

Hearth and Home.

TEA—WHAT IT IS.

Tea is raised in Hindostan, Corea, Assam, Java and Brazil, and has been attempted in Southern Europe, and they all produce an inferior tea. Some efforts have been made in the United States, but of the results as to quality we are not informed. If our Eastern China will produce good tea, that will continue to be the great tea garden of the world. That the plant will grow well in the Southern United States we know, but that a good flavored tea will be produced we have doubts, from the experience of other countries. The Hanan teas are of three qualities, named from some particular localities. These are the black teas mostly exported to England. The class of Congou teas called Moning, are from another province, and resemble in character the two proceeding. It is said to have an earthy smell and taste derived from the soil in which the plant grows. The leaf is usually small and black, but the infusion is strong and of an agreeable flavor.

The tea was formerly in common use under the name of Bohea, is a product of the borders of Poyang Lake, and many years ago was the most common tea exported from Canton. The leaf is of a dark, red colour, open and coarse, producing a pale red infusion, which is not highly esteemed. The Souchong is one of the black teas, in former days in great repute, and now is in use under different names for its varieties. The leaves are reddish, and the infusion is of the same colour.

The Pekoe is the most delicate of all black teas. Its name means "white hair," from the down on the leaves. It consists of the earliest leaf buds, collected as they are just bursting in, Spring, while the down is not yet changed. The leaf has a soft downy appearance. There are four varieties of Pekoe varying in colour, and appearance.

The black tea known as Oolong, "black dragon," are produced near Amoy and east of the Bohea hills. These are very fragrant and highly esteemed. It has a long black curled leaf. The infusion is pale and delicate, being aromatic and agreeable. It is a high priced black tea, often bringing in Shanghai, \$1,50 per pound.

Green teas are from a range of low hills, extensions of the Bohea hills stretching north and west of 28° to 35°. There are three classes of green teas, taking their names and character from the sections of country in which they are produced. Each of these different classes furnish six varieties, viz., Hyson, Young Hyson, Hyson Skin, Twankay, Imperial, and Gunpowder.

Young Hyson was formerly considered the best

of green teas. Its Chinese name means "before the rain," because it was picked when the leaves first unfolded. Fine tea of this class is of a bright, greenish, grayish color, with a burnt flavor. The leaves are, of course, immature, varying in size and appearance.

Hyson is a well matured leaf, curled and twisted, of a bright, green color, sometimes shining. The name in Chinese means "vigorous spring." The infusion of the best tea is a pale straw color, becoming darker as the tea is of inferior quality.

The Hyson Skin is the refuse of the two preceding varieties, often containing a considerable quantity of dust. It resembles in qualities the teas from which it is separated.

The Twankay is so called from the river Twan in the district which it grows. The leaf is open and bright, and resembles Hyson in make. It is not generally considered a first class tea, but some samples have turned out equal to good Hyson.

The Imperial and Gunpowder are foreign terms applied to these teas. The Imperial is known by a Chinese word meaning "round pears," the gunpowder by words that mean "sesamum pearl." These teas have the same characters, the imperial being the largest leaves picked out of the lot, and are highly esteemed teas, and are among the highest priced teas in the market.

There is an immense business carried on in Canton, and perhaps in other places, in manufacturing teas, to suit the market. The teas are brought to the market, and they are worked over and adulterated to make them appear what they are not. They are known as Canton teas. The ordinary green teas are dyed by sprinkling them with a mixture of Prussian blue and plaster of Paris, and then glazing them by rolling them in a heated pan. They are scented by the flowers of the olive, the jessamine, and gardenia (Cape jessamine). These flowers are cultivated in great quantities in the neighborhood of Canton, and sold to the tea dealers.

—*American Grocer.*

A RARE BOY.—A gentleman has informed us of a humane act on the part of a boy which we commend for imitation to all our readers, and especially to the young. A little bird fell from its nest during one of the recent violent storms. This boy picked it up tenderly, put it on a fence near the tree, and with true delicacy walked away, so that the anxious parent bird might not be frightened to take the little creature back to the nest.

An honest reputation is within the reach of all men; they obtain it by social virtues, and by doing their duty. This kind of reputation, it is true, is neither brilliant nor startling, but it is generally most conducive to happiness.

He learns much who studies other men: he also learns more who studies himself.