

it is true that the Chinese use their tea grounds over and over again, selling them to the poorer classes. The preparation of the tea for the market is almost altogether by hand. The tea districts are generally hilly and they are laid out in beautiful terraces. About Foochow there are 40,000 men and women who do nothing but act as pack animals for the carrying of tea. They have it packed in baskets which they carry on poles across their shoulders up and down the mountain passes. They get about twenty-five cents a day. It costs about two cents a pound to pick the tea and there are a number of local taxes which will now probably be greatly increased on account of the war.

HOW BRICK TEA IS MADE.

Great quantities of tea are exported to Russia and Mongolia every year in shape of bricks. These are made of the lower grades of tea and of tea dust. The leaves are ground up and steamed and cooked until they are soft and mushy. They are then put into molds about the size of an ordinary brick and are pressed into shape, so that they become as hard as chocolate cakes. The finer varieties are molded into small cakes, in fact, of just about the size of the small cakes of sweet chocolate which you buy in the candy stores. I visited several of the factories in Hankow, which make this kind of tea, and the process was even less appetizing than that which I described as to the ordinary tea. The factories, in the first place, are very warm. The steaming tea is handled by dirty coolies, and it is sweetened by perspiration. After the bricks are finished they are carried by boats up the rivers and canals to Tientsin, and from thence go on camels into Mongolia and on to Russia. There are about sixty bricks in one package, and they are so arranged that they can be carried on camels. This brick tea takes the place of money in many parts of Asia; and in Mongolia it passes as currency, each brick being worth from fifteen to twenty cents. The Mongols divide a brick into thirty equal parts. They boil it with milk, butter, sheep fat and salt, using camel dung for fuel. I visited one of the largest of the brick tea factories in Hankow, and I met Russians there who were making fortunes out of shipping brick tea to Russia. Some of the factories employ more than a thousand hands, and the business is almost as great as that of shipping tea to Europe.

THE DECLINE OF THE TEA TRADE.

The Chinese tea trade has been declining for years, and this war will be a terrible blow to it. India is fast pushing its way into the tea markets of the world, and you find good Indian tea now sold all over the United States. The trade has practically grown up within the past twenty-five years, and since 1870 the Chinese markets have been steadily declining. In 1870 England imported ten million pounds of tea from Assam. Ten years later it was taking more than sixty million pounds, and there are now more than a quarter of a million acres of tea plantations in India. The Chinese have been adulterating their tea, and they have been steadily losing ground, while the Japanese and the Indian merchants have been gaining. The Indian tea now brings a higher price in the English markets than the Chinese tea, and not half as much of the

Chinese tea is used as was twenty-five years ago. I had a chance to see something of the tea plantations of India during a journey which I made six years ago to Darjiling, in the Himalaya mountains. This city is more than a mile above the sea, and you ride for a long distance through well kept tea gardens, the bushes of which are very much like those of our currants. These gardens turn out more than three hundred pounds of tea per acre, and there are five pickings, beginning in March and ending in November. The most of the tea plants are raised from the seed. The tea seeds are of about the size of a hazelnut. They are sown in nurseries in December and January, and by April the sprouts are ready to be transplanted. The best soil is virgin forest land, and the richer the better. The plants begin to bear in their third year, and they reach their best yield in their ninth year, after which the bush begins to decline. The Indian tea is generally grown in large plantations. The Chinese tea comes from little patches scattered over the country, and the holdings are generally small. In China the tea plant is in full leaf during the latter part of May, at which time is the second picking. A good tea tree will yield from ten to twenty ounces of leaf, and the best pickers average about fifteen pounds a day. The wages for such persons is from six to eight cents per day, and women and children do the work. The most of the Japanese tea is now fired in copper or iron pans, which are set into bake ovens and kept hot by fires under them. A great deal of the Chinese tea is dried over charcoal in a sieve, being rubbed with the hand until the contents are perfectly dry and the leaves become dark.

GREEN TEA AND BLACK TEA.

It is supposed by many in this country that green tea is caused by the copper basins in which the tea is fired. This is so to a certain extent, but there is a natural green tea, that is, a green tea produced without the use of coloring matter. Any kind of tea may be made green or black, according to the length of time of firing. If the tea is picked when not yet ripe and fired quickly it will have a green color. This green, however, is often produced by putting indigo and soapstone into the drying pans; and I met a tea merchant in Japan who told me that most of the green tea was colored in this way and not with copperas. The natural color of the tea leaf is green, and the purest of tea, which is known as the sun-dried tea, is of a green color.

We are now using a great deal of the Formosa tea, which ranks as one of the best teas of the world. Some varieties of this tea cost \$25 and upward a pound; and quite a lot of Indian and Japan tea has been put upon the market as Formosa tea. It will surprise many people to know what an immense number of tea drinkers there are in the world. Great Britain is said to drink one hundred million cups of tea per day, and every man, woman or child in Great Britain consumes five pounds of tea every year. The Australians are the greatest tea drinkers in the world, and they average over seven pounds per year. They take a great deal of Chinese and Indian teas. The greatest consumers of the Japanese teas are the United States and Canada, and we take

the bulk of the Japanese teas. Tea drinking is increasing in America, and the English drink more tea and less coffee every year. The Japanese and Chinese are drinking tea all the time, and a visitor is served with a cup whenever he calls. It is estimated that there are five hundred million tea drinkers in China and India.

THE CHINESE AND OPIUM.

I am told that the falling off of the tea crop of China is more than made up by the increase in the opium product. Opium is grown now all over China, and there are plantations of it in the north beyond the Chinese wall. I was greeted with the sickening smell of opium wherever I went, and in the city of Foochow, which is about as big as St. Louis, there are one thousand registered opium dens. Shanghai is filled with opium joints, and the biggest opium den in the world is to be found there. It is an immense three-story building covering what would be about one-half of an American city block, and it is furnished as gorgeously as were the caves of Monte Cristo. The cushions of the beds are of the finest velvet, and the frames of the couches are inlaid with mother-of-pearl. There are hundreds of rooms, and when I visited this den, the air was blue with opium smoke. Upon some of the beds men and women laid together and smoked side by side. There were haggard old men and fresh young boys smoking together, and there were mandarins in silks and coolies in rags in the different rooms. The entrance was lighted with the electric light, and the whole of the interior was made up of the finest carvings of costly teak wood. The different rooms were graded, and you could get a smoke here for a few cents, or paying nearly as high as a dollar for some of the pipes and the most gorgeously fitted up rooms. A great deal of the smoking is done in the private houses, and it is as common in China for your host to offer you a pipe of opium as it is in America to be offered a cup of tea or a glass of wine. There is considerable discussion among the foreigners of China as to the effect of opium upon those who use it.

It is claimed by many that the habit is no worse than that of drinking, and a report from the hospital in Canton shows that the moderate opium smoker gains flesh rather than loses it. The effect of smoking opium is said to be less injurious than that of eating it, and the Chinese use the drug differently from us. We take it to make us sleep. The Chinaman uses it as we do wine, to stimulate conversation; and two Chinese gentlemen will lie and smoke for hours while they chatter to one another. The habit is very costly, and the poorest of the Chinese cannot afford to smoke a great deal. There are thousands of moderate opium smokers in China, just as there are thousands of moderate drinkers in the United States, and the number of smokers is said to be increasing. At the present time I was told that about one-tenth of the people smoke opium, and I heard many instances of men having ruined themselves by the habit. All of the hospitals which are kept up by the missionaries have many patients who wish to be cured of opium smoking, and some of the wealthy Chinamen buy certain kinds of food with a hope of strengthening themselves against it. I saw a number of opium sots in China. They are called