

and America, lemon juice in Russia, and some kind of spirits in other countries of Europe.

Regarding the quality of tea we may be guided by the following rules. The darker the liquor the stronger the tea; and the nearer the approach of the infused leaf to a salmony brown, the purer the flavor. Black tea of good quality, should in infusion, yield a bright, clear, brown liquor, agreeable to taste and smell.

In the many chemical components of tea, the most important in infusion are the essential oil, theine and tannin, the flavor of the tea depending largely on the essential oil, and what is called the strength of the tea, on the tannin. Theine is an alkaloid, identical with the coffeine of coffee, and can be extracted by infusing the tea for about ten minutes. But if it is infused longer, the amount of tannin becomes greater, which is very injurious on account of its tendency to impede digestion. Their lack of knowledge of how to prepare tea, no doubt led the Europeans to infuse it too long, when they began to use it, whence it was long regarded as very injurious to health. Dr. Lettsom in his "Natural History" says: "The first vice of that pernicious custom of drinking spirits was owing to the weakness and debility of the system, brought on by the daily habit of drinking tea." Doctors of course will always disagree, but

it is pretty generally admitted now, that tea is a very wholesome as well as pleasant drink. It is certain that the theine contained in tea satisfies some craving of the human system, for it is the characterizing constituent of other substances in constant use, such as coffee, cocoanut, etc.

Dr. Edward Smith, experimenting on the physiological effects of tea, found that while the amount of nutriment contained in the quantity of tea one usually takes, is not sufficient to be of use in building up the system or in supplying heat, it has however, a very marked effect on the vital functions, particularly stimulating respiration, as shown by the increasing amount of carbonic acid thrown off by the lungs after taking it.

The Chinese, who are accustomed to the constant use of tea, are careful never to drink any which is less than a year old, as by that time the oil has sufficiently evaporated and ceases to be injurious.

Any of us who have felt the dulcet strength and animating blandness of tea sufficiently blended with real farm-house cream, will agree with Lo Yu, when he says of tea: "It tempers the spirits and harmonizes the mind, dispels lassitude, and relieves fatigue, awakens thought and prevents drowsiness, lightens or refreshes the body, and cleans the perceptive faculties."

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A nun hath no nation.

Wherever man suffers, or woman may soothe,
There her land! there her kindred.

—OWEN MEREDITH.

