

and the packs of hounds kept by sporting members of the planting community are hardly sufficient to keep down the game. The open season is now the most unfavourable one for hunting, and some owners have been obliged to sell their hounds in consequence. The Forest Department plantations at Nuwara Eliya and Nanuoya are suffering much from the attacks of red deer and elk. In some places as new parks are put in they are browsed down. I should not be surprised to hear that private properties suffer in the same way. It would be therefore desirable to make some provisions for keeping the game down within reasonable limits.

PROPOSED FORESTRY BRANCH AT THE SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE.

Owing to the courtesy of the Government of India, some of our superior officers have been able to study at the Imperial Forest School at Dehra Dun, and in 1894 two rangers are to be sent from here. It has, however, struck me that, with the present staff of the Agricultural School, together with some additions from the Forest Department, it would be possible to give to our rangers and guards, and also to candidates for appointment in those grades, a training which, although not equal to that obtainable at the Indian school, would materially help in a proper and careful treatment of our forests. Large sums of money are no doubt spent on the Dehra Dun school; the best professors are obtained from all parts of India, and an experience of thirteen years has now shown the best way to impart a practical knowledge of forestry and its appendant sciences, and we cannot hope all at once to compete with Dehra. But, whereas this Government cannot afford to send more than three or four men at a time for a lengthened period of time to a distant place like the north of India, it may be more practicable to have classes in Colombo and to teach forestry in the very forests in which officers will be called upon to practise it. I have therefore been ordered by Government to discuss the matter with the Director of Public Instruction, who has kindly offered to give all the assistance possible. The final proposals have not yet gone in, but we shall submit them before long.

The receipts for 1893 amounted to Rs365,758 (as against 462,427 in 1892) and the charges to Rs404,756 (as against 475,491 in the previous year.)

TEA DRINKING IN JAPAN AND CHINA.

To take a cup of social tea in China and Japan is not only a pleasure, as it is with us, but a solemn duty born of generations of custom. *** The delicate straw-coloured beverage which is consumed in Japan differs very materially from the infusion called tea at home. *** The teapot is heated with hot water before the tea is put in, then hot water, not boiling, is poured over the leaves, and immediately poured on and off, but it is never allowed to stand on the leaves more than a minute.

In most houses a kettle of water is always on the *hibachi*, a sort of portable stove, resembling a brazier, and this is set before the tea-maker, who watches the bubbles and steam with as much anxiety as if the fate of the whole Empire depended upon the water being used at a certain instant. Both men and women make tea so daintily and deftly that it is a perfect delight to watch them. ***

The natives themselves use neither milk nor sugar in their pale, yellow tea, but when they can get a cup of what they call China tea—which is a great treat, for they prefer it to their own—they use "all the trimmings." ***

The Banko teapots, with the plainly visible thumb marks, are much prized by the Japanese, but a tiny teapot of Kaga ware, with ten cups—the Japanese dozen or set—is the one most commonly seen. Some of the fine tea sets cost fabulous sums.

Many of the old families have brass or iron kettles, beautiful and artistic, which they proudly show, and declare that they have come down to them by direct inheritance from ancestors who used them six and

seven hundred years ago. A story is told of one of the Shoguns, who, being very fond of tea, rather unscrupulously gratified his taste for fine kettles by robbing the pagodas of Buddhist temples of the brass rings that surmounted them, and used the metal thus secured for casting a kettle, which he declared gave "no harsh taste to the water." ***

The Chinese are as inveterate tea-drinkers as the Japanese, but they use leaves prepared in a different way. ***

The Chinese keep always a kettle of water boiling over the brazier ready to make tea at a moment's notice, for no visitor ever goes to a house without being offered tea on arriving and departing. They use boiling water, and pour it over the dry tea in each cup. Among the better class, a cup shaped like a small bowl is used with a saucer which is a little less in diameter than the top of the bowl, and is used for a cover when the tea is brewing. When the boiling water is poured over the tea, it is covered for the space of two or three minutes, by which time the leaves have unfolded and fallen to the bottom of the cup, leaving the tea clear and deliciously fragrant. ***

The Chinese have a variety of teapots, most of them much larger than the toy things of the Japanese, and many of them kept in a basket cosy. The handles or halls are often bamboo or metal, similar to the *do-bin* of the Japanese.—"The Lady," Aug. 9.

PIASSAVA FIBRE.

On my way to Cape Coast I noticed a small quantity of Piassava Fibre being shipped from Appam. This valuable fibre is obtained from the palm which is so common and plentiful in this part of the colony, namely, "*Raphia Vinifera*." It is a very important product, being worth from £45 to £60 per ton according to quality.* Great interest is at present shown in England in the discovery of similar fibres to this, and there is a good market for them, but the supply is very small, owing chiefly, I think, to the difficulty experienced in extracting and cleaning the fibre. It is chiefly used for brushmaking. I will make enquiries and endeavour to obtain information respecting suitable machinery for cleaning and preparing the fibre which information, if I am able to procure it shall be published in my next report.—*Mr. W. Crouther's Report, Gold Coast.*

SELECTED ENGLISH PATENTS.

TEA.—No. 15317.—The Waygood-Tupholme Grocers Machinery Co., Ltd., and B Tupholme, Falmouth Road, London.—Relates to apparatus for cutting, equalizing and blending tea. The cutting apparatus consists in a pair of the usual cellular rollers and two knives A in contact therewith, which are fixed on shafts B carrying levers connected by a spring Pawls are pivoted on the levers and are usually supported by the fixed checks, but when nails, stones, or other articles push back either of the knives a little, the corner of the pawl moves in to gear with a cam on the roller shaft, and the lever C is thereby pushed further way, so that the knife A is turned sufficiently to allow the foreign body to pass. The spring D then brings the knife back to the cutting position. From the cutter the tea falls upon a travelling band, to which other tea may also be supplied, and is conveyed to a mixing-cylinder containing three canted wings and two byonet sided trihedrons which during a few revolutions of the drum, effect the blending. The door of the drum is opened and closed by a pair of racks thereon, which can be put into gear with two pinions on shafts above and below, operated respectively by a pulley with an endless rope, and by a hand-wheel. From the mixing drum the tea glides gently into troughs in which scoops fit easily. Or the tea may be delivered into a chest by a travelling belt. For delivery into bins on the floor below a receiver or carriage is used having four triangular

* Written two years ago.—Ed. T.A.