

THE LABOUR QUESTION.

Although the labour question grows each year a more serious problem there seems little prospect of the introduction of any aids to hand picking. In slavery days, when the hands on the plantations were largely in excess of the present number, ladders were used, as tending to safety, but have been abandoned because they make picking slower, and consequently, more expensive; and economy in production is a condition of the first importance in clove growing.

Work begins as early as daylight permits and proceeds until a drum sound at 2 p.m. when the industrial army marches with its spoils to the receiving sheds, where are also the drying ground wide, open spaces of hard earth or concrete. Each picker spreads out a mat and proceeds to "stem." A bunch is taken in the palm, and a quick contraction of the fingers causes the buds to fall. Stalks are cast aside, but finally sold at one-seventh the price of cloves. On succeeding days the buds, taken under cover at night, are spread out thinly on mats in the sun and stirred at intervals by attendants, who keep a keen eye on the weather, as heavy showers come up quickly, with disastrous results.

In a few hours the delicate hues have faded, and in about five days there is the brown clove of commerce. On the tree the perfume of the clove is merely suggested, but with drying its pungency develops rapidly. So intense is it that, when cloves are stored in bulk, it often produces headache.

Deciding when the final stage in dry-

times he sells the growing crop. While enjoying tolerable immunity from the ravages of insects and blight, the clove is somewhat uncertain as to yield. It is affected by under or excessive rainfall, and a wet harvest largely increases the cost of picking as well as causing deterioration in quality. In bearing it is very variable. A tree which has pro-

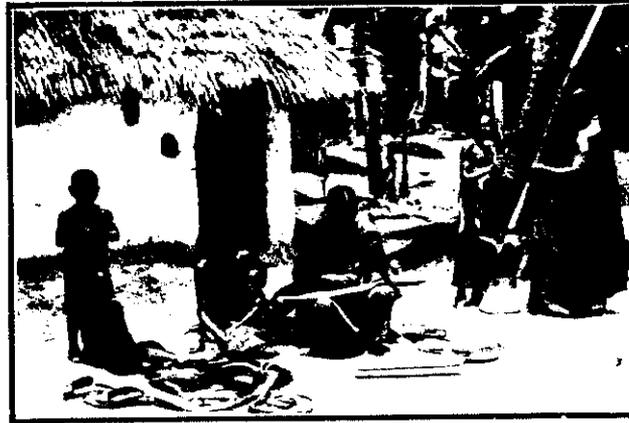
duced 200lb (a large amount) one year will probably be barren the next, and in the following may give only a few pounds. Pemba, during the last few years, has been passing through what threatened to be a crucial period. When, after much temporising, the fiat went forth to increase their number by the importation of slaves from the mainland. Of what use was the harvest if there were not hands to gather; and dire were the predictions, and dolorous the anticipations, when the legal status of slavery was finally abolished. The great clove industry, the mainstay of the island,

would be irretrievably ruined, and general bankruptcy would ensue. Pemba depended entirely on her agricultural produce; and in this edict the death-knell of her prosperity was sounded.

THE INDIAN MONEY-LENDER AND HIS INFLUENCE.

Happily those dark forebodings have not been realised and freedom was established, not only

Continued on page 53.



NATIVE WOMEN AT WORK PLAITING PALM-TREE FIBRE.



NATIVE COOLIES LAYING OUT CLOVES TO DRY IN THE SUN.

ing has been reached requires close attention and discrimination from even experienced testers, although a standing rule usually assists the decision. Should the clove bend without breaking, it is not sufficiently dry; if it snaps, it is too dry, and loses value in consequence; but if, while bending, it breaks with a fracture it is in perfect condition. The cloves are then put in coarse sacks and conveyed on men's heads to the nearest shipping point, whence they are taken in dhows to Zanzibar, to be sold at the Custom House.

THE POSSIBILITIES OF ARTIFICIAL HEAT.

As the clove is a product the value of which depends largely on its successful drying the possibilities of artificial heat being supplied in wet seasons has occupied the attention of growers, but without producing any satisfactory results. Stacks with sliding trays, and also drying under glass, seemed to present some encouraging possibilities, but in both cases the initial expenses and cost of increased labour prevented their adoption. The application of artificial heat is not practicable with the clove owing to its losing strength and consequent value during the operation.

The conditions on which cloves are picked vary considerably. Where the grower has not sufficient help he contracts with a company of pickers for the harvesting of a plantation on equal shares, or will let the picking for a certain sum under supervision, or some-



Made in Dublin.

BOTTLED FOR DIRECT EXPORTATION
By READ BROTHERS, Limited

Dog's Head Guinness

with the Dog's Head Label on every bottle.



Is superior to any stout because it is brewed from the only stout water in the world; the DUBLIN WATER.

Keeps in all climates. Always uniform and standard in quality.

A strength giving food and tonic in the most palatable liquid form.

Good for the wife—Good for you

SOLD EVERYWHERE.



EYES!

If your Eyes are troublesome, we hold a large stock of SPECTACLES to suit all Sights at about ONE-SIXTH of the usual prices charged.

Real Pebble Spectacles 3s 8d pair
Rolled Gold Spectacles 3s 8d pair
Crystal Spectacles, 1s, 1s 6d, 2s, 2s 6d pair

Cases Free, and Post Free

AT MILLER'S

Fancy Repository,
100 Victoria St., AUCKLAND.