

and Japan tea. If the Indian planters would stand the loss, probably in a few years there might come such a displacement of China and Japan as would prove profitable to the Indian producer.

Years ago the markets of Europe were filled with American products for which there was little demand. Year after year they were forced into consumption with great loss to the shippers. In time they obtained a foothold, demand grew and a profitable export trade was secured. And there are good reasons to suppose that fine Indian and Ceylon tea would gain a prominent place here. It would certainly improve the average grade of China and Japan tea imported. A large jobbing house recently published the following advertisement:—

LOW PRICED TEAS

ARE OFTEN A SNARE AND A DELUSION.

"There never was a time in the history of the tea business in New York when there was so much trash offered as there is now. Consequently general quotations, and particularly auction sale figures are very misleading. Frequently we have inquiries such as: What kind of tea is it that we see quoted as low as 7 to 10 cents."

"There is but one answer to this, viz: It is a grade of tea that would drive trade away from any respectable grocer. We do not buy or sell such goods. We can and do sell fair, sweet drawing Amoy Oolong, Moyune Young Hyson, Congou and Japan, as low as 12 to 14 cents. Such teas can be sold by retailers without any special dissatisfaction, but no effort should be made to sell them to customers who know what a good cup of tea is."

If good sweet, choice Indian tea can be sold at auction from 15 to 30 cents per pound, it will in time cause a change in the character of the imports, approximating the change brought about in England. The experiment is worth trying and the planters ought to pay the cost of introduction.—*American Grocer.*

PROPERTIES OF INDIAN AND CEYLON TEA.

A REPLY TO MR. ERNEST HART.

Sir,—In a recent lecture on tea, &c., you state that an unerring instinct has led all the nations of the East and South, and subsequently all the Western nations, to adopt beverages of which the active principle is "theine." You stated as respects "tea," (after describing various methods of manufacture) that in all cases the leaf most highly valued was small top leaf of the twig and the bud.

I think that we Indian planters can easily prove to you that this fine leaf and bud are intrinsically better in all respects as to flavour and in "contents," than the lower and larger leaves. You state that there is no reason whatever to suppose this.

In former days Indian planters used to pluck as many as six leaves on one shoot—later on the number was reduced to a limit of four: nowadays the rule is to take only two leaves and the bud. Those who take the third leaf make it into coarse tea which sells at a very low price.

You have pointed out that the lowest leaves are made into congou, the medium leaves into soucheongs, and the fine leaves into orange pekoe. *There is no Indian "congou" now.* You warmly complimented Ceylon teas and Indian teas, pointing out, however, that the great favour with which Ceylon teas were now regarded was no doubt due to the fact that while equally rich in theine they had a less proportion of tannin than Indian teas. Why so if tannin is not injurious? I would ask you to enlarge on this difference; for on this point depends the welfare of both Indian and Ceylon tea.

I wish you to note that in spite of the fact that the Ceylon teas are in great favour because "they had a less proportion of tannin" it is well known that Ceylon teas do not sell at as high a figure as Indian teas—so that the Ceylon planter will naturally endeavour, in spite of any consideration as to "flavour," to make his tea as strong in tannin as Indian tea, in order to get as high a price.

You give full praise to the green tea of Japan which is largely consumed by the Natives and in America, and you say that this tea is neither so bitter nor so strong "as to require to be" doctored with milk and sugar to disguise its bitterness. You thus infer that British grown teas do require something to tone them down. Leaving aside the value of milk and sugar as "food," and presuming that tea alone should be drunk, can you wonder at the bitterness and strength of Indian tea when you find that the strongest and most bitter teas fetch the highest prices? In fact every Indian and Ceylon planter is devoted to the making of tea in which these two qualities predominate, and to attain the perfection of strength some plantations have arrived at the manufacture of tea in large and paying quantities from only the top two leaves and the bud.

From your position as Chairman of the Health Society you are naturally on the *qui vive* as to any product in general use which is of benefit or the reverse to those who use it. By using the term vitiated in connection with the ruling taste for strong tea, you disclose your opinion as to the effects of such tea.

There is one sort of Indian tea which I think you can never have tasted, and that is good flavoured Indian tea kept for three years.

If not you have no idea of the mellowing effect of keeping tea, and what a superb beverage it is. There is no trace of bitterness, and I believe that such tea infused for only a few minutes would steal your affections from the Japanese green tea which you praise so highly.

I anticipate that when it is recognized that India and Ceylon can manufacture any and every class of tea, that tea to suit all tastes will be made, and by this means the consumption of tea by all classes will be enormously increased; and that tea can and will be supplied which will not injure those who consume it habitually.

It remains with leading men of your position to discover what teas are good or bad; from the example of China and Russia, two countries of opposite extremes as to climate, it is evident that tea can be universally consumed without prejudice to health, and those who are interested, and pursue the subject professionally, must point out what sort of tea is good and what is bad. From the brief reports on your lecture (in our Indian papers) it strikes me that you have considered the question of "tea" more from the point of *taste* than from one of *health*.

From the planter's side in the discussion the question of quality is supreme, and no doubt you will admit that no highly flavoured article of diet can be consumed in very large quantities. So that in our interests, you might for a time put aside the question of high flavour and good taste. Even the tea you give preference to could not be consumed by the bulk of the people in large quantities daily, because the flavouring essences would surely be injurious.

Could we discover the class of tea which can be consumed in the largest quantities with the least possible injury to health, we could undoubtedly supply that tea to the benefit of all concerned.—Yours very truly,

AN INDIAN PLANTER.

—Calcutta Planter.

INDIAN TEA IN AMERICA.—We call attention to the very straightforward and satisfactory address of the Chairman at the annual meeting of the Indian Tea Association. Have the Ceylon Joint Sui-Committee, we are inclined to ask, got particulars of the scheme adopted for Mr. Bleehynden's guidance in America? This ought to be considered, seeing that Ceylon and India are expected to work together; but we see that Indian planters only propose spending Rs6,000 a year against the Rs80,000 to Rs90,000 (£5,000) which Ceylon is expected to devote to the Campaign annually.