FACTS ABOUT TEA SERIES—No. 1

Tea as a Beverage

Tea first became known in China nearly 3000 years before Christ. In that country tea was greatly prized, both for its remarkable qualities as a beverage and for the almost religious ceremony attached to the drinking of it. Up to the sixth century, tea was used only for medicinal purposes. Even in the seventeenth century it cost $25.00 to $50.00 per pound. All tea caddies were constantly kept under lock and key. Today when even fine quality like "SALADA" costs less than one-third of a cent per cup, it is not surprising that the consumption of tea is increasing tremendously.

"SALADA"

PENNY PLAIN

BY O. DOUGLAS

Shopman—"You may have your choice—penny plain or two-pence colored."

Solemn Small Boy—"Penny plain, please. It's better value for the money."

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CHAPTER XXIII.—(Cont'd.)

The great excitement to Jock and Mhor was the crossing of the border. "I did it once," said Mhor, "when I came from India, but I didn't notice it."

"Rather not," said Jock; "you were only two. I was four, wasn't I, Jean? when I came from India, and I didn't notice it."

"Is there a line across the road?" Mhor asked. "And do the people speak Scots on one side and English on the other? I suppose we'll go over with a bump."

"There's nothing to show," Jock told him, "but there's a difference in the air. It's warmer in England."

"It's very uninterested of Peter to go on sleeping," Mhor said in a disgusted tone. "You would think he would feel there was something happening. And he's a Scots dog, too."

The Border was safely crossed, and Jock professed to notice at once a striking difference in air and landscape.

"There's an English feel about things now," he insisted, sniffing and looking all round him; "and I hear the English voices. . . . Mhor, this is how the Scots came over to fight the English, only at night and on horseback—into Carlisle Castle."

"And I was English," said Mhor dreamily, "and I had a big black horse and I pranced on the Castle wall and killed every one that came."

"You needn't boast about being English," Jock said, looking at Mhor coldly. "I don't blame you, for you can't help it, but it's a pity."

Mhor's face got pink and there was a tremble in his voice, though he said in a bragging tone, "I'm glad I'm English. The English are as brave as—as——"

"Of course they are," said Jean, holding Mhor's hand tight under the rug. She knew how it hurt him to be, even for a moment, at variance with Jock, his idol. "Mhor has every right to be proud of being English Jock. His father was a soldier and he has ancestors who were great fighting men. And you know very well that it doesn't matter what side you belong to so long as you are loyal to that side. You two would have had some great fights if you had lived a few hundred years ago."

"Yes," said Mhor. "I'd have killed a great many Scots—but not Jock."

"Ho," said Jock, "a great many Scots would have killed you first."

"Well, it's all past," said Jean; "and England and Scotland are one and fight together now. This is Carlisle. Not much romance about it now, is there? We're going to the Station Hotel for tea, so you will see the train, Mhor, old man."

"Mhor," said Jock, "that's one thing you would have missed if you'd lived long ago—trains."

The car had to have a tire repaired and that took some time, so after tea the Jardines stood in the station and watched trains for what was, to Mhor at least, a blissful hour. It was thrilling to stand in the half-light of the big station and see great trains come in, and the passengers jump out and tramp about the platform and buy books and papers from the bookstall, or fruit, or chocolate, or tea and buns from the boys in uniform who went about crying their wares. And then the wild scurrying of the passengers—like hens before a motor, Jock said—when the flag was waved and the train about to start. Mhor hoped fervently, and a little unkindly, that at least one might be left behind, but they all got in, though with some it was the last second of the eleventh hour. There seemed to be hundreds of porters wheeling luggage on trolleys, guards walked about looking splendid fellows, and Mhor's eyes, as he beheld them were the eyes of a lover on his mistress. He could hardly be torn away when Davis came to say that Stark was waiting with the car and that they could not hope to get farther than Penrith that night.

The dusk was falling and the vesper bell ringing as they drove into the town and stopped before a very comfortable-looking inn.

It was past Mhor's bedtime, and it seemed to that youth a fit ending for the most exciting day of his whole seven years of life, to sit up and partake of mutton-chops and apple-tart at an hour when he should have been sound asleep.

He saw Peter safely away in charge of a sympathetic "boots" before he and Jock ascended to a bedroom with three small windows in the most unexpected places, a bright, cheery paper, and two small white beds.

Next morning the sun peeped in at all the odd-shaped windows on the two boys sprawled over their beds in the attitudes in which they said they best enjoyed slumber.

It was another crystal-clear morning, with mist in the hollows and the hilltops sharp against the sky. When Stark taciturn as ever, came to the door at nine o'clock, he found his party impatiently awaiting him on the doorstep, eager for another day of new roads and fresh scenes.

Jean asked him laughingly if Wilfred the Gazelle would live up to its name this run, but Stark received the pleasantry coldly, having no use for archness in any form.

It was wonderful to rush through the morning air still sharp from a touch of frost in the night, ascending higher and higher into the hills. Mhor sang to himself in sheer joy of heart, and though no one knew what were the words he sang, and Jock thought poorly of the tune, Peter snuggled up to him and seemed to understand and like it.

The day grew hot and dusty as they ran down from the Lake district, and they were glad to have their lunch beside a noisy little burn in a green meadow, from the well-stocked luncheon basket provided by the Penrith inn. Then they dipped into the black country, where tall chimneys belched out smoke, and car-lines ran along the streets, and pale-faced, hurrying people looked enviously at the big car with its load of youth and good looks. Everything was grim and dirty and spoiled. Mhor looked at the grimy place and said solemnly.

"It reminds me of hell."

"Haw, haw!" laughed Jock. "When did you see hell last?"

"In the 'Pilgrim's Progress,'" said Mhor.

One of the black towns provided tea in a cafe which purported to be Japanese, but the only things about it that recalled that sunny island over-seas were the paper napkins, the china, and two fans nailed on the wall; the linoleum-covered floor, the hard wooden chairs, the fly-blown buns being peculiarly and bleakly British.

Before evening the grim country was left behind. In the soft April twilight they crossed wide moorlands (which Jock was inclined to resent as being "too Scots to be English") until, as it was beginning to get dark, they slid softly into Shrewsbury.

The next day was as fine as ever. "Really," said Jean, as they strolled before breakfast, watching the shops being opened and studying the old timbered houses, "it's getting almost absurd: like Father's story of the soldier who greeted his master every morning in India with 'Another hot day, sirr.' We thought if we got one good day out of the three we were to be on the road we wouldn't grumble, and here it goes on and on. . . . We must come back to Shrewsbury, Davie. It deserves more than just to be slept in. . . . ."

"Aren't English breakfasts the best you ever tasted?" David asked as they sat down to rashers of home-cured ham, corpulent brown sausages, and eggs poached to a nicety.

So far David had made an excellent guide. They had never once diverged from the road they meant to take, but this third day of the run turned out to be somewhat confused. They started off almost at once on the wrong road and found themselves riding up a deep green lane into a farmyard. Out again on the highway David found the number of crossroads terribly perplexing. Once he urged Stark to ask directions from a cottage. Stark did so and leapt back into his seat.

"Which road do we take?" David as five offered themselves.

"Didna catch what they said," Stark remarked as he chose a road at random.

"Didna catch it," was Stark's favorite response to everything. Later on they came to the top of a steep hill ornamented by an enormous warning post with the startling notice—"Cyclists dismount. Many accidents. Some fatal." Stark went on unconcernedly, and Jean shouted at him, holding desperately to the side of the car, as if her feeble strength would help the brakes. "Stark! Stark! Didn't you see that placard?"

"Didna catch it," said Stark, as he swung lightheartedly down an almost perpendicular hill into the valley of the Severn.

"I do think Stark's a fool," said Jean bitterly, wrathful in the reaction from her fright. "He does no damage on the road, and of course I'm glad of that. I've seen him stop dead for a hen, and the wayfaring man, though a fool, is safe from him; but he cares nothing for what happens to the poor wretched people inside the car. As nearly as possible he had us over the parapet of that bridge."

And later, when they found from the bill at lunch-time that Stark's luncheon had consisted of "one mineral," she thought that the way he had risked all their lives must have taken away his appetite.

The car ran splendidly that day—David said it was getting into its stride—and they got to Oxford for tea and had time to go and see David's rooms before they left for Stratford. But David would let them see nothing else. "No," he said; "it would be a shame to hurry over your first sight. You must come here after Stratford. I'll take rooms for you at the Mitre. I want to show you Oxford on a May morning."

It was quite dark when they reached Stratford. To Jean it seemed strange and delicious thus to enter Shakespeare's own town, the Avon aglimmer under the moon, the kingcups and the daisies asleep in the meadows.

The lights of the Shakespeare Hotel shone cheerily as they came forward. A "boots" with a wrinkled, whimsical face came out to help them in. Shaded lights and fires (for the evenings were chilly) made a bright welcome, and they were led across the stone-paved hall with its oaken rafters, gate-legged tables, and bowls of spring flowers, up a steep little staircase hung with old prints of the plays, down winding passages to the rooms allotted to them. Jean looked eagerly at the name on her door.

"Hurrah! I've got 'Rosalind.' I wanted her most of all."

Jock and Mhor had a room with two beds, rather incongruously called "Anthony and Cleopatra." Jock was inclined to be affronted, and said it was a silly-looking thing to put him in a room called after such an amorous couple. If it had been Touchstone, or Mercutio, or even Shylock, he would not have minded, but the pilgrims of love got scant sympathy from that sturdy misogynist.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Next morning Jean's eyes wandered round the dining-room as if looking for some one, but there was no one she had ever seen before among the breakfasters at the little round tables in the pretty room with its low ceiling and black oak beams. To Jean, unused to hotel life and greatly interested in her kind, it was like a peep into some thrilling book. She could hardly eat her breakfast for studying the faces of her neighbors and trying to place them.

Were they all Shakespeare lovers? she wondered.

The people at the next table certainly looked as if they might be: a high-browed, thin-faced clergyman, with a sister who was clever (from her eyeglasses and the way her hair was done, Jean decided she must be very clever), and a friend with them who looked literary—at least he had a large pile of letters and a clean-shaven face; and they seemed, all three, like Lord Lilas, to be "remembering him like anything."

There were several clergymen in the room; one, rather fat, with a smug look and a smartly dressed wife, Jean decided must have married an heiress; another, with very prominent teeth and kind eyes, was accompanied by an extremely aged mother and two lean sisters.

One family party attracted Jean very much: a young-looking father and mother, with two girls, very pretty and newly grown up, and a boy like Davie. They were making plans for the day, deciding what to see and what to leave unseen, laughing a great deal, and chaffing each other, parents and children together. They looked so jolly and happy, as if they had always found the world a comfortable place. They seemed rather amused to find themselves at Stratford among the worshippers. Jean concluded that they were of those "not bad of heart" who "remembered Shakespeare with a start."

Jock and Mhor were in the highest spirits. It seemed to them enormous fun to be staying in an hotel, and not an ordinary square up-and-down hotel, but a rambling place with little stairs in unexpected places, and old parts and new parts, and bedrooms owning names, and a long, low-roofed drawing-room with a window at the far end that opened right out to the stable-yard through which pleasantries could be exchanged with grooms and chauffeurs. There was a parlor, too, off the hall—the cosiest of parlors with cream walls and black oak beams and supports, two fireplaces round which were grouped inviting armchairs, tables with books and papers, many bowls of daffodils. And all over the house hung old prints of scenes in the plays; glorious pictures, some of them—ghosts and mruders over which Mhor gloated.

They went before luncheon to the river and sailed up and down in a small steam-launch named The Swan of Avon. Jean thought privately that the presence of such thongs as steam-launches was a blot on Shakespeare's river, but the boys were delighted with them, and at once began to plan how one might be got to adorn Tweed.

In the afternoon they walked over the fields to Shottery to see Anne Hathaway's cottage.

Jean walked in a dream. On just such an April day, when shepherds pipe on oaten straws, Shakespeare himself must have walked here. It would be different, of course; there would be no streets of little mean houses, only a few thatched cottages. But the larks would be singing as they were to-day, and the hawthorn coming out, and the spring flowers abloom in Anne Hathaway's garden.

She caught her breath as they went out of the sunshine into the dim interior of the cottage.

This inglenook . . . Shakespeare must have sat here on winter evenings and talked. Did he tell Anne Hathaway wonderful tales? Perhaps, when he was not writing and weaving for himself a garment of immortality, he was just an everyday man, genial with his neighbors, interested in all the small events of his own town, just Master Shakespeare whom the children looked up from their play to smile at as he passed.

"Oh, Jock," Jean said, clutching her brother's sleeve. "Can you really believe that he sat here?—actually in this little room? Looked out of the window—isn't it wonderful, Jock?"

Jock, like Mr. Fearing, ever wakeful on the enchanted ground, rolled his head uncomfortably, sniffed and said, "It smells musty!" Both he and Mhor were frankly much more interested in the fact that ginger-beer and biscuits were to be had in the cottage next door.

(To be continued.)

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