

At Tshinde you change into small river steamers by which you are conveyed to Katunga on the Shire and thence you ride up 25 miles to Blantyre which is to all intents and purposes the capital, though the seat of administration is at Zomba, 40 miles near to Lake Nyassa. There are about 265 Europeans settled in the country.

#### THE NEW SEASON'S (CHINA) TEAS.

Our own Mincing-lane correspondent reports that business has been more active in the tea market through the arrival of the new season's Black Leafs. Samples were shown on the 4th instant, and sales to a comparatively large extent were effected at a range of prices which must be satisfactory to importers. The highest prices so far is 2s 6d per lb. The general run of quality proves more on the useful class, but of finest there are not as many parcels as could be desired, though it is the grade most wanted. At current rates merchants will do well to at once quit their holdings.

It may perhaps be noted as a rather melancholy fact that not a single London paper specially noted the arrival of the "Moyune" with the first of the new season's teas.

The run of the "Moyune" from the Red Buoy at Woosung to Gravesend was 34 days 9 hours 40 minutes or a few hours shorter than last year, when the time, was 35 days. Messrs. Wills & Co. (Limited), the agents of the China Mutual Steam Navigation Company at Port Said, state that the "Moyune" took in at Port Said 570 tons of coal in one hour and twenty minutes.—*L. and C. Express*, July 6.

#### TEA ADULTERATION.

Thanks to the wise regulation by which teas are analysed by the Customs Department, tea adulteration has been practically made impossible in England. It is not so, however, in Sydney. According to our go-ahead contemporary, the *Westminster Gazette*, at a recent sitting of the local Parliament one of the members, Mr. Neild, "drew from his coat-tail pocket a sample of tea, and handed the same to Sir George Dibbs for the edification of the authorities." Ten days later the Premier assured the Assembly, upon the authority of the Government analyst, that the tea contained "distinct traces of lead and antimony, to say nothing of wooden chips and shavings, and was, in fact, quite unfit for consumption."

The sample, it appears, came from a bulk shipment of nearly a thousand chests, most of which had found its way into the "festive teapot" before the Parliamentary exposure. The lead discovered by the analyst has been described by a Sydney merchant as "colouring matter," and he says that if you picked out from the tea a piece of stalk you could write your name with it, almost as though you had a blacklead pencil in your hand. It seems that the common plan of colouring on the plantations is to "involve an infusion of lamp-black into the leaves, or else churn the leaves along with lumps of blacklead in a revolving barrel." A great deal of this mixture is we learn, landed in Sydney every year. Does any of it ever reach London?

The *Westminster's* inquiry if any of this reaches London is answered by the fact that we are protected from such adulterations by the Customs chemist's examinations of all imported teas. There is, however, a swindle practised with teas which we exposed some time ago, and which is still being carried on by some of the largest of the much-advertised packet tea firms, who use a "tea-faking" machine. The large refreshment caterers and hotels have a great quantity of exhausted tea leaves. These, on being dried and passed through the "tea-making" machine, can be, and are, made to have the appearance of the finest teas, and when mixed off in moderate proportions with genuine tea may be sold to the public without any risk of detection. It is only a few months since an offer was made to the Aerated Bread Co., by a gang of persons anxious to further develop and exploit this swindle, to collect

the waste leaves at a certain price from the whole of this company's establishments. We understand, however, the offer was declined. The company would not lend itself to any such practices, and it is a pity that a similar high sense of honour does not afflict some of the largest packet tea firms, who have been lately freely indulging in this swindle.—*Food and Sanitation*.

#### SEASONING TIMBER.

The timber, after cutting (known as felling), should be placed in a dry position, so that the air may circulate freely round it. It should not be placed in the sun or wind, or it will be sure to "crack" and "warp" very much in drying. If the timber is roughly squared with the axe, it will not split to such an extent as though it were left in the round. If the trees are large, they may with advantage be cut "on the quarter," after a period of drying in the whole state. A good plan is to set the timber upright, as it will dry much more rapidly. After remaining in the "quartered" state some time, it may be cut up into the desired size. The boards, as now cut, will require careful attention before being in a fit state to use. They should be placed in drying-sheds, with the ends open to the air, avoiding, if possible, positions in which the wind will act directly upon them. The floor should be of some hard material, such as cement, and should be kept perfectly dry. Bearers must be placed horizontally between the uprights, leaving a space between each equal to the width of boards; these bearers should be placed about four feet apart. The boards are placed on edge with strips between them, a nail being driven into the top of each strip to prevent its falling downwards. An alternative arrangement is to place the boards one upon the other, with strips between each piece, taking care to place the strips one exactly over the other. There are many methods of hastening the drying of timber, one of which is to place it completely under water for a time, afterwards placing it on end. This will prevent to a great extent the "warping" of "stuff" when used by the joiner. Nothing, however, equals natural drying, which makes the "stuff" more durable. For timber used by the carpenter, two years may be stated as a reasonable time for it to season, but for the purpose of the joiner it should not be used under three years, unless artificially dried.—*From Works* for July.

MR. D. MACKAY ON PERAK.—In a conversation I recently had with Mr. D. Mackay I gathered that he had a high opinion of the future of Perak for both kinds of coffee, and, moreover, that there would be a splendid opening for coconut planting as there is a grand market for the product in China, where the growers of tea as well as the crowds in the cities are eager buyers of the nut, which realises a good price in the bazaars. His opinion of the Waterloo estate is that it cannot fail to be a profitable investment, the soil and the climate being both in its favor. It is already yielding good returns, and I shall not be at all surprised to learn that the current report of a coffee plantation in Perak being converted into a limited company has reference to this property, though I cannot be certain in regard to it; but the names of those mentioned to me in connection with the enterprise would point to it. My informant thinks that, so long as fine and suitable land can be had in the Straits for R10 per acre, few will care to take up land in Ceylon at R100. For some time labor and the Government land regulations stood in the way of planting in the Malay Peninsula; but these things are now changed. The land regulations are now modified, and Chinese will make as good coffee cultivators as Indians, and far more reliable, for these latter get too much pay, and as a rule soon go to the dogs; whilst, if John Chinaman has equally good pay he does good work for it. As regards coconuts in Perak, it seems that the trees come into bearing sooner and bear more heavily than in Ceylon.—*London Cor.*, "Times of Ceylon."