

**A HAND-BOOK TO
COFFEE PLANTING
IN SOUTHERN INDIA**

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A Hand-Book to Coffee Planting in Southern India by John Shortt

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IN SOUTHERN INDIA,

BY

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ON

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TO
HIS EXCELLENCY SIR WILLIAM DENISON, K. C. B.,
COLONEL ROYAL ENGINEERS,
GOVERNOR OF MADRAS,
THIS SMALL VOLUME
OR HAND-BOOK OF COFFEE PLANTING,
IN SOUTHERN INDIA,
IS BY PERMISSION
RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,
BY THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

IN launching this work on Coffee cultivation before the Public, it will be necessary to explain what claims I have to consideration on this subject, and from what sources I have obtained my information, since planters will no doubt be disposed to enquire what experience I can have had in coffee planting. As I am merely an amateur planter, *my experiments* extend over a few plants only which I have for some years carefully cultivated, and watched their habits and constitution, but my observation extends over some millions of plants, not only in the so-called planting localities, some of which I have visited, but in various parts of India I have observed the habits of the coffee plant, in amateur experiments similar to my own.

Horticulture or Agriculture is a practical and not a theoretical science, and theory although very well in its place is worthless in itself, when not borne out by practice and experience. Practice without theory is but hap-hazard work, but when theory is tested by practical experience and based on science, we cannot go wrong, for we know and understand the subject in all its bearings, and can practically carry out the teaching of theory and the facts of science, in our Horticultural and Agricultural operations.

The cultivation of coffee in this country is now attracting much attention, and being carried out on an extended scale, to meet the demand which is constantly increasing. We hope that in the absence of a better, this book will be a guide to those entering into coffee speculations, and may prevent the loss and misdirection of labour consequent on capital imprudently laid out. There are numerous localities, soils, hill sides and plateau, still lying waste or over-

grown with jungle, which are admirably suited for coffee, and which with a moderate capital judiciously laid out, might be converted into smiling plantations giving handsome returns. The chapter on the "Physiological consideration of the coffee plant," might be made applicable to almost any plant. The object of considering the subject here and confining the observations entirely to coffee, was with a view of impressing the subject on the mind of the planter, and to give him an interest in the study of the plant itself. Having always been fond of Horticulture and Agriculture, for the last 6 years I have made it a special study, during my leisure moments, and the knowledge thus acquired I have fully applied to the subject under review, and have not only given the results of my own observations and experiments, but have taken advantage of every work I could procure, so as to bring together as far as possible, all that has been written on the subject.

Whilst in the midst of my M.S., I was by the kindness of the Honorable J. B. Norton favored with the perusal of Laborie's and another pamphlet, a reprint from the "*Ceylon Observer*," containing "Letters on Pruning" by W. and the manuring of coffee estates by C. Wall, Esq., and as I have not acknowledged these in the body of the work, I have much pleasure in alluding to them here.*

I am in an especial manner indebted for much valuable information to my friend H. G. Morison, Esq., who has been familiar with coffee planting from his boyhood; for from the time he landed in this country after completing his education, he has been more or less engaged as a planter and merchant.

Mr. Morison is not only a planter, but a successful one, and from his familiarity with most of the planting localities

* These pamphlets have since been reprinted by Mr. Higginbotham, Bookseller and Stationer, Madras.

in Southern India, he was in a position to afford me valuable assistance, and readily placed the information he possessed at my disposal.

My obligations are also due to B. A. Daly, Esq., who has been a coffee planter on the Sherwaroy Hills for the last 22 years, for much information. I am greatly indebted to W. H. Staines, Esq., of Coonoor, for specimens of Insects, and for having placed at my disposal some valuable "memo-randa" bearing on the subject of coffee.

I have also to thank Messrs. Fischer and Co., of Salem, and General Ottley, for various hints on the subject of coffee cultivation, &c.

To my friend Mr. G. Norton, the Chemist and Druggist, I am greatly indebted for having so kindly and readily undertaken at my request to analyse not only the ash of the plant, but the soil also.

I am aware that this work falls short of what it might be, but as my sole object has been to assist those engaged in a subject which seems to have become a mania of late, I ask the indulgence of the reader for any shortcomings that may be found in the body of the work.

JOHN SHORTT.

