

PORTLAND, OREGON, SUNDAY MORNING, JUNE 16, 1907

UNCLE SAM'S NEW CHOCOLATE APPETITE



The Cocoa Bean at Close Range.

A Cultivated Taste that is Rapidly Overcoming His Tea and Coffee Habit.



Washing Beans from the Pulp

ANOTHER cup of chocolate, please! Already Uncle Sam has consumed about 6,000,000,000 cups in a year, but his taste for the beverage acquired, though it has been by slow degrees until in recent years, when it has developed by bounds, seems to be not easily satisfied.

For Americans have, almost without realizing it, become a chocolate-drinking nation. Astounding, when looked into, are the figures which prove this. Not only do they show the enormous growth of a new taste, but they indicate conclusively that it has come at the expense of coffee and tea drinking.

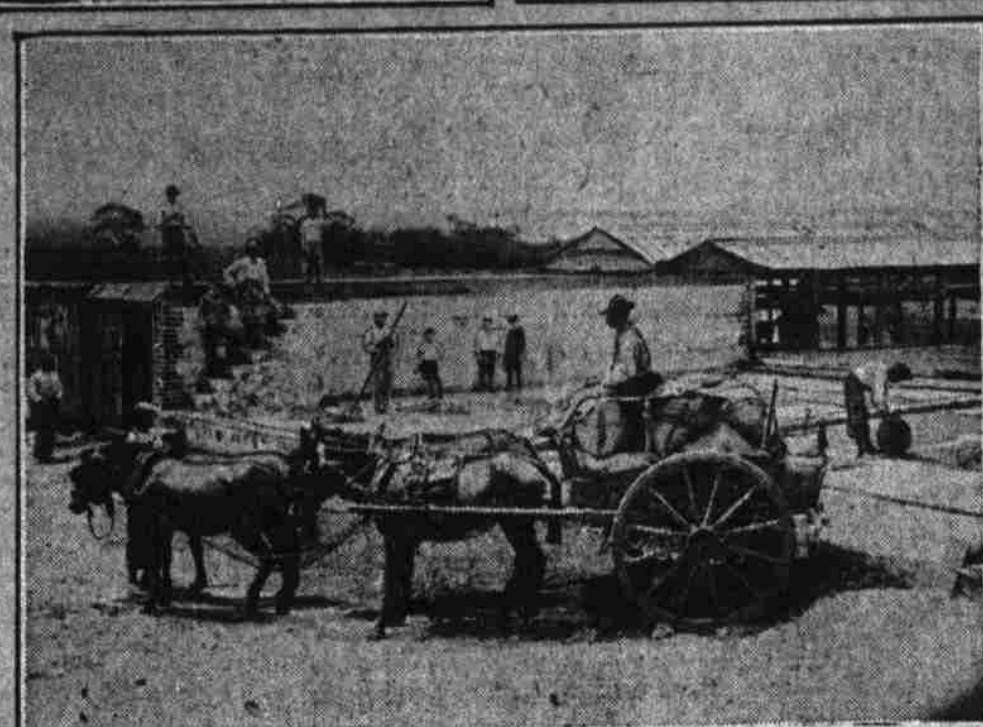
In a decade the importation of cocoa—at least half of which is used for beverage—has increased 200 per cent.; in the same period coffee importation has increased but 30 per cent., and tea importation has actually decreased 10 per cent.

And this is not because of the comparative prices of these commodities, for while the price of cocoa in ten years has increased in about the same proportion as that of tea, the price of coffee has been very much lowered.

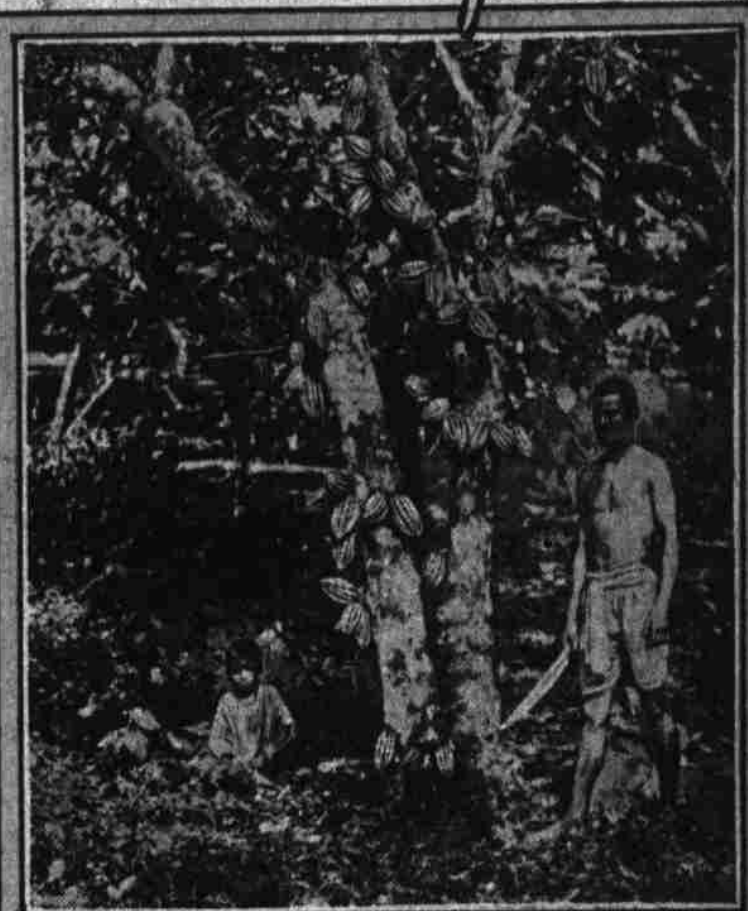
Even the statistics at hand do not show the real extent of the growth of the chocolate habit, for it is declared that in the last year or two the ratio of growth has been much greater, and presages sensational strides in the near future.

The government has included cocoa in the army rations. The ordinary citizen who used to have it for breakfast now likes it for dinner as well. In almost every restaurant it is consumed in great and growing quantities at the lunch hour. Over soda counters it is served both hot and as a flavor for cold drinks. It is superseding intoxicants to some extent.

Is chocolate to be the American drink of the future? And what of the enormously increased demand for other purposes, such as confections?



How the Beans are Dried



Cocoa on Its Native Heath

EACH cook has her own way of making cocoa. Some prefer it weak, with plenty of milk, others say it is best strong; so that the amount of the powdered basis required to make a cheering cup rests with the individual who prepares it. But the people who grind the cacao beans—cacao is the correct name—and do the product up in boxes, know pretty well what the average taste requires; and they declare that a teaspoonful of cocoa to a cup of water, or water and milk, is about the right proportion. A teaspoonful—that's a quarter of a tablespoonful, isn't it? And your table of measures will tell you that there are two tablespoonfuls of cocoa—or flour, which is of the same consistency—to an ounce. Eight teaspoonfuls to an ounce, 128 to a pound.

Allow three teaspoonfuls for waste or excess, and say that for every pound of cocoa that is brought there are made and served 125 cups of the drink.

Now, suppose that half the cocoa imported to the United States is used for beverage—this is believed to be a fair division—and what do you find?

Multiply 46,000,000—half the estimated total number of pounds of cocoa imported to the United States in the fiscal year now closing—by 125, and unless figures deceive, you have 5,750,000,000 cups of cocoa consumed in the United States in a year.

Indeed, a manufacturer who should know

declares that this figure could reasonably be enlarged to 6,000,000,000, leaving plenty of the delicious product for chocolate confections, sweet chocolate and covering for chocolate cakes.

Six billion cups a year! Sixteen million four hundred thousand cups a day!

If the ratio of the last census be taken as a basis, it will be admitted that one-eighth of the population of the United States—or about 10,000,000—are under the age of 5 years. These, manifestly, do not consume cocoa.

So one may say that every person over 5 years of age in the United States—thus the average goes—has his cup of cocoa every four and one-third days, or that almost every fourth person has his cup every day.

And this must seem to any one like a very good showing for a beverage that ten years ago was being consumed at the rate of only 5,500,000 cups a day.

Perhaps one would not be running risk of controversy in saying that in 1897 there were 60,000,000 persons in the United States of ages making them eligible to the cocoa-drinking class.

The figures, then, would indicate that in that year only one person in twelve drank a cup of cocoa a day, or, if you will, that each person drank a cup once in twelve days.

So the ratio in 1907 in favor of cocoa drinking seems to be about one in five, as against one in twelve ten years ago.

And so it is beyond dispute that the increase in the cocoa taste in the United States

in a decade has increased more than 100 per cent., even aside from what might be expected owing to increased population.

Is the cocoa-drinking habit increasing at the expense of the tea and coffee habits?

It would certainly seem so from the figures on the subject which the United States government has collected.

These statistics show that for the first two-thirds of the fiscal year now drawing to a close the quantity of cocoa imported into the United States was three times as great as in the corresponding period for 1897.

The increase in consumption for that period has, therefore, been 200 per cent.

If this enormous difference is to be accounted for simply by more population, or greater prosperity, then, of course, the imports of tea and coffee must show the same increase; if they do not, there must be indicated a change of taste in the matter of beverage on the American table.

What are the facts?

The government figures show that while cocoa importation has increased 200 per cent., coffee importation has increased but little over 30 per cent. in the last ten years.

For the first two-thirds of 1907 the coffee importation was 647,206,151 pounds, while for the same period of 1897 it was 466,204,373 pounds.

But this disparity isn't nearly so significant as that between the figures showing the cocoa importations compared with the tea importations for a decade.

Tea importation has actually decreased despite growth of population.

For the first two-thirds of the fiscal year 1907 the amount of tea imported was but 72,475,440 pounds, as against 81,220,822 pounds for the same period of 1897.

But, you say, perhaps decrease in the price of cocoa and increase in the price of coffee and tea has caused the change in taste.

No; for cocoa has risen in price, while the price of tea has increased to about the same extent, and the price of coffee has actually been greatly reduced.

To be exact, the average price of cocoa for the first two-thirds of the fiscal year 1907 has been 13.6 cents a pound as against 9.3 cents in 1897; that of tea 16 cents, against 12.6 cents ten years ago, and coffee 8 cents against 11.4 cents ten years ago.

Perhaps it may be interesting to view the comparative consumption of these articles in the light of what they cost Uncle Sam in total each year.

His cocoa importations for the first two-thirds of this year cost him \$3,344,426, as against \$1,830,831 in 1897; his coffee importations \$1,869,152, as against \$3,333,608 for 1897, and his tea bill was \$11,609,068, as against \$10,247,506.

Split the cocoa bill in two if you will, allowing but one-half of it for beverage, and you still have a very respectable argument for maintaining that Uncle Sam is gradually dropping coffee and tea for cocoa.

Of course, vast quantities of the chocolate imported are consumed in other ways—in many forms of confections, in chocolate cake and similar substances to satisfy the gigantic sweet tooth of the nation.

There are few drug stores where one can not find chocolate, put up in small packages, waiting to be exchanged for a nickel or a dime; the hundreds of thousands of soda fountains that are now busy all over the land require no small amount in the aggregate. The increase in manufacture of various kinds of candy into which chocolate enters to a greater or less extent has been enormous.

It took Americans a long time to learn the merit of cocoa as a beverage and as an edible.

Cortez, that intrepid explorer of the sixteenth century, discovered its use by the Aztecs in Mexico when he first set foot on their territory. He brought it to the notice of Europeans, but it did not become popular.

Even in the United States, though cocoa is found in abundance in Central and South America along the Gulf of Mexico, its impor-

(CONTINUED ON INSIDE PAGE)



Gathering the Crop and Opening Pods. Photos from Philadelphia Commercial Museum.