

COFFEE GROWING.

"Coffee is being grown now in so many countries," writes a correspondent—"Borneo, the Straits Settlements, Central Africa, Mexico, Colombia, and other States of South America, all going into coffee planting on a large scale,—that they must in a few years, overflow the markets of the world, and reduce prices to an extent that will allow of no profit, to the producer. It was a gloomy time for coffee planting in Ceylon in 1846-47. Plantation coffee went below 40s per cwt. In those bad times, many estates were abandoned, or sold for one-tenth of what they had cost, and this rush into coffee, at so many centres, is likely to lead to like results in a few years."

But what about cheap labour? Will it not tell in coffee—as in tea—growing, and justify Ceylon men doing what they can with Liberian or with small fields of Arabian coffee?

NEWS FROM THE CENTRAL PROVINCE:
PLANTING AND OTHERWISE.

(Notes by "Wanderer.")

August 9th.

BRITISH NORTH BORNEO.—I notice that in the Sandakan District the nationality of labor employed on tobacco estates was as follows:—

Chinese	1,548
Native	224

Prices paid for Borneo tobacco—2.75, 2.50 and 1.52 guilders, the Company has declared a dividend of 12 per cent 92-93, and the profits 1893-94 will permit one or two of the Tobacco Companies to declare much larger dividends.

COFFEE.—*Alas!* the coffee bushes on most of the estates in Dimbula and Dikoya that promised to give good crops are now attacked by bug and leaf disease. The worst of these attacks of bug on coffee where tea is planted is that the tea plants are quite blackened, and must suffer also.

BIG YIELDS OF TEA.

The following is worth noting as the result of using cattle manure. Three fields Nos. 1, 2 and 3 were all pruned last year in February when all blackened from the frost.

No. 1	Had not been pruned for 2 years before
No. 2	do do 1½ do
No. 3	do do 1 do

These are adjoining fields:

No. 1 had been manured with cattle manure the preceding year, No. 2 has been manured with the same manure since, No. 3 has never been manured. I would remark here that this is a splendid tea; of the three, No. 3 has the best soil, and looks as good as the manured tea; a splendid cover. But while Nos. 1 and 2, the manured fields, are still flushing as well as the weather permits, No. 3 is blossoming and shooting up and needs pruning at once. No. 3 is the best sheltered. The average yield of the fields is over 700 lb. per acre per annum. No. 1 field is very stiff clay; a dark chocolate. At first I feared tea would not grow there, owing to the stiffness of the soil clinging in lumps to the coolies' mamoties and the constant supplying needed, the frost from which it suffered every year, killing the smaller plants out altogether and the larger down to the ground. These larger plants would then throw out shoots all round the collar and from the roots. At 4 years the field looked like a one year old clearing; and several planters said it would never grow tea. But I forked the ground over, and applied freshly slaked lime before it had lost its caustic state, and while it burnt the coolies hands. The result was grand! It grew so rapidly and thickly that since then the frost has only affected the tops of the bushes, and they shelter, the supplies.

Permit me here to contradict the statement that once manure your tea you must always manure it. It does not hold good with tea nor did it with coffee although the latter did look "shuck" after heavy crop whether the crop was the result of manure or not.

PLANTING AND PRODUCE.

SIR AMBROSE SHEA AND BAHAMA FIBRE.—In an article entitled "The Romance of a Governorship," the *Pall Mall Gazette* calls attention to the labour of Sir Ambrose Shea in connection with the fibre industry of the Bahamas. It says: "When Sir Ambrose first went out as Governor the industries of the population of the islands, some 50,000 souls, consisted of sponge fishing, which was not too remunerative a calling, and fruit cultivation, which was still more precarious a trade. Indeed, the islands were living from hand to mouth, and a state of intense depression prevailed. His Excellency had not long been in the colony when one day a man came into his office carrying a bundle. Sir Ambrose, who evidently possessed an observant eye, fastened it not so much upon the contents of the bundle as upon the rough piece of rope with which it was tied. Unless all his shipping experience was betraying him the rope was Manila. So he asked the man where he got that cord from. 'It grew in my garden, your Excellency,' was the reply. Sir Ambrose, according to the man's subsequent narrative of the incident, thought he was being 'sourced,' and spoke somewhat sternly, 'Why, there's plenty of it in your Excellency's own grounds,' insisted the man with the bundle. Sir Ambrose doubtless now knew, that had there been any idea of a joke at the outset, it would have been dropped at the stage at which it brought a frown to his brow. Greatly surprised at this news he allowed himself to be conducted into the grounds, where the sisal plant was pointed out to him. Upon examination of the leaves of the plant he at once detected its fibrous appearance. He took a few leaves indoors, scraped off their surfaces, and picked out from them beautiful long fibres five or six feet in length. To say that his Excellency was astounded would be a feeble way of describing his feelings. This sisal plant was held in detestation in the colony. It overran the vegetable gardens, and strangled the yams and the sweet potatoes.

AN ALADDIN'S LAMP.—Attempts had been made to root it out of the islands, and, these having failed, equally unsuccessful efforts had been made to burn it out. Yet Sir Ambrose could see that this plant was going to be a genuine Aladdin's lamp to the colony, a source of endless wealth. He hinted something of this sort to some of his acquaintances, but one and all, as politely as might be declined to believe his Excellency. It was an article of belief in the islands that every new Governor had his own particular fad. This, then, was Sir Ambrose's, they said. He would soon get tired of it, they hoped if his hobby was not encouraged by any aggressive opposition, so they all looked on a little cynically while the Governor busied himself about this precious plant. Even the niggers were incredulous. 'You've been treading gold under your feet,' he observed to a group of them one day. They did not like to disbelieve so great a personage as the Governor, but even a nigger has a certain amount of self-respect, and they could not swallow that. So they assumed a mystified look, and tacitly wondered how the missionaries had overlooked the moral welfare of the Governor so unaccountably. But later on, when they found all their sisal plants were being bought up eagerly by operators, and were in strong demand, they turned to one another with staring eyes and open mouths, while the old men of the families sagaciously remarked, 'I 'speca dia 'ere sisal plant is what de Gubnor was tellin' us about when he say: we was treading the gold under our feet.' The niggers are not in want of any information about the plant now. But this is in advance of the narrative.