

ment that are responsible for these differences include moisture, temperature, light, nutrition and many geographic and cultural conditions that affect these things; (4) there must be appropriate environmental conditions before any gene or combination of genes can have selective value, either natural or in plant breeding, otherwise they may be entirely lost; (5) in tests, suitable conditions may have to be provided artificially; (6) the cumulative effect of modifying factors under a particular set of environmental conditions can be taken advantage of by the plant breeder in improving the adaptability of selections having special market appeal; (7) the value of any heritable character under a particular set of conditions may bear no relation to its development or lack of development under other environmental conditions; (8) work in experimental taxonomy encourages the belief that the adaptability of many crops for southern and western conditions can be materially improved by breeding and selection even though they have been developed primarily for other regions with quite different conditions; (9) improvement might be expected in some cases through intervarietal crosses by accumulating genes from different varieties that may have a favor-

able effect directly or in combination; and finally (10) in other cases more rapid progress may be expected by outcrossing to wild forms where these are available or by making wide crosses among cultivated forms. Perhaps this summary carries its own moral. As a matter of fact much of the breeding work in the South and Southwest has been and still is in line with these considerations.

This interest in breeding for increased adaptability to southern conditions evident in the past ten years is very encouraging. As the work progresses we may expect an even larger accumulation of hereditary factors favoring quality and production under our conditions. This will make it increasingly easy to synthesize a variety according to certain specifications. There is still a good deal of spade work to be done. This means that we must discover new genes judging their value to us not by their expression under a different environment, but by what they can do under conditions peculiar to our own locality, both as individual hereditary factors and in new combinations. With these it seems reasonable to expect that we can provide the plant material basis for an increasingly prosperous southern horticulture.

SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

RECENT DEATHS

HERMAN STABLER, since 1925 chief of the conservation branch of the U. S. Geological Survey, died on November 24, at the age of sixty-three years.

DR. REUBEN PETERSON, until his retirement in 1931 with the title emeritus for thirty years professor of obstetrics and gynecology at the University of Michigan, died on November 25, at the age of eighty years.

DR. SAMUEL HANFORD MCKEE, ophthalmologist at the Montreal General Hospital, formerly clinical professor of ophthalmology at McGill University, died on November 25. He was sixty-seven years old.

A RECENT message received through the American Red Cross announces the death in Germany on July 5 of Professor Oskar Bolza at the age of eighty-five years. He was a reader in mathematics at the Johns Hopkins University in 1888-89, associate at Clark University, 1889-93, associate professor at the University of Chicago, 1893-94, and professor, 1894 to 1910. For many years past he had been non-resident professor living in Freiburg.

DR. RICHARD B. GOLDSCHMIDT, professor of zoology at the University of California, writes: Mrs. L. Goldschmidt, widow of the crystallographer, Professor Victor Goldschmidt, of Heidelberg, who had been professor there for about forty years and had be-

queathed his fine art collection with a large endowment to Heidelberg University, recently committed suicide at the age of eighty-two years, when the Nazis wanted to deport her to a Polish ghetto.

TRANSFER TO THE UNITED STATES OF THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE INTER- NATIONAL SOCIETY OF SURGERY

By a vote of the delegates from all the affiliated societies of the Americas, representing Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Cuba, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, the United States, Uruguay and Venezuela, the headquarters of the International Society of Surgery has been provisionally transferred from Brussels to the United States.

In explaining the need for the change Dr. Rudolph Matas, of New Orleans, acting secretary and treasurer, said:

The German occupation of Belgium and the Nazi devastation of the rest of Europe and all the other war-torn nations had virtually restricted the international relations of the society to the Western Hemisphere, where its fellowship is widely spread through its affiliated branches in North, Central and South America.

The Executive Committee of the United States Division, the largest, most active contributor to the transaction, felt it their duty conjointly with their Latin American colleagues to rescue the society from the perils of the Euro-

pean conflagration. The first steps were taken in November, 1941, at Boston, but no final action could be taken to transfer the official sanction in Brussels to America without the concurrence and approval of all the affiliated branches in America.

The act by which the transference of the society was effected was signed either personally or by proxy by the delegates from all the affiliated societies of the Americas.

By action of the Council of Delegates, the official seat of the society will be established in the Inter-American Division of the New York Academy of Medicine, directed by Dr. Mahlon Ashford, where Dr. Enrique J. Cervantes, assistant secretary-treasurer of the executive committee, editor of *America Clinica*, the official organ of the society, and editor and secretary of the Hispanic-American Medical Society, will be able to render service to the fellows of the society and to medical visitors coming from the Latin American countries.

The affairs of the society will be administered by an executive committee composed of Dr. Elliott C. Cutler, Col. M. C., U. S. Army, *chairman in absentia*, Dr. Eugene Pool, Dr. Arthur W. Allen and Dr. Matas.

A meeting held on February 12 was presided over by Dr. Eugene Pool, who serves as acting chairman of the executive committee for the United States, in the absence of Colonel Elliott C. Cutler, now at the front. Dr. José Arce, dean of the University of Buenos Aires, is serving as acting president in the absence of Professor L. Meyer, of Brussels, detained in Belgium by Nazi compulsion.

A revision of the constitution prepared by Dr. Matas was adopted in November and a representative group of fellows from New York and elsewhere signed the act of reorganization, as witnesses of the signing of the act by the delegates of the governing council. These included Dr. Mahlon Ashford, director of the Inter-American Division of the academy, and Dr. Archibald Malloch, librarian of the New York Academy of Medicine; as fellows and guests were Drs. Walter Estell Lee, of Philadelphia; Russell S. Fowler, Ralph Colp, Edwin G. Ramsdell, Frederick W. Bancroft, Howard Lillienthal, Charles Elsborg, Seward Erdman, Carl Eggers, Henry Lyle, and others elsewhere by proxy.

GENETICS IN THE U. S. S. R.

FOLLOWING are the essential parts of a letter written to Dr. M. Demerec, the Carnegie Institution, Cold Spring Harbor, New York, by Dr. S. Gershenson at Ufa, U. S. S. R., on July 6, and received by registered mail on November 20:

My laboratories, both in the Institute of Zoology of the Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian S.S.R. and in

the Kiev State University were, like all other scientific institutions, safely evacuated from Kiev. At present the first of them, where I am working, is in Ufa (Ural), the second in Kzyl-Orda (Middle Asia). All our laboratory equipment is with us, but we lost all our *Drosophila* stocks, among which were some very valuable ones (*e.g.*, a collection of over 100 mutant genes of *D. buscki*, most of which were already mapped, collections of mutant genes from wild populations of *D. funebris*, *D. melanogaster*, etc.), and both our laboratory and private libraries are also lost. This latter loss is especially painful, and I should be greatly obliged to you and to all American geneticists whom I would kindly request you to inform on the subject, for sending of not only the reprints of new works appearing out of press, but also for sending of all old reprints which you can spare. . . .

At present we are actively occupied with selection, breeding and genetics of the oak silk-worm and of cattle. Besides this work on economically important objects, I continue to study the distribution and dynamics of melanism in the hamster—a work that I have been leading during the last three years, and which has already given some interesting results concerning the mechanism of natural selection and the origin of lower taxonomic units. I am also working on some theoretical genetical-evolutionary questions.

Please extend my best regards to my colleagues. Kindly tell them as well as other American geneticists that we are trying here to help all we can in the great fight against fascism and that we unanimously believe in a complete victory over our common foe. We all greatly welcome the recent agreement between U. S. A. and U. S. S. R. and trust that it will lead, among other important results, also to the further development of scientific relations between our countries.

Information received from the Embassy of the U. S. S. R., in reply to inquiries, indicates that books and reprints can be sent by mail in small packages addressed directly to the Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian S. S. R. in Ufa. If, however, the material is very bulky and can only be sent in packing cases, it would be advisable to send it by sea. In that case, the Embassy will be glad to send shipping directions if the weight and dimensions are supplied.

THE ST. LOUIS MEETING OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF AGRONOMY

THE thirty-fifth annual meeting of the American Society of Agronomy was held in the Hotel Statler in St. Louis, Missouri, on November 11, 12 and 13. There were 393 members and guests registered in attendance. The meetings were held jointly with the Soil Science Society of America.

A general meeting was held on the morning of November 12, with President Richard Bradfield presiding. Papers were presented by Dr. O. S. Aamodt and by Dr. Frank W. Parker, of the Bureau of Plant Industry. Following these papers a committee