

by the Fibre Investigation Department of Agriculture at Washington and specimens were accordingly presented to them. Col. Ward truly observes that the great problem is the manufacture of a good decorticating machine. So far as the Fair was concerned there was nothing new in this line of machinery on exhibit. The free "afternoon-coffee" prove a great attraction as has already been generally admitted. Appended to the report is a statement showing the expenditure of the £5,000 voted by the Legislature. There is a balance at the credit of the account amounting to £423, which may be slightly increased by the further sale of articles not yet disposed of. The compilation and distribution of the Handbook cost £964, the erection of the Court £1,182. It should be added that the Atlas Company conveyed the exhibits free of cost to and from New York, and Messrs. Macey and Dunham of that city acted gratuitously as forwarding agents. To the great credit of the Honorary Commissioner be it said that he has not charged in the account a single item of expense incurred by himself.—*leaner.*

### TEA SOIL AND OTHER ANALYTICAL EXPERIMENTS.

A planter, who is not keen about the Association following Mr. Hughes' advice, wrote, before he had seen letter on page 57:—"Why can't the Government make Cochran or someone else public analyst, and if any planter wants his soil or tea leaves analysed, send to him, and for a small fee get a report. What good was done by analyses of coffee soils, in times past! A decent clean-looking bean will fetch a good price, no matter where it has been grown. The same thing happens with tea, a fine flavoured tea will fetch a good price wherever grown, and I think most planters of 10 or 15 years' experience know what soils are suitable for tea. I would rather use my own judgment in a matter of that than go to any analyst."

Our correspondent should not suppose that analyses of soils and manuring experiments are the only steps (though these are very important). He cannot have read Mr. Hughes' letters in our columns during the past year very carefully. Take the very latest (before the one above referred to) and what did Mr. Hughes write (April 11th)?—

"With a variation of climate and soil, there will naturally be a variation in the quality and strength of the tea made."

But in what respects does the tea differ, and how far is the difference due to the soil, and how far to the climate; or still more how far is the difference due to the mode of manufacture?

There are the points which I have put forward from time to time in your paper, with a view of exciting the interest and support of your Planters' Association.

It is therefore a matter of regret, and possibly of distinct pecuniary loss to the Ceylon tea enterprise, that up to the present time the Planters' Association have not considered it desirable to promote scientific investigation into the principles of tea manufacture.

As was pointed out in my Report upon the Tea Analyses made last year in London, the market price of the samples examined, varied according to the amount of the soluble ash contained, and the results certainly suggested further research as being likely to yield useful as well as interesting results.

It is probably only a question of time; and very likely a large Tea Company will first lead the way in scientific research and attach an experienced chemist to the Factory staff, who, if a good man, would soon be found most useful, for instance in reporting on the quality of the green leaf delivered from different estates.

In saying this I feel sure I am not simply expressing an opinion, but predicting a fact."

We sincerely regret that the enterprise of the Ceylon Planters' Association in the direction pointed out above, should have fallen so far behind that of the sister Tea Association in Calcutta.

### DRUG REPORT.

(From Chemist and Druggist.)

London, May 24th.

**CASSIA FISTULA.**—Twenty bags of fair, but somewhat wormy, Java pods, imported via Amsterdam, were bought in today at 30s per cwt. They are said to represent the residue of the recent imports.

**COCAINE.**—Next to the drop in salicylates the chief feature of interest in the drug market has been the sudden reduction of 4s per oz. (equal to about 2½ per cent) in the price of hydrochlorate of cocaine. From a minimum of 18s per oz., the quotation for the article (in parcels of at least 100 oz) has been lowered to 14s per oz. Smaller quantities are being offered at 14s 3d to 14s 6d per oz. For 1-oz. bottles 3d per oz. extra is charged. Delivery must be taken within three months from date of contract.

**QUININE.**—These has been no business at all in the article this week. In the wholesale market it would, perhaps, be possible to buy second-hand German bulk at 11d per oz., but 11½d per oz. is the asking price.

**VANILLA.**—A fairly large supply, offered at auction today, was well competed for, ordinary and medium kinds realising full prices, fine beans 1s per lb. advance. The following were the quotations:—Fine 8 to 9 inches, 20s to 21s 6d; 7 to 8 inches 18s to 18s 6d; 6½ to 7 inches 12s to 14s 6d; 5½ to 6½ inches 10s to 11s 6d; 4½ to 6 inches 8s to 9s 6d; pale oily and foxy, from 12s 6d down to 2s per lb.

### TEA AND SCANDAL.

Mrs. PARTINGTON, Mrs. RAMSBOTTOM and Mrs. GRUNDY are such historical characters that it would be interesting to get their experiences of Tea. I have as yet only come across those of the first-named lady, and I now hand them on to you. They are thus described in "Mrs. Partington's Tea Party":—"Mrs. P.'s first visit was to the Grocer's. 'I want half a pound of the best black and a quarter of a pound of the best green if you please' said she, to the sharp young man behind the counter. 'I'm told Souchong has the best savour, but I don't pretend to know. The real insignificance of the names passes my reprehension.' 'Perhaps you'd like to try Orange Pekoe ma'am' suggested the shopman. 'It's tea I want, thank you' was the reply. 'I didn't know that you were conveyors of fruit as well.' The man grinned and packed up the black tea. 'Gunpowder I suppose ma'am?' he asked. 'Lor bless the man; does he think I am going to kill anybody, or have a corrosion in the house or what?' she exclaimed. The man explained that he merely mentioned a certain kind of green tea. 'Well' she said, greatly relieved; 'if you're sure it won't blow up, I don't mind. I've often heard that it's dangerous to use much green tea and if they put gunpowder in it. I am sure it is no longer a project of surprise.' The green tea was also packed up. . . . The tea was made and passed round, and no one present ever tasted a better flavoured cup in his life. Mrs. P. had a genius for tea-making; 'an excellent thing in woman.' She did not give you all the strength of the leaf in the first cup, and the mere washings of the tea-pot in the second. She did not send you a pale yellow infusion with the first, and a black decoction with the second. She avoided both these faults and managed to give just the right and pleasant degree of strength to both, and even if you were unreasonable enough (as all her guests were) to ask for a third or even a fourth supply, you might be quite certain of finding the quality of the beverage unimpaired. Her tea pot was like a conjuror's bottle, and seemed inexhaustible in its supply of good liquor except that it continued to pour tea only, and not variously coloured water like the bottle in question, 'Paul