The coffee tree grows in Arabia, East and West Indies, and other warm climates. It bears white star-like blossoms, which are succeeded by berries, each containing two seeds which are usually called berries. The seeds are of a greenish-grey colour, and, when freed from the surrounding pulp, are dried and exported under the name of raw coffee.

The stimulating properties of coffee are due to caffeine, a substance allied in composition and in action to theine. It contains also various astringent matters and a small amount of flesh-forming substance which is not easily extracted. It owes its flavour to a volatile oil, which is only developed by heat. Because of this volatile character the roasting is delayed as long as possible. A coffee-roaster consists of a closed cylinder which is made to revolve over gas or a charcoal fire. Coffee-roasting is a difficult art, for it requires great exactitude. If the coffee is underdone the full aroma is not developed, whereas over-roasting develops an unpleasant caramel flavour. In French homes the coffee is roasted and ground just before it is used, and this is one reason why the French make such good coffee.

Coffee which is bought ready ground can rarely be depended upon as pure, even when sold as such. Dr. Hassell examined thirty-four samples of ground coffee, and only found three of that number which were not adulterated.

The most common adulterant is the dried root of the chicory plant. It resembles coffee in colour, and is harmless, but it contains no stimulating properties, so that its admixture reduces the value of the coffee. Its presence can always be detected by a very simple test. Take a glass of water, and lightly sprinkle on its surface a little of the suspected coffee. Pure coffee will float for a long time because it is buoyed up by its oil. Chicory immediately sinks to the bottom, and as it sinks colours the water a reddish-brown hue. Other adulterants are roasted wheat, beans, and acorns.

A good infusion of coffee may be made by allowing an ounce or an ounce and a-half of ground coffee to each pint of water, and using a stone-ware jug. It should be allowed to settle before pouring off the clear liquid into a silver coffee-pot for table. Another method employs the "percolator." This consists of a double strainer which fits over the coffee-pot. The coffee is put between the two strainers with sufficient room to allow for swelling. The upper strainer is filled with boiling water, and when it has percolated through the coffee more water is added until the right quantity of coffee is made.

By simply infusing coffee all the albuminoids remain in the grounds. Dr. Parkes and others recommend that the grounds left from the coffee should be boiled and strained, and the liquid used next day in coffee making instead of water. This suggests the method adopted by the people of Smyrna, who always add some of the old grounds to the fresh coffee.

Coffee may be "fined" by adding one or two shavings of isinglass, or a teaspoonful of whipped white of egg, and allowing it to stand for a few minutes by the side of the fire.

In small quantities, coffee acts upon the nervous system as a stimulant, and causes wakefulness. Its action is antagonistic to that of alcohol or any narcotic poison, so that, after an emetic has been given strong coffee should be administered as an antidote while awaiting the arrival of a doctor.

An excess of coffee leads to restlessness, irritability, depression, and other nervous symptoms. In a few cases coffee has caused biliousness, but, generally speaking, it is a good cure for headache. As it does not induce perspiration, it is not so useful as tea after exposure, excepting when exposure brings on diarrhœa, in which case it is useful as an astringent.

Cocoa consists of the ground seeds of a South American plant. The seeds are embedded in a pulp in long pods, from which they are separated by fermentation. The seeds are flattened in the first rolling, and go by the name of cocoa nibs. The nibs are then passed between hot rollers, which remove a large portion of the fat, and the remaining portion is ground to powder, and sold as cocoa, either pure or mixed with sugar and starch.

The active principle of cocoa is theobromine, in the proportion of from 1 per cent. to 2 per cent. It is allied to theine, but has less action upon the nervous system. There is only a small amount of tannin present, so that for children and persons of weak digestion it is a more suitable beverage than tea.

The raw cocoa contains 50 per cent. of fat, which goes by the name of cocoa butter. Nearly the whole of this is removed during the process of manufacture, but what remains is apt to prove irritating to weak stomachs, as it is not easily digested. Dutch manufacturers add alkaline substances to the cocoa, which render the fat more easy of digestion by saponifying it, but it is often asserted that such alkalies are injurious to the system.

Cocoa contains over 12 per cent. of albuminous matter, but less than 8 per cent. can be regarded as a true proteid. Even this amount makes cocoa more nourishing than tea or coffee, and, if the cocoa is made with milk instead of water, the beverage is nourishing and wholesome. Its use is specially recommended in the acid forms of dyspepsia, as cocoa increases the acid-absorbing power of food.

A Nurses' Home at Ripon has been presented to the Marquis and Marchioness of Ripon, "as a memorial of their golden wedding." The presentation was made by Viscount Mountgarret.

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