

TEA-CIDER—A NEW DRINK IN JAVA*

The so-called "tea-mould" (German: "Tee-Pilz" or "Wolga-Pilz" has already for a long time been known in Europe (Germany, Poland, Russia, etc.) as a culture from which originally a beverage was made as a medicine against rheumatic afflictions and as a stimulant. The therapeutical activity of this beverage as a reducing agent for blood pressure has been established, whereas, being a weak agent, it is also absolutely harmless in the hands of laymen.

A few months ago the "Tea Expert Bureau" in Batavia (an Association of tea planters in Java and Sumatra) got acquainted with this culture and realizing the great possibilities of this beverage as a means to increase the consumption of tea in the Dutch East Indies immediately started a propaganda campaign to popularize the beverage amongst the European and native population. The success was remarkable, not to say phenomenal; thousands of enquiries have-reached the Bureau for a piece of the culture and tens of thousands of natives have obtained the culture through the Propaganda Department of the said Association. As a matter of fact the "Tea Cider", as it is named by the Tea Expert Bureau, is on its way to become one of the most popular drinks in Java, both for Europeans and natives.

The process of manufacturing the Tea-Cider, in itself a simple one, is as follows:—

Make tea in the ordinary way, viz. about 40 grammes (about one ounce and-a-half) of dry tea to one gallon of water; remove the tea leaves after the tea has been made; add about 10% sugar to the tea-decoction. The solution should after cooling be poured into a large glass jar or Singapore jar. The fluid is then inoculated with a piece of living tea-culture or with some fluid from a cultivation which has already fermented. The jars should be closed with a clean cloth making the receptacle dustproof, but not airtight. Jar and contents should be allowed to stand; the jar should on no account be moved. After some time a very thin film will form on the surface and will rapidly grow thicker. It is of a creamy colour. The time

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it takes the film to form depends upon the climate. In a hot climate like Batavia the film forms after a couple of days, whereas, e.g., in the mountains it takes a few weeks. When a strong thick film has formed, the liquid should be poured away and the bottle and film washed with clean cold water. A cooled sugared tea-decoction should then be added again to the cultivation-film and the process repeated. When the tea has fermented sufficiently, depending on individual taste (5-10 days) it should be filtered through a clean, folded cloth into a large container so that the fluid becomes very clear and free from floating parts of mould. The tea-cider may then be poured into bottles, which should be filled so as to leave no air in them. To find ultimate satisfaction in this drink it should, after having been bottled, be allowed to mature for at least a few weeks. The drink has an agreeable taste. It is sparkling, faintly sour and refreshing. In view of the sparkling properties of the drink the bottles should have patent locks as ordinary corks will fly off the bottles.

The better the quality of the tea used, the better the aroma and bouquet of the tea-cider.