

interesting conference given up to a discussion of the products of the Ya-Chow country, the following interesting methods of ripening persimmons used by the natives came up. They are of especial interest in connection with Mr. H. C. Gore's work on persimmons here in the Department and the work of Vinson on ripening dates.

The commoner method, apparently used on a commercial scale, is to lay down a layer of lime, air-slaked, on an out door platform or bed of earth; on this lime straw is placed sufficiently thick to conceal the lime, and on this the green persimmons are placed. The rapidity of ripening or the completeness of the action was not observed by Mr. and Mrs. Openshaw.

The other method consisted in placing a number of green persimmons in a basket with a number of the coarse pears of the country. As the natives say, "the pears take the bitterness from the persimmons." As the baskets of ripening fruit are placed in closets to ripen, it is to be supposed that the pears never get so far as complete decay. After being used in this manner the pears are thrown away as spoiled.

CHINESE TURKESTAN, Kashgar. From Mr. Frank N. Meyer, Agricultural Explorer, we hear under date of October 27, that he has reached Kashgar in safety. There seems to be nothing remarkable to be seen there. The fruits are decidedly poorer there than in Russian Turkestan, and far fewer in varieties. There are a few strange varieties of plums, somewhat between plums and cherries in general looks. Fine varieties of winter melon, which "certainly ought to be boomed in America, as we have nothing like them. The so-called winter peaches they have here are all clingstones, somewhat watery and not very fine in general. There are, however, excellent pomegranates." Mr. Meyer left on October 29 for Yarkand with the British Consul, thence to Khotan, and then to Keria. When returning they expect to make side trips into the mountains to collect all the good things of the country. Botanically, the country from Andishan to Kashgar by way of Osh was extremely poor, the mountains and plains being arid or semi-arid and practically devoid of vegetation. On the Russian side there were still to be seen many wild grasses but dried out and shrivelled, while on the Chinese side there was very little vegetation at all. For a few days they went through absolutely barren regions and where vegetation appeared it consisted of Artemisias and saltbushes.

GREECE, Corfu. From this island, Dr. Charles Sprenger writes October 21 and 29 that he will send us cuttings of the Lecein olive, a variety unusually resistant to cold and frost, a Tuscan variety of Asparagus, and next autumn will send us plants of *Asparagus tenuifolius* from Florence as it never fruits there.