

A PERFECT CUP OF TEA.

THE SECRET OF THE JAPANESE.

A lady who has just returned home from a visit to Japan has brought with her the secret of how to make a 'perfect cup of tea,' as she calls it. It is really astounding, she says, that none of our writers have taken the trouble to explain the intricacies and inner secrets of the art of tea-making. They have given all their time and space to the women, the flowers, the odd life of the people, and the gay colours, utterly ignoring what to most women is of importance, and, incidentally, great comfort.

When I arrived at Nagasaki I secured the services of a little Japanese girl, who was regarded as one of the best tea-makers in Japan. She came to my room and brought her tea kit with her. She spoke a little English, and when I made my wants known and informed her that I desired to know every trick in the art, she squatted herself on the mat in a bay window, and the lesson began.

First she lighted an alcohol lamp, although a charcoal brazier is just as good, and placed upon the flame a quart of fresh, clear water, which in about five minutes came to a boil. While the water was heating she placed in another kettle a small portion of green tea. She carefully shook the kettle until the tea was spread evenly over the bottom, and when the water in the first kettle began to boil she removed it from the alcohol lamp and set it on the tray until it ceased to bubble. When it stopped seething she poured a sufficient quantity of the hot water over the tea to fill a small teacup, and then as quickly as possible poured it out, without letting it steep at all. There was the trick.

She explained to me that the tannin in tea is poisonous, and that the first contact with hot water takes from the leaves all that is worth drinking. The steeping process, common with us, is fatal to perfect tea. When her brew came from the spout it was a colour between pale green and amber, such a colour as I have never seen in home-made tea. She passed the cup to me without sugar or milk, and I tasted it expectantly.

It was simply perfect. There was hardly more than two or three mouthfuls, but I sipped it for about five minutes, during which time every draught seemed rich with a strong perfume.

Like Oliver Twist, I asked for more, whereupon she removed all the tea grounds from the second kettle, and began all over again. I was informed that there was sufficient strength in the remaining tea grounds to make another cup if necessary, but the first perfect aroma was gone.

No Japanese who understands the art will permit a second cup to be made out of grounds which have once been wet. The tea should be drunk immediately, and a fresh cup should be made whenever more is required.

After each pot is made, and the grounds are emptied again for the next brew, the pot should be allowed to dry from the heat it has gathered during the process of making the tea. This precaution will be found wise, as it enables one to keep the tea dry until the hot water is ready to be applied.

In no case should the water be boiling, as its action on the leaves will be too rapid, and the tannic acid will indicate its presence to the tongue, creating a taste that is not pleasant when one becomes a regular tea drinker.

There are no harmful effects from tea drinking if the recipe I have given is carefully followed. It can be drunk at any and all times and at any hour.

It will make your sleep peaceful, your hours of wakefulness pleasant, and your digestion regular. Never use sugar or milk, and, above all things, do not steep it for a second.



GENERAL VIEW OF THE MACHINERY COURT.

stand which makes the machine so light running that the youngest child of eight years can work them. When the present General Manager of Australia, Mr F. D. Brown, came from America in 1894, to take control, he prophesied that the business in the Auckland branch would, with the latest machines then coming out, be double in a few years. The sales have increased to date from about 400 to over 800 for last year, which speaks volumes for the popularity of the Company's goods. That they are used in the factories, and justly so, too, is shown by a machine on the stand that has been running in Mr G.

H. Powley's factory for the last 14½ years on power, and is still in good order, and cost not more than 30/ for repairs the whole of the time. The sewing machine of to-day is expected to do more than plain sewing, and the Singer Co. have introduced art work which resembles painting with the needle, several samples of which are to be seen on the stand. To show the magnitude of this concern which started on £8 of borrowed money, it now commands a working capital of over £2,000,000 sterling, and has an army of employees numbering 66,000 throughout the world, also 4000 waggons and 6000 horses, and has made and sold 15,000,000 machines.

The late Charles Matthews now and then failed, like some of the rest of us, in meeting his bills as promptly as the tradespeople concerned could desire.

On one occasion a brisk young tailor, named Berry, lately succeeded to his father's business, sent in his account somewhat ahead of time.

Whereupon Matthews, with virtuous rage, seized his pen and wrote him the following note:

'You must be a goose—Berry, to send me your bill—Berry, before it is due—Berry.'

'Your father, the elder—Berry, would have had more sense.'

'You may look very black—Berry, and feel very blue—Berry, but I don't care a straw—Berry, for you and your bill—Berry.'



SINGER SEWING MACHINE EXHIBIT.

Photos. by Walrond.

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