

The block system of dwellings makes this comparatively easy. When you have one hundred and forty households in one house under one roof, and that roof flat from end to end, a central smoke chamber and spray purifier is not difficult. It would require to be paid for, as every improvement must be. But it is better to pay a little directly for cleanliness and health than a great deal more indirectly for dirt and disease. We have got beyond the time when people were allowed

to throw household slops and refuse into the streets out of their windows. It is worth considering whether people should not be prevented from throwing refuse out of their chimneys into the atmosphere and the lungs of their neighbours. A tax on smoky chimneys, that is, every chimney that simply takes the smoke out of the house and discharges it into the air without purification, might gradually help to make our towns more healthy and habitable.

A BUNCH OF DAFFODILS.

THE wind to-day is keen of edge—
It rakes the wrinkling river ;
It sweeps the swinging, rattling sedge,
It makes the pollards shiver.
The lambs send forth a quavering bleat
From sheltering stacks and fences ;
The young buds feel the sun a cheat
That lured with false pretences.

A day—as English springs begin—
More fell than all Decembers
To nip the blood and rip the skin,
And drive us round the embers.

Yet daybreak heard you lilt a tune
Through fields and beechen closes ;
You passed and made us think of June,
And almost look for roses.

I saw you seek the blazing beds
Where, braving wind and weather,
A thousand sprightly golden heads
Were tossing all together.
You placed a bouquet in your breast—
The faint blush grew so deep, dear,
I almost guessed its glow confessed
A secret—which I'll keep, dear.

FREDERICK LANGBRIDGE.

OUR BREAKFAST BEVERAGES.



THE old saying that the world is compassed to provide a washer-woman's breakfast, applies more to the drinkables than to the eatables.

On the principle that it is of things with which we are most familiar that we know the least, I am going to begin by talking about tea. We have been drinking it in England for the last two centuries and more; the Chinese for the last ten. The Dutch have the credit of introducing it to Europe; they exchanged it

with John Chinaman for sago, and their physicians praised it so greatly that it would appear, according to their showing, to be a panacea for every ailment and every woe.

When we first had it here, it cost ten guineas a pound. Catherine of Braganza, Charles II.'s Portuguese wife, made it popular in England, and since that time the history of tea is closely associated with the story of our social life. Pepys speaks of it as a China drink,

and describes his wife making it at home. It was then bought principally of Thomas Garway, a tobacconist who had a coffee-house in Change Alley, Cornhill, which later on became the chief resort of people of quality, with business in the City, and was only closed some twenty years ago. But the tobacconist and tea-dealer knew how to puff his wares. If we may believe his handbill, tea not only "maketh the body active and busy," but is a preventive against most of the bodily ailments, which he very particularly describes.

This valuable commodity he offered at from sixteen to fifty shillings a pound, showing a great abatement in cost. Dr. Johnson would have endorsed pretty well all Garway alleged in its favour. The great lexicographer drank tea nearly all day, by himself and in company—in truth he was the very king of tea-drinkers. To Hazlitt it was meat and drink; De Quincey, Lord Palmerston, and men of all shades of politics and every kind of pursuit, have been known as patrons of the cup that cheers without inebriating. It clears the mind, soothes the nerves, and has a most stimulating effect on the faded mental powers, but like all good things it may be abused. Too much of it produces nervousness, and

has an ill effect on the digestive organs. A great deal depends on the making; it should neither be drunk too hot nor too strong.

Leigh Hunt, Soyer, and hundreds of clever people, have written their opinions as to the best way of making tea. Three things are essential: good tea, a good tea-pot, and boiling soft water.

We will discuss the goodness of the tea later; the best tea-pot is a silver one of good thickness; earthenware cools more rapidly; but whatever the kind, see that it is dry and scrupulously clean—not a vestige of an old leaf inside. Make it thoroughly warm before you begin. And preserving the aroma of the tea is another of the great points. If you cannot get soft water, do not despise an infinitesimal portion of soda. Be sure the water boils, really boils so that the steam comes well out of the kettle, and never boil it up twice. Measure the tea into a cup; a spoonful for each person and one for the pot is an old-fashioned but sensible reckoning. Open the lid quickly and slip the tea in, pour on sufficient water to well cover it, and close the lid; by this means the tea-pot does not cool as it would if you measured each spoonful separately into it. Let it stand four minutes, add enough water for the cups required, and in five minutes more pour out a little in each cup all round till all are filled and equally strong, then add more water for a second cup. If allowed to infuse too long, it is well-nigh poisonous; if it cannot be drunk at once, it should be drained off from the leaves into another tea-pot.

Tea plantations are a beautiful sight when the shrub is in flower. The plant takes five years to reach perfection, and yields a crop in about three. The leaves are gathered, dried, and packed. Pekoe is the finest black tea, then Souchong, Congou, and Bohee; and they come mostly from Fokien. There are four crops in a year, the first the best. The more quickly it is prepared the more wholesome is the tea; unfortunately the leaves often lie about a long time before they are dried, and are more or less decomposed ere their preparation begins. More than 100,000,000 lbs. are imported annually into England, a third of the consumption of the whole world, and several pounds per head. Its enemies affirm that before it was so generally used, neuralgia was an unknown evil among us.

Coffee, largely as it is drunk all over the world, has only a third of the consumption of tea. It came to Arabia from Persia as early as the fifteenth century, and in 1554 was brought to Constantinople, where coffee-houses were at once established, for the social element has always been a part and parcel of its existence among civilised nations.

All kinds of stories have been told as to its first discovery. A superior of a Dervish community, seeing that goats became livelier when they had eaten coffee berries, or, as it was then called, Cahui or Kauhi, prescribed it for the brotherhood, to keep them awake.

Who shall decide when doctors disagree? On the one hand we are told that coffee is good for mirth and digestion, stimulates the brain and banishes somnolency, that taken after dinner it will digest fat, and all oily aliments, and that it is a powerful antidote to

opium, which is why the Turks drink it so freely; while, on the other, if taken too strong and too freely, it is said to produce nervous disorders, and to weaken the stomach.

Men of letters have always largely patronised it, and both Voltaire and Buffon stand out as famous examples. Brillat de Savarin urges of all things moderation in its use. A man drinking two bottles of wine a day, he says, would be none the worse, but an equal quantity of coffee would render him imbecile or give him consumption.

The great point is to learn how to make it. It has great heat-imparting properties; a cup of well-made hot coffee imparts more caloric than as much alcohol.

Every year a number of new contrivances are brought out for making coffee, most of them possessing merits, which, however, I have no space to decide or discuss. I am only going to give a few broad principles. If you possibly can, buy your coffee unroasted, and roast it daily, quite an easy matter if you are provided with a roasting machine, which is hung before the fire, wound up, and continues to revolve until the berry is of the uniform tint, not too dark and not burnt; even an ordinary frying-pan will answer. Then grind it and keep it from the air; like tea, half the merit is lost with the aroma; moreover, coffee, like milk, is always ready to take up foreign flavours. The Arabians never grind the coffee, they pulverise it in a mortar, in order to secure a better, purer taste, but we have not in Europe adopted this plan. However it is made, a liberal hand is needed in the using. A good cup requires plenty of coffee. Mocha is considered by the world in general the best coffee, the truth being that not half the quantity advertised as such in England even is grown. Ceylon, Madras, Central America, and Jamaica contribute their quota. It is wonderfully pretty to see it growing, a mass of white flowers, in some countries eight or ten feet high, in others from fifteen to twenty.

It is raised from seed and transplanted when six months old, and has a dark, smooth, evergreen foliage. It takes three years to come into bearing, and will last twenty, and blossoms all the year round. In France they patronise a mixture of Mocha, Martinique, and Bourbon.

A true coffee-lover eschews chicory, and the "house-mother" should be careful to get good, genuine coffee. A little study soon teaches the different kinds. The Mocha or Arabian is small and of a dark yellow colour; that from Java and the East Indies is of a paler yellow; and the West Indies and Brazil send berries of a bluish-grey tint.

The adulteration of coffee is of all kinds—roasted acorns the least deleterious. By-the-by, asparagus is said to be a substitute for coffee, but its preparation is a secret. Grinding the coffee at home makes the chances of adulteration considerably less. The American plan of making coffee is worth consideration, viz., mixing an egg, shell and all, with the ground coffee, adding cold water enough to moisten the whole, then on this boiling water is poured and allowed to boil for ten minutes or more, till it is settled. Anyway,

most coffee-makers who allow the admixture of milk at all, say that it should be put first in the cup, and that cream is an improvement. A French plan is to add a second supply of hot water to the grounds, pour it off, and store it in a bottle to use instead of water for making coffee. Perhaps the perfection of Viennese coffee is due to the hot milk and whipped cream served with it. In Turkey each cup is made separately, and is thick and muddy—indeed, half grounds, all swallowed in the draught.

Three points must be remembered: to use positive boiling water; not to over-boil the coffee; and, lastly, that the perfect flavour depends on the volatile essential oil, which is brought out by the roasting, but is lost if kept long after roasting, or a day after grinding.

The fashionable doctors who now and then set their faces against tea and coffee are wont to prescribe chocolate and cocoa. Now chocolate was the first discovery Fernandez Cortez made in Mexico, before he found gold.

It is made from the seed of the cocoa plant, prepared with sugar and cinnamon, and its nutritious element is due to the oil or butter it contains. The choice of form is large: if you decide on cocoa nibs, the seeds are merely roughly crushed; if the seed is pressed between rollers, you have flake cocoa; the common kind has been reduced to a paste and pressed into cakes. There is no economy in buying the cheap kinds, for they are adulterated with red lead, lard, and sago,

and much besides. Both in Mexico and Peru it is the fashionable drink of womankind, and thence it made its way to Spain. The Spanish monks introduced it to France, and Anne of Austria, when she married Louis XIII., made it fashionable.

Napoleon used to take a mixture called *choca*, viz., coffee, milk, and chocolate combined, but it has never been largely adopted. Linnæus called chocolate "*Theobroma*" ("food for the gods"), but it is not at all digestible when flavoured with vanilla. A simple way of making chocolate is as follows:—Break it in small pieces into the chocolate-pot, with cold milk, place it on the fire, stirring it all the time till it becomes thick, then serve with boiling milk, or better still, whipped cream.

Cocoa nibs require cold water poured over them, and to be simmered for three or four hours, removing the fatty scum that rises to the surface. A cocoa paste is sold which saves trouble, merely requiring to be mixed in a cup with hot water, but in this form adulteration is difficult to detect. The cocoa-tree has been imported from Mexico to most parts of Central America, Brazil, Peru, Venezuela, Surinam, and the West Indian Isles. The seed-pods are gathered when ripe, and the seeds having been removed are "sweated," as it is called—that is, laid on shelves and shut up for forty-eight hours, till all the pulp disappears and they are properly dried. The husks are removed; they are then roasted, and subsequently ground or reduced to paste according to their special use.

ARDERN HOLT.

THE HERMIT OF DUNDOYNE.



"WHAT tumbledown place a castle? I never should have thought it. It looks like the ruin of a mediæval pig-sty."

"Nevertheless, it was once the residence of a very great swell, and a very eccentric one."

"That must have been in dark ages?"

"Not at all; only in the beginning of the present century."

The speakers were a young English gentleman "touring it" in Ireland, and an Irish friend who was acting as a volunteer *cicerone*. The object which was the subject of their conversation was a very ugly ruin, standing on the banks of the Boyne, near Drogheda.

"And it is called Dundoyne Castle?"

"Yes, that's its name; and the last owner was called a hermit—the Hermit of Dundoyne—and he was to all intents and purposes a hermit. He shut himself up for several years in his 'Castle,' and was never seen by any one all the time. But he gave all his money to the poor—or most of it—and was therefore immensely

popular. It was said of him that he was as bountiful as Providence, and as invisible."

"But you don't mean to say that he was for years unseen—a voluntary prisoner?"

"Yes, he was just that. There was a woman in the case—"

"Naturally—there generally is."

"Quite so. He was, they say, crossed in love—a complaint that affects people differently. There was the pilgrim of love—you know the song—who went wandering around 'quite promiscuous like,' absurdly asseverating that for him there was no rest but the grave—his was a very bad type of the disorder. Then in the olden time, we all know, the popular refuge of the love-lorn male was a monastery. Nowadays disappointments in the market matrimonial have not such serious consequences; they drive more people—in Ireland, at all events—to drink than to the cloister. The great majority they don't hurt at all. This particular lover, however, was really and truly a very interesting person, and the fame of his good deeds still endures in these parts."

"You raise my curiosity—do you know his story?"

"Well, yes, and I wouldn't mind telling it, only it's rather long, and exciting—that is, it excites me, for I know it is true."