

## COFFEE IX THK STRAITS.

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### COFFEE IN THE STRAITS.

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Coffee planting in the Straits Settlements may be said to date from the arrival of the first Ceylon planters in the Colony, who, on the failure of the industry in Ceylon, came over and settled chiefly in Johore and Singapore.


The results of those early ventures induced Mr. T. H. Hill, one of the first and most enterprising of the Ceylon planters, to prospect the other Native States with a view to planting operations, the Government granting him large concessions of land in Sungei Ujong, Selangor and Perak as a Pioneer Planter, a title which he well deserves, having been the first to successfully cultivate Liberian coffee in these three States.

In 1882 Mr. Hill, then managing the Ampang Tin Mines, selected and took up some land near Kuala Lumpur which he planted up with Liberian coffee, pepper, tea and other tropical trees. Mr. Evans, who died some years after of cholera in Perak, was the first Superintendent on this the first coffee estate in Selangor, which was appropriately named "Weld's Hill," after the late Sir Frederick Weld, then Governor of the Straits Settlements. This estate is now almost entirely under Liberian coffee, there being only a few acres of pepper left, which is being gradually worked out, as the proprietors evidently find coffee at \$35 a pikul pays very much better than pepper at \$10.


Messrs. Hill and Rathborne next selected and planted "Ginting Bedai" and "Batu Caves" Estates. Ginting Bedai, situated above the pass of that name on the main mountain range, at an elevation of between two and three thousand feet, was planted with coffee (Arabica), but had to be quite abandoned before any results could be obtained, as it was found impossible in the absence of roads to maintain a labour force some 23 miles from Kuala Lumpur in the heart of the jungle. Some trees that were then planted may even now be seen struggling for life amongst the native jungle.

Batu Caves Estate is a stretch of some 2,850 acres of flat land lying round the base of the Batu Caves, from which it takes its name. At first there were only some 12 acres of coffee (Liberian) planted and a few trees of cocoa, but within the last three years the proprietors have considerably increased their planting operations. In 1883 Stephenson opened the estate of "Beverlac" at Klang. This estate—along with "Tremelbye," "Enterprise" and "Glenmarie," which are situated in the same District and all opened about the same time—was planted with pepper, but the later clearings have been planted with Liberian coffee. From 1884 to 1889 no new estates were opened, but a few Javanese and Kuantan Malays settled in different parts of the State and planted up an acre or two round their houses, the most







extensive of these perhaps being the group lying between the Racecourse and Lincoln Estate. Towards the end of 1888 the late Mr. William Dougal, Manager of the Chartered Bank in Singapore, Mr. Sword of the Straits Trading Company, Mr. Currie of the Borneo Company and myself obtained a grant of 1,500 acres of land in the Setapak Valley, in three blocks of 500 acres each, named, respectively, "Hawthornden," "Roslin" and "Lincoln" after those places at home.



This was immediately followed by the opening of "Wardieburn" by Messrs. C. and R. Meikle in 1889. This estate is thoroughly Scottish, as its name would lead one to expect. Named after the proprietor's beautiful home near Edinburgh, it is kept in the high state of cultivation for which Scottish farmers are everywhere famed, and the good old Scottish title of "Laird" has been bestowed by his brother planters on one of the proprietors.



At the end of 1889 Mr. H. Huttenbach acquired two small patches of coffee near Kuala Lumpur, one of some 10 acres, about half a mile out of town, from Mr. Bristowe, late of the Land Office, which he has called "Selangor Coffee Garden," the other, some three miles along the Selangor Railway, from some Javanese, which he named "Batu" Estate; both these properties he has, with his usual enterprise, very much improved and extended. Towards the end of 1890 another estate was opened in the Setapak Valley by the Messrs. Glasford, who had had some experience of coffee planting in Southern India, and they named their estate "The Mount," after a property of that name in Fife-shire. A few months later Mr. M. A. Stonor opened "Klang Gates" Estate, situated near the rocky gorge through which the waters of the Sungai Klang flow. About this time Mr. G. Murray Campbell, of Messrs. Campbell and Co., at that time engaged on the Railway Extensions in this State, applied for land from Government, and finally selected a block to the east of Lincoln Estate, but which was not opened until some months later. This was named "Aberscross" Estate, after the place where Mr. Campbell first saw the light and where his forefathers lived before the history of Scotland began. This estate has been largely extended since the first opening. The next block taken up was by Mr. E. V. Carey, acting on behalf of some influential Ceylon gentlemen and himself, early in 1892. The land selected was in the Gombak Valley, opening out of the Setapak Valley, and amounted to 1,000 acres, to which he gave the name of "New Anherst," after his old Ceylon estate. The last estate opened in Selangor, "Kent," the property of Mr. A. B. Lake, is on the Batu Road, and originally this land formed part of Messrs. Hill and Rathborne's concession at Batu Caves.

The steady increase in the number of coffee estates argues well for the future of Selangor as a coffee-producing country.

The estates in the Kuala Lumpur District alone now represent an area of some 7,000 acres of which over 1,500 acres are planted with Liberian coffee.—

F. A. Toynebee.