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History of Coffee
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Source: *Journal of the Statistical Society of London,* Vol. 15, No. 1 (Apr., 1852), pp. 50-58
Published by: Oxford University Press for the Royal Statistical Society
Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/2338310
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History of Coffee.—By John Crawford, Esq.

[Read before the Statistical Society of London, 19th January, 1852.]

Coffee, the *Coffea arabica* of botanists, belongs to the same natural order of plants as the different species of Peruvian bark, viz., the Rubiaceæ. Its ordinary appearance much resembles that of a Portugal laurel; its flowers, both as to shape and fragrance, the jasmine; and its fruit, small wild cherries. The trees in a plantation, in order to afford nourishment, light, and air, must be planted not nearer to each other than nine feet. The plant yields fruit at two years old, is in full bearing at four, and its cultivation is worth continuing until it reaches the age of twenty. When it comes into full bearing, its height is about eight or ten feet, but it will live to attain that of twenty. A coffee-plantation in full flower has much the appearance of a grove of evergreens in a temperate climate, on which has fallen a pretty heavy snow shower, superadding heat and fragrance.

There are about a dozen species of the genus to which coffee belongs, some African, some Indian, some American, and some Polynesian, but all of them inhabitants of countries within and immediately about the Tropics. One species alone, the Coffea arabica, is cultivated, or at least largely so, and yields the important commercial article. Within the limits described, coffee is a very hardy plant, and seems readily to yield fruit in any tolerably rich soil, over every part of a zone of at least forty degrees around the globe. Its favourite locality, however, is hill-sides, at an elevation of from 1000 to 3000 feet above the level of the sea, and hence its wide diffusion, its extensive cultivation, and large consumption. As an object of cultivation, it takes the place, within the Tropics, in relation to other objects of culture, that the vine does in the South of Europe, or tea in China.

In comparison with the production of sugar and spirits from the cane, which partakes at least as much of the character of manufacture as of agriculture, that of coffee is a simple process, which may be carried on by small capitalists, and in some localities, from the temperance of the climate, even by European capitalists. The tea of China, of which the production is so immense, is certainly all so produced. Even coffee itself is so produced by the small negro proprietors of Hayti, by the inhabitants of several parts of Sumatra, and by those of Celebes.

Coffee, although taking its name from Arabia, is not a native plant of that country, but of Abyssinia, where it is found both in the wild and cultivated state. From that country it was brought to Arabia, in comparatively very recent times. Mr. Lane states that it was first used there about the year 1450. It was not known to the Arabs, therefore, for more than eight hundred years after the time of Mahomed, and was introduced only between forty and fifty years before the discovery of America. The Arabians called coffee kăhwăh, which is an old word in their language for wine. The unlucky word gave rise to a dispute about the legality of its use among the Mahomedan doctors, who, mistaking the word for the thing it represented, denounced as a narcotic that which was anti-narcotic. They were beaten, and coffee has ever since become a legitimate and favourite

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potable of the Arabs. In a century, its use spread to Egypt and other parts of the Turkish empire.

For two centuries from its introduction into Arabia, the use of coffee seems to have been confined to the Mahomedan nations of Western Asia; and, considering its rapid spread and popularity among the European nations, it is remarkable that it has not, like tobacco, extended to the Hindus, the Hindu-Chinese, the Chinese, the Japanese, or the tribes of the Indian Archipelago, who no more use it than Europeans do the betel preparation. The high price of coffee, and the low cost of tobacco, most likely afford the true solution of the difference. One striking result of the use of coffee first, and then of tobacco, among the Mahomedan nations, is well deserving of notice. These commodities have been, in a great measure, substituted for wine and spirits, which had been largely, although clandestinely, used before, and hence a great improvement in the sobriety of Arabs, Persians, and Turks. I give this interesting fact on the authority of Mr. Lane, who mentions it in his notes to his translation of the Arabian Nights.

From Turkey, coffee found its way to Europe. A Turkey merchant of London, of the name of Edwards, brought the first bag of coffee to England, and his Greek servant made the first dish of English coffee. This was in 1652, under the Commonwealth. But for half a century, at least, Arabia furnished all that Europe consumed, which, therefore, must have been very trifling. It was, in fact, long the luxury of a few fashionable people, with whom, however, it must have been in general use sixty years after its introduction, as we find from the well-known passage of the "Rape of the Lock," published in 1712, in which politicians are described as seeing through it "with half-shut eyes."

Le Grand d'Aussy, in his "Vie Privée des Français," gives a curious and interesting account of the first introduction of the use of coffee in France. As early as 1658 some merchants of Marseilles introduced the use of coffee into that city, and Thévenot, after his return from his eastern travels, about the year 1658, regaled his guests with coffee after dinner. "This, however," says Le Grand, "was but the eccentricity of a traveller, which would not come into fashion among such a people as the Parisians. To bring coffee into credit, some extraordinary and striking circumstance was necessary. This circumstance occurred on the arrival, in 1669, of an embassy from the Grand Seigneur Mahomet IV. to Louis XIV. Soliman Aga, chief of the mission, having passed six months in the capital, and during his stay having acquired the friendship of the Parisians by some traits of wit and gallantry, several persons of distinction, chiefly women, had the curiosity to visit him at his house. The manner in which he received them not only inspired a wish to renew the visit, but induced others to follow their example. He caused coffee to be served to his guests according to the custom of his country; for since fashion had introduced the custom of serving this beverage among the Turks, civility demanded that it should be offered to visitors, as well as that those should not decline partaking of it. If a Frenchman, in a similar case, to please the ladies, had presented to them his black and bitter liquor, he would be rendered for ever ridiculous. But the beverage was served by a Turk—a gallant Turk—and this was sufficient to give it inestimable value. Besides, before the palate could judge, the eyes were seduced by the

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display of elegance and neatness which accompanied it,—by those brilliant porcelain cups into which it was poured,—by napkins with gold fringes on which it was served to the ladies; add to this the furniture, the dresses, and the foreign customs, the strangeness of addressing the host through an interpreter,—being seated on the ground on tiles, &c., and you will allow that there was more than enough to turn the heads of French women. Leaving the hotel of the ambassador with an enthusiasm easily imagined, they hastened to their acquaintances to speak of the coffee of which they had partaken; and heaven only knows to what a degree they were excited (exaltés)."

The extravagant price of coffee, notwithstanding that the fashion of drinking it was established, prevented it from coming into use. It was only to be had, according to Le Grand, at Marseilles, and even there not in any quantity. Labat, quoted by him, states that the price, at this time, was the enormous one of forty crowns a pound. In 1672 an Armenian of the name of Pascal opened, in Paris, the first coffee-house on the plan of those he had seen at Constantinople. Pascal was followed by a crowd of imitators, whose numbers became so great, in 1676, that it was found necessary to form them into a society by statute.

As to the European names of coffee, they are all from the same source; the old Arabic word for wine, kăhwăh, which is composed of a very guttural K, unpronounceable by Europeans, except by an awkward effort, of the labial W and of two short vowels ă, with an aspirate at the end of each syllable. The Turks have changed the labial W into V; and the European nations who took the word directly from them have corrupted the word by converting the labial V into the labial F, by substituting an ordinary K or hard C for the Arabic guttural,—by omitting both the aspirates, and by converting the last short ă into ĕ, or, as with ourselves, always the greatest corrupters of orthography, changing both the vowels.

The history of the cultivation of coffee by European nations in their colonies is singular. The old Dutch East India Company carried on some traffic with the Arabian ports on the Red Sea; and about the year 1690, the Dutch Governor-General of India, Van Hoorne, caused some ripe coffee-seeds to be brought to Java: they were planted, grew, and produced fruit. He sent a single plant home from Batavia to Nicholas Witsen, the Governor of the East India Company, which arrived safe, was planted in the Botanic Garden of Amsterdam, where it prospered, produced fruit, and the fruit young plants. From the Amsterdam garden, plants were sent to the Dutch colony of Surinam, and the planters entered on the cultivation of coffee in 1718, or 133 years ago. The authority for this is the celebrated physician and botanist Boerhaave, in his Index of the Leyden Garden. In ten years after its cultivation in Surinam, it was introduced from that colony by the English into Jamaica, and by the French into Martinique. The first coffee-plant cultivated in Brazil, now the greatest producing country in the world, was reared by a Franciscan monk, of the name of Vellosa, in the garden of the convent of St. Antonio, near Rio Janeiro: it throve, and the monk presented its ripe fruit to the Viceroy Lavrado. He, judiciously, distributed it to the planters, who commenced the cultivation in 1774, only 77 years ago.

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It was about 1690, as already stated, that the coffee-plant was first introduced into Java. From thence it was conveyed to Sumatra, to Celebes, to the Philippines, and, in our own times, to Malabar, Mysore, and Ceylon. The few coffee-berries brought from Mocha to Batavia are the parents of the vast quantity now produced; and all the coffee that is consumed, save the trifle yielded by Arabia, has the same origin. The success of the cultivation of coffee in the colonies of European nations is a striking contrast to the substantial failure which has taken place in the culture of the vine and the tea-plant, and proves the facility with which coffee can be raised, and the difficulty of producing both wine and tea. Even the Indians of Sumatra and Celebes, without any help from Europeans, have produced very good coffee; but to produce good wine or good tea, even if the climate of these islands were suitable, would perhaps be as much beyond their skill, as to produce a steam-engine or a time-keeper.

Attempts have been made to estimate the quantity of coffee produced in every part of the world at the present time, and the following has been considered probable, which is the utmost that can be said of this or of any similar estimate:—

	lbs.
Brazil	176,000,000
Java	124,000,000
Cuba and Porto Rico	30,000,000
St. Domingo	35,000,000
Laguira	35,000,000
Costa Rica	9,000,000
British West Indies	8,000,000
Ceylon	40,000,000
Malabar and Mysore	5,000,000
French and Dutch West Indies	2,000,000
The Philippines	3,000,000
Sumatra	5,000,000
Celebes	1,000,000
Arabia	3,000,000
	476,000,000

Estimating the value of this quantity in Europe at 50*s.* a cwt., it will exceed 10,000,000*l.* Supposing the tax imposed on coffee, on an average, not to exceed our own, now the moderate one of 3*d.* a pound, and that no more than 300,000,000 of pounds are subject to it, the revenue which this article yields to different European governments will be 3,700,000*l.* The prime cost to the consumer, therefore, will be 13,700,000*l.*; but to this must be added expense of transport from emporia, with the wholesale and retail profits of intermediate dealers; and, with this addition, the actual sum paid by the consumers of coffee will not, I think, be over-estimated at 20,000,000*l.* a year. Supposing the whole quantity of 476,000,000 of pounds to be exported by sea, its conveyance would require 214,289 tons of shipping, without including transhipment, which is frequent. Taking the freight of coffee at 2*l.* 10*s.* per ton for voyages, which are seldom under six weeks, and in some cases extend to double and treble that time, it will amount to above 530,000*l.* I give these estimates only for the purpose of showing the importance of a branch of industry which has been the creation of little more than 130 years; for Arabia, which had furnished the

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whole supply before that time, now yields, according to the estimate, very little more than the *one hundred and sixtieth part of it,* yet it probably produces now as much as ever it did.

With respect to the relative quantities of coffee consumed in different countries, this is, of course, a matter which must depend upon the wealth of their inhabitants, their taste, and the preference, or otherwise, which, by custom, they may have for this stimulant over others of the same class. A few examples may be given. In Denmark, including the duchies, the consumption of coffee, on the average of the four years ending with 1847, was 12,337,281 lbs., and the population being 2,296,496, the rate per head was 5·37 lbs. On comparing the first two years of this statement with the two last, there is a very trifling increase in the latter, but the consumption may be considered, within so short a period, as nearly stationary. Chicoree is largely used in Denmark to mix with coffee; and in 1847, the quantity given in the return amounted to 3,047,558 lbs., which approaches to near a fourth part of the coffee consumed in the same year.

The consumption of all the countries comprehended in the German Union, for the five years ending 1848, was 95,531,577 lbs., and the population being 29,392,524, the consumption of each person was only 3·25 lbs. There was here an increase of consumption, on a comparison of the two last with the two first years of the statement, of 8·24 per cent. But there is a wide difference in the rate of consumption in the different countries composing the Union. Saxony, with a population of 1,836,433, consumes 6,010,400 lbs., or at the rate of 3·33 lbs. a head; whereas Bavaria, with 4,520,751 inhabitants, consumes only 516,355 lbs., or 1·12 lbs. a head. It is to be observed, that in all the countries under the German Union, what are called substitutes for coffee (generally, it may be presumed, chicoree) are included in the quantity consumed.

On the average of five years ending with 1848, the consumption of Prussia in coffee was 59,649,920 lbs., and the population being 16,597,282, the average per head was 3·58 lbs., being, as might be expected, the largest of any country under the German Union. Comparing the two first with the two last years, there had been an augmentation in the consumption of 6·81 per cent.

The quantity of coffee yearly consumed in Belgium, on the average of the four years ending 1848, was 39,608,938 lbs.; and as the population was 4,337,196, the consumption of each person averaged 8·92 lbs. Comparing the two last with the two first years, the increase of consumption was no less than 39½ per cent. No mention is made in the tables of chicoree, probably because a domestic product, and untaxed, but it is understood to be largely consumed.

Our own consumption of coffee in 1850 was 31,226,840 lbs., and the population of Great Britain and Ireland being 27,452,261, the consumption per head was 1·13. It had rapidly risen down to 1847, but has since been declining, from causes not very obvious. The heavy duties imposed down to 1825, were the cause, no doubt, of the low consumption down to that year. They had, before then, been, on colonial coffee, 1*s.*, on British Indian, 1*s.* 6*d.*, and on foreign, 2*s.* 6*d.*, the last virtually prohibitory. With such duties, the consumption in 1824 was 8,202,943 lbs. Next year, the three different kinds of duty

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were respectively reduced to 6*d.*, 9*d.*, and 1*s.* 3*d.*, and the consumption rose at once 11,082,970 lbs., and continued to rise until 1847. In 1846, the duty was reduced to 4*d.* a pound on all British, and to 6*d.* on all foreign. Next year, the consumption attained its maximum, viz, 37,441,373 lbs., from which, down to 1850, there had been a fall, 6,214,503 lbs. Last year, however, the duty on all coffee having been reduced to 3*d.* a pound, there has been an increase over the consumption of 1850 of 1,337,324 lbs.

The defalcation in the consumption since 1847 has been charged to what has been called the substitution of chicoree for coffee. Chicoree, however, is not a substitute for coffee, for it cannot be used alone, and, indeed, in no way without coffee. It seems to be only a cheap diluent, and the effect of its use ought to be, not to displace, but to extend the consumption of coffee, by rendering it more accessible to the poorer classes of consumers.

In Denmark, Germany, and Belgium, chicoree is used, probably to a greater degree than among ourselves, but in none of these has a falling-off in the consumption taken place. On the contrary, there has been, even in Denmark, a small advance, and in Belgium a very large one, and this within the very period in which our consumption has declined. I suspect the true solution will be found in the preference given to tea by the taste of the people of this country. While the consumption of coffee has declined, that of tea has constantly advanced since 1847. In that year, the quantity consumed was 46,314,821 lbs., and in 1851 it was 53,965,112 lbs., an increase of between seven and eight millions. It is certain that the respective duties on tea and coffee have had no part in promoting the consumption of the first, or in discouraging that of the last. They ought, as they have borne on the two articles, to have had the opposite effect. A hundred weight of coffee, worth 56*s.*, pays a duty of no more than 28*s.*, or 50 per cent. ad-valorem, whereas a hundred-weight of tea, at 1*s.* a pound, pays 265*s.*, or 236 per cent. on the value, which is between four and five times as much. Tea, in fact, has always virtually paid a higher duty, in this country, than coffee, and yet has, notwithstanding, advanced more rapidly in consumption. Thus, tea, intrinsically worth 1*s.* a pound, was sold at the public sales of the East India Company at 2*s.*, and a tax on this monopoly price of 2*s.* was imposed by the State, which made the virtual tax paid by the consumer 200 per cent. Coffee, worth at the same time 56*s.* a cwt., paid only 112*s.*, or 200 per cent., being one-third less. Yet, while coffee was favoured by the lighter duty, and tea burthened by the heavier, the consumption of the first little exceeded, in 1824, 8,000,000 lbs., while that of the latter exceeded 20,000,000 lbs., the disparity being really far greater, when it is considered that, in use, one pound of tea is equal to three of coffee. This preference has been further enhanced by a fall in the price of tea, since that year, more than commensurate with that which has taken place, in the same time, in that of coffee.

The relative consumption of tea and coffee in the United States of America, and in the United Kingdom, will assist us in understanding what the proportions of the two commodities would be, if England and America, in point of general taxation, were placed under the same circumstances. Neither of these commodities pays a duty in America, and,

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generally, the population of the two countries has the same tastes. We must take the consumption of America to be the same as the importation after deducting re-exportation. The importation of coffee in 1850 was 145,272,687 lbs., and the re-exportation having been 15,381,758 lbs., there remained for consumption 129,890,929 lbs. The population in the same year being 23,300,000, the rate of consumption per head was 5·57 lbs. It follows from this, that the proportion of coffee consumed in America is as five to one of that consumed in the United Kingdom.

The tea imported into the American Union in 1850 was 29,872,654 lbs., and the re-exportation being 1,673,053 lbs., there remained for consumption 28,199,601 lbs. The quantity of coffee, therefore, consumed in America, is above four times that of tea, while with us, the consumption of coffee is only as 60 to 100.

The tea and coffee together consumed in the United States in 1850 amounted to 157,090,530 lbs., which gives 6·74 lbs. for the consumption per head. With ourselves, the joint consumption of the two articles for the same year was 82,404,055 lbs., which was at the rate of 3·0 lbs. only, or less than one-half the American consumption. This, however, is not, perhaps, the fair way of considering the relative consumption of the two nations, either as to use or value. A pound of tea is, on an average of all teas, equal in value to two pounds of coffee, and in use to three. In reference to use alone, then, the tea consumed by both parties should be multiplied by three, and on this estimate the consumption of the two stimulants by the Americans will be 9·20 lbs. per head, and of the British 6·70. Even on this hypothesis, the American consumption is greater than our own by 38 per cent. The reasons are obvious enough. The mass of consumers is in easier circumstances in America than in the United Kingdom, and besides this, they have their tea and coffee cheaper than we have, not only by the duty, which is near 6,300,000*l.*, but also by the profits which must be paid on that duty by those who advance it to the State.

It can hardly be denied but that the consumption of tea and coffee, and I will add to them another stimulant, of which the effects are, to a considerable extent, of the same nature, tobacco, have contributed materially to the sobriety, decency, and even morality, of the inhabitants of this country. They all stimulate the nervous system, without producing intoxication, and it is difficult to commit an excess in them. The change in manners effected by them, whatever its extent, has been the work of about two centuries and a half, for before that time every stimulant of popular use had been intoxicating. The actual price paid by the consumer for the three articles in question cannot, I think, be estimated at less than 25,000,000*l.* a year, viz., 12,000,000*l.* for tea, 3,000,000*l.* for coffee, and 10,000,000*l.* for tobacco. Had this enormous sum, chiefly contributed by the middle and working classes, not been expended in these commodities, it must have been so in the intoxicating potables used by our ancestors. It is true that tea, coffee, and tobacco, have not displaced ale and spirits, but it is certain, also, that they have, to a large extent, been substituted for them.

In corroboration of what is here stated, it deserves to be noticed that the introduction of two of the commodities mentioned, coffee and tobacco, have conduced to the promotion of sobriety among the Mahomedan nations of Western Asia. My authority for this is

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Mr. Lane, to whom I have already alluded, who states the fact in his learned and judicious notes to his translation of the Arabian Nights. "I judge," says he, "from the conversation and writings of Arabs, which justify me in asserting that the practice of drinking wine in private, and by select parties, is far from being uncommon among modern Muslims, though certainly more so than it was before the introduction of tobacco into the East, in the beginning of the 17th century of our era; for this herb, being in a slight degree exhilarating, and at the same time soothing, and unattended by the injurious effects that result from wine, is a sufficient luxury to many who, without it, would have recourse to intoxicating beverages, merely to pass away hours of idleness. The use of coffee, too, which became common in Egypt, Syria, and other countries, besides Arabia, a century earlier than tobacco, doubtless tended to render the habit of drinking wine less general. That it was adopted as a substitute for wine, appears even from its name."—Lane's Arabian Nights, vol. i., p. 215.

If the commodities which I have named really conduce to the sobriety, and, consequently, to the morality of the people, it becomes the duty of the legislature to encourage their consumption in the only way in which it can legitimately do so—by the imposition of moderate and equable duties. Coffee, at the present rate of duty, is fairly enough assessed, but the tea-duties are at once excessive and unequal, and the tax on tobacco is such, that this article has become one of the chief objects of the contraband trade.

It remains only that I should name the authorities from which I have derived some of the principal facts given in this paper. The consumption of the nations of the Continent, is taken from the elaborate and instructive statements relating to foreign countries contained in the Tables of Revenue, Population, and Commerce, published by the Board of Trade. The consumption of the United States of America I owe to the kindness of the American Legation. The statements of the coffee-produce of all countries is, to a great extent, taken from the elaborate letter of an American merchant residing at Rio de Janeiro, which appeared in a New York journal. It was this very able letter which immediately drew my attention to the subject, and induced me to write upon it. The statement of the produce of the East has been corrected from the official returns of the Dutch and English Governments, or from those of merchants. From their nature all these statements must be looked on on as little better than approximations. Taken chiefly from the quantities exported, they, of course, do not include the consumption of the producing countries, which, however, in so far as the East is concerned, is not considerable.

Note by Dr. Beke.—In the course of the year 1850, I wrote to my friend Dr. H. L. Fleischer, Professor of the Oriental Languages in the University of Leipzig, respecting the derivation of the word *coffee*. The following is a translation of his answer on the subject, dated October 18, 1850:—

"The Arabs still possess the word بُنّ as well as قَهْوَة, but they employ the former solely to designate the coffee-berry. Berggrén, in his Guide Français-Arabe-vulgaire (Upsala, 1844), has the following under the word *Café*:—

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'*Café*, en grain, بن بنونات *bounn*, pl. *bounounât;*

„ en grain brûlé, بن محمص *bounn mou'hammas;*

„ en poudre, مسحوق, بن مسحون *bounn mas'houn*, ou *mas'houq;*

„ liqueur, قهوة *qàhwé.*

'Le mot Arabe *qàhwé* désignait originairement une espèce de vin doux et léger [it is still used in this sense by Arabian poets], et il ne fût donné à la décoction du *bounn* que vers la fin du 13me ou, selon d'autres, du 15me siècle, époques auxquelles on rapporte la première invention de cette boisson dans le Yemen.'

"The chief authority for the history of coffee is the 'Treatise on Coffee' contained in De Sacy's *Chrestomathie Arabe*, 2nd edit. vol. i. pp. 412-483; to which may be added what I have cited in Naumann's *Catalogus Libb. MSS. Bibl. Sen. Lipsiæ*, p. 512, from a Persian Treatise on Coffee."

When writing to Professor Fleischer, I had referred him to the native names of coffee in the languages of Abessinia and the neighbouring countries, which are given in my Vocabularies, printed in the second volume of the Proceedings of the Philological Society of London, p. 101. These names it will not be uninteresting to re-produce here. They are as follows:—

Kaffa	*bunno*	Agau of Agaumider	*bunnoa*
Woratta	*bunna*	Gafat	*bunshen*
Wolaitsa	*bunna*	Amharic*	*bunn*
Gonga	*bunno*	„ of Shoa	*bunna*

In the Amharic and Tigre languages of Abessinia, the name given to the decoction of the roasted berry is *kahwa*. But, as the beverage is common among the Mohammedans alone, it being deemed unlawful by the Christian Abessinians; and as the Mohammedans of Africa, and indeed of all other parts of the world, affect the Arabic language from religious pride and as a means of distinguishing themselves from the surrounding "infidels;" it is not to be doubted that the word *kahwa*, as thus used by the Mohammedan Abessinians, is merely the Arabic قهوة.

In M. Tutschek's "Dictionary of the Galla Language," the name given to the tree and berry is *buna*, while the decoction is said to be called *qa'wa* or *ca'wa*, which is merely the Arabic, as before. But among the pagan Gallas of Guderu and other districts south of Abessinia Proper, I found the word *boka* used to designate the decoction, as well as the tree and berry; this being the sole variation which I met with among the languages of Abessinia and the adjacent countries from the uniform use of *bunn*, or some closely similar word, to signify *coffee*. And, as the coffee-tree grows wild and is indigenous in most, if not all, of those countries, it is manifest that the Arabic designation of the berry (*bunn*) was derived from the native East-African name, and was introduced into Arabia from Africa together with the coffee itself.

C. B.

* See Isenberg's "Dictionary of the Amharic Language."

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