

The World's Future Wheat Supply.

Sir William Crookes' presidential address before the British association at Bristol, England, was one of the sensations of the day and has caused much discussion. It related to the world's future supply of wheat, and the speaker claimed that the failure of the world's power to supply the rapidly augmenting millions of its population with this kind of important food was clearly within sight. He premised that this cereal is an essential factor of diet for the progressive and dominating races; that no substitute could possibly take its place; that the cumulated experience of civilized mankind had set wheat apart as the one great brain and muscle making food, an experience also justified by the chemistry of nutrition. After an elaborate study of statistics to establish his contention that the growth of the wheat using nations and the rapid extension of that use are fast outrunning the agricultural pace and the possible utilization of suitable areas, he sums up in brief. The definite statement is that should all the wheat growing countries be worked to their full capacity they would only give an addition of about 100,000,000 acres. Reckoning the yield at the present world average of 12.7 bushels, 1,270,000,000 bushels would be just enough to supply the increase among bread eaters till 1931. Then the pinch will come, and Sir William Crookes queries, where can be grown the additional 330,000,000 bushels required ten years later by a hungry world?

The remedy must be found in the laboratory which must furnish an artificial fertilizer sufficient enriching and sufficiently low priced to increase the yield of wheat vastly without proportionately increasing the cost of production. The necessary aliment of wheat growth is some form of fixed nitrogen. The present available forms in which this exists on a large scale are the refuse of coal gas making, guano deposits and nitrate of soda, but it is alleged by this inexorable statistician's figures that all these will fail to furnish the needed supply within the next generation at the increasing rate of use. So recourse must be had to the artificial production of this all important soil food. In its free state nitrogen is the most abundant and pervading of bodies as found in the atmosphere. The problem is the successful fixation of nitrogen in quantity and cost of production. This, the speaker assured his audience, could be accomplished surely through electricity. But it would not be from coal and steam engines. Only water power transformed into electricity on a gigantic scale would do the work with such energy and economy as to yield the 12,000,000 tons of nitrate top dressing which would be required to raise the world's needed yield of wheat. This was perfectly practicable, and the speaker, after his cheerless prognostications in

the outset, ends with a rosy promise: "A preliminary calculation shows that there need be no fear on this score. Niagara alone is capable of supplying the requisite electrical energy without much lessening its mighty flow. The future can take care of itself. The artificial production of nitrate is clearly within view and by its aid the land devoted to wheat can be brought up to the 30 bushels per acre standard. In days to come, when the demand may again overtake the supply, we may safely leave our successors to grapple with the stupendous food problem."

Similia Similibus.

The disease of anarchy as a political and social evil has rooted itself dangerously in many parts of Europe and even affected to some degree free and happy America. The recent startling outcome of the disease has made the powers of civilization more alert to devise some means of controlling, if they cannot extirpate, the malady. It has been proposed that each nation should exile the professors of this doctrine from its borders, so far as they become known by expression of opinion. This of course would go far toward checking the propaganda as well as of ridding the country of the more blatant and garrulous apostles of the dreadful gospel. The effect, however, would be to send an army of this human vermin into the more hospitable regions of the free nations where the doctrine of free opinion, as long as it is confined to speech, is looked on as the cornerstone of liberty. To inflict so alarming a nuisance, which easily becomes a civil danger, on one's neighbors, even if done in self defense, is scarcely generous, for even in case of a belief, which, conjoining itself with the various shades of natural insanity, so quickly leaps from opinion into murderous action, such countries as England and America would scarcely feel justified, it is to be feared, in taking harshly repressive measures.

That something must be done, however, to shut down the gates against the infection and propagation of anarchy is quite clear. Perhaps a mild measure, which would have the value of a great experiment in sociology as well as of penal justice, might recommend itself indeed to even the freest countries, which value the rights of individualism as a sacred heritage. This project has in it a curative element and justifies itself in the form of criticism as an admirable "argumentum ad hominem" in its application to the philosophy of anarchy. It proposes to grant to these fanatics the most favorable possible opportunity for proving the efficacy of their theories of society.

Anarchy as an intellectual belief bases its appeal for a following on a few fundamental principles—firstly, before a healthful social order can be re-established the whole system at present dominant must be disintegrated from base

to pinnacle; secondly, murder of individuals as one of the means of attacking the props of existing society is perfectly justifiable as a means to an end; thirdly, that the right cannot be denied to the individual anarchist to exercise his personal judgment in committing such murders. In other words, it is permissible for each philosopher of this school to act as judge and executioner. The anarchists, however, profess to deplore the necessity of murder, even as Robespierre shed tears over the alleged necessity of sending some hundred or two victims to Sanson's knife each day of the "Terror."

To procure a field for the fullest and freest practice of anarchistic reform, then, it is necessary that society should first be in a state of nature, a virgin soil, so to speak. The nearest possible approach to this would be one of the more savage regions of equatorial Africa. Here, where false civilization has never yet planted its debasing influences, the anarchists could build up their glorious edifice. There would be no temptation to kill, unless to slay the black cannibal desirous of trying an anarchistic roast, or else to knife each other out of the lust of habit. Provided with seeds and tools wherewith to cultivate the soil and to build houses, with weapons and ammunition for self defense, unhampered by the civilization which they detest, they could try the experiment of creating their millennium, which the world would watch with interest. The nations could easily arrange together to herd these dissentients as fast as possible and to share the expense of deporting them to an African paradise among wild beasts and wilder men. Here they could try to work out their own salvation without let or hindrance. The world is invited to consider this suggestion as a happy solution of a troublesome problem.

Governor Bloxham of Florida has called a convention of state governors and their proper advisers to meet in Tampa in February to consider proper measures to put the interests of the militia of the country on a uniform footing of regulations and training and to consider all questions affecting their increased efficiency. It is a project full of splendid possibilities and a credit to the state that such a suggestion should have come from its excellent executive.

Before the recent election the imperial German government was serious in its purpose of forcing a law through the Reichstag greatly abridging the suffrage. Now that the government has won the emperor thinks he can afford to wait for another season. But it is wise to take time by the forelock. The next election may leave government without a majority.

No man is satisfied with his own fortune or dissatisfied with his own wit.