

always said I had a talon for it' said Mrs. P. to some of her guests, who praised her tea-making. "For my part I don't think talons has much to do with it. It's stinginess generally that makes bad tea. If you use plenty, the confusion is sure to be good." . . . . . Meanwhile Mrs. P. says, "there was such jugular feeling all the evening, and everybody was so anonymous in praising her tea, that she hopes it won't be the last time she shall see her friends heaped about in friendly concave."

#### A BALLAD OF 5 O'C. TEA (AFTER AUSTIN DOBSON.)

Served in most delicate ware,—  
Dresden or Sevres,—where you spy  
Dainty devices and rare,  
Hues that enrapture the eye;  
Hands that are shapely and white,  
Pour out the fragrant Bohea,  
Beauty presides at this rite  
This is your 5 o'clock Tea!

Perched in the midst of the fair,  
Masher, resplendent, yet shy,  
Awkwardly shifts in his chair,  
He will gain courage by-and-by.  
Beaux so antique, most polite,  
Prattle in garrulous glee,  
Here in their element quite,  
This is your 5 o'clock Tea!

Characters melt into air,  
Good reputations must die,  
Think you "my Lady" will spare  
For all that you murmur "Oh fy!"  
Colloquies vapid and trite,  
Sland'rous tongues running free,  
Small emanations of spite,  
This is your 5 o'clock Tea!

ENVOY:—Sugar and cream can excite  
Envy and malice we see;  
Satirists cry with delight—  
This is your 5 o'clock Tea!

*Orchids.*—F. B. DOVETON.

We have got quite hardened now-a-days to hearing not only a few nourishing, but many wishy-washy, drinks dubb'd *Teas*, such as Beef Tea, Hot Tea, &c.; but it is curious to note how very early this habit began. In 1699 John Evelyn published a little work called "Acetaria, A Discourse of Sallets," and in recipe No. 27 I read as follows:—"Flowers.—Some of them are pickled and divers of them make also very pleasant and wholesome *Teas*, as do likewise the wild Time, Bugloss, Mint, &c. *Penny-Royal*.—Of this plant discreetly dried, is made a most wholesome and excellent *Tea*." I was amused to see that one of the above flowers, happening to come at the end of a line, was divided not into *Bei-gloss* (ox-tongue) as it should have been, but into *Bugless* as though good against B. flats or Norfolk-Howards!

A. M. FERGUSON.

#### PLANTING IN NEGOMBO DISTRICT.

COCONUTS AND CINNAMON.

At last we are having the monsoon rains and the first half of June has been rather wet, 8.70 inches being the rainfall for the fortnight as against 6.37 inches in the corresponding period of the previous year. But this year April and May together only gave 6.85 inches, whereas in April 1893 alone we had 13.44 inches followed by 8.22 inches in May.

During the past two months harvesting of cinnamon was much hindered and retarded and as the growth of the bushes has been very unsatisfactory, owing to diminished rainfall since July last. The crop of 1893-94 is likely to be a small one.

From the same cause there will be a general short-fall in the crop of coconuts, but it will not be so serious as in the case of cinnamon. Among other advantages which the one has over the other the coconut planter can generally count on the certainty of securing the crop on his trees, whereas the cinnamon planter is greatly dependent on the weather for harvesting the produce of his bushes.

#### INDIAN PATENTS.

Calcutta, the 24th May 1894.

Applications in respect of the undermentioned inventions have been filed, during the week ending 19th May 1894:—

Withering or Limping Tea Leaf.—No. 150 of 1894.—Samuel Cleland Davidson, of Sirocco Engineering Works, Belfast, Ireland, Merchant, for improvements in the process of withering or limping tea leaf in the course of its manufacture into black tea and in apparatus therefor.—*Indian Engineer.*

#### CROWN LAND IN JAVA.

In the Amsterdam letter (May 30th) of the *L. and C. Express*, we read:—

It is said that the Government intends to suspend the issue of waste grounds in Java, in order to direct more attention to the working of the other islands in the Archipelago.

#### JAVA COFFEE CROP.

AMSTERDAM, May 30.—According to a telegram from the Governor-General of Netherlands India, dated May 26th the Government's coffee crop in Java is estimated for this year at 306,980 piculs. This quantity is about double as much as estimated last year, and the out-turn of the private crop will also be considerably more, by which the agricultural companies hope to regain the losses sustained by the small crop of 1893. From the East of Java, however, reports are received that the great expectations are not fully realised, as the fruit seems to have suffered much from the heavy rains.—*L. and C. Express.*

#### OVER-PRODUCTION: IN REFERENCE SPECIALLY, TO TEA.

Many of the leading journals both in Europe and America have recently contained—or have reprinted—articles relative to the above subject. The consensus of opinion expressed throughout these is that the whole world is suffering, and must continue to suffer, from the fact that the producing power of the present day is, as the result in part to the wide employment of machinery, in excess of that of consumption. It is hardly necessary for us to restate the arguments adduced to demonstrate this fact. They must be, we fancy, patent to every one who considers seriously the present depressed prices of nearly every article of food or of personal use. It is undoubtedly the disproportion between the two items mentioned, that is responsible for the difficulties that now beset us. Population has not increased in any corresponding ratio to the enormous increase of capacity for raising food stuffs. Our own leading industry furnishes a strong illustration in favour of this contention. Where would our tea industry have been, had we not succeeded in largely ousting from consumption the teas of China? What has most aided our planters in their struggle for existence, has no doubt caused some trouble, and possibly distress, to the Chinese tea-cultivators and middlemen. It has ever been the case that success in one quarter can only be secured by a reduction in the prosperity of another.

Hitherto, under the action of this invariable law, the leading industry of Ceylon has attained to a high point. The question to be faced is as to whether the industry, so far a production is concerned, is fast reaching its prescribed maximum. Already, as we know, there are not wanting signs which "he who run may read" that the present demand is more than met