

TEA CULTURE.

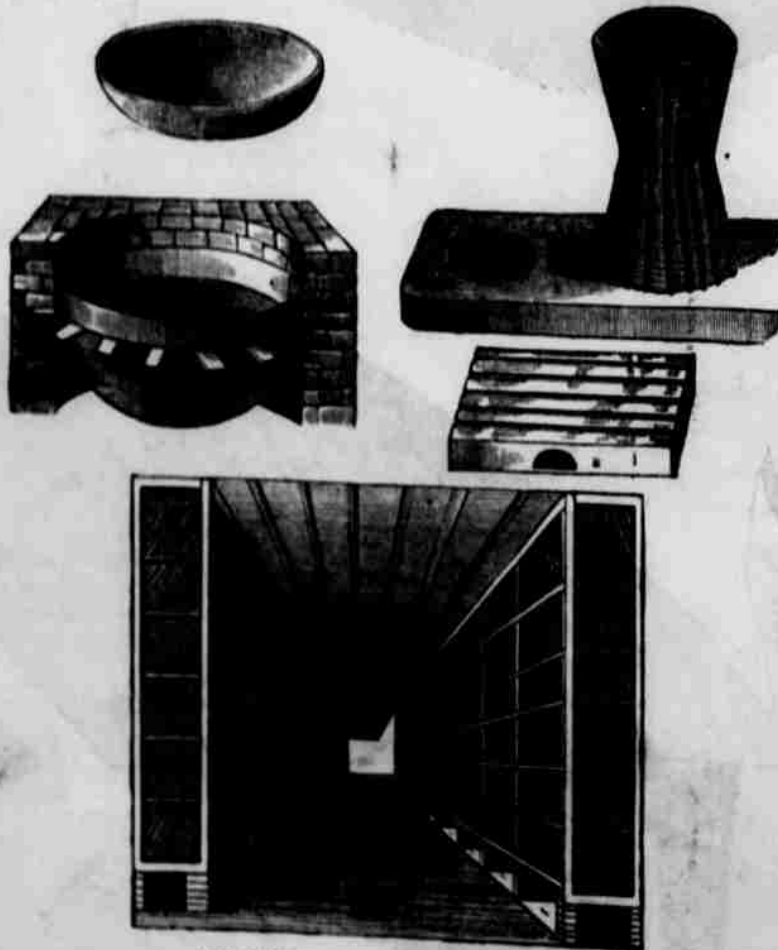
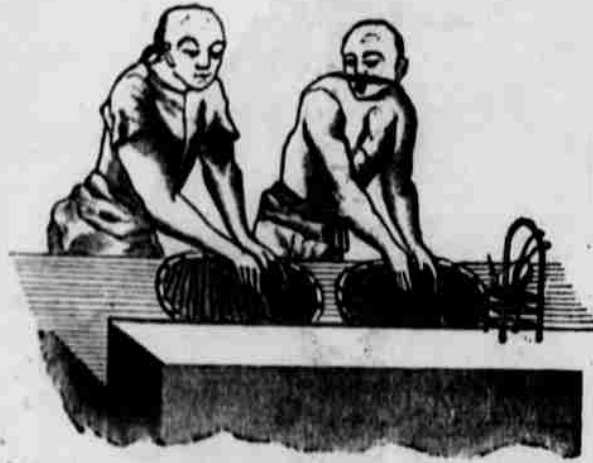
The subject of tea culture is one which has of late received considerable attention in different parts of the United States, and will be especially interesting to Oregonians when it is once generally known that the soil and climate of many parts of this State and especially of Douglas, Josephine, Jackson and parts of Coos and Curry counties, furnish every requisite to successful tea culture. We therefore devote considerable space in this issue to show the manner of growing and curing the leaves of this much used plant, and sincerely hope that enterprising farmers in the counties named as well as in other portions of this state will give the tea plant a fair trial. Seeds can be obtained free of charge from the U. S. Agricultural Department through our representatives at Washington. In China tea has been used for over a thousand years; to England it was introduced as a beverage in 1661. Since then nearly all the nations have become addicted to it. For the year 1860 the Pacific Coast imports of tea from China and Japan were 1,144,830 lbs., valued at \$300,766, since then the annual increase in consumption has been simply immense. For the year 1880 the imports were 22,079,524 lbs., valued at \$6,688,020, and the total value of tea imports from Jan., 1860, to December, 1880, was \$64,085,206. These figures for so sparsely a settled

section as the Pacific Coast are certainly as astonishing as they are true, and offer every inducement to give tea culture a trial, even if a start has to be made with a dozen plants only. As far as known, tea culture other than for ornamental purposes, was first attempted in the United States by Dr. Junius Smith at Greenville, S. C., the results were excellent, but unfortunately the death of the doctor brought experiments to a close. The tea plant is, contrary to a popular error, an extremely hardy

one, and flourishes in Japan as far north as 43°, where in winter the ground is frozen 6 inches deep for weeks in succession. In Java where extensive tea gardens are established, it succeeds under entirely opposite conditions of temperature. In China it grows as well in the most southern sections under a tropical sun where the thermometer remains for long periods at 100° Fah., as in higher latitudes, where snow and ice often cover its tender leaves. From this it will be seen that the plant adapts itself to either heat or cold.

The tea plant bears a strong resemblance to the myrtle; it has a dense, highly ornamental foliage and brings forth in the spring a large number of beautiful white slightly odorous flowers, in appearance very much like the camellia, only not so attractive; the leaves are alternate on short, thick channelled foot stalks, and form the valuable part of the plant.

The best location for a tea garden is a fertile hillside with a southern exposure, such as are to be especially found in the Yoncalla valley. A rich sandy loam in the vicinity of some small creek if the land is not subject to overflow will also make a fine tea garden. Seeds should be planted in a hotbed or cold-frame about December, and in early spring plants will be ready to set out. Before planting, the land should be deeply plowed and thoroughly pulverized by repeated harrowing and checked off into



IMPLEMENTS USED IN TEA CURING.