

## MANURING TEA AND ITS EFFECT ON "FLAVOUR" AND PRICES.

The question was asked in our columns a few weeks ago as to whether manure affected the flavour of the resulting flush or rather of the manufactured tea and so led to a reduction in price? We called for the experience of some of our older tea planters and the outcome of inquiry and of much information which has reached us, is, we are glad to say, on the whole, adverse to the opinion that judicious manuring need affect the quality or price of tea.

The question is a very old one and was raised and answered by Colonel Money in his original Prize Essay on Tea Cultivation. From the revised edition of his book, we quote as follows:—

An idea existed formerly—got, I believe, from stray Chinamen, who I don't think knew much about tea in any way—that manure, though it increased the yield, spoilt the flavour of tea. The idea is opposed to all agricultural knowledge, for high cultivation, which in no case can be carried out to perfection without manure, much improves the strength and flavour of all edibles, the product of mother earth. My first experience of manure to the tea plant was obtained in the Chittagong district from a small garden close to the station, which has been for some years highly manured. I was struck with the frequency and abundance of the flushes and the strength and flavour of the tea. My high opinion of the tea was later borne out by the Calcutta brokers. I allude to the "Pioneer" garden, close to the Chittagong station. During the best tea months flush succeeded flush at intervals of less than a week, while eight to ten maunds (640 to 800 lb.) was the yearly yield per acre! The soil was very sandy and poor. After-experience showed me that manuring nearly doubles the yield of plants, and that so far from injuring the flavour of tea it improves it, while it adds greatly to the strength. I shall therefore, beg the question that manure is an advantage. If any planter doubts, let him try it, and his doubts will soon be solved. Any manure is better than none, but I believe one of the best manures for the tea plant (always excepting night-soil and the excrements of birds, which cannot be procured) is cattle manure. It is not heating, like horse-dung, and may be applied in large quantities without any risk. The fresher it is applied, in my opinion, the better, for it has then far more power. If mixed with any vegetable refuse, the bulk being increased, it will go further, but I do not think it is intrinsically any the better for it. There are several chemical manures advertised for tea plants. All garden refuse should be regarded as manure and buried between the plants. I allude to the prunings of the bushes and the weeds at all times from the land. To carry these off the ground, as I have sometimes seen done, is simply taking off so much strength from the soil. The greener, too, all this is buried the better. When it is considered how much is taken from the tea plant, it is evident the soil will be exhausted, sooner or later, if no means are adopted to repair the waste. Where manure cannot be got the waste must be made up, as far as possible, by returning all other growth to the soil. But manure should be got if possible, for it will double the yield of a garden; and highly concentrated chemical manures will, I am sure, be eventually much used on tea gardens.

From the above it will be seen that cattle manure is specially recommended; and yet, curiously enough, this is just one of the manures that one experienced Ceylon planter thinks may—at least for a time—affect the quality of the leaf; while bones and castor-cake judiciously applied should not. A certain proportion of fish manure is also a favourite application. One case that

recurs to us in the earlier years of tea in Ceylon is that of plantations at a medium elevation, above 3,000 feet, where the commencement of manuring seemed to have a distinctly adverse effect on the average prices of tea under the estates' mark. On the other hand, we have several groups in which manuring has now been systematically kept up for a number of years with most satisfactory results both in respect of quantity and quality. There is no need that we should mention names or particularize more than to point to a well-known case in Matale where old coffee estates have been so dealt with—to the wonderful illustration afforded near Gampola—and to prominent Dimbula plantations under very experienced management, where the prices secured are always above the average, and the crops, we believe, very satisfactory in quantity owing in no small degree, to judicious and systematic manuring.

## THE AMERICAN TEA CAMPAIGN. THE SCHEME OF A CANDIDATE.

We have seen the application of one of the candidates for the post of Ceylon representative in America—a gentleman of scientific education and experience as a lecturer, but employed in the island in a commercial capacity—from which we quote as follows:—

### PLAN OF WORK.

**Wholesale Dealers.**—The wholesale dealers would be the first to whom I would direct my energies; and by interviewing them, showing samples, and giving practical scientific reasons for taking up our product, I would elicit their sympathy, and induce them to stock Ceylon teas, giving them every possible information as to where and how to buy.

**Retail Dealers.**—After gaining the sympathy of the large buyer, I would then turn my steps towards the retailer, and by all means in my power get him to go in for selling our teas. I would assist him in advertising by means of circulars and, if thought necessary, a native servant or two.

The Consumer next would come under my care, and this would be done by means of lectures on various subjects relating to Ceylon and Ceylon teas. I would cultivate an interest in Ceylon among the working classes by connecting myself with their various friendly society and trade organisations. At all my lectures I would distribute sample packets of tea along with circulars, on which the names and addresses of dealers in Ceylon teas would be clearly printed. I would make my lectures as interesting as possible by means of lime-light pictures, models and practical experiments.

**The Medical Profession.**—As a means of creating a taste of Ceylon teas, the Medical Profession would be one of the most valuable sources of advertising. It only requires a few practical demonstrations to them of the value of pure Ceylon teas as compared with the chemically faced and impure articles so skilfully prepared by the Chinese. It should not take much time to convert the Americans from green teas, were it only brought prominently before the Medical Profession as to the plan adopted by the Chinese to preserve the green appearance, and the dangers arising therefrom. Much was said at home by the medical and public health authorities, about two years ago, with reference to green teas. The same can be said about the green teas of China and Japan, which are to a great extent prepared with sulphate of copper. Their black teas are also acted upon with chemicals after they have had the first infusion for themselves. Such facts as these brought practically before the Medical Profession would do noble work, and also the insidious condition of the Chinese people and factories. I would interview the leading medical men on this subject, and also attend their society meetings and bring the matter as prominently before them as possible.

**Schools of Cookery.**—There being many such institutions in America, I would make it part of my duty to visit them, and by means of lectures on "The Dietetics of Tea" I would get them interested in Ceylon grown products. I would give practical lessons on the best means of infusing and preserving the flavour of tea. To each member of the classes a sample packet would be given, with the names of dealers in each town from whom Ceylon teas were to be had. I would also give an occasional small box to the leading medical men.

**Means of Advertising.**—This would be done on as large a scale and as cheaply as possible, through the medium of the newspapers, magazines, journals, &c., and by handbills; and a native or two would also be made use of.

**The Press.**—I would interview the editors, and write short articles for the various newspapers and magazines, &c., on tea and its uses, bringing Ceylon tea prominently to the front as an article of diet.

#### SYNOPSIS OF LECTURES.

##### POPULAR LECTURES TO THE CONSUMERS IN GENERAL.

**Ceylon.**—Its people and their habits, illustrated by lime-light.

**Tea.**—Its cultivation and manufacture; illustrated by means of views of estates and models of factories and machinery.

**Ceylon Tea vs. China and Japan.**—A comparison of the mode of manufacture in Ceylon and that of China and Japan, shewing the advantages of the cleanly and scientific process adopted here, and the primitive unclean and insanitary conditions of the Chinese and Japanese with special emphasis on the means adopted by China and Japan of doctoring up old infused leaves.

**The History of Ceylon Tea.**—An account of the rapid rise and progress, and the place Ceylon now holds as a tea producing country.

**Demonstrations.**—As to way to infuse tea.

##### LECTURES TO THE MEDICAL PROFESSION.

**Manufacture.**—The various processes adopted in the manufacture of tea.

**Chemistry.**—The chemistry of tea.

**Physiological Action.**—Showing its superiority over alcohol as a stimulant and sustaining agent.

**Its place in Dietetics.**—By practical experiments to show its value as a dietetic, and to show that pure tea *per se* is not injurious but that it is due to the bad name given to tea in general owing to the chemically prepared teas of China having set up a lot of disease.

##### LECTURES TO SCHOOLS OF COOKERY, ETC.

**Tea as an Article of Diet.**—Practical demonstrations as to its action on digestion by means of experiments.

**Preparation.**—Lessons on the proper method of infusing and keeping tea.

### THE WANARAJAH TEA COMPANY.

The second ordinary general meeting of the shareholders of the Wanarajah Tea Company of Ceylon, Limited, was held on Sept. 14th, in the office of the Agents and Secretaries, Messrs. Baker and Hall, 4, Queen Street, Colombo. Mr. J. C. Dunbar presided, and the others present were Messrs. E. S. Anderson, Thos. Mackie, A. Cantlay, J. Buchan, R. L. M. Brown (as attorney for Mr. R. Collinson), J. W. Vanderstraaten, and T. W. Hall. By proxy there were present Messrs. Geo. Noel, H. M. Alley, A. Orchard, J. J. de Havilland, and C. A. Hutson, and Margaret Ryan, and Margaret Rollo.

Mr. HALL read the notice calling the meeting and the minutes of the previous meeting which were duly confirmed.

#### THE REPORT.

The CHAIRMAN then moved the adoption of the Report of the Directors for the second year of the Company's working which was published on the 25th August. He said there was

really nothing to add to the Report which the Directors had endeavoured to make as full as possible, being desirous of giving the shareholders all the information in their power. If shareholders had any questions to ask he would do his best to answer them.

Mr. BROWN referring to the statement that the water-course had subsided at the road diversion, asked whether the water-course had now been put thoroughly in order.

The CHAIRMAN replied that this particular break had been put in order, but information had been received from the Superintendent that another piece had gone.

Mr. BROWN asked if that was due to the unusually wet weather.

The CHAIRMAN replied that it was partly due to that, and

Mr. MACKIE added that as stated in the Report it was also due to the treacherous nature of the soil.

#### MR. MACKIE'S REPORT.

The CHAIRMAN then read Mr. Mackie's last report as follows:—

Great Western, Talawakelle, Aug. 15th.

Messrs. Baker & Hall, Colombo.

DEAR SIR,—I beg to inform you that I went over the Wanarajah Company Estates last week accompanied by the other three Upcountry Directors. It is usual to give an outline of the general appearances of an estate in sending in a report; but in the case of these two estates this is a somewhat difficult matter as the original plantings were not confined to whole fields, but to patches here and there where the coffee shewed signs of weakness.

The growth of the bushes throughout the estate is satisfactory, but from the appearance of the older Tea I am of opinion that a considerable increase of yield would be obtained by a more liberal system of cultivation, and this can only be got by the application of artificial manures which I would strongly recommend to be taken in hand as early as possible.

It is well-known that these estates for many years have been in a somewhat neglected condition—no manures, few drains, and indifferent weeding which give the ridges and exposed parts a washed out and worn look.

Since the Company was formed the draining has to a considerable extent been put in order. There is yet however a good deal to be done and a fair allowance has been made to continue the work during the current season.

WEEDING.—The order and condition under this heading shews great improvement and it is to be hoped that with the careful attention which this work has, and is now receiving a reduction of the rates will shortly be made.

CLEARING AND SUPPLYING.—The Company was fortunate in having such a large area of virgin forest. The clearing of 104 acres planted last year is a success. The jât is good, the growth well forward, and the whole has been well supplied this season. The yield from these fields will be large and the quality should help the selling value of the teas from the low land.

We were unanimous in coming to the conclusion that funds should be provided to open the remaining 99 acres of forest this season. The plantings under the coffee are only of average growth, but when the bushes are relieved of the shade and roots of the coffee trees they will have a better chance of developing.

As one good, or even average, coffee crop does not succeed another, the trees that are bearing well this year should be removed immediately after crop, but any good parts likely to be remunerative the following season should be left.

FUEL TREES.—A considerable sum was spent on nurseries, and planting not only through the estate generally, but on the abandoned ravines and steep river faces owing to the steep and weedy nature of