

**"OVER-PRODUCTION" OF TEA—AND  
NEW PRODUCTS,**

**COCONUTS, LIBERIAN COFFEE, CACAO;  
RUBBER, &c.**

We call attention to a letter in another column as illustrating the way in which thoughtful planters are considering how to insure themselves against the risks involved in "Overproduction" and still lower prices for tea. One exceedingly practical suggestion—already acted on to our knowledge in a number of cases—is for lowcountry estate owners to add coconut palms to their tea fields. It is stated that the palms, even when grown up, do no harm to the tea, and the Peradeniya estate is offered as evidence. But our correspondent forgets that Peradeniya has an exceptionally rich soil—so rich that in older times it was specially selected as the site of a sugar estate. We scarcely think that in the generality of the lowcountry, coconuts and tea would continue for any long period to prosper well together: we should expect the bushes immediately round the palms after a certain number of years rather to suffer. Nevertheless, we are quite clear as to the wisdom of the experiment in very many instances and it is a matter of very great importance indeed that the lowcountry tea planter should know he has other and profitable "strings to his bow" besides an overproduced staple. Indeed, there are several more products besides the palms to be considered: in the Polgahawela district there are fields where cacao, Liberian coffee and tea seem to grow and crop fairly well together. In the Kalutara district, some of the richer rubber-yielding plants have been added freely to the tea fields.

If therefore lowcountry tea plantations do not occupy so strong a position—in consequence of the quality of their teas—as those in the higher regions, the disadvantage may be balanced by the greater choice of other products which may, in certain eventualities, be cultivated along with tea. Some of these—rubber, Liberian coffee, cacao and even the palms—may flourish up to 2,000 feet above sea level: under favourable circumstances even higher. But there is a limit and then we may ask what can be added to tea in the higher regions, especially from 4,000 feet upwards? Our correspondent mentions the planting of cinchona. There is not much hope in that direction with Java holding sway through her very rich barks. For the improvement of the tea fields themselves, to diversify their appearance and to secure a stock of fuel if not timber, there is nothing better, we suppose, than to plant the fields all over—at proper distances, say 30 to 40 feet apart?—with "grevilleas." Practical men are very strong that these trees absolutely benefit the tea,—that their shedding of leaves alone is as good as a "surface manuring." There are a great number of plantations throughout the hillcountry, already well covered with grevilleas and from none have we heard any complaint; while two cases especially, have been held up to us as special illustrations of the great advantage of the process. Those are Mount Vernon estate, Dimbula, and Dambulagalla and Pitakanda estates, Matale East. No doubt there are others, equally well planted up; but we name the first places we think of, for the benefit of any sceptical estate owners; for, we feel sure, that Messrs. Cantlay and Fraser will not object if such choose to go and see for themselves. We have not referred here to experiments with minor or newer products of more or less interest, and which individual planters—studying the *Tropical Agriculturist* from time to

time—will no doubt carry on as leisure or opportunity offers. There may any day, through some discovery or change of habit in Europe, set in a phenomenal demand for Coca, Kola or some other product more or less tried in Ceylon, but for which at present the market may seem very limited. Tea in its cultivation and preparation requires a great deal of attention, and in neither department has perfection by any means been attained; but among our enterprising and intelligent Ceylon planters there are sure to be many who will never be content to run along old grooves merely, or to cease from further experiments both with the old and with new products.

**"OVERPRODUCTION" OF TEA AND NEW  
PRODUCTS, AND GOOD ADVICE FOR LOW-  
COUNTRY TEA PLANTERS.**

22nd June.

DEAR SIR,—Your leading article (see above) on "Overproduction" was to the point and very ably demonstrated what must appear the inevitable result of the present anxiety to add more acres to the already large tea area. Yours seemed the voice of a prophet, and methinks your own words alarmed you, and you tried to comfort yourself and others by quoting the testimony from a Church Missionary, and then hug yourself in the belief that it is quite safe to go on until India and Ceylon produce 160 additional million lb. of tea! Glad you think so, but you cannot too strongly press on all owners of lowcountry tea estates the necessity and advisability of planting all their tea lands with coconuts. They have only to go and look at that fine field of tea and coconuts near the Peradeniya Railway station, to convince them how well both cultivations thrive together. The problem is a more difficult one so far as the higher estates are concerned. Cinchona at present prices does not offer much encouragement here; yet I have seen young tea fields regularly planted throughout with this now (so far as Ceylon is concerned) almost defunct product.

If there is nothing else we can turn to, we must use every endeavour to push our teas in other markets, and the question is, are we contributing enough money by the continuation of this 10 cts. per 100 lb.? Would it not pay us better to double this amount and give our representative a free hand to advertise and push our teas in the way he thought best amongst the wholesale dealers, and render to the *thirty* a monthly statement of the result of his labours? Would this be interfering with private enterprise? Would he not be helping merchants here, by introducing new buyers to them? Are our interests and those of the Colombo merchants, not on a par with the Indian tea growers and the Calcutta merchants? Why then cannot we work on similar lines?—Yours truly,  
OLD PLANTER,

**A CEYLON CINCHONA COMPANY.**

The twelfth annual report of the Padiagama Cinchona Company (Limited), of Ceylon, has just been presented to the shareholders. The directors regret that the report is not so favourable as had been hoped at the commencement of the season. Actual working of the year shows a small margin of 1,263-28r. The directors recommend that the total balance now at credit of profit and loss account, say 9,123-15r., should be appropriated in reduction of suspense account, which represents the loss incurred in working the estate previous to 1890, whilst the tea (which is now the staple product of the company) was coming into bearing.—*Chemist and Druggist.*