

Description of Manufacture

COCOA and chocolate originate from the fruit of the Cacao Theobroma tree. The tree flourishes in warm, moist climates such as the West Indies, Ceylon, Java, Africa, Mexico, Venezuela and Brazil. It blossoms throughout the entire year in the sheltered valleys of these countries, where the soft soil is kept constantly moist by heavy rains and large rivers.

A knowledge of the Cacao tree was first brought to Europe in 1519 by Fernando Cortez and his troops. At this period the Cacao Bean was regarded by the natives as a symbol of great value, and in some cases as a substitute for money. Later the wealthier class of natives used the bean in preparing a beverage which had a decidedly acquired taste. They added cayenne pepper or ground chillies to the mixture, and when first tasted by the Spaniards was looked upon as having small commercial value. However, the Spaniards soon learned to mix sugar, spices and cinnamon with it, and introduced the product into Spain, which gradually established itself as the celebrated chocolate beverage.

During cultivation the tree requires great care. The young trees are placed under the shelter of banana trees, and at a later period of their growth under the shade of coral trees, to protect them from the intense heat of the tropical sun.

Eventually the tree, when thus cared for, will attain a height of from twenty-seven to thirty feet, and yields abundant red flowers and golden yellow pods which contain the Cocoa Beans. These pods have the form of an angular cucumber, and vary in size and shape. Each pod contains from twenty-five to forty almond-shaped seeds arranged in five longitudinal rows, which are the Cocoa Beans from which cocoa and chocolate are manufactured (see opposite page).

When ripe the pods are gathered and split in two. The beans are then spread out on screens to dry gradually upon bamboo floors, exposed to the rays of the tropical sun. After this treatment the beans are subjected to a process of fermentation, packed and shipped to the different markets of the world.

In producing cocoa and chocolate the Cocoa Beans undergo very many changes in the process of manufacture. The beans are first inspected, sorted and cleaned. They are then emptied into large roasting machines, and the roasting process brings out the delicious flavor singular to cocoa and chocolate. The beans are then placed in a machine which cleans and removes the outer shell and dispels all small particles of dust, at the same time cracking them into what are known as "cocoa nibs." These cocoa nibs are then ground between stone grinders, and they contain so much natural oil, or cocoa butter, that they grind to a liquid condition—this liquid is called "chocolate liquor."

In the manufacture of cocoa powder the chocolate liquor is placed in immense hydraulic presses which separate the liquid from the solid. The liquid runs off into receptacles as pure cocoa butter, leaving the solid, which is pure cocoa in the raw state. This solid is then ground by special processes into the finished article, such as Perfection Cocoa.

In the manufacture of chocolate the cocoa butter is retained. To produce a delicious and palatable chocolate, sugar and flavoring are added to the chocolate liquor, and then many processes of grinding and rolling are introduced. Eventually the chocolate emerges a rich, velvety, hot mass. In this form it is then taken to the molding room and molded suitably into the different lines that are manufactured, such as Maple Buds, Milk Chocolate, Medallions, Queen's Dessert Chocolate, etc.

In the production of both cocoa and chocolate the Cowan Company, Limited, have introduced the most modern methods in the world, and the greatest possible care has been taken to preserve the strictest sanitary conditions everywhere throughout the factory.