

impressed by the apparent value of Mr. Roberts' invention, and if he can deliver his chest at the price above mentioned it seems to be likely they will soon become favourite with your planters. For many reasons, well-seasoned wood is much to be preferred to metal for tea chest, and these new ones can be used over and over again, and folding flat as they do, can readily be re-shipped without occupying much space or with any risk of breakage. They can be closed up completely in a couple of minutes.—London *Cor.*, July 20.

THE TEA TRADE IN AUSTRALIA.

The *Melbourne Argus* of the 12th ult. in reviewing the tea trade for the season 1893 says the most striking feature was the comparative absence of the disturbance which so seriously affected almost all the channels of commerce during the financial troubles of the past twelve months. Importations were heavier than usual, owing primarily to the low state to which stocks had fallen at the end of last season. This increase had not tended to benefit the small section of the community, composed of importers and dealers, but almost exclusively the public, who, through the whole year, had reaped the benefit of a fully-supplied market. The blending trade now took a distinct lead, the great bulk of the year's sales having been effected by those houses that had paid the closest attention to all the details of this interesting branch. In Melbourne and the country towns the exclusive tea shops had made rapid progress as direct suppliers and it only required a few more seasons to conquer the trade of the country and fair inland districts, where at present Foochow teas were in the main sold as imported. The expansion of the trade, both in Indian and Ceylon teas, had been very rapid. The consumption of these now exceeded that of the product of China, and this expansion was certainly due to merit. No doubt the finer Foochow kinds had flavour and better keeping qualities, but they lacked strength; while both Indians and Ceylons had a great advantage both in strength and color—the qualities that, so far, the public appreciate. At present consumers were not educated up to fine quality, and consequently there had been a marked absence throughout all the colonies of really fine tea. Ceylon sent quite a surfeit of common teas, and consequently all concerned in this trade reaped but little benefit from them. They had also received a larger proportion than they cared for of faultily-gured better class leaf; in fact a great blot in this trade had been the apparent belief of buyers in Colombo that any tea would suit Australia, and, acting upon it, they had caused heavy losses to all concerned; but latterly some really good quality had been sent, and all of it had found a ready sale. Indian paid very well for the first three months, held their own for another three months, and had gradually tended to more or less severe losses as the season closed. Ceylon also commenced well, but gradually lost way, excess of supply and their indifferent keeping qualities having led to some of the smartest losses of the season; so severe, indeed, had these losses been upon some of the "held over" shipments that it would be a bold importer who again held for a better market. Dealers had been more fortunate; there had always been plenty of stock, and therefore no occasion to speculate.

COFFEE, PALMS, RICE &c. IN SOUTH CHINA.

It is an orthodox economical doctrine in China, for the agriculturist, that the man must plough the rice-fields, and the woman must rear silkworms and weave cloth, or starve. The officials sometimes take laudable pains in extending sericulture, for instance, in Kwangai province in 1891, and, at the date of this

report, in this district. But it would probably be easy for people less opposed to novelties than the Chinese to grow many other things in the neighbourhood, screened by the existing bamboos and pine-woods from the violent winds which make such protection necessary.

The ricinus, or castor-oil plant, grows all about here and in South China as a wild weed. In Tong-King, when exploited, it is said to be almost at once remunerative. Areca and coconut palms and coffee would probably do well. In the same latitude and climate a little west, in the French territory, the traveller steaming up the Red River to Hanoi admires an interminable panorama of arecas raising their elegant crests above the bananas; and near T.-Kow and Tainan, in Formosa, are flourishing plantations of this tree. The coconut grows abundantly in Hainan, quite close. Coffee grows well in Tong-King, at least as far north, and in the little island of Gweichow, only thirty miles south of Pakhoi, it thrives in the grounds of the Catholic Fathers of the Missions Etrangères. Of this, last, however, it must be said that it has not yet found its way to favour with the Chinese as an article of food.—*Consular Report.*

PLANTING ON THE SHIRE HIGHLANDS.

Mr. A. J. Swann writing from the Zambesi River, says:—

Whatever prospects there may be offered at Johannesburg, Port Salisbury, or Barbuton, the Zambesi and Shire Highlands must be considered essentially a field for *capitalists*. Let no young man, led away with the glowing prospectuses of this company and the other, launch out from home for these parts *unless* he has an engagement *before leaving*. I parted with my fellow-passengers at Cape Town, Natal, Port Elizabeth and even Beira, all *on spec*, but bound *up country*, where doubtless situations will be obtainable almost at once for steady, trustworthy men. *But* that does not apply to Chindi and the Zambesi; therefore on no account emigrate here *unless* with capital. Providing one has capital—say, £1,000—he can commence operations either as a coffee or cocoa planter, and if one may judge by the present crops, be certain of success. The country immediately adjoining this grand river presents all sorts of inducements to the man eager and willing to work, but there is one fatal condition to be faced—viz., it *belongs to Portugal*. No one would question her right to the land, being the first pioneers, but it is a fact beyond contradiction that she will neither make use of it nor allow others. Capitalists are eager to start all kinds of legitimate undertakings, to rent their land, to improve their revenue, and make use of the finest East African waterway, but they invariably find that as soon as capital is expended, plant fixed up, and a concern set running, all kind of hindrances are thrown in their way, they are burdened with increasing taxes beyond reasonable bounds, their industry is crippled in its early stages and collapses, bringing ruin to the shareholders and dead loss to the Portuguese officials, who get little or no salary except what can be made by a disgraceful system which could only be tolerated in a Portuguese colony, and thus these out-of-date people, who pretend to be a civilised race, block the way of millions who are clamouring for room to work and live. No sane person who has studied the world's history and marked the ever-increasing rush of business competition in Europe, America and elsewhere can question the certain fate of such a race, providing they continue to stand in the way of progress—*Christian World.*

PLANTING TEA IN RUSSIA.

An experiment already tried without success has been lately repeated. Tea plants have been sent from here to Russia to be planted on the slopes of the Caucasus. It is a private enterprise on the part of Messrs. Popoff, Freres, but the ground is granted by the Government. About 2,000 plants have been sent