

On China Tea

by Bertrand Russell

Russell rarely allowed himself to expand in public upon the little things in life that he enjoyed. But everyone knows he drank huge quantities of tea, especially China tea. He once found an opportunity to describe his favourite drink, and his obvious love of it poured forth. The quotation is from an article he wrote soon after his return from China. The article concerned "Chinese Amusements". Russell is describing how "the art of exquisite enjoyment has probably been carried to greater perfection than anywhere else in the world", how in visiting a Buddhist monastery, no sooner has one sat down in the pavilion than

...some kind person, like a genie in "The Arabian Nights", brings tea in little cups - not the gross liquid that we call tea, but an amber-colored nectar with an intoxicating fragrance, half aromatic, half like the meadows in June, combining the freshness of spring with the beauty of summer sunshine robbed of its dust and heat.

The Nation and the Athenaeum, 17 Dec. 1921.