

COFFEE ESTATES.—Altogether the estates of Cazengo and Golungo Alto number somewhere between 15 and 20. The largest of them—one of eight, which are in the hands of the Banco Nacional Ultramarino of Portugal—was described to the writer by the courteous and hospitable manager-in-chief of the mortgaged group as “six miles long and of breadth unknown,” the map of it which he was engaged upon being then incomplete. Its crop for 1893 was estimated at 214 tons, and for the first time in the history of the property systematic planting had been undertaken, which was expected to result in the addition of 118,000 trees.

ORIGIN.—Such information must needs provoke inquiry, and it becomes necessary to explain that all these estates have been created either by the appropriation of forest in which coffee was growing wild, or by uniting patches already cleared by natives, and old records exist which prove that many a birthright was bartered for something much less substantial than a mess of pottage. That the value of the holdings might be vastly increased is self-evident. One of the smallest, that which has been mentioned as managed by Englishmen, and which belongs to a British firm, is registered as covering 1,424 acres, but only 464 contain coffee. Of the remaining area 54 acres are given to cane, for the manufacture of rum, 64 to manioc, as food for the hands, and 1 to drying grounds, thus leaving 841 acres unproductive, except in so far as it yields fuel for the steam-power and distillery.

MANAGEMENT.—Then, again, the bean of this indigenous coffee is not only of very poor flavour, but also of very small size, and on account of the height of the trees and their straggling character is often hardly worth the trouble of picking. An acre of coffee, with the plants 6 feet apart, and properly cultivated, is considered in other parts of the world good for a crop of half a ton. Under such conditions the 464 acres above referred to might be expected to bear at least 200 tons, whereas at present they only yield 35. There is no digging or manuring done on any of the properties. The trees are simply cleared of under-growth and pruned a little, in the roughest and readiest manner, and then left to do the best they can with such nutriment as rots on the surface around. But it is easier to indicate possibilities than to attain them, the problem exists in the usual terms of labour and management, and for those who can solve it the reward is fortune.

COFFEE PRICES.—Notwithstanding its inferiority the coffee of Cazengo and Golungo Alto readily finds a market. In 1892 the total shipment from Loanda consisting mainly of the crops of the two districts named, amounted to 4,805 tons, valued by the Customs at 209,609*l.*, and yielding to the Government a little over 6,000*l.* in duty. All of it went to the Tagus, and all in Portuguese vessels. The returns for 1893 are not yet obtainable; but everybody is of opinion that they will record a considerable increase; and it is a matter of certainty that the profits for the year will mount far beyond the average. The ill wind of Brazil is a favouring breeze on this side of the Atlantic. Coffee which was purchased in Cazengo at 8*½*d per lb., and which cost 1*½*d per lb to bring to the port of shipment, has already been selling in Lisbon at 7d per lb. The margin is satisfactory, and yet it shows that under ordinary circumstances there must be very little room to depend upon. In fact, the rate of exchange often makes all the difference between profit and loss. The best bargains may be utterly ruined by the vagaries of the unstable milreis, which today is worth only 3*s* 4 13-16*d.*; whereas six months ago its value was 3*s* 7*½*d. For this and other reasons merchants in Portuguese West Africa need a large capital and unbounded patience.—*Kew Bulletin.*

INDIAN TEA IN AMERICA.

A campaign for the introduction of Indian tea in the United States is being discussed in Calcutta and by the Indian Tea Planters' Association. One proposition is to raise a fund by a tax on tea plantations. The *Indian Planters' Gazette* says: “Whatever

differences there may be as to details, there is a remarkable unanimity of opinion as to the necessity of some such scheme being adopted.” It is assumed that the reason Americans do not take to Indian tea “is invariably because it has not been sent there or pushed as it was in England.” This is only partially true. India, as well as Ceylon tea, has been advertised in this country as no other sort ever was.

The truth is, Americans are not a tea-drinking people. Beer and coffee are the two national beverages, with beer occupying first place. Up to 1890 coffee was the favorite beverage, but since that date the per capita consumption has exceeded that of coffee, the use of the three beverages comparing as follows: Beer, 16.08 gallons; coffee, 14.00 gallons; tea, 10.56 gallons per annum. In England it is tea and beer—40 gallons of tea, 33 gallons of beer, and less than 2 gallons of coffee being consumed per capita per annum.

Nevertheless, Americans will welcome any plan which will secure a free distribution of Indian money especially if it is in the direction of raising the grade of tea consumed. Little reliance can be placed upon the efforts of the grocery jobbers or the retail grocers. They will work to sell the sorts for which there is a demand, and not to change the character of the tea generally used.

It is a fact that immigrants, in coming to this country from England and Ireland, abandon the use of the sort of tea to which they were accustomed in their native country. Sonchong, English Breakfast, Congou, or any sorts of heavy-boiled, red-liquored tea is not in favor. Possibly this is because importers have always neglected these sorts, being content to follow in old ruts than carve out new paths. There may be climatic reasons for the preference of American for a stronger stimulant than is afforded by tea. The *Gazette* says:—

The Americans are a shrewd, practical people, and will not pay more for Indian tea, which they hardly know of, than for China and Japan, to which they are accustomed. Now a scheme which would guarantee gardens against loss and possibly undersell foreign tea, while giving the grocer a chance of getting our product first hand at the auction room, will at once give Indian tea an advantage in the American markets which will lead to the success that it has achieved in the United Kingdom.

This plan seems to have the support of those interested in the Indian trade. They are willing to tax the planters to make good the difference between the cost and the price obtained in the auction room. One of them says:—

We could then go on forcing our tea through auctions into consumption, knock out China and Japan by underselling as well as get in front of Ceylon. Once laid down in the market under such favourable conditions, the grocers would want more of it, and prices would soon recover by the increased demand. Thus in a comparatively short time you would have 20,000,000 pounds of tea going to America, almost displacing the foreign product.

Would it? Last year the imports of tea were 89,061,287 pounds, of which 45,653,172 pounds came from China, 39,602,519 pounds from Japan; 2,547,361 pounds from the United Kingdom. In other words China and Japan supply 95*½* per cent of imports of tea into the United States.

Good China and Japan tea sells in the auction room below the prices of Indian of like grade. Let us take the last report as an illustration:

7,144 packages sold as follows: Moyune—312 packages Hyson, 9*½* to 7*½*; 1,124 do Young Hyson, 8*½* to 7*½*; 181 do Imperial, 6*½* to 23*½*c; 381 do Gunpowder, 8 to 35c. Japan—50 packages pan-fired, 13*½* c; 447 do Congou, 8*½* to 18c; 178 do India and Orange Pekoe, 12*½* to 18c. Oolong—1,296 Foochow, 9*½* to 13*½*c; 3,215 do Formosa at 16*½* to 36.

Undoubtedly if large blocks of Indian tea were put in the auction room to be sold without reserve they would find buyers at prices as low as those obtained for China and Japan tea. This would force Indian into consumption and its use would continue just so long as Indian was on a parity in price with China

and Japan tea. If the Indian planters would stand the loss, probably in a few years there might come such a displacement of China and Japan as would prove profitable to the Indian producer.

Years ago the markets of Europe were filled with American products for which there was little demand. Year after year they were forced into consumption with great loss to the shippers. In time they obtained a foothold, demand grew and a profitable export trade was secured. And there are good reasons to suppose that fine Indian and Ceylon tea would gain a prominent place here. It would certainly improve the average grade of China and Japan tea imported. A large jobbing house recently published the following advertisement:—

LOW PRICED TEAS

ARE OFTEN A SNARE AND A DELUSION.

"There never was a time in the history of the tea business in New York when there was so much trash offered as there is now. Consequently general quotations, and particularly auction sale figures are very misleading. Frequently we have inquiries such as: What kind of tea is it that we see quoted as low as 7 to 10 cents."

"There is but one answer to this, viz: It is a grade of tea that would drive trade away from any respectable grocer. We do not buy or sell such goods. We can and do sell fair, sweet drawing Amoy Oolong, Moyune Young Hyson, Congou and Japan, as low as 12 to 14 cents. Such teas can be sold by retailers without any special dissatisfaction, but no effort should be made to sell them to customers who know what a good cup of tea is."

If good sweet, choice Indian tea can be sold at auction from 15 to 30 cents per pound, it will in time cause a change in the character of the imports, approximating the change brought about in England. The experiment is worth trying and the planters ought to pay the cost of introduction.—*American Grocer.*

PROPERTIES OF INDIAN AND CEYLON TEA.

A REPLY TO MR. ERNEST HART.

Sir,—In a recent lecture on tea, &c., you state that an unerring instinct has led all the nations of the East and South, and subsequently all the Western nations, to adopt beverages of which the active principle is "theine." You stated as respects "tea," (after describing various methods of manufacture) that in all cases the leaf most highly valued was small top leaf of the twig and the bud.

I think that we Indian planters can easily prove to you that this fine leaf and bud are intrinsically better in all respects as to flavour and in "contents," than the lower and larger leaves. You state that there is no reason whatever to suppose this.

In former days Indian planters used to pluck as many as six leaves on one shoot—later on the number was reduced to a limit of four: nowadays the rule is to take only two leaves and the bud. Those who take the third leaf make it into coarse tea which sells at a very low price.

You have pointed out that the lowest leaves are made into congou, the medium leaves into soucheongs, and the fine leaves into orange pekoe. *There is no Indian "congou" now.* You warmly complimented Ceylon teas and Indian teas, pointing out, however, that the great favour with which Ceylon teas were now regarded was no doubt due to the fact that while equally rich in theine they had a less proportion of tannin than Indian teas. Why so if tannin is not injurious? I would ask you to enlarge on this difference; for on this point depends the welfare of both Indian and Ceylon tea.

I wish you to note that in spite of the fact that the Ceylon teas are in great favour because "they had a less proportion of tannin" it is well known that Ceylon teas do not sell at as high a figure as Indian teas—so that the Ceylon planter will naturally endeavour, in spite of any consideration as to "flavour," to make his tea as strong in tannin as Indian tea, in order to get as high a price.

You give full praise to the green tea of Japan which is largely consumed by the Natives and in America, and you say that this tea is neither so bitter nor so strong "as to require to be" doctored with milk and sugar to disguise its bitterness. You thus infer that British grown teas do require something to tone them down. Leaving aside the value of milk and sugar as "food," and presuming that tea alone should be drunk, can you wonder at the bitterness and strength of Indian tea when you find that the strongest and most bitter teas fetch the highest prices? In fact every Indian and Ceylon planter is devoted to the making of tea in which these two qualities predominate, and to attain the perfection of strength some plantations have arrived at the manufacture of tea in large and paying quantities from only the top two leaves and the bud.

From your position as Chairman of the Health Society you are naturally on the *qui vive* as to any product in general use which is of benefit or the reverse to those who use it. By using the term vitiated in connection with the ruling taste for strong tea, you disclose your opinion as to the effects of such tea.

There is one sort of Indian tea which I think you can never have tasted, and that is good flavoured Indian tea kept for three years.

If not you have no idea of the mellowing effect of keeping tea, and what a superb beverage it is. There is no trace of bitterness, and I believe that such tea infused for only a few minutes would steal your affections from the Japanese green tea which you praise so highly.

I anticipate that when it is recognized that India and Ceylon can manufacture any and every class of tea, that tea to suit all tastes will be made, and by this means the consumption of tea by all classes will be enormously increased; and that tea can and will be supplied which will not injure those who consume it habitually.

It remains with leading men of your position to discover what teas are good or bad; from the example of China and Russia, two countries of opposite extremes as to climate, it is evident that tea can be universally consumed without prejudice to health, and those who are interested, and pursue the subject professionally, must point out what sort of tea is good and what is bad. From the brief reports on your lecture (in our Indian papers) it strikes me that you have considered the question of "tea" more from the point of *taste* than from one of *health*.

From the planter's side in the discussion the question of quality is supreme, and no doubt you will admit that no highly flavoured article of diet can be consumed in very large quantities. So that in our interests, you might for a time put aside the question of high flavour and good taste. Even the tea you give preference to could not be consumed by the bulk of the people in large quantities daily, because the flavouring essences would surely be injurious.

Could we discover the class of tea which can be consumed in the largest quantities with the least possible injury to health, we could undoubtedly supply that tea to the benefit of all concerned.—Yours very truly,

AN INDIAN PLANTER.

—Calcutta Planter.

INDIAN TEA IN AMERICA.—We call attention to the very straightforward and satisfactory address of the Chairman at the annual meeting of the Indian Tea Association. Have the Ceylon Joint Sui-Committee, we are inclined to ask, got particulars of the scheme adopted for Mr. Bleehynden's guidance in America? This ought to be considered, seeing that Ceylon and India are expected to work together; but we see that Indian planters only propose spending Rs6,000 a year against the Rs80,000 to Rs90,000 (£5,000) which Ceylon is expected to devote to the Campaign annually.