

MARAGOPIPE, LIBERIAN AND OTHER KINDS OF COFFEE, AND NEW PRODUCTS GENERALLY.

We call attention to "J. M." 's interesting letter on page 134, in reference to the Maragopipe coffee referred to the other day by our correspondent, Mr. T. Christy.

We cannot learn of any one else in the island who has experimented with this coffee in the way described by Mr. Christy. "J. M." gives us some interesting information of his experience and his exhortation not to be impatient over experiments with new products is very well timed. As regards other varieties of coffee received, or tried in Ceylon and elsewhere, we have the following response from Mr. E. Woodhouse to our inquiry:—

"Yes: I certainly obtained a number of samples of different kinds of coffee from the West Coast of Africa, but it is so long ago that I have been trying in vain to recollect by what channel they reached me. They came in little bags, 5 or 6 of them if not more; but on opening them up I found to my disappointment they contained *cleaned beans* instead of parchment, and consequently useless for sowing purposes, and they were therefore consigned to the cup. The tiny beans were excessively bitter and by the way they were all small-sized beans, with one exception, and that was a sample of the large Liberian variety which was tried with such little success in Ceylon. The Central African coffee I saw in Zanzibar in 1878 in the house of one of the principal slave-dealing Arabs who said it came from the Lake Tanganyika. The beans were small with something of the appearance of the 'monkey' coffee collected on the estate upcountry. I may here remark that the Liberian cherries I saw grown in Selangor were juicy enough to be put through a pulper, without difficulty, whereas the Ceylon Liberian (I understand cannot be pulped with any degree of satisfaction. This difference was acknowledged by an old Pussellawa kangani who showed me over the Batu Cave estate belonging to Mr. Hill, and also by the ex-Ceylon Superintendent of Pengerang in Johore."

We further call attention to the letter (on the same page) of a planter who thinks the colony will not be in a sound position until among other things, we are exporting 250,000 cwt. of Liberian coffee. We should certainly like to see that day; but much fear the export of *all* kinds of coffee from Ceylon will not reach that figure again before the close of the present century. At the same time, every little helps, and we are much in favour of careful experiments in small clearings such as "J. M." and some others of our estate proprietors have initiated.

PLANTING IN SOUTHERN PROVINCE.

(From Mr. Ievers' Administration Report for 1893.)

It is difficult to estimate the area under tea. It was estimated last year by Mr. Elliott to be 5,000 acres in the Galle and 4,000 in the Matara Districts. There has certainly been an increase in the acreage, because Sinhalese are now opening up small gardens all over the district. I have collected the following information regarding the native growing of tea, but I cannot guarantee the figures. I am told it costs a native R100 to clear and plant an acre of forest, and R30 for an annual upkeep, and that an annual profit of R65 an acre is obtained when the tea comes into bearing.

CINNAMON.—The area has increased in the Galle District from 3,340 acres in 1892 to 3,875 in 1893. It is said that an acre of cinnamon land does not now give a profit of more than R8 per annum. The cultivation seems to be carried on more from sentiment and strong caste feeling than from its being lucrative.

SUGAR.—There is a decrease in the acreage in cultivation of cane, as only 864 acres are estimated to have been under crop, as against 1,040 in 1892. The yield was estimated to have been 6,912 cwt of sugar. The cost of cultivating an acre of cane is said to be R65 a year. The decrease is attributed to the necessity for allowing land to remain fallow, which had been cultivated for three successive years.

CITRONELLA OIL.—The area under this produce appears to have been normal.

THE UNITED PLANTERS COMPANY OF CEYLON, LIMITED.

The Directors now present to the Shareholders their Third Annual Report, with the accompanying Accounts to the 31st December, 1893, and are pleased to be able to show such a satisfactory result, bearing in mind the depression that existed during the greater part of last year.

The quality of the Tea was fairly well maintained, and the yield considerably increased, but prices on the whole showed some slight falling-off from the previous year.

During the year 236 acres of new land have been planted in Tea, and are doing well.

The Accounts now presented show a Balance of Profit of £6,590 1s. 11d, after paying an Interim Dividend at the rate of 5 per cent. per annum, all Current Expenses and upkeep of Machinery and Buildings, and after writing £2,000 off the Factories and Machinery Account, £1,000 off the New Clearings Account, and making further provision for the Superintendents' Fund.

The Directors propose to add £950 to Reserve Account bringing the amount of that Account up to £4,000, to pay a Final Dividend of 3½ per cent., free of Income Tax, making 6 per cent. for the year, and to carry forward a Balance of £808 6s. 11d.

The Directors have again to place on record their appreciation of the excellent care and attention bestowed by the Superintendents on the Estates under their charge.

INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT NYASSALAND.

Mr. E. Woodhouse has placed at our disposal the following information received from Mr. H. P. Johnston in a letter dated 5th July:—

In regard to Nyassaland, land is very cheap at present ranging from almost nothing in the border districts to 2/6 in the settled country. The average rainfall is 55 inches annually. The country is exceedingly well timbered and well watered by running streams. The mortality at present among Europeans is 6·5 per cent, though this proportion is considerably reduced when the deaths of people killed in warfare, or hunting accidents or in infancy are deducted. The deaths from malarial fever and dysentery—the only two diseases of any seriousness—amount to about 3 per cent.

The natural aspect of the country is exceedingly beautiful. The soil is nearly everywhere fertile. Native labourers very abundant and very cheap, wages ranging from about 2s 6d to 3s a month besides food which costs 1s per week. Customs duties, taxes, &c. are very low. Some of the planters reckon that with ordinary good luck and with present prices, 100 per cent profit may be made on coffee directly the trees come into bearing.

There is a direct line of steamers (the German mail line) between Bombay and Tshiade (Ohinde) at the mouth of the Zambesi.