hankow, and there saw how brick tea is made. Hankow is the chief tea market of China. It is 600 miles in the interior, on the wide Yangtze river, which is so deep that the biggest ocean steamers can carry their cargoes from there to every part of the world. The chief tea fields lie to the south of the Yangtze, and most of them are some distance from Hankow. The tea is brought on the backs of men to the river and is shipped up the numerous tributaries of the Yangtze. At Hankow it is prepared in all sorts of ways for the market. There are exporting firms there who manufacture for the United States, some who deal chiefly with England, and also representatives of the French and German importing houses. The Russians have the largest houses, and they monopolize the brick tea industry, annually shipping millions of bricks to Vladivostok and Odessa, to Tibet and Mongolia, and also over the Transiberian railroad to Russia. Many of the bricks are carried part of the way on camels, and not a few go overland into Russian Turkestan.

One of the factories I visited covered more than an acre of ground. It employed 100 Chinese, and it had on hand 1,000,000 pounds of tea pressed into bricks and ready for export. The bricks filled the whole upper floors of the factory. They were laid up in piles, much as we stack bricks here and there through the room. They had been taken from the molds and left in the warehouse to cure. Each kind of tea had its own place, and I saw some from Ceylon which had been shipped to Hankow to be made into bricks before going to Russia.

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