

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 'spects dere '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.

DEVELOPING THE INDUSTRY.—Sir Ambrose came back to England to raise capital for the development of this new source of wealth, and brought with him samples of the plant, which the Kew Gardens people declared to be the best fibrous leaves they had ever seen. Thus encouraged, Sir Ambrose soon got his capitalists. He organized a system of ten-year allotments and put 100,000 acres of Crown lands into the scheme. Mr. Joseph Chamberlain took 20,000 acres; Mr. Courage, the brewer of a company in which Lord Denbigh is concerned, and a big Newfoundland company, all took substantial holdings, and it was not long before the entire hundred thousand acres were taken up. Land which was difficult to sell at 5s. the acre now commands four dollars, and the result is a fine fund under the control of the Imperial Government for the making of roads, harbours, and other public works. Upon returning to the Bahamas, Sir Ambrose despatched a commissioner to Yucatan. There had been a similar industry there, which had resulted in the making of some enormous fortunes, during the last thirty years. So rumour said, at least; and the commissioner went to see to what extent these stories could be verified, for the statements in some cases seemed too fabulous for credence. The commissioner returned with a report to the effect that the whole thing was true. The samples of the Yucatan plants which he brought back, moreover were very inferior to the Bahamas variety. The latter indeed have proved to be from 25 to 30 per cent superior. After this the new industry was taken up enthusiastically.

APPARENTLY FABULOUS, BUT TRUE.—“Sir Ambrose distributed the allotments in such a way that there was no crowding, and no competition on the part of the holders for their neighbours' labourers. The system is something like a revival of a pleasant form of feudalism. In case the colonials should awake and think the English investors were making too good a thing out of the islands, Sir Ambrose gave to all heads of families who had neither land nor present means of purchasing it ten-acre lots, to be paid for out of the first crop. This year there will be a moderate export, while next year the exports should reach 2500 tons and go on increasing at the rate of about 2,000 tons yearly. The estimated value of £20 per ton mentioned by Sir Ambrose is, I believe, a very low one, for the fibre is so fine that it is likely to get into linen fabrics and so on, increasing materially both its value and the demand for it. These people with the ten-acre lots can leave the cultivation to the women and children, and yet benefit more than £100 a year therefrom. The prosperity of the islands is felt by the very poorest man there, and in time the colony threatens to give the world an object-lesson in what happens to a community which is too well off. One matter which gave Sir Ambrose Shee, in his organization of the industry, considerable anxiety, was the absence of any satisfactory labour-saving appliances. But now a New York man has invented a scutching machine, which separates the fibre from the vegetable part of the leaf so rapidly that leaves may be picked in the morning, and the fibre from them ready for shipment in the evening. Two women, one at each end of the machine, can separate from 1,500 to 2,000 lb. of fibre per day. Last year the fruit yield was a complete failure, and the colony must have been famine-stricken but for the fiscal plant. Sir Ambrose Shee had applications from all the ends of the earth for plants, but in the interests of the islands he passed a law prohibiting the exportation of the plants. Regarded in the light of the fiscal principles which now obtain, such a law appears a little heterodox; but the case has special circumstances, and the Colonial Office have confirmed Sir Ambrose's pronouncement.”

COFFEE IN RUSSIA.—We learn from St. Petersburg that a tobacco grower in the Kuban district of the Caucasus last year sowed four grains of Mocha coffee, which he had procured from Poti, where it had failed to realise expectations. Two grains died, but the other two gave eight hundred berries. These eight hundred being planted out have produced seven hundred fine healthy bushes, from which an excellent little crop is expected shortly.—*H. and C. Mail*, July 27.

A WARNING TO “WOULD-BE TEA PLANTERS IN WESTERN LANDS:” TEA IN THE UNITED STATES AND RUSSIA.

An old planter writes:—“There are millions of acres, in and out of the tropics, fit to grow tea; much of it better than lands now under that product; but cheap and abundant labour, is a far more important factor, than suitable land. The average wages of day labour on Ceylon estates, runs from 4d to 5d. sterling, at the present value of the rupee, and any country that has to pay higher, had better let tea planting alone. Neither Russia nor the United States can obtain labour at this rate, and he can import tea much cheaper than they can produce it. As both those countries however, go in for the protection of home products, at the expense of home consumers, it may be feared, that if their experiments are attended with a fair measure of success, foreign-grown tea, would be heavily handicapped in their markets.”

We see no immediate cause for a fear of this kind. It is impossible to make tea-growing a paying industry on any large scale, in either Russia or the United States.

INDIAN PATENTS.

CALCUTTA, THE 26TH JULY 1894.

Applications in respect of the undermentioned inventions have been filed during the week ending 21st July 1894:—

TEA ROLLING MACHINERY.—No. 197 of 1894.—Lawrence Herbert Sutton, of Panitolla, Lakhimpur Assam, Engineer, of the Jokai Assam Tea Company, Limited, for improvements in tea rolling machinery.

MANUFACTURE OF FOLDING BOXES OR CASES.—No. 203 of 1894.—John Coryton Roberts, of 16, Cromwell Grove, West Kensington, London, England, Planter for improvements in the manufacture of folding boxes or cases.

OIL IN STEAM BOILER AND OTHER FURNACES.—No. 207 of 1894.—Allan Stewart and Charles Stewart Brassfounders, of Port Eglinton Brass Foundry, Glasgow, Lincashire, Scotland, and John Farmer, Engineer, of 147, St. Andrew's Road, Pollokshields Renfrewshire, Scotland, for improvements in and relating to appliances for burning oil in steam boiler and other furnaces.

BURNING OIL IN STEAM BOILER AND OTHER FURNACES.—No. 208 of 1894.—Allan Stewart, and Charles Stewart, Brassfounders of Port Eglinton Brass Foundry, in the City and Co. of Glasgow, Scotland and John Farmer, Engineer, of 147, St. Andrew's Road, Pollokshields, Renfrewshire, Scotland, for improvements in and relating to appliances for feeding and burning oil in steam boiler and other furnaces.—*Indian Engineer.*

CALCUTTA, THE 2ND AUG. 1894.

Applications in respect of the undermentioned inventions have been filed during the week ending 23rd July 1894:—

PORTABLE DOMESTIC APPLIANCES FOR THE THRESHING OF CEREALS AND OTHER SEEDS, &c.—No. 216 of 1894.—James Mylne, Zemindar and Indigo Planter, of Beheea, in the district of Shahabad, Bengal, for portable domestic appliances for the threshing of cereals and other seeds and the production of bhoosa from the straw of the same.

Specifications of the undermentioned inventions have been filed under the provisions of Act V of 1888:—

BRICK KILNS.—No. 252 of 1893.—Edward Lennon Cantwell, Civil Engineer, and Patent Agent, of 5, Old Post Office Street, Calcutta, British India, for improvements in brick kilns. (Filed 18th June 1894.)

MACHINES.—No. 11 of 1894.—Jean Alexandre Lacote, of 95, Boulevard Beaumarchais, Paris, in the Republic of France, Engineer, for improvements in machines for decorticating ramie and other fibrous plants (Filed 20th July 1894).—*Indian Engineer.*