

**HORTICULTURE AND EXPERIMENTAL GARDENS.**

(From Administration Report for North-Central Province.)

In this Province there is practically no horticulture. There are the experimental gardens, but these being watered from Tissa tank scarcely afford a fair test of adaptability of new introductions. They might, however be easily worked into a valuable institution, though at present they may be characterized as small, well laid out and pretty when not eaten down by the cattle I usually see in them.

*Eucalyptus alba* promises well, and as it has balsamic qualities ought to be largely planted round the bathing, drinking, and washing tanks, and in similar damp and unhealthy spots in the town as a protection against malaria.

CACAO exists here precariously without being watered, but only in favourable places, and can scarcely ever be of economic value except in Tamankaduwa, where I believe a large area is suitable for some of its varieties.

COCONUT is proved to thrive here by the one coconut grove of the Province—a plantation made in Anuradhapura by the enlightened enterprise of Godage Mudaliyar. Coconut trees exist in most villages, and afford enough young nuts for the hospitality exercised by the villagers to their visitors, and very little more.

JAK TREES exist in the moister villages below bunds of tanks. The experimental garden ought to be supplied with seeds of many varieties, and specimen plants established there, whilst the others are distributed as widely as possible. Seeds procured from the drier Malay States might afford a race of jak that would suit the conditions of this Province better than the Ceylon varieties, but all those also should be introduced and tried. The Peradeniya Gardens have done almost nothing for village gardens as yet, and the Anuradhapura branch might easily be made to redeem this one deficiency in the record of that invaluable institution. I myself observed that the jak of Perak is a fruit very superior in flavour when ripe to the best I have eaten in Ceylon. It may possess other qualities differing from the trees grown here. As a vegetable, cooked while half ripe with a little coconut juice, the jak is as wholesome and important to the Sinhalese peasant as the potato is to the peasants in England.

BREADFRUIT.—This grows here and there as a single tree. Two closely allied varieties are found in Ceylon, introduced long ago from the Maldives, and probably prior to European rule. There are a great number of distinct varieties in the South Sea Islands, and several in the Malay Archipelago. A German official from Samoa, who tasted the Ceylon fruit, assured me that it was one of the worst varieties he knew. As there is steam communication between Samoa and Sydney it would be no great task to introduce new varieties, some of which might prove adaptable to the villages here where the Maldivian variety fails to thrive.

VINES.—As grapes grow well at Kalpitiya, Trincomalee, and Jaffna, they certainly would thrive here. The experimental gardens ought to make a special feature of viticulture and introduce new varieties. The grape grown at Jaffna, &c., is of a most inferior quality, and it is probable that selected vines from Persia and Syria would succeed better than the variety now grown, and afford a good quality of fruit. The grape at present grown appears to be identical with the outdoor grape of England, formerly grown in vineyards there and is presumably the variety least likely to succeed in North Ceylon. Vine culture is well adapted to native habits, and the villagers would soon learn how to train, prune and cultivate the vine and thin the fruit, if an example were made at the gardens. Those who elsewhere grow a vine or two gain a considerable profit from it, and the care required is a wholesome and educational effort.

Figs would probably grow very well here, though at Galle and Colombo the fruit is poor. I do not see a single fig plant in the gardens. This tree, if a

variety could be selected that adapted itself here, would be a pleasant addition to the villager's little compound, which at present has only its pomegranate tree, and its bilimbi bush, and perhaps a guava of the old and inferior variety, or an orange tree.

To sum up. The Gardens here, if to be of any use to the Province, should introduce and test the varieties of well-known fruit trees and vegetables grown elsewhere or in Ceylon, as well as introduce new kinds. Little nurseries should be made of trees useful for food or affording, by profit or luxury, an incentive to careful home-culture by the peasantry. Soursope, pomegranates of better quality than now exist, oranges, limes, even country damsons, uguressa plums, West Indian papaws, and all such fruits could be sown in small plots of ground for distribution to the villagers.

Mahogany, eucalyptus, and other such trees might be experimentally introduced for ornamental planting in the district with advantage. Vegetables suited for village growth, such as improved varieties of beans, egg-plant, chilly, bandecai, gourd, jams, &c., should be systematically grown to stimulate the peasant's curiosity and emulation.

At present none of these economical branches are taken up, and yet the Director complains that no local interest is taken in the gardens! A few scorched selaginæ and sun-bleached foliage plants, five gardenia bushes, a score or so of trees of botanical interest, and some cow-browsed palm plants, added to a thriving row of mandarin orange trees, is my own present impression of the Anuradhapura Gardens.

**AGRICULTURE.**

The usual rice cultivation exists here, and chenas are sown with kurakkan or gingelly. One or two Tamils have small plots of tobacco in the Province.

I believe cotton might be grown with great success, somewhat on the Egyptian system, over a large area in Tamankaduwa, but at present no cotton is produced here.

In regard to chenas the policy was initiated in 1892 of diminishing this wasteful and unsatisfactory system, so far as Crown lands are concerned. Owing, however, to the exceptional distress of the year, and uncertainty in regard to the expected rains, it was thought best to allow chenas in 1893, carefully restricting them to scrub jungle under ten years' growth.

**BREAKS OF TEA: AND ENTOMOLOGIST FOR CEYLON.**

LONDON, June 15

Mr. Francis Long, of Messrs. J. S. Long & Co., Tea Brokers, of 10 and 11 Mincing Lane, whose interview with myself on the subject of the sale of

**SMALL BREAKS OF TEA**

was mentioned in a former letter of mine, has written me taking exception to some points in my report of that interview. Mr. Long thinks that in some respects I unintentionally misrepresented the meaning of what he said to me. Of course, under such circumstances, I can do nothing less than reproduce here his written remarks to myself as to the points on which he considers me to have misrepresented him. His attention was called to the extract of my letter given in the *Overland Observer* of the mail before last, (see page 828 of Vol. XIII.) by Mr. Leake, as Secretary to the Ceylon Association in London. The last mentioned gentleman thinks that what I reported Mr. Long to have said reflects upon the procedure of the Tea Committee of the Association, as well upon himself in his capacity of Secretary. If you refer to my letter of April 20th you will, however, see that I was careful to state to Mr. Long—conjointly with Mr. Roberts, who was present—that we both knew that communication had been made by Mr. Leake of the result to the Committee's consideration of the Brokers' proposal. Mr. Leake's letter to Mr. Long reads in part:—"The statements imputed