

# TEA—THE BELOVED BEVERAGE

WHO are the greatest tea drinkers in the world? No, not the Russians, in spite of their continuity of imbibing. They drink but a weak decoction; nor the people of China and Japan, who also drink it very weak. The people of New Zealand are the great per capita users, but the palm for individual tea drinking goes to the workers on the great sheep farms of Australia. These men, range riders, counter-types of the American cowboys, drink tea of the strongest kind at every possible excuse. Incidentally, they rank as the tallest men amongst civilised races, outstripping even the wonderful physique of the New Zealander. It would, of course, be as foolish to attribute their physique to tea drinking as it would be to say that tea stops the growth of children but the facts are interesting, considering the vapid remarks about "tea hounds and tennis lizards."

The English, with a consumption of nine pounds of tea per head, and Canadians with four and a quarter pounds a year, rank next.

The word "tea" is of Chinese origin, the correct name being "t'su" or the more modern one "cha." Its society debut in England was made in 1666 when "cha" became "tay" and finally "tea." As early as 1657 tea was advertised for sale, both in leaf and as a drink, at one of the many London coffee houses, which afterwards gave way to tea shops. Chinese poets had already written

reams in its praise, so it was but natural that from 1670 onwards English poets, including Tate, Gay, Milton, Tennyson, as well as a host of others, should follow in their wake, just as such prose writers as Lamb, Dickens, Dr. Johnson, Sidney Smith, added their praise of "the cup that cheers but not inebriates," to that written centuries before by Confucious and his contemporaries. Partizanship ran high in those days and we find Poet Laureate Tate writing—

*Tea, even the ills which from coffee  
spring, repairs,  
Disdains its vices and its virtues  
shares.*

THE average English family of to-day commences the day with tea—indeed, I know many foreign residents in England who think the cup of tea brought to their bedside by a deft maid in the early morning is worth all the wines of Bacchus. Let me tell you a secret, however: that horrible concoction labelled English Breakfast Tea in the United States is unknown to the residents of any other country, except Germany. Certainly the English drink tea at breakfast, but it is just the same tea, either "Ceylon" or a blend of "India and Ceylon" as

they drink in the afternoon.

China tea is not generally known, used, or liked in Britain. Mixed tea, that is, black and green, went out of fashion with Victorian styles. Green tea, as a solus drink, is not, of course, used except by perhaps some isolated individual of the type that would dye the hair blue to be distinctive. Japan tea, or Formosa Oolong is rarely used in England, except for blending purposes.

ON our way to "afternoon tea" we have just time to drop into one of the big office buildings and see how they take tea. In many modern office buildings the owners serve tea as part of the service, just as they render janitor service, or clean the windows. In other offices one of the staff makes and serves it, not à la tea table, but just as an incident. In my office I remember the four o'clock tap at the door. My competent secretary goes to the door and returns with a cup of tea and a slice of Genoa cake, which she places at my elbow, and gets some for herself. For ten minutes we relax, business is put aside, we chat on equal terms, we are no longer machines but human beings. All the little harshnesses of the day seem to melt away, and we slip into the yoke again feeling refreshed. "Funny,"

you say? Not one whit funnier to you than are a score of "happenings" in the average American office to an English visitor.

WHY, it's twenty minutes to five and since I'm alone in my rooms, I must make tea for myself. Come and watch me. There, the kettle is boiling and the teapot (earthenware, of course, which holds three cups and "one to play") is already warmed. Two full teaspoonsful of my favourite Orange Pekoe. Now, it's "stood" three minutes. One tiny square of sugar—never powdered or granulated, then the cream. "Milk" you say? Milk, dear lady, is only a substitute, and a pitiful one, for cream. And now, to quote the gentle poet Gay,

*Through all the room  
From flowery tea exhales a fragrant  
fume.*

Artificial sunburn, whether induced by iodine baths, applications of tea or ochre powder, is becoming and harmless. Genuine sunburn coarsens and injures the skin, and when coming and going renders it unsightly. A foundation of not too spirituous face cream and a layer of fine powder applied very thickly and then wiped off will prevent. Slices of cucumber and lemon rubbed on alternately will help to cure. Calamine lotion soothes in severe cases.

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