skies on a clear night and if in possession of a few measuring instruments (without lenses, of course) could at once check and follow his reasoning.

As it seemed odd to me that no translation of this work existed in English, I queried two publishing houses in the matter, one the house of Putnam, which has brought out the books in the Loeb library, the other, the Harvard University Press. Messrs. G. P. Putnam's Sons wrote, August 19, 1925, through Mr. Ben Ray Redman:

> I have read with great interest your letter regarding the possible translation of Copernicus' "De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium" and regret to inform you that the publication of this work could not be undertaken at the present time with any hope of commercial success—at least by a general publishing house. If this epoch-making book has never before been translated into English, it seems to me that one of the university presses would be glad to bring it out and to secure for it the distribution which it deserves.

Some correspondence passed between the Harvard University Press and the present writer. Their attitude was most courteous, but on October 30, Mr. Harold Murdoch, director of the Syndics, wrote that on October 22 that Board had "regretfully decided that it would be unwise for us to attempt the publication."

It may be of interest to state that when this book was placed on the Catholic Index as a prohibited book (in 1616) a list was drawn up of the changes which might be made in the book to render it safe for the faithful to read. It is a curious and unintended eulogy of the scientific character of the book that, with the exception of the passages where Copernicus sums up his conclusions, little beyond verbal changes were needed elsewhere to make the work read as a hypothesis rather than a thesis. It is now beginning to appear that the motive for this condemnation was largely to exhibit the Catholic Church as quite as orthodox about the biblical cosmogony as the sectaries. Actually, of course, the obvious earth and heavens of the Old Testament are of far cruder type than either the conceptions of Ptolemy or Copernicus, but this was a fact which neither Catholics nor Protestants could well concede; and Copernicus' book remained forbidden till 1835, when it was silently removed from the Index Librorum Prohibitorum.

DREW BOND

MT. VERNON, N. Y.

A PLANT NEW TO THE UNITED STATES

WHILE visiting a beekeeper at Mesilla Park, New Mexico, in January, 1925, I was impressed with his description of a plant on which his bees worked freely. Being unable to decide what it might be from his description and no plants being available at that time of year, he promised specimens the following summer. When they came, I did not recognize the plant and passed it on to Dr. William Trelease, of the University of Illinois, for identification. Trelease was just leaving for an extended absence and again passed it on to Dr. Paul Standley, of the National Museum, who has specialized in flora of the southwest.

To the surprise of everybody interested he identified it as Syrian bean-caper, *Zygophyllum fabago,* which had not previously been known to occur in this country. From local reports the plant has become naturalized over a considerable area of the neighborhood in which it is found and is the source of considerable honey in the particular apiary which first brought it to attention. No one has so far offered any explanation of its presence.

FRANK C. PELLETT

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MILLING AND BAKING QUALITIES OF OLD WHEAT

A FARMER living near Junction City, Kansas, presented in August, 1925, to the Kansas State Agricultural College a sample of wheat which he knew to be at least twenty-five years old. The wheat was dark red, the kernels were plump, well preserved and there was no evidence of weevil. The test weight as received was 55.8, and after passing the cleaning separator it was 56.3. A germination test made in the seed-testing laboratory showed no signs of life. A milling test gave a normal amount of flour, but the ash was high. The amount of moisture and protein in both the wheat and flour compared well with the average generally obtained from a normal Kansas hard wheat. The baking test produced a loaf of small volume, heavy texture and poor color. The bread was very similar to that made from wheat which has been injured by heating in the stack or bin or when germination has proceeded too far. The gluten washed from the flour was also similar to that obtained when wheat has been injured as mentioned.

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