

copious records, took hundreds of superb photographs and secured a great variety of interesting and useful plants, many of which are now growing in the United States. Previous to these trips he had visited all parts of the United States and had walked across central Mexico, sleeping in Indian villages or on the mountain sides. Earlier in life he walked from Holland to Italy, guided only by his compass, and nearly lost his life in the Alps, overtaken by a snow storm. The first person he met in Italy said: "Where did you come from?" and then "Impossible! There are no roads!" when he replied "From over the mountains." Before he came to the United States (in 1900) Meyer had been gardener to Hugo de Vries in Amsterdam for eight years. He had also lived and studied in London. Meyer was one of the most friendly men I have ever known and one of the most interesting. He was also a just and upright man. His knowledge of plants was phenomenal and especially of conditions suited to their growth, but he was interested in everything pertaining to the countries he visited—climate, topography, fauna, flora, geology, ethnology, art archeology, religion. He was an entertaining public speaker, as many can testify, a good conversationalist and a copious and fascinating letter writer. A published volume of his letters would be as interesting as a novel, more interesting than most novels. He had also a gift for linguistics, being most at home in Dutch, German and English, but knowing also something of French, Spanish, Italian, Russian and Chinese. On the whole, Meyer preferred the United States to any other country and had become a citizen, but the narrowing conventions of our social life irked him a good deal at times—"The sky is too near" was his whimsical way of putting it—and after a few months of Washington life there was always a longing for the free air of the wilderness. Grand mountain scenery in particular appealed to him strongly. Early in life he spent a year in a Dutch social colony, a kind of second "Brooke Farm," founded by the poet Dr. Frederik van Eeden, but the serpent of selfishness was there also, he told me. In

philosophy Meyer was a follower of Schopenhauer; in politics a Marxian Socialist; in religion a Buddhist. It is not known how he met his death. He was ill at the time, it is said, and disappeared in the night from a river steamer. He was in middle age, of medium height, stocky, broad-shouldered, strong. He had blue eyes, brown hair, a big beard and regular features.

O brother of all men and faithful friend,
By riddle of the world made desolate,
'Tis meet an Asian flood should be thy fate,
By *Welt-Schmerz*, *Welt-Gang* driv'n to sad life's end!

Nobly to plan is life! Life's worth, its trend;
Mere close of life is naught, or soon or late!
Lonely he lived, alone he died, but great!
His growing fame nor gods nor men forbend!

The splendid good he did shall live and grow
To fructify with Time and bless mankind,
Which was his noble dream and life-long goal!
But who that did not call him friend shall know
The opalescent wealth that stored his mind,
His breadth of view, his tenderness of soul!

ERWIN F. SMITH

SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

RUSSIAN WHEAT

THE *Bulletin* of the Neuchâtel Geographical Society (vol. 26, 1917) contains an elaborate paper by Léon Felde on the "Production and Export of Russian Wheat." According to an abstract in the *Geographical Journal*, the first part (pp. 80) discusses very fully, if not very deeply, the whole question of production—soil, climate, technical and social conditions; the second part does the same for the commerce, dealing with the internal and external transport from all points of view, but specially with exports to Switzerland. It is a very useful compilation, marred only by some rigidity, *e. g.*, the fixing of germination at 6° C. and the accumulated temperatures being stated definitely as 2000°, the relation of higher accumulated temperatures to latitude and higher mean temperatures being thus ignored.

The spring-wheat area falls, typically, within the area of highest general culture. It lies parallel with the rain-bearing winds—north

eastwards from the Sea of Azov, along isotherm 22° C. (c. 71° F.) in July, while the winter-wheat area lies athwart the winds, parallel with the Black Sea coast, especially southeast of the Azov, i. e., along isotherm -4° C. in January. The spring-wheat area is, therefore, associated with greater range of temperature (having an average of -10° C. in January), as also with greater variation of yield, this having varied from 58,000,000 cwts. in 1906 to 148,000,000 in 1913; and such variation helps to account for the excessive variation in price, which even at Odessa varies from 29 per cent. below normal to 32 per cent. above, while at Saratov it varies from 35 per cent. below to 62 per cent. above. Both areas have sudden increase of rainfall in May, then maximum in June-July, a dry autumn, and some increase of rain again in November or December. And it is, of course, the "temperate" winters that are bad for the winter wheat (p. 27)—in hard winters it seems to take no harm. In fact, wheat-growing is greatly facilitated by both soil and climate, but there are at present insuperable difficulties against introducing intensive culture, although the wheat area has—for Russia—quite a dense population (25 to 70 per square mile). In the absence of scientific agriculture, the result of this comparative density is that only sixteen governments, out of c. 70 in European Russia, have normally any surplus wheat for export; and this surplus is based on a per capita consumption of 150 pounds in 1913, as against 60 pounds in 1906. Still, cereals make two thirds of the total value of Russian exports, wheat having over one third of the total cereal value. The transport is by both water and rail, the useful "floatage" being estimated at c. 90,000 miles and the navigable water at c. 28,000 (excluding Finland), and an annual duration varying from an average of 263 days (with a range of 50) on the Dnieper, to one of 231 days (with a range of 29) on the Don, and one of 223 (with a range of 67) on the Lower Volga. The statistical returns emphasize in the most marked way the insignificance of Odessa as a wheat port. For some years it has never been in the list of the first

six. It is generally far behind its two neighbors of the Dnieper liman, Kherson and Nicolaiev—the latter, as an important railway junction on the only line to Kherson and with a much wider river, having the steadier trade of the two. All three together were not equal to Rostov in 1913, with its 17 per cent. of the total Russian export, while even Riga is usually at least as important as Odessa. The sheltered "Riviera" port of Novorossiskaya, the terminus of the Volga line from Tsaritsin, comes next to Rostov, with c. 9 per cent. of the total export and has a very steady trade; and Taganrog usually stands third, though large quantities of wheat are exported from other Azov ports, e. g., Yessk, Berdiansk, Mariupol and Feodosia—which really counts as an Azov port. Altogether, c. 45 per cent. of Russian wheat exports go from the Azov, the Black Sea proper having only c. 40 per cent.; and the quantity in millions of pounds roughly approaches the value in millions of roubles (203 and 225 in 1913). For years before the war Russia had furnished Switzerland with her chief supplies of wheat, though by 1912 the proportion had fallen slightly below 50 per cent., while it was only 36 per cent. in 1913. The grain moved via Genoa or Marseilles or Mannheim, some going on as far as Strassburg or Kehl; and the manipulation of dues on the German railways was such that, though the water rate to Mannheim was c. 1,400 francs per quintal as against 800 to Genoa or Marseilles, the total cost to Berne was only c. 3,200 francs as against 3,070 via Genoa and 3,300 via Marseilles. The saving to Zurich was 300 francs greater. The extra time for delivery to Switzerland via the Rhine was 20 days.

THE SUPPRESSION OF BODY-VERMIN

A COMPREHENSIVE paper entitled "Combating Lousiness among Soldiers and Civilians," by Professor G. H. L. Nuttall, appears in *Parasitology* for May. According to an abstract in *Nature*, the paper is one of a series which when complete, will constitute an exhaustive monograph on human lice. It brings together, not only the available published