

any contact with iron would make the leather prepared by the extract brittle and discoloured.

**Medicine.**—Reede states that the bark mixed with dried ginger or long pepper and rose water is said to be a cure for diabetes. No other writer appears to have made this observation; indeed, O'Shanghnessy expressly states that none of the Mangroves are reported to have any medicinal virtues.

**Food.**—The fruit is reported to be sweet and edible, and the juice to be made into a kind of light wine. Salt is extracted from the aerial roots.

**Structure of the Wood.**—Sapwood light red, heartwood dark red, extremely hard, but warps and splits in seasoning; it is very durable. Weight 70.5 lbs. per cubic foot.

**Domestic Uses.**—The wood, although good, is rarely used in India. Rumphius, speaking of the wood, states that in Amboyna it was a much valued fuel, and that the Chinese employ it to make charcoal for use in their workshops. He also adds that the larger aerial roots were used as anchors for small boats, and remarks that in the Moluccas a curious custom, and one at variance with European ideas, prevails, in that while the anchors were made of wood, the boats are constructed of a light stone thrown up by the volcanoes of these islands.

#### OCCASIONAL NOTES.

We are glad to be able to announce that the article on the "Laws of Ceylon relating to Agriculture," which had been left unfinished in our issue for April, 1891, will be continued in this and future numbers. The accomplished lawyer who has kindly consented to complete the article, hopes to be able to find the time to write also on the Forest Laws of Ceylon. Now that the students of the School of Agriculture are getting some training in Forestry, the paper on the Forest Laws of Ceylon will be of special value.

We offer a hearty welcome to Mr. G. W. Sturgess, the new Colonial Veterinary Surgeon for Ceylon. We trust he will have a useful and successful career in the island.

Mr. W. A. de Silva, G.B.V.C., who has been acting as Colonial Veterinary Surgeon, has reverted to his substantive appointment as Headmaster of the School of Agriculture, where his varied qualifications make his services of the greatest value to the staff and students.

The Hon. Secretary to the Agri-Horticultural Society of Madras has been good enough to give us some information regarding a variety of paddy which is cultivated as a dry crop, i.e., not irrigated but dependent upon rainfall. This variety which is known as "Valai" is cultivated in a comparatively limited tract of country from 40 to 50 miles north of Madras. The land is manured, and ploughed two or three times. It is then harrowed twice and the seeds are then put in with the native drill. The seed is sown in August or early in September, and the crop is harvested in

December. The mean monthly rainfall at Madras which may be taken as the same as the tract in which "Valai" is grown, is as follows:—August 4.81 in., September 4.34 in., October 10.80 in., November 13.60 in., December 5.75 in. The mean annual rainfall is 50 inches.

There would seem to be little chance of the *Maram* grass (*Pennisetum arenaria*) doing well with us, as the Superintendent of the Saharanpur Botanic Gardens, in writing to us, mentions that though it made a good growth during the cold season, it completely died out during the first monsoon. We had hoped that this grass might have been useful on our sandy wastes, but it is suggested to us that the various species of *Sporobolus* grown on the *usar* lands in India, might suit our purpose better.

Of the six varieties of cow-pea grown experimentally at the School of Agriculture, the variety known as "the wonderful" was the most satisfactory. The cow-pea in appearance and growth much resembles the bean known in Sinhalese as *gas-ma*, only that the latter is much the robusiter of the two and yields heavy crops of fruit. We doubt not that this latter is in every way fitted to take the place of the cow-pea, and we commend it to the notice of those interested in the subject of leguminous green manures.

A herd of some 25 Sind cows and bulls was lately imported from Karachi by that enterprising gentleman, Mr. T. H. A. de Soysa, and realised good prices when exposed for sale. It will be remembered that the first occasion on which Sind cattle were imported into the island was in 1893, when a number of cows were brought over for the Government Dairy. The dairy authorities may justly take credit for being the means of introducing one of the best Indian milking breeds into Ceylon where the native milch cow is so unsatisfactory.

The crop of sweet-potatoes raised at the School of Agriculture under favourable conditions was at the rate of 60 tons per acre.

We have received, through the kindness of the Superintendent of the Cossipore Practical Institution of Horticulture, Floriculture and Agriculture, three cases of Rhea plants for experimental cultivation at the School of Agriculture. The Cossipore Institution was founded in 1886 through the munificence of Babu Hem Chander Mitter, who, quite unassisted by Government or private individuals, has been maintaining it nearly seven years for the purpose of imparting free education on Horti-Flori and Agriculture. Students are expected to remain as such for a period of at least three consecutive years, and they are allowed to draw a monthly stipend of R10 to R14, accordingly to their efficiency, with free board. Lectures are delivered to the students on various subjects in Practical Botany, while the institution also offers facilities for the training of the sons of gardeners in the art of high-class gardening. On another page we give an extract from the report of this useful Institution for 1893.