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PROCESS OF FERMENTING TOBACCO

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The Italian style cigars or "stogies" are made out of leaf tobacco known in trade as Kentucky dark and Virginia dark tobacco grown in the States of Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia, which tobacco in the course of manufacturing is subjected to a special process of high fermentation heretofore in use and hereinafter described. It has been found, however, that only tobacco of crops grown under special cultural conditions is capable of giving the true type of the required fermentation so called pyridicammoniacal, while tobacco of other crops, which are by far in the majority, gives an atypical or spurious fermentation with heavy production of moulds and waste and in consequence the quality of the resulting product is very poor. The tobacco capable of undergoing the true process will be designated hereinafter as suitable tobacco.

Heretofore to obtain the proper results in the process of fermentation hereinafter described it was necessary to mix suitable with unsuitable tobacco, and as no one can tell what years will produce suitable tobacco and what years unsuitable tobacco, and, as the unsuitable crops, according to long experience, are by far in the majority, it is necessary to keep large quantities of suitable tobacco in storage from year to year.

The object of my invention is to provide a process which will be certain in operation and make all tobacco from any crop of the kind in question suitable tobacco without regard to the year in which it is produced.

Heretofore suitable tobacco taken from the hogsheads was moistened with the proper percentage of water, stemmed and then put to ferment in specially equipped rooms in bulks of about ten thousand pounds each; the period of fermentation lasting about twenty days, during which time the bulks are demolished and rebuilt several times to obtain the proper type of fermentation at various temperatures. This fermentation, which in the last stages must be strongly ammoniacal, gives the tobacco a distinctive flavor and aroma which is desired by smokers of cigars or "stogies" known in trade as Italian cigars, specifically as "Fermentati" or "Toscani" cigars.

For some unknown reason (probably connected with the character of the growing season) the tobacco in question, when grown in certain years, will not go into an ammoniacal fermentation when treated as above specified, but go into an atypical or spurious fermentation, and therefore such tobacco cannot be used alone but must be worked in with suitable tobacco in the ratio of approximately one to two in order to obtain the required results. This proportion may be varied one way or another according to crops but is substantially as indicated.

The problem which my invention solves is the problem of making all of this Kentucky and Virginia dark tobacco suitable tobacco. The solution which I have discovered is as follows:

The treatment is substantially the same as above specified for all tobacco except that after the tobacco has been moistened and stemmed and has absorbed about 45% of its weight in water, it is sprayed or otherwise treated with a solution of hydrogen peroxide (3% active ingredients). This solution for best results should be applied through a vacuum chamber. In any event the tobacco should absorb from 3% to 4% additional weight from this treatment and thereafter the tobacco is put in bulks and treated substantially as before.

Experience has shown that all tobacco of the kind and character in question, when so treated, regardless of the year of growth, will ferment properly so that suitable tobacco by my improved process is assured with each crop. It also appears that the flavor and aroma of the tobacco when worked into cigars or "stogies" is improved and that tobacco is more homogeneous so that the cigars or "stogies" will be more uniform in quality and burn and draw better. Moreover my improved treatment eliminates a far greater proportion of the nicotine insuring a greater degree of mildness to the product. It is also apparent that this process makes it unnecessary to carry a large stock of suitable leaf tobacco worth a very large sum of money

(over a million dollars for an ordinary factory) so as to tide over the years when unsuitable tobacco is successively produced. As above stated, my improved process makes all of this Kentucky and Virginia dark tobacco suitable.

Having thus described my invention, what I claim is:

1. The process of fermenting tobacco which consists in moistening and stemming same, and thereafter adding a solution of hydrogen peroxide and permitting this tobacco to ferment.

2. The process of fermenting tobacco which consists in moistening and stemming same, and thereafter adding a solution of 3% hydrogen peroxide and permitting this tobacco to ferment.

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this 28 day of November, 1930.

ANDREA SCALVINI.