

early history, so to speak, is shrouded in mystery, because nowhere was there recorded in any permanent form the historical account of their first introduction into the country. This system of printed inventories is therefore intended to be an orderly and clear method of making permanently available to the public the record of the introduction of thousands of new and more or less valuable plants which it is hoped will increase the welfare of the country in one way or another.

In the early days of plant exploration, particularly in Europe, the danger of introducing new parasites with new seeds and plants was not realized, and private firms and wealthy amateurs did a great deal of the work of plant introduction, either as public-spirited men or for profit. To-day, with the rapid increase in our knowledge of the diseases of plants, has come a new responsibility—that of making sure that no dangerous insect parasites or parasitic fungi are introduced with the plants. Furthermore, the work of securing new plants has proved on the whole a very unprofitable business to such private firms as have engaged in it, because of the great expense of maintaining explorers in the field and the difficulty of retaining control of a new plant long enough to make much out of it.

As the researches of the Government experts result in new methods for the disinfection of large quantities of plant material, this commerce is bound to grow, and it is even conceivable that general inexpensive methods will be discovered by which all kinds of parasitic diseases of plants can be killed on imported material as soon as it arrives in this country, so that only disease-free plant material will leave the quarantine stations of our ports.

The fragmentary nature of many of the notes in the inventory is to be regretted, but in general it must be said that this is the result of a failure on the part of many who send in material to grasp the plan of plant introduction as a whole; and since fresh field observations, even though they are incomplete, are more valuable than book knowledge, it has been deemed better to print these impressions fresh from the field than to give abstracts from books on horticulture and botany describing the plants.

There are a number of very interesting new introductions in this inventory, for it covers collections which Mr. Frank N. Meyer, agricultural explorer of the Bureau of Plant Industry, made in the Shantung Province of China, and some remarkable new potato varieties secured by Mr. W. F. Wight during his trip through southern Chile and Peru.

Mr. Meyer's collections enumerated in this inventory include a cultivated large-fruited variety of the Chinese haw (*Crataegus pinnatifida*), No. 35456, which in Mr. Meyer's opinion deserves the serious consideration of American horticulturists. It is a hardy tree, remarkably drought resistant. The fruit is of good flavor, and from