

BRITISH CENTRAL AFRICA.

NEWS OF OLD FRIENDS.

Our file of the *British Central Africa Gazette*, extends up to 30th April and contains a great deal of interesting information. Before leaving for Europe, Mr. Johnston C.B., the Commissioner was, on the 4th April, entertained at luncheon by the Shire Highland residents, at the Court House, Blantyre. At the meeting held afterwards, the following subjects (inter alia) were discussed:—The future prospects of the country; Regulations dealing with native labourers; the protection of caravans on roads; the route to be taken by the proposed railway; Import duties; measures to prevent the introduction of coffee leaf disease into this country, etc. The meeting was a satisfactory one, and has been of much assistance to H. M. Commissioner in enabling him to ascertain on the eve of his departure for England, the views of the European residents on various questions.—Mr. Vice-Consul Sharpe who acts for Mr. H. H. Johnston, H.M. Commissioner and Consul-General, during his absence, returned in the middle of March from a journey round Lake Nyasa.—As evidence of how the people seek British protection we learn, that the native population clustered round Fort Maguire now numbers over twelve hundred.

We read that April was to witness a considerable exodus of Administration officials going home on leave of absence. Mr. Alexander Whyte F.Z.S., returns to England after three years' hard work in British Central Africa. During his absence his place will be taken at Zomba by Mr. MacLounie who will be glad to receive and acknowledge Natural History Specimens. Messrs. King, Miller, Whicker, Bell, and Hoare are all leaving during April for a visit to England. Vice-Consul King will be replaced during his absence from Tshinde by Vice-Consul Belche who has arrived there from Delagoa Bay.

Another Ceylon man's work is referred to:—

Mr. T. E. Lloyd is surveying the Central Shire (Cataract region) a part of the river which has been left untouched by the map maker since Livingstone's first rough survey. Mr. Vice-Consul Sharpe has fixed by latitude and longitude the positions of all important places from Tshikwawa on the Lower Shire to the shores of Lake Mweru and to Fort Rosebery the north end of the Johnston Falls on the river Luapula. The Commissioner has made surveys of the Shire from Tshiroto to Tshikwawa and from Matope to Lake Nyasa and has besides laid down on the map a good deal of the country round Zomba, Mlanje, Tshiroto, and Blantyre. The late Mr. Peile surveyed the whole of the Lower Shire Province, Captain Sciater B. E. mapped out the Mwanza basin, Mlanje, and other Shire districts. Other work has been done by Mr. Crawshaw on the North West of Lake Nyasa and is being done by Captain Edwards on the South East and South West of the same Lake. In addition Commander Carr R.N. has surveyed the Lower Shire from Tshiroto to Pinda. All this work is being forwarded to the Royal Geographical Society and it is hoped that in time a really accurate map of the Eastern part of British Central Africa may be produced.

NOVELTIES FOR ENGLAND: MR. WHYTE'S COLLECTION.

Amongst the Natural History collections recently sent to England there were many novelties in beasts, birds, reptiles, fish, molluscs and insects. It is a very rare thing now a days to discover new mammals: nevertheless in the last consignment of specimens despatched by the Commissioner there were a new antelope from Lake Mweru and a new species of *Cercopithecus* Monkey from Mt. Mlanje. The Antelope—a handsome water buck—was discovered by Mr. Crawshaw and has been named after him—*Cobus Crawshayi*.

Mr. Whyte's journey home will be no sinecure. He has in charge an extensive managerie of unruly beasts and querulous birds which he hopes to deposit

safely, living or dead, in the Zoological gardens. Among them is a large Wart Hog, originally from Lake Mweru. By a *façon de parler* this animal is described as "tame"; that is to say he will not run away from his native attendants who however not infrequently have to yield place to his impetuous charges. The lower incisors and canines of this wart hog can be used on timber with the effect of a sharp chisel: it is therefore merely a matter of mathematical calculation to those that know him how long he will take to eat his way through the planks and beams of his travelling cage. A native carpenter travels in attendance to build up and repair as the pig destroys. In this way it is hoped that he may reach the dock of the ocean steamer still in his cage.

Mr. Whyte conveys to England at least a dozen creatures which have never been exhibited before in the Zoological Gardens. We therefore wish him good luck and warm weather between Madeira and London. The English Channel is a sore trial to tropical animals.

We must warn our readers against the risk of confusion between this division and that of British Eastern Africa or "Ibea" as it used to be called—between Nyassaland or Blantyre, for instance, and Uganda. About the latter Lord Stanmore has been holding forth in the House of Lords, and it is quite evident that attractive as the country is from Kiukiyu to Uganda—and we have more to say about it—some time must elapse before it is ready for planters. At Blantyre, on the other hand, great progress has been made in settlement and planting, and the London correspondent of an evening contemporary—who, however, seems rather mixed over Central and East Africa—shows that Messrs. John Gordon & Co., formerly of Kandy, and still of London, have been forwarding palpers to Blantyre. This firm could not give the correspondent the information which has repeatedly appeared in our columns from Blantyre correspondents—ex-Ceylon residents—as to coffee fields and crop: the yield of young coffee being 5 cwt. per acre. The pioneer planter is Mr. John Buchanan, C.M.S., (no connection of any gentleman of the name in Ceylon or Assam,) who went out as a lay Mission Agent and began planting coffee 10 or 12 years ago. The area now planted altogether, we should say, must cover a few hundred acres, and the cost of labour is very favourable, while land is got on very easy terms and good sport must be readily available. We are thus answering our correspondent "£5,000" offhand; but in a few days we shall be able to give him more definite information, on most of the points raised by him.

Meantime to resume our notice of the latest African Gazette, an interesting account is given of Tete, a town in Portuguese East Africa:—

Lieutenant Commander Carr, R.N. has recently paid a visit to Zomba to see the Commissioner. He left Tete after the middle of March having landed most of the Telegraph gear safely. Captain Carr enjoyed his visit to Tete and made some very interesting journeys about the Central Zambezi, penetrating as far inland as the Jesuit Mission in Buroma (beyond the Juebrabo Falls). This was the first time British Gunboats has ever visited Tete, but it evidently will not be the last judging from the ease with which they got there (never touching bottom) and the pleasantness of their stay. Captain Carr speaks warmly of the kindness and hospitality received at the hands of the European Portuguese, prominent among whom is the widely-known Senher Nunes, the friend and guide of Livingstone. [Senher Nunes is the brother of the late ex-British Vice-Consul Nunes at Quelimane]. Captain Carr pooh'd the idea of a quarrel between the English and Portuguese at Tete in the matter of the Telegraph and pointed out that a great distinction should be drawn between the Portuguese of European birth and the half Castes and Goanese.

European Portuguese like Senhor Nunes who plant all imaginable trees, shrubs, and vegetables, who make bricks, tiles, and cement, construct water wheels, turning lathes, and sugar mills, who feed cattle and dress hides are ideal colonists for Central Africa and are as welcome on British Territory as on Portuguese.

Fruit is available at Tete in abundance. Mangoes, which are famous everywhere for flavour, guavas, pine-apples, custard apples, oranges, and lemons, etc. The mangoes were planted by the Jesuits, who appear to have done more for the country than anyone else and whose reward for their work was expulsion. No native of the Zambezi can be persuaded to plant a mango seed as they have a superstition that those who plant a seed of the mango inevitably die; but for this stupid idea the whole country would have been covered with these trees by this time. Wheat grows well in the Zambezi valley and bread is made at Tete by Senhor Teixeira's people, pombe making the yeast. The flour is of a good white quality and makes as good bread as the English variety.

Coconut planting has begun to attract attention in good earnest in East and Central Africa and a great deal of information from recent articles of ours in the *Observer* and *Tropical Agriculturist* is given, but by a curious perversity is credited to the *Madras Mail* (which had also copied from our publications). We quote as follows to show the great scope there is for palm cultivation in Central Africa:—

COCONUT PLANTING.

Perhaps it is not known to all our readers how successfully the coconut palm has been introduced on the west coast of Lake Nyasa by Jumbe, the Arab Sultan of Mariamba. Jumbe furnished the Administration a year ago with some young plants which are now thriving at Fort Johnston. Makwira, a Makololo chief, has coconuts growing and yielding fruit on the Lower Shire just above Elephant Marsh. There is no reason why millions of coconut trees should not grow here and there along the shore of Lake Nyasa and on the banks of the River Shire. The writer of these lines has seen coconut palms growing luxuriantly on the banks of the River Kwanza in South West Africa, two hundred miles from the sea, and it is a mistake to suppose that the coconut requires sea air for its well being. It evidently prospers better for the presence of certain salts in the soil, but these are abundantly found on the low lying shores of the Lake and on the banks of the Shire. A very suitable district for coconut plantations would be the neighbourhood of the salt Lake Tshilwa. In Zanzibar the yield is excellent, the average being from 100 to 200 nuts per tree.

A description is given of Mlanje district, of British Central Africa:—

The total area is about 1,250 square miles, a large proportion of which is occupied by the Mlanje range of mountains, their area perhaps being about 300 square miles. It is the most easterly collectorate division of the British Central Africa Protectorate and adjoins the Zomba, Blantyre and Rao districts. It has three Administration stations, namely Fort Anderson, Pangomani and Fort Lister.

Forest and Fruit Trees.—The invaluable cypress forests on the plateau rank first both in appearance and utility, the only drawback at present being the difficulty of access. These tracts of forest are all on Crown land and every effort is made to preserve them from damage by fire and other means of destruction. Quantities of this useful timber have been used for building purposes at Blantyre and Zomba with most gratifying results. Mr. Whyte, in whose honour the tree is named (*Widdringtonia Whytei*) has collected large quantities of seed and is endeavouring to introduce the tree to other districts. On Mlanje, it is seldom seen below 3,500 feet elevation. The Mananja name is "m'ngwai". The most useful forest trees are "Mula" or "mpembu" (*Parinarium mobala*) a prettily grained wood, "Mpindimbi" (*Vitex umbrosa*) "M'alala" very tough and often used for bows, "Msenku" (*Nyapaca Kirkii*) a dark red wood and very common, "Nsopa" close grained, and "Mbawa"

(*Khaya senegalensis*) and "nkungza" both a species of mahogany, and making most beautiful furniture.

Bamboos are to be seen at all altitudes, those on the higher slopes of the mountain being very small. Varieties of Euphorbia grow on the Tshilwa plain. Indian rubber is not tapped to any extent by the natives although the vine (*Landolphia*) is quite common.

Several orange trees are growing in the southern division, those at Tshipoka's yielding fruit of a superior quality. Lemons and refreshing limes are also plentiful the latter however coming chiefly from around Mount Olarendon.

Fish.—Are found in nearly all the streams and the people make weirs and set nets and fish traps at every suitable locality.

Of sad news we have the following:—

It is with much regret that we announce the death at Rhodesia, Mweru, of Mr. F. G. Bainbridge, the Collector for the Lupula District of British Central Africa. Mr. Bainbridge originally came to this Country in the employ of the African Lakes Company, and was for some time engaged in carrying on their transport service between Lakes Nyasa and Tanganyika. He entered the service of the British Central Africa Administration 16th May 1893, and proceeded with the late Mr. John Kydd to form the new station of Rhodesia, on the Kalungwizi River (Lake Mweru). Upon the death of Mr. Kydd at Rhodesia September 24th, 1893, Mr. Bainbridge took charge of the station, pending the arrival there of Dr. Watson. At the date of his death, Dr. Watson had reached Mkula, only a few days distant from Rhodesia. His death was due to hæmaturic fever, this being the second death from that cause in the Mweru District.

Of progress again:—

Two iron boats for the British Central Africa Administration are now on their way north, one for Tanganyika, the other for Mweru. They will greatly facilitate and shorten the journey to the countries south (or west) of Lake Mweru. The stretch between Abercorn and Sumbu, which takes, by land, five days, can be done by boat in one to two days. From Mputa (N.E. corner of Mweru) to Katanga (Mshidi's) takes by land three weeks, whereas with the help of a boat on Mweru it can be done in eight days. Moreover, from Mputa to the new station, Fort Rosebery, on the Lupula, can be done by boat in eight days, whereas the same journey by land with a caravan could not be accomplished in less than fifteen days' actual travelling.

Captain Jacques paid a short visit to Zomba and Blantyre on his way from Tanganyika to the coast. He has, as most people interested in Africa are aware, held, with much gallantry, for some time past the Congo Free State station "Albertville" on the west side of Lake Tanganyika. His journey from Tanganyika to Tahide has been accomplished in five weeks. Previous to Captain Jacques' departure from Albertville, Captain Descamps, who passed through Blantyre on his way north some few months ago, had arrived there. Captain Jacques expressed his astonishment at the substantial progress made in the Shire Highlands.

INDIAN TEA DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION.

The following is from the fourteenth annual report:—The committee of the Indian Tea Districts Association have the pleasure to submit to the members the following statement on the conclusion of the fourteenth year of its operations:—

Shortly after this Association was formed in May, 1879, efforts were made to establish branches both in Calcutta and the various tea districts in India. Two years later, viz., in May, 1881, the Indian Tea Association was formed in Calcutta. It has from the first been the endeavour of your committee to bring about as close a union as possible between the two Associations, which have but one end in view, the promotion of measures tending to the advantage of the tea industry. With this special object communications have been made to Calcutta during the last two or three years, and the following resolutions