

up the extent ultimately under cultivation will probably not fall short of fifty thousand acres, with a yield of close upon 20,000,000 lb. leaf. This development will, however, be the work of some years.

CACAO is doing remarkably well in the Badulla District at an elevation of 2,500 ft., and there is little doubt that it can be extensively grown both in the hill districts and in the low-country, now that conditions under which it should be cultivated are better understood. It is well established in the Monaragala District, and a small plantation has been started in Bintenna.

The prices realized for this product have been somewhat disappointing, but a large margin of profit is still left even though the market value has depreciated.

The total acreage under cultivation is 1,702, but only a small portion is yet in full bearing.

CINCHONA is rapidly going out of cultivation, and in a few years there will be scarcely any left.

FUEL TREES.—I have not been able to secure reliable statistics in respect to the acreage planted with fuel trees, but the estates generally are now independent of the Government reserves, and the question of fuel, which at the outset of tea enterprise gave rise to much discussion, no longer causes any anxiety.

### ARABIAN AND LIBERIAN COFFEE, PEPPER, TAPIOCA &c. IN THE STRAITS.

The Selangor Resident has been on tour and from the interesting Notes of his journey we quote as follows from the *Selangor Government Gazette* of June 22:—

A considerable amount of Liberian coffee has been planted on the small holdings in this part (Klang) of the district, but, with the exception of the plots held by Chinese, the appearance presented by the trees is much less satisfactory than that of those growing along the Telok Menaghan Road. The planters are chiefly Javanese settlers, holding their land under customary tenure and who insist upon taking the utmost out of the soil by planting amongst the coffee such products as Indian corn, kladi, klidi, sweet potatoes, padi, plantain and tapioca.

A feature of the country round about the town of Klang is the extensive cultivation of kladi and klidi by Chinese. These crops mature, the former in eight months, the latter in four months, so that two crops a year at least are obtained from the latter. An acre yields about 14 and 20 pikuls, respectively, and the price obtained varies, according to the kind planted, from 85 cents to \$1.50 a pikul. The principal market for this produce is Kuala Lumpur.

Mr. Hüttenbach has nearly completed his coffee works, his intention being to buy up native coffee and prepare it for the market. This should prove a boon to the rapidly growing number of native coffee producers and be a factor in the progress of the district.

On the morning of the 18th the Resident was driven by Mr. Hemmy, Surveyor, along the Telok Menaghan road (3 miles), followed by the Acting District Officer, the District Engineer, and Penghulu Mohit. It was along this road that H. E. the Governor drove on his visit to Klang on the 21st April, when he was so favourably impressed by the flourishing appearance of the native coffee gardens along each side of the road. About 500 acres of land are under coffee in this part of the district and 200 acres are being opened by natives and Chinese, 50 or more acres by Mr. T. H. Hill and 40 acres by Mr. Forsyth, under the direction of Mr. P. Stephenson. Several applications for coffee land, by Europeans, have recently been sanctioned.

The history of the coffee industry in the district may briefly be given as follows:—In 1887 Haji Mahomed Tahir, a Javanese, known in pre-Residential times as the Penghulu Dagang or headman of the foreign settlers, obtained an advance of \$4,000 from the Government, he being the owner of 95 acres of land, now held on customary tenure, and 700 acres under lease or agree-

ment, and commenced planting up with arecanut palms, duriens, mangostins and coconuts. The demand for, and consequently the price of, arecanuts has of recent years been much depressed, and the cultivation is no longer a paying one in Selangor. In several places many acres of fine areca palms have now been cut down to make room for Liberian coffee, but the way was shewn by Haji Mat Tahir, who with extraordinary energy, for a native, has drained his land, and planted up a portion with coffee, which has proved so successful that he has been able to cut up most of his land into blocks, averaging from three to five acres, which he sublets at 50 cents an acre for coffee gardens, to Chinese and foreign Malays. The land is low and wet and for a long time it was considered by Europeans that so soon as the roots of the coffee reached water the trees would die out.

This theory has been disposed of by the results of the Haji's enterprise, his oldest trees having been planted for seven years and presenting now the most flourishing appearance. The result has been that applications for coffee land are coming in rapidly from Europeans, Chinese and natives, and the quitrent for the District has been raised from 25 to 50 cents an acre for coffee estates. The history of the European coffee enterprise in the District remains to be written, it would be premature and perhaps dangerous to forecast it. There are already premonitory symptoms of demands by the European would-be planters for roads and drains and "facilities" never put forward by native and Chinese planters, and it would be lamentable if, in the long run, the European planter, who prides himself on his pluck and sturdy independence, is beaten by the native and Chinese holders of what may be termed garden coffee lots.

There can, however, be no reason to doubt that the Selangor planters will shew the same pluck and go-aheadness as their confreres in India, who contribute to a public cess which is utilised in the construction of accommodation roads, drains and ditches, and by the planters in Sumatra, who combined to make their own roads for common use, and goodness too.

Piloted by Mr. Hemmy, the Resident and his party, after discussing the question of the continuation of the Telok Menaghan Road, walked to the boundary of Mr. Hill's land, had a look at Mr. Forsyth's new clearing and flourishing coffee nurseries, and then proceeded across country to Tremelbyr Coffee and Pepper Estate, the property of Captain Treweek and Mr. Melbye. This estate comprises 515 acres, of which 35 acres have been planted with pepper, some of which is seven years old, and 75 acres with Liberian coffee, ranging from four years and a half to one year in age.

White pepper only is exported, and is prepared from the ordinary pepper by soaking it for about a fortnight in water, with the object of removing the outer skin. In the case of black pepper the berry is plunged into hot water and then dried and smoked the outside skin being retained. With black pepper at \$9 a pikul, white pepper would fetch about \$15. Pepper is a pretty cultivation, but it has been passing through hard times of late, owing to over production and the consequent fall in price. There are not, however, wanting signs that stocks are decreasing and production falling off, and that those who have "held on" may yet reap the reward of pertinacity. Great care has to be exercised in the culture of the vine and in the operations of "turning down" and tying up to the posts, and it has been said that 25 acres of pepper require as much supervision and labour as 100 acres of coffee.

A well-looked-after vine, in favourable conditions, is said to bear for 20 years. The vines are not allowed to bear until they have fully covered the posts and are of a uniform diameter from top to bottom. The selection of the posts on which the vine is borne requires considerable care. In the Klang District there is a wood known as *brumbong* which, while useless for other purposes, is apparently unaffected by either burial in the soil or exposure to weather, and it is consequently admirably adapted for pepper

posts. It appears to be known in Province Wellesley and Perang under the name of *sarong katula*.

Much of Tremelbyr Estate was in lalang when first acquired by its present owners, and the consequence, as regards some of the coffee, is not entirely satisfactory. The land is hilly and includes some large and beautiful forest trees. It is hoped that the proprietors will be public spirited enough to preserve some of their fine timber on the ridges and along the Kuala Langat Road. After partaking of the kind hospitality of Mr. Nisson, the Manager, the Resident walked and drove along the Kuala Langat Road to the point where it crosses the Sungai Aub, a tributary of the Klang and one of the chief drainers of the Klang Mukim. The road from this point, right on for seven miles, passes through very low-lying country, with the rich black soil which is proving to be so well suited for Liberian coffee. Instructions were given for the deepening of the drains on each side of this portion of the road and for clearing the Aub and Sie Jingkong Rivers. The Kuala Langat Road is a section of the "Coast Road," to which reference has been made in previous "Notes." It forms one of the boundaries of a large freehold property comprising 3,000 acres, belonging to Lim Swee Keng & Co., and acquired by them from Government at auction for \$5,800, formerly the property of the Sago Company, Limited, who failed to pay their premiums and so the land was sold. Recently 600 acres of this holding have been sold to Mr. W. Bailey, of Johor, at \$6 an acre, and 500 acres are now being sold to Mr. Tambusami Pillay, of Kuala Lumpur. Both are opening in coffee. Of the rest of the property, some 30 acres are under sago, 100 acres are let out to Chinese and Malays in small lots, planted up with kladi, kiidi, coffee, and fruit-trees, and the remainder is uncultivated.

On the way, on the left-hand side of the road, some 60 healthy-looking nutmeg-trees, in bearing, were passed, the property of a Malay.

After breakfast the Resident and Mr. Robson took their horses across the Klang River, by the Government ferry, and rode out two and a half miles on the Kapar Road, another section of the "Coast Road." The natives are planting coffee on their roadside holdings, but in a somewhat desultory manner calling for the "advice" of the District Officer. The soil though sufficiently good, is not equal to that of the Klang Mukim.

Later on, accompanied by Raja Hassan, the District Officer and Mr. P. Stephenson, the Resident walked for about a mile and a half along the remains of the old Klang-Batu Tiga Road, on the right bank of the Klang River, which, before the railway, was constructed, was used as the route to Kuala Lumpur, joining the Damansara Road at Batu Tiga. On this road H. H. Tunku Dia Udju, the former vice-Sultan, holds 2,000 acres of leasehold land, which has hitherto remained uncultivated. The Tunku is now clearing some 150 acres, and has entered into arrangements with Javanese for opening in coffee.

Retracing their steps, the party visited Mr. Stephenson's pepper estate known as Beverlace. This is one of the oldest estates in the country, having been opened in 1882. It contains 250 acres, of which 28 acres are planted with pepper, in bearing. The land is held under lease subject to quit-rent at the rate of 10 cents an acre, and is specially exempted from paying an export duty on the pepper produced. The estate was opened with assistance from the Government. Black pepper only is prepared. The owners are now planting up with Liberian coffee. The labour employed for the pepper is Chinese, on daily wages at the rate of \$10 a month, the headman receiving \$18 monthly. Taskwork is not adopted.

Not far from here Messrs. Hill and Kathborne some seven years ago, established a steam sawmill, which has had a somewhat melancholy history. After passing through several hands, it has recently been acquired by Towkay Lok Yew and removed to Kuala Lumpur.

Rajah Hassan told a dismal tale of the destruction of his flourishing coconut plantation by the ravages of the beetles bred in the refuse stuff at the sawmill. He received no compensation for his heavy loss.

The experience of many sawmills in the East inaugurated with estimates conclusively showing an assured margin of clear profit, has provided that the European machinery cannot compete with the patient labour of the Chinese sawyer, who, in place of making the log to be operated upon come to him, at great cost, himself goes to the log, and camping alongside, in a modest hut erected at the cost of a few dollars, works away doggedly, spends little on food, luxuries, and amusements, and in due time receives the recompense of his labour. An unlovely life, but it pays.

On Sunday, the 20th, the Resident, Mr. Robson and Mr. Stephenson left by the 9 a.m. train for Batu Tiga, nine miles, where they were met by Mr. Hurth, the Manager of the Enterprise and Glenmarie Estates. The Resident and Mr. Robson drove along the old Damansara Road to the Jeang Heng Hin Tapioca Estate, about two miles. The road is only upkept for one mile from Batu Tiga on this side. The tapioca estate comprises 2,998 acres and stands in the names of Neo Swee Gam and Neo Sun Hong. It is held under lease with a quit-rent of 20 cents an acre, and with no conditions as to the mode in which the cultivation of the tapioca is to be carried out or the number of crops to be taken off the land. About half of the area has been used up by this destructive crop and the remainder will probably be exhausted in another six or seven years, when there will remain a plentiful crop of lalang, which will supply seed to the neighbouring estates. In returning, a visit was paid to Mr. Stephenson's pepper estate, Ebor, consisting of 100 acres, of which 25 are under pepper in full bearing. Near this land, Mr. Stephenson owns 350 acres, not yet opened, which it is proposed to plant up with Liberian coffee. After inspecting Ebor and breakfasting with Mr. Stephenson, the party drove to the Glenmarie estate, two miles. This estate of 563 acres, of which 35 acres are planted with pepper, has recently been acquired by the Messrs. Hüttenbach, who are also the proprietors of the adjoining enterprise estate, on easy terms. The estate seems to have suffered seriously from bad management in the past. It is now proposed to plant up gradually with Liberian coffee. Statute immigrants are employed by the proprietor, and the estate appears to be free from serious sickness and the coolies to be contented. An estate hospital is to be supplied. The Enterprise estate of 123 acres, of which 40 acres are in pepper and 25 in coffee, presents a more flourishing appearance. These two estates lie on either side of the old Damansara Road, which was formerly the only route from Klang to Kuala Lumpur. Before the completion of the railway visitors to the State took lunch at Klang and ascended the river as far as Damansara, whence to Kuala Lumpur, by a road which avoided no hills, the distance was 15 miles. The road is now only upkept for two miles from Batu Tiga, where there is a Police Station.

After enjoying the hearty hospitality of Mr. and Mrs. Hurth, the Resident left by the 2.55 p.m. train for Kuala Lumpur. There is or was a notion that Klang is moribund, but such is far from being the case. As the chief port of the State—the most commodious port on the west coast of the Peninsula—and possessing the best coffee land in Selangor, and with several estates opened and more in prospect, and with a considerable native agricultural population, this District has a very favourable outlook. Houses are scarce and in demand in the town, and it is strange that more buildings are not erected. The extension of the railway to Kuala Klang—five miles—will do no harm to the town, but the contrary. Port Dickson has not taken the place of Seremban, nor Port Weld of Taiping.

IVORY TRADE IN CHINA.—The Belgian Consul-General at Shanghai has recently forwarded to the Brussels commercial museums a sample of Siamese ivory, such as is used in manufacturing Chinese articles *de luxe*. The ivory used by the ivory workers of Shanghai costs them on an average about 4s 6d per lb., but the price varies according to the size of the tusks.—*Board of Trade Journal*.