

Kandy District.—Many fields are being abandoned for want of wa tr. Prospects generally poor to bad, except in Pata Dumbara, Uda Dumbara, and Pata Hewaheta, where good crops are expected.

Matale District.—Rainfall fair in Matale south, especial in Kohoniyapatu; none in the east; two showers in the north on the 24th and 25th. Some of the yala fields are being resped; chenas are being cleared, for maha.

Nuwara Eliya District.—Kotmale: paddy ploughing and sowing for maha continued; kurakkan, young plants. Uda Hewaheta and Walapane: paddy, ploughing and sowing for the yala; clearing of chenas for kurakkan commenced.

Jaffna District.—Heavy rain throughout the district on the 27th and 28th. Dry grain, kurakkan, being transplanted, much benefited by rain. Palm-rah fruits gathered, crop indifferent; cutting and curing of tobacco almost completed, crop on the whole good.

There were good showers of rain on the 26th, 28th and 29th August in Mannar island, but not on the main land, except in one or two villages.

Mullaitivu District.—Rain at intervals during the month:

Vavuniya District.—Mamadu and Iraperiyakulum resped; paddy being very generally sown in tank beds; some rain in last week of month.

Hambantota District.—Paddy: yala crops in East Giruwa Pattu resped; outturn good; standing crops in West Giruwa pattu middling; in Megam pattu standing crops at Tissa middling owing to failure of rain up-country, and consequent insufficiency of water in Kirioda river; crops at Werawila, Keligama, and Veragama good.

Batticaloa District.—Good showers of rain last week, but water in wells is yet short.

Tringomalee District.—Koddiyar: about 50 acres damaged for want of rain.

Kurunegala District.—Areas under yala crop everywhere below average; maha cultivation backward; slight showers fell everywhere, but added little to tank supply; appearances of distress.

Chilaw District.—Northern division: yala paddy crops a failure, except in one village.

Puttalam District.—Small extent yala paddy, Demala hatpattu, maturing in some villages; others died owing to drought; chenas cleared in all pattus.

North-Central Province.—Continued drought; but slight rainfall at the end of the month, 1.42 inch; yala crops are being harvested under Anuradhapura tanks; the cultivation was late; paddy now only blossoming under many village tanks; the crop, partially or wholly, died from failure of water; very few tanks have more than enough for drinking purposes left.

Province of Uva.—Paddy crops in Bintenna, Udukinda, and Wellawaya withered by protracted drought; harvest in Wellawaya and Buttala damaged by flies, and Okkanpitiya by heavy rain; yield in Yatikinda and Wiyaluwa fair; chenas being cleared generally.

Ratnapura District.—Crops generally good, but spoiled by drought in some villages of Kolonna korale; prospects of chena crops favourable; rain plentiful towards end of month, except in Kolonna korale.

Kegalla District.—Yala paddy prospects: Galboda and Kinigoda korales, Paranakuru korale, fair; Beligal korale middling; Three Korales and Lower Bulatgama good; maha sowing in progress. Foot-and-mouth disease in parts of Dehigampal korale and Beligal korale.

THE "TROPICAL AGRICULTURIST."

A planter writes:—

"I have seen the colotype portrait, in last month's *Tropical Agriculturist* of the late Mr. Alex. Brown. As I knew him very well, I can answer for its being an excellent likeness, life-like in its expression, and in the outward calm which characterised the man. These memoirs and

portraits have been very interesting, and of them all, that of poor 'Sandy' Brown by no means the least so. He had confidence in himself, and knew how to hold his own, and to make his way in life, but was unable to bear misfortune and the ingratitude of people who owed all to him.

"But though these memoirs are to be for a time suspended, the new feature that will characterize the *Tropical Agriculturist* will be found of even more value by the present generation of Ceylon Colonists. To know the exact position each estate occupies in its district, and its distance on or from its outlet road, river or railway, is information I have often longed for; and now this is to be afforded in your excellent publication in detail, month by month, thus adding another to its already long list of attractions."

We thank our correspondent for his complimentary testimony and good wishes. We have still to give colotype and memoirs of Thomas Wood to complete our first series of Pioneers: unfortunately, our London Agents have made a mistake over Mr. Wood's colotype, but we trust the supply will soon be here.

ON THE DISTRIBUTION OF MANURES.

But if comparatively little is known of the effect of manures in horticulture, how much less is known of their utility in relation to the method of their distribution! With the exception of the investigations of which this note is intended to give a summary, no previous experiments in this direction would appear to have been made, although it is a field of investigation which, as will be seen, may produce very important results.

Text-books and custom—perhaps because it is the custom, perhaps because it seems more natural—advise the minute subdivision of manures, their equal distribution, and their thorough mixture with the soil, as though their utility were greater in proportion to their dissemination. It would now appear that this procedure is not always the best.

In 1892, M. Tb. Schloesing read before the French Académie des Sciences the results of investigations which he had made on the subject. This eminent authority explained how there are fertilisers, such as nitrate of soda, which are "travelling manures," so to speak, very soluble, infinitely diffusible; and how others, such as phosphatic and potassic manures, are "immobile," which, even when applied in combinations, such as potassium salts and superphosphates, which are themselves very soluble, soon enter into insoluble forms, or become wholly or partly fixed to the elements of the soil by what is known as its absorbing power. The proportion of the manure which thus becomes immobilised varies considerably not only in different soils, but even in the same soil. These manures, therefore, remain isolated in the soil, and the absorption of their fertilising principles depends on the roots themselves reaching them. But the roots interpenetrate only a portion of the ground in which they grow, and they therefore only absorb their required parts of the fertilisers which they actually reach. Hence, the utilisation of a potassic or phosphatic manure diminishes as the portion that becomes fixed is greater than the portion that remains in solution.

The question, therefore, which M. Schloesing investigated related to the best method of distribution of such manures. Whether there was a noticeable difference in the yield of two equal plots of the same kind of soil, which received equal portions of the same manures when in one case the fertilisers were very evenly, and in the other case very unevenly distributed? To this end experiments were made with four different crops, viz. Wheat, Potatoes, Haricot beans, and Peas. Homogeneous soil, containing 4.5 per cent. moisture, was divided into two lots, each weighing 1848 kilogrammes (very nearly 86 cwt.);