

with pernicious liquors, must contribute to lessen its virtues. Notwithstanding all this the frenzy for this Asiatic infusion has now become almost universal in the northern parts of Europe. But it cannot be denied that since its first introduction, it has contributed more to the sobriety of the nation than the severest laws and most eloquent harangues of Christian orators, or the best treatises of morality."

I have just seen a Tea named 'Dulcemoza.' I suppose it is so called, being intended to be drunk in every *Dulce Domum*.

A. M. FERGUSON.

BOTANICAL EXPLORATION IN BORNEO.

One of the most interesting papers read before the Royal Horticultural Society was that delivered by Mr. F. W. Burbidge, M.A., curator of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Dublin. He prefaced his remarks with a graceful allusion to the extensive social, political and commercial work which the late Sir James Brooke, better known as Raja of Sarawak, accomplished in Borneo. Sir Hugh Low was the first, however, to investigate the flora of West Borneo, and to commence the introduction of plants which were new to science. It was in 1877 that Mr. Burbidge and Mr. Peter Veitch were sent out by a Chelsea firm to make botanical collections, more particularly in reference to the discovery of new species of "pitcher-plants" known to exist in great varieties and numbers in certain parts of that country. Before starting, Mr. Burbidge received a pleasantly frank description of the inhabitants of Borneo from the botanical traveller, Mr. Thomas Lobb, who had visited the place a quarter of a century before, and who described the natives as an unmitigated lot of thieves and liars. Mr. Burbidge gave some highly entertaining accounts of the difficulties of travel in that remote country where such luxuries as vehicles were practically unknown, and, for the matter of that, impracticable. It took his party six days to travel a distance of 18 miles. He succeeded in bringing home no less than fifty new species of ferns, besides several new pitcher-plants and orchids. Mr. Burbidge was enthusiastic over the number of fine orchids—notably one with flowers with a spike exactly resembling a lily of the valley—and rhododendrons still to be introduced into English gardens. The opportunities for botanical exploration are yearly becoming so many that doubtless even Borneo will soon be exhausted of its rarities. The paper was attentively followed by a large audience, and the author received a hearty vote of thanks.—*O. Mail*, April 27.

VANILLA IN TAHITI.

The cultivation of vanilla has received a good deal of attention lately from our official representatives abroad. The British Consul in Tahiti (Polytesa) has just sent home an exhaustive report on the culture of the plant in his district, from which we take the following passages:—

The cultivation of vanilla has been carried on in the Island of Tahiti for several years, but is limited to a few districts only, that of Papara supply more than half of quantity sent into the market. The native mode of culture is, as a rule, simply to plant the cuttings of the vine under the shade of trees, and then to leave them to grow and twine round supports as best they can. Stakes, though not dense, is necessary to ensure a successful crop of beans. About one year from the time of planting the vine commences to flower, and the inoculation, which then takes place, must be carefully attended to; this is generally carried out by women and children whose

light hands are best suited for the delicate operation. In from six to nine months from the time of inoculation the bean will be ripe for picking and curing. The method of curing is to keep the beans alternately indoors rolled in cloths, and outdoors during the day spread on mats exposed to the sun; for periods of three or four days at a time, until they are dried and ready for the market, but many native planters now dry their vanilla in boxes with glass covers. At the Tamarua plantation, which is under foreign management, great attention is paid to trimming the plants, and keeping the ground clear from weeds, and the vines are trained on well-selected supports invariably carefully attended to.

The boxes used for curing the beans are made of hard wood with glass covers, and measure 6 by 4 by 2 feet in depth. They are usually filled three-quarters full, the beans being placed on a blanket in the bottom of each box and covered with a double thickness of blanket at the top. The glass lids are then put on, and the boxes exposed to the sun for about fifteen days, when the beans are generally found to be sufficiently sweetened to admit of their removal to the drying-house, which is constructed of corrugated iron, and contains three tiers of wire shelves. The beans are laid on the top tier first, and are then moved to the second and third in succession as they gradually dry, and remain on the latter until they are perfectly dry and fit for the market.

The Tamarua plantation consists of about 51 acres. The annual expenses with an experienced foreman receiving 200*l.* per annum, amount to about 400*l.* The crop varies from 90 to 260 lb. per acre per year. An average of 175 lb. at the medium price of 4*s* per lb. leaves a very fair profit.

The Tahiti vanilla is inferior to that of Mexico, Bourbon, and Mauritius, and the drawback is not improved by the careless manner in which the native, and even the European, dries and ties his bundles of beans for export. The following figures show the exports of vanilla from Tahiti during the last ten years:—

	1883.	1884.	1885.	1886.	1887.
Weight, lb. ...	2,726	5,454	4,919	8,406	7,610
Value, £ ...	818	1,636	1,475	2,522	3,044
	1888.	1889.	1890.	1891.	1892.
Weight, lb. ...	12,569	8,789	15,882	24,585	25,560
Value, £ ...	5,028	1,758	3,258	7,456	4,418

—*Chemist and Druggist*.

STANDARD TEA COMPANY OF CEYLON: ON COFFEE AND TEA CULTIVATION.

The third annual meeting of this company was held at the offices, 25, Fenchurch Street, on Tuesday, 1st May. The directors present were: Mr. Alex. Brooke (in the chair), Mr. Peter Muir, Mr. Robert Kay Shuttleworth and Mr. Norman W. Grieve. Among those present were Mr. A. E. Wright, Mr. George Johnston, Mr. H. L. Stables, Mr. E. Forman, Mr. Wilson, Mr. Capper and Mr. Robert J. Chippinall.

The Secretary read the notice calling the meeting.

The report and accounts were taken as read.

The CHAIRMAN said that it was a pleasure for the directors to recommend for a third time a dividend equal to 10 per cent. per annum. Exchange had been favourable, averaging for the company 1*s* 3 7/32*d*. The Indian Government had been assaying to "improve" exchange undeterred by the example of the United States Government and the bileous troubles consequent thereon in that country; but the Calcutta officials so far apparently had done little good or harm. Coffee as seen in the report had continued to contribute substantially to profits. There were received from all the estates in 1893 723 cwt., including 77 cwt. from Gordon, the newest acquisition, and not in 1892 accounts. Excluding Gordon coffee, the company had in 1893 646 cwt against 1892 530 pwt. Last year allocation was made to hopes entertained by some in Ceylon of benefiting their coffee by planting among irrevocable shade trees. This was brought home to him (the chairman) when visiting in February the Liddesdale