

by the Fibre Investigation Department of Agriculture at Washington and specimens were accordingly presented to them. Col. Ward truly observes that the great problem is the manufacture of a good decorticating machine. So far as the Fair was concerned there was nothing new in this line of machinery on exhibit. The free "afternoon-coffee" prove a great attraction as has already been generally admitted. Appended to the report is a statement showing the expenditure of the £5,000 voted by the Legislature. There is a balance at the credit of the account amounting to £423, which may be slightly increased by the further sale of articles not yet disposed of. The compilation and distribution of the Handbook cost £964, the erection of the Court \$1,182. It should be added that the Atlas Company conveyed the exhibits free of cost to and from New York, and Messrs. Macey and Dunham of that city acted gratuitously as forwarding agents. To the great credit of the Honorary Commissioner be it said that he has not charged in the account a single item of expense incurred by himself.— *leaver.*

TEA SOIL AND OTHER ANALYTICAL EXPERIMENTS.

A planter, who is not keen about the Association following Mr. Hughes' advice, wrote, before he had seen letter on page 57:—"Why can't the Government make Cochran or someone else public analyst, and if any planter wants his soil or tea leaves analysed, send to him, and for a small fee get a report. What good was done by analyses of coffee soils, in times past! A decent clean-looking bean will fetch a good price, no matter where it has been grown. The same thing happens with tea, a fine flavoured tea will fetch a good price wherever grown, and I think most planters of 10 or 15 years' experience know what soils are suitable for tea. I would rather use my own judgment in a matter of that than go to any analyst."

Our correspondent should not suppose that analyses of soils and manuring experiments are the only steps (though these are very important). He cannot have read Mr. Hughes' letters in our columns during the past year very carefully. Take the very latest (before the one above referred to) and what did Mr. Hughes write (April 11th)?—

"With a variation of climate and soil, there will naturally be a variation in the quality and strength of the tea made.

But in what respects does the tea differ, and how far is the difference due to the soil, and how far to the climate; or still more how far is the difference due to the mode of manufacture?

These are the points which I have put forward from time to time in your paper, with a view of exciting the interest and support of your Planters' Association.

It is therefore a matter of regret, and possibly of distinct pecuniary loss to the Ceylon tea enterprise, that up to the present time the Planters' Association have not considered it desirable to promote scientific investigation into the principles of tea manufacture.

As was pointed out in my Report upon the Tea Analyses made last year in London, the market price of the samples examined, varied according to the amount of the soluble ash contained, and the results certainly suggested further research as being likely to yield useful as well as interesting results.

It is probably only a question of time; and very likely a large Tea Company will first lead the way in scientific research and attach an experienced chemist to the Factory staff, who, if a good man, would soon be found most useful, for instance in reporting on the quality of the green leaf delivered from different estates.

In saying this I feel sure I am not simply expressing an opinion, but predicting a fact."

We sincerely regret that the enterprise of the Ceylon Planters' Association in the direction pointed out above, should have fallen so far behind that of the sister Tea Association in Calcutta.

DRUG REPORT.

(From *Chemist and Druggist.*)

London, May 24th.

CASSIA FISTULA.—Twenty bags of fair, but somewhat wormy, Java pods, imported via Amsterdam, were bought in today at 30s per cwt. They are said to represent the residue of the recent imports.

COCAINE.—Next to the drop in salicylates the chief feature of interest in the drug market has been the sudden reduction of 4s per oz. (equal to about 2½ per cent) in the price of hydrochlorate of cocaine. From a minimum of 18s per oz., the quotation for the article (in parcels of at least 100 oz) has been lowered to 14s per oz. Smaller quantities are being offered at 14s 3d to 14s 6d per oz. For 1-oz. bottles 3d per oz. extra is charged. Delivery must be taken within three months from date of contract.

QUININE.—There has been no business at all in the article this week. In the wholesale market it would, perhaps, be possible to buy second-hand German bulk at 11d per oz., but 11½d per oz. is the asking price.

VANILLA.—A fairly large supply, offered at auction today, was well competed for, ordinary and medium kinds realising full prices, fine beans 1s per lb. advance. The following were the quotations:—Fine 8 to 9 inches, 20s to 21s 6d; 7 to 8 inches 18s to 18s 6d; 6½ to 7 inches 12s to 14s 6d; 5½ to 6½ inches 10s to 11s 6d; 4½ to 5 inches 8s to 9s 6d; pale oily and foxy, from 12s 6d down to 2s per lb.

TEA AND SCANDAL.

Mrs. PARTINGTON, Mrs. RAMSBOTTOM and Mrs. GRUNDY are such historical characters that it would be interesting to get their experiences of Tea. I have as yet only come across those of the first-named lady, and I now hand them on to you. They are thus described in "Mrs. Partington's Tea Party":—Mrs. P.'s first visit was to the Grocer's. "I want half a pound of the best black and a quarter of a pound of the best green if you please" said she, to the sharp young man behind the counter. "I'm told Souchong has the best savour, but I don't pretend to know: The real insignificance of the names passes my reprehension." "Perhaps you'd like to try Orange Pekoe ma'am" suggested the shopman. "It's tea I want, thank you" was the reply. "I didn't know that you were conveyors of fruits as well." The man grinned and packed up the black tea. "Gunpowder I suppose ma'am?" he asked. "Lor bless the man; does he think I am going to kill anybody, or have a corrosion in the house or what?" she exclaimed. The man explained that he merely mentioned a certain kind of green tea. "Well" she said, greatly relieved; "if you're sure it won't blow up, I don't mind. I've often heard that it's dangerous to use much green tea and if they put gunpowder in it, I am sure it is no longer a project of surprise." The green tea was also packed up. . . . The tea was made and passed round, and no one present ever tasted a better flavoured cup in his life. Mrs. P. had a genius for tea-making; "an excellent thing in woman." She did not give you all the strength of the leaf in the first cup, and the mere washings of the tea-pot in the second. She did not send you a pale yellow infusion with the first, and a black decoction with the second. She avoided both these faults and managed to give just the right and pleasant degree of strength to both, and even if you were unreasonable enough (as all her guests were) to ask for a third or even a fourth supply, you might be quite certain of finding the quality of the beverage unimpaired. Her tea-pot was like a conjuror's bottle, and seemed inexhaustible in its supply of good liquor except that it continued to pour tea only, and not variously coloured water like the bottle in question. "Paul

always said I had a talon for it' said Mrs. P. to some of her guests, who praised her tea-making. "For my part I don't think talons has much to do with it. It's stinginess generally that makes bad tea. If you use plenty, the confusion is sure to be good." Meanwhile Mrs. P. says, "there was such jugular feeling all the evening, and everybody was so anonymous in praising her tea, that she hopes it won't be the last time she shall see her friends heaped about in friendly concave."

A BALLAD OF 5 O'C. TEA (AFTER AUSTIN DOBSON.)

Served in most delicate ware,—
Dresden or Sevres,—where you spy
Dainty devices and rare,
Hues that enrapture the eye;
Hands that are shapely and white,
Pour out the fragrant Bohea,
Beauty presides at this rite
This is your 5 o'clock Tea!

Perched in the midst of the fair,
Masher, resplendent, yet shy,
Awkwardly shifts in his chair,
He will gain courage by-and-by.
Beaux so antique, most polite,
Prattle in garrulous glee,
Here in their element quite,
This is your 5 o'clock Tea!

Characters melt into air,
Good reputations must die,
Think you "my Lady" will spare
For all that you murmur "Oh fy!"
Colloquies vapid and trite,
Sland'rous tongues running free,
Small emanations of spite,
This is your 5 o'clock Tea!

ENVOY:—Sugar and cream can excite
Envy and malice we see;
Satirists cry with delight—
This is your 5 o'clock Tea!

Orchids.—F. B. DOVETON.

We have got quite hardened now-a-days to hearing not only a few nourishing, but many wishy-washy, drinks dubb'd *Teas*, such as Beef Tea, Hot Tea, &c.; but it is curious to note how very early this habit began. In 1699 John Evelyn published a little work called "Acetaria, A Discourse of Sallets," and in recipe No. 27 I read as follows:—"Flowers.—Some of them are pickled and divers of them make also very pleasant and wholesome *Teas*, as do likewise the wild Time, Bugloss, Mint, &c. *Penny-Royal*.—Of this plant discreetly dried, is made a most wholesome and excellent *Tea*." I was amused to see that one of the above flowers, happening to come at the end of a line, was divided not into *Bei-gloss* (ox-tongue) as it should have been, but into *Bugless* as though good against B. flats or Norfolk-Howards!

A. M. FERGUSON.

PLANTING IN NEGOMBO DISTRICT.

COCONUTS AND CINNAMON.

At last we are having the monsoon rains and the first half of June has been rather wet, 8.70 inches being the rainfall for the fortnight as against 6.37 inches in the corresponding period of the previous year. But this year April and May together only gave 6.85 inches, whereas in April 1893 alone we had 13.44 inches followed by 8.22 inches in May.

During the past two months harvesting of cinnamon was much hindered and retarded and as the growth of the bushes has been very unsatisfactory, owing to diminished rainfall since July last. The crop of 1893-94 is likely to be a small one.

From the same cause there will be a general short-fall in the crop of coconuts, but it will not be so serious as in the case of cinnamon. Among other advantages which the one has over the other the coconut planter can generally count on the certainty of securing the crop on his trees, whereas the cinnamon planter is greatly dependent on the weather for harvesting the produce of his bushes.

INDIAN PATENTS.

Calcutta, the 24th May 1894.

Applications in respect of the undermentioned inventions have been filed, during the week ending 19th May 1894:—

Withering or Limping Tea Leaf.—No. 150 of 1894.—Samuel Cleland Davidson, of Sirocco Engineering Works, Belfast, Ireland, Merchant, for improvements in the process of withering or limping tea leaf in the course of its manufacture into black tea and in apparatus therefor.—*Indian Engineer*.

CROWN LAND IN JAVA.

In the Amsterdam letter (May 30th) of the *L. and C. Express*, we read:—

It is said that the Government intends to suspend the issue of waste grounds in Java, in order to direct more attention to the working of the other islands in the Archipelago.

JAVA COFFEE CROP.

AMSTERDAM, May 30.—According to a telegram from the Governor-General of Netherlands India, dated May 26th the Government's coffee crop in Java is estimated for this year at 306,980 piculs. This quantity is about double as much as estimated last year, and the out-turn of the private crop will also be considerably more, by which the agricultural companies hope to regain the losses sustained by the small crop of 1893. From the East of Java, however, reports are received that the great expectations are not fully realised, as the fruit seems to have suffered much from the heavy rains.—*L. and C. Express*.

OVER-PRODUCTION: IN REFERENCE SPECIALLY, TO TEA.

Many of the leading journals both in Europe and America have recently contained—or have reprinted—articles relative to the above subject. The consensus of opinion expressed throughout these is that the whole world is suffering, and must continue to suffer, from the fact that the producing power of the present day is, as the result in part to the wide employment of machinery, in excess of that of consumption. It is hardly necessary for us to restate the arguments adduced to demonstrate this fact. They must be, we fancy, patent to every one who considers seriously the present depressed prices of nearly every article of food or of personal use. It is undoubtedly the disproportion between the two items mentioned, that is responsible for the difficulties that now beset us. Population has not increased in any corresponding ratio to the enormous increase of capacity for raising food stuffs. Our own leading industry furnishes a strong illustration in favour of this contention. Where would our tea industry have been, had we not succeeded in largely ousting from consumption the teas of China? What has most aided our planters in their struggle for existence, has no doubt caused some trouble, and possibly distress, to the Chinese tea-cultivators and middlemen. It has ever been the case that success in one quarter can only be secured by a reduction in the prosperity of another.

Hitherto, under the action of this invariable law, the leading industry of Ceylon has attained to a high point. The question to be faced is as to whether the industry, so far a production is concerned, is fast reaching its prescribed maximum. Already, as we know, there are not wanting signs which "he who run may read" that the present demand is more than met