

put them in a closed box until the following day, when, to my disappointment, I found the insects as lively as ever! Not a single corpse to be seen! Further experiments were prevented by the rapid putrefaction of the infusion. It is possible that the fault lay in the preparation of the mixture. Perhaps it is necessary to obtain an extract by distillation instead of infusion. These are points that should be ascertained from headquarters.

I think it very probable that we may possess in Ceylon many native plants or trees with hitherto unsuspected insecticidal properties. I am now engaged in making experiments in this direction.—Yours truly,

E. ERNEST GREEN.

AMERICAN CONSUL MOREY ON CEYLON TEA AND TRADE GENERALLY.

A Colombo merchant in sending us a copy of the *Shipping and Commercial List* of New York, in which we find Consul Morey's Report on Ceylon Tea Trade, &c., writes:—"I think Mr. Morey has gone too far in dogmatizing about low-country teas, land in Ceylon, and marked deterioration in quality, all of which is calculated to do damage to the interests of the Island, and will not help Ceylon tea into America. The paragraph about American drills being displaced by locally manufactured drills, 'neither as good nor as cheap as pepperill,' is altogether gratuitous; for, the local production is much cheaper. I am surprised at Mr. Morey's tone altogether." And so are we, because while it is the bounden duty of a Consul to give a fair and outspoken Report for the benefit of his countrymen, it is equally his duty to seek information from those best qualified to give it to him, and surely one or other of the Directors of the Cotton Mills ought to have been inquired of; while as regards our tea we certainly think Mr. Morey goes a little too far. We quote from his Report the main portions as follows:—

CEYLON TEA FOR THE UNITED STATES.

By W. MOREY, United States Consul at Ceylon. In June, 1886, I reported upon tea, the production of which was then being prosecuted as a "new Ceylon industry." The shipments had amounted to 4353,000 pounds in the previous year, and both planters and exporters were anxiously considering ways and means for introducing their product into different countries, especially the United States. In 1889 a "Ceylon Planters' American Tea Company" was formed locally, which merged in 1891 into an American company, bearing the same name, I believe, and incorporated under the laws of New Jersey. Considerable advertising was done in the United States by the last-named company, but very little tea was handled by them, and in 1893 the company went into liquidation. In the meantime the Ceylon Government had appropriated \$100,000 toward making an exhibit at the World's Columbian Exposition at Chicago, and it appears that most of that money was expended in the interest of Ceylon tea. With this incentive the local shipments of tea to the United States amounted to 250,945 pounds in 1893, though about 163,000 pounds, say nearly two-thirds, of that quantity went to California, quite independent of any stimulus whatever from the World's Fair exhibit. The total shipments to the United States in 1891 having been 268,554 pounds (about the same quantity as in 1890), and only 250,945 pounds in 1893, it is plain that up to the present the considerable attempts that have been made to introduce Ceylon tea into the United States have met with small success. The planters, however, are

not discouraged, and at their meeting in Newera Elnja, [sic] on the 14th of April, they voted to ask the Government to continue indefinitely the export duty on tea of one-tenth of one cent per pound (imposed in 1893 to raise funds for the exhibition at Chicago) for the purpose of continuing what they call "the American campaign." * * *

As hereinbefore mentioned, the total shipment of Ceylon tea to all countries in 1885 was 4,353,000 pounds, and 84,406,064 pounds in 1893, showing the enormous increase in eight years of over 80,000,000 pounds. In the meantime prices have so fallen annually that in 1893 the average price of Ceylon tea at public sales in England was 9d (18 cents) per pound.

For this fall in price several reasons are given. One authority says the price of tea follows the price of silver; another says plucking for quantity instead of quality is the cause; another says carelessness in the manufacture has much to do with it; another that Ceylon tea does not keep well i.e., it soon loses its fine flavour; and others say that it is actually deteriorating in quality.

I am much inclined to believe that the last-named cause is the most nearly correct, for it is within my knowledge that estates which ten or fifteen years ago produced good tea grow nothing now worthy of that name. This is especially true of properties in the low country, and to a great extent of old coffee lands among the hills converted into tea estates. In the low country the soil is poor, and constant cropping soon exhausts the tea elements therefrom. Accordingly, after ten years at most, the tea product is so very poor that the liquor from it resembles more a decoction from boiled herbs than from good tea.

To keep up the quality manuring is necessary, but the price of tea in Europe (18 cents per pound) does not pay for fertilizing; neither will manuring pay in the higher altitudes, though the price of high-grown tea is about 25 per cent more than of that which is grown in the low country nearer the sea.

Much of the upcountry tea is grown on hillsides, where, owing to the steepness of the land, most of the manure applied is washed away by the rains. But if the theory of electric storms producing an abundance of plant manure in the form of nitrogen is correct, the high altitude estates have a great advantage, as there is much thunder and lightning and rain in the hills of Ceylon nearly all the year round. Therefore high-grown tea may be expected to hold its own and keep its flavor for some years to come. More especially is this the case where the estates have been made on virgin soil in favorable localities.

Considering that most low-grown teas are too poor in quality for anything but blending purposes, some not being even fit for that, it follows that, as a rule, only high-grown Ceylon tea is suitable for the American market; more especially as the object is to displace China and Japan teas, already largely in use there. This can only be done by presenting a better article to the dealers and consumers at as low, or perhaps lower price, than now obtains. To do this, I conceive that nothing cheaper than 20 to 25 cents (United States money) per pound locally can be successfully used. Of course there is plenty of such tea produced here, but very little is sold in the local market, for as a matter of fact, producers of such tea mostly send their product to London, where its quality is so well known to the trade that it is sure to be sold profitably, and there may be other reasons for its going there that need not be mentioned here. It will be hard, therefore, to induce them to send it on speculation to the United States.

Tea suitable for the United States will therefore need to be bought in London, after its cost has been greatly enhanced there by many intermediate expenses and charges, and where, perhaps, its purity or quality has not been improved by manipulations. Accordingly it is by no means certain that China and Japan teas will be easily or largely displaced in a country where they are already used to the extent of 85,000,000 pounds per annum while Ceylon tea, notwithstanding the expenditure of large

sums of money and much advertising in the last five years, has not attained the proportions of even 500,000 pounds per annum. * * *

Unfortunately, the element of reciprocity of trade is absolutely absent between the United States and Ceylon; for while the United States takes nearly \$2,500,000 worth of Ceylon products yearly, and mostly free of duty, Ceylon imports nothing directly from the United States, and very little indirectly, while transportation between the two countries is circuitous and expensive.

Formerly some kerosene oil came here direct from New York—not much, to be sure, and never amounting in value to \$100,000 per annum. Even upon this an import duty was levied in 1885 against my protest. Now the import of kerosene oil direct from the United States has actually ceased. The same is true of American drills, which formerly came here in considerable quantities, but which are now displaced, mostly by locally manufactured drills, which are neither as good nor as cheap as as Pepperrill drills. * * *

Possibly, however, after several years of careful consideration and observation, I may state as an opinion that Ceylon tea, worth locally free on board, 20 to 25 cents per pound, is probably as good an article at present as can be got for the same price anywhere; but as a rule, that quality of tea is not largely sold locally. Again, as the years roll by, Ceylon tea, to re-state the fact mildly, does not improve in quality.

I am informed by the largest local shipper of tea to the United States that his advices from the United States intimate that the Ceylon export price should not exceed 15 cents per pound. If such is the case it is doubtful if any considerable tea trade can be done between the two countries; for, in my judgment, the teas sold locally, for much less than a rupee per pound, are very poor. I myself have sampled some that was invoiced at 18 cents (United States money) per pound free on board, and it was not, to my taste, drinkable.

The Editor of the paper above-mentioned, remarks:—

* * * The production of Ceylon tea has increased from 4,353,000 pounds in 1835 to 84,406,064 pounds in 1893—a truly wonderful increase—nearly twenty fold. Unfortunately, this increase in production has been accompanied by a marked deterioration in quality, for which several reasons are alleged; the chief reason being, in the opinion of the Consul, the constant cropping, which practice soon exhausts the tea elements in the soil. It may be gathered from the report that another reason is the employment of soil which is not well adapted to the cultivation of the tea plant. The inferiority of quality has naturally led to a serious decline in prices, and it is now complained of that the average price of Ceylon tea at public sales in England in 1893 had fallen as low as nine pence (18 cents) per pound. * * *

In a former attempt to establish a trade in Ceylon teas in the United States, agents were appointed in this city and in Chicago for the purpose of pushing this trade. The enterprise proved a failure, as might have been expected, because by this plan the wholesale trade was slighted and overlooked. In order to succeed, the wholesale trade must be enlisted, by whose co-operation alone can any new article be successfully introduced to their wide connection among the retail trade.

The imposition or continuance of the proposed export duty cannot improve the export trade to the United States, as the exports to London will obtain the same advantage as those to New York, so that the proposed plan would simply continue things just as they are now. We have no great faith in the success of this trade through the appointment of the proposed representative in New York. As the resolution passed at the meeting of the planters above referred to reads, this representative would have to pay the bonus of 2½ per cent on Ceylon tea imported into the United States, via England or other route.*

* This refers to the abandoned bounty scheme.

In order to the establishment and extension of the trade in Ceylon teas, there must be direct importation from Ceylon. This must be followed up by a general distribution among the wholesale trade. With the fund obtained from the export duty; part of it might be invested in the venture of the direct shipment of a carefully selected cargo of Ceylon teas expressly gathered for the United States market. The cargo, whose expected arrival should be largely advertised in the principal cities, should be offered to the trade of auction, the date, hour and place of auction being widely announced on arrival. There should not be any fear but that the sale will be largely attended, and that the competition will be keen enough to ensure that the whole, or at least the greater part, of the cargo would be sold at such fair prices as the merits of the different lots should command.

CEYLON TEA IN AMERICA.

Mr. Consul Morey sticks to his Report as may be seen from his letter elsewhere. He is quite right not to base his writing on information which he considers interested and one-sided; but we meant that a Director of the local Cotton Mills could probably have given him information which, when compared with what he got elsewhere, would have enabled him to generalize a little more accurately. Certain we are, at any rate, that in respect of our tea industry, its condition and prospects, Mr. Morey has generalized in a way to do the Colony some injustice. He has by no means so discriminated as to leave a fair impression on the minds of his American readers. They ought to have been told that the old worn-out tea land to which he refers is chiefly confined to a limited middle belt, where, however, liberal cultivation with manure is effecting wonders with tea even in very old coffee land; while the vast proportion of our higher and lower tea plantations being on virgin land, or on land that had done very little in coffee, are as vigorous and promising as any similar tea gardens in the world.

In this connection, we may refer to the receipt by this mail of the "25th Anniversary" number of the American Grocer, splendidly printed with numerous engravings. The paper was started in 1869, and ever since, with but brief intervals, we have studied its pages. In this special issue, the staples of grocers—cacao (chocolate), coffee, tea and sugar—are the subjects of special papers well illustrated. Central America is referred to for illustrations of coffee plantations and preparation; while some 12 pages are devoted to "tea," led off by a very beautiful engraving of "a tea plantation, Uji, Japan," a fine level garden on the side of river or lake, backed by a cedar-clad mountain range. Then follow pictures of "Firing Tea," "Sorting Tea" and "Picking Tea" in Japan with maps on very small scales of Japan and China Tea districts. Then comes a chapter on "Indian Tea and its Manufacture by Modern Methods," well written and fairly illustrated showing "a flush," withering room, rolling tables, firing, handsome coolly woman plucking leaves, sorting room, &c. There is no reference to Ceylon save in the statistics. Mr. Blechynden has, no doubt, seen that justice was done to India; for we find the following advertisement prominently displayed in this number of the Grocer:—

Indian Tea Demonstrations—Are being given by—Natives of—India in costume At Grocers' Stores Only, By way of Introducing India Teas to the American Consumer. R. Blechynden, Commissioner Indian Tea Association, (Care of L. Sutro & Co.) 105 Hudson Street, New York.

It is quite time that Sir Graeme Elphinstone, Bart., and his colleague were on the spot, to push the claims of Ceylon tea.