

**Some Thoughts for Tea Drinkers.**

Tea is so popular an article of consumption that any information tending to a better appreciation of its dietetic uses, and of the part it plays not only in domestic, but in political, economy, must be of direct interest to a very large proportion of the people, who will derive much instruction from the Paper on the subject read by Mr. Shand before the last meeting of the Royal Colonial Institute. There are probably few persons who, while sipping the "cup that cheers but not inebriates," have not been struck by the varieties of flavour and general quality possessed by different kinds of tea, and have not considered how far those differences are due to natural and how far to artificial causes; but to a very small proportion of tea drinkers probably has it occurred to inquire whether any questions of national importance are involved in this choice between a dear and a cheap tea—a tea grown in India or Ceylon and one produced in China or Java. Less than a generation ago the idea of "tea" was associated solely with the country which has given its name to the cups from which it is usually drunk; and, as a matter of fact, it is only within the last twenty-five years that tea from any other country besides China has been placed on the English markets. At the present time, however, the tea drinking public have a choice of teas from China, India, and Ceylon, with an occasional chance of securing a parcel from Natal, Fiji, or the Straits Settlements, not to mention the Dutch East Indian Colonies. In 1830 the quantity of tea exported from Ceylon was but 114,000 lbs.; last year it was no less than 13,000,000 lbs.—or one-third of the gross imports of tea into the United Kingdom in the year 1845. At that time the Customs duty on tea was over 2s. per lb., and when a proposal for a reduction of the duty was made it was met with the answer, made on "high official authority" that the "imports of tea having reached 40,000,000 lbs., it was probable that the limit of consumption had also been reached, and that further reduction could only be accompanied by loss of revenue." The single colony of Ceylon, however, which at that time had not even dreamt of tea-growing, will in another two years' time send us a quantity equal to the whole of our imports in those days, while India, which was then in equal ignorance of its capacity to rival China as a tea growing country, will be sending us three times as much. At the same time the quantity of tea imported into this country from China is nearly three times as great as the "extreme limit of consumption" forty years ago. So far these figures merely indicate an enormous increase in the tea-drinking capacity of the people of the United Kingdom who as Mr. Shand states, are only beaten in this respect by their Australian cousins. But the figures, when more closely examined, have a much greater significance. While the production of tea in India and China has been increasing in almost geometrical progression, our imports from China have been steadily falling off: last year for example, the imports of tea from China were only 119,000,000 lbs. as compared with 145,000,000 lbs. in 1886, whereas those from British East Indies were 98,000,000 lbs. in 1887 against 80,000,000 in 1886. In

other words, China, instead of being the sole source of our supply of tea, now only sends us one-half of our whole imports. This great change is due to two causes. First to the original superior qualities of Indian and Ceylon teas, and next, to the falling off in the quality of China teas. Evidence of the higher value which is placed on the produce of the British Indies will be found in the fact that the 97,000,000 lbs. of tea from that source was declared to be worth over 5,000,000l., while the 119,000,000 lbs. of China teas are only worth a trifle over four and a half millions sterling, instead of over six million sterling which they would have been valued at if the quality had been equal to that of the former kinds. This superiority of Indian and Ceylon teas over those of China is due partly to the natural conditions of soil and climate under which the particular varieties of the plant more particularly cultivated in Assam and Ceylon are grown and partly to the greater care with which this produce is prepared for consumption. It is clearly then to the advantage of the English-tea-drinkers to avoid Chinese teas and to give the preference to those grown in "British" soil. The slightly higher prices which the latter command is compensated for by the higher chemical properties possessed by them, and by the fact that a pound of Ceylon or Indian tea will yield a larger number of cups of "tea" for drinking than the same quantity of Chinese tea. But there is the still larger consideration, that in "patronising" the produce of the Colonies and of India Englishmen are contributing to the support of their fellow subjects, instead of to that of foreigners, and at the same time contributing to the maintenance of those bonds, material as well as sentimental which unite the Colonies to the Mother Country, and to the general prosperity of the Empire. It is urged by the friends of China that as soon as she awakens, as she shows signs of doing, to a sense of the loss she is suffering through the carelessness or the malpractices of her tea growers and shippers, she will find that she possesses such advantages in an unlimited supply of labour, and an unlimited area available for tea cultivation, that she could swamp all competitors on the question of quantity and of quality. It would appear, however, that a great deal of lee-way has to be made up before China can attain such a position as this. Mr. Shand's paper made it fully clear that the cost of labour is one of the principal elements in the successful conduct of a tea plantation, and that China has the advantage over Ceylon that she can get labour at about 1d. a day, while in Ceylon it costs 6d. But there is already a difference of 5d. between the average prices of Ceylon and China teas in the English market—a difference entirely due to quality: and it is evident that, in order to bring the quality of their teas up to that of the Ceylon varieties, the Chinese growers will have to incur considerable expense in improved methods of picking, curing, and packing.—*The Colonies and India.*

A London cable of last week says: The Dominion issues have risen from 1½ to 4½; 3½ per cents are quoted at 107, 4 per cents at 113. The Canadian Gazette says the next time Canada war's a loan she may evidently issue at 9 per cent.

The Grenfell, Assa. agricultural society intend erecting a hall in the spring. A subscription list has been drawn up and largely signed.

The Manitoba Mortgage company has abandoned the idea of forming a company to take over the Manitoba lands fallen into possession of the company. A call for a £ per share will be made.

The total quantity of sugar of all kinds, refined and raw, imported into Canada in the last fiscal year and entered for home consumption, was 200,466,072 pounds, costing \$4,862,042. or about 2.4 cents per pound. The duty paid on the above quantity of sugar was \$3,167,528. or about 65 per cent. The sugar entered at 2.4 cents per pound.

A Liverpool cable on Thursday says: The emigration season is opening most auspiciously. One hundred and fifty Belgian farmers for Calgary leave Liverpool to-morrow. Many parties have arranged for succeeding weeks, including seventy genuine Sussex farm laborers, followed by further batches, and emigrated by the Self Help Emigration Society. Enquiries in England, Scotland and Ireland are generally gratifying. Everything points to a large emigration.

The successful floating of the stock of Sir John Lister Kaye's Northwest Coal and Colonization company, in England, seems to have started up a crop of similar concerns, the promoters of which propose to make money out of land which they first purchase *en bloc* and then sell it in parcels to the settler. The idea is a good one for the promoters. The country's interest is apocryphal. Very little good, either to the shareholders or the country, came of the host of colonization companies started by Canadians at the time the C. P. R. contract was let, and less seems likely to attend these ventures by transatlantic speculators. Under ordinary circumstances there is no need of an intermediary between the Government and the settler, and unless the new projects show themselves to be possessed of something more than a desire to make money in connection with their schemes it would be well to let them push their enterprises at the expense of some other region.—*Montreal Gazette.*

**Montreal Trade Notes.**

Stocks of grain in store shows a decrease of 19,000 bushels of wheat, 53,000 corn, 154,000 peas, and 48,000 oats, compared with same date last year. Prices were: Red winter wheat, 83c to 87c; white winter, 85c to 87c; spring, 83c to 84c; No. 1 hard Manitoba, 86c to 87; No. 2 do., 83c to 84c; No. 1 Northern, 83c to 84c; peas, 73c to 74c per 66 lbs. in store; oats, 42c to 43c per 34 lbs.; barley, 65c to 70c.

Flour and meal were quoted: Patent, winter, \$4.40 to \$4.50; patent, spring, \$4.49 to \$4.65; straight roller, \$4.00 to \$4.55; strong bakers', \$4.20 to \$4.50; oatmeal, standard, to \$5.45; oatmeal, granulated, to \$5.70; rolled meal, \$6.00; rolled oats, \$6.25, in barrels.

The market was firm for bran at \$19.50 to \$20 per ton, with Manitoba offering at \$17.50 to \$18 per ton, shorts \$20 to \$21, and moulie \$27 to \$29 per ton, low grades selling at \$23 to \$25 per ton.

Butter quotations were: Creamery, 20c to 22c; townships, 17½c to 22c; western, 15c to 18c; medium grades, 10c to 14c.