

sio, in the posthumous introduction to his edition of Marco Polo published in 1545, mentions having learned of the tea beverage from a Persian merchant, Hajji Muhammed.<sup>1</sup> A. DE MANDELSLO,<sup>2</sup> in 1662, still reports that the Persians, instead of *Thè*, drink their *Kahwa* (coffee). In the fifteenth century, A-lo-tin, an envoy from T'ien-fan (Arabia), in presenting his tribute to an emperor of the Ming, solicited tea-leaves.<sup>3</sup>

The Kew Bulletin for 1896 (p. 157) contains the following interesting information on "White Tea of Persia:" —

"In the Consular Report on the trade of Ispahan and Yezd (Foreign Office, Annual Series, 1896, No. 1662) the following particulars are given of the tea trade in Persia: 'Black or Calcutta tea for Persian consumption continues to arrive in steady quantities, 2,000,000 pounds representing last year's supply. White tea from China, or more particularly from Tongking, is consumed only in Yezd, and, therefore, the supply is limited.' Through the courtesy of Mr. John R. Preece, Her Majesty's Consul at Ispahan, Kew received a small quantity of the 'White tea' above mentioned for the Museum of Economic Botany. The tea proved to be very similar to that described in the *Kew Bulletin* under the name of P'u-erh tea (*Kew Bulletin*, 1889, pp. 118 and 139). The finest of this tea is said to be reserved for the Court of Peking. The sample from Yezd was composed of the undeveloped leaf buds so thickly coated with fine hairs as to give them a silvery appearance. Owing to the shaking in transit some of the hairs had been rubbed off and had formed small yellow pellets about  $\frac{3}{8}$  inch diameter. Although the hairs are much more abundant than usual there is little doubt that the leaves have been derived from the Assam tea plant (*Camellia theifera*, Griff.) found wild in some parts of Assam and Burma but now largely cultivated in Burma, Tongking, etc. The same species has been shown to yield Lao tea (*Kew Bulletin*, 1892, p. 219), and Leppett tea (*Kew Bulletin*, 1896, p. 10). The liquor from the Persian white tea was of a pale straw colour with the delicate flavour of good China tea. It is not unknown but now little appreciated in the English market."

18. The Arabic stone-book sailing under the false flag of Aristotle distinguishes several kinds of onyx (*jiza'*), which come from two places, China and the country of the west, the latter being the finest. Qazwīnī gives Yemen and China as localities, telling an anecdote that the Chinese disdain to quarry the stone and leave this to specially privileged slaves, who have no other means of livelihood and sell the stone only outside of China.<sup>4</sup> As formerly stated,<sup>5</sup> this may be the *pi yü* 碧玉 of the Chinese.

19. Qazwīnī also mentions a stone under the name *husyat iblīs* ("devil's testicles") which should occur in China. Whoever carries it is

<sup>1</sup> YULE, Cathay, new ed., Vol. I, p. 292; or Hobson-Jobson, p. 906.

<sup>2</sup> Travels, p. 15.

<sup>3</sup> BRETSCHNEIDER, Mediæval Researches, Vol. II, p. 300.

<sup>4</sup> J. RUSKA, Steinbuch des Aristoteles, p. 145; and Steinbuch des Qazwīnī, p. 12; LECLERC, Traité des simples, Vol. I, p. 354.

<sup>5</sup> Notes on Turquois, p. 52.