

LETTERS FROM RUSSIA.—XVI.



FIG. 1137.—JAROSLAV NIEMETZ.

WE have a great many interesting and novel plants from middle Asia, and the railroad now being built will furnish us with more. Some of these are edible and may be worthy of cultivation. At present they are under trial in the Imperial Botanic Garden at St. Petersburg. Being desirous to serve the Dominion Experimental Farms at Ottawa, the officers of which, willingly give me information concerning Canadian fruit culture, I have written to Siberia for seeds of the following plants, the further trial of which will be made at Ottawa and will show whether they are of use in Canada.

1. *Rubus Xanthocarpus*. Bur. and Franch. This new species of raspberry was found in 1885 by the Russian traveler, G. N. Potapin, in China, Province of Kanzas, and was previously described by French Scientist Bureau and Fran-

chet. It is a low plant, about one foot in height with herbal, prickly, suspended leaves. The fruit is ovoid, light yellow, sweet and palatable. At St. Petersburg it ripens about the middle of July. This plant has proven hardy in Northern Russia and is fit for cultivation on a large scale.

2. *Ribes Dikusha*. Fish. (Blue currant of Siberia). This species was discovered by the Russian botanist N. T. Turchaninoff in Eastern Siberia and was described by botanist Fisher. It very much resembles the common black currant (*Ribes nigrum*) but there is a difference in the forms of leaves, calyx and pistil. In size and flavor, the berries resemble those of black currant, but are blue and green in color. Turchaninoff says that if eaten, they will make people drunk. The plant grows in moist places and is hardy in the botanic gardens at St. Petersburg.

3. *Ribes Procumbens*. Pall. Moss currant, this was found by botanist Pallas in Siberia. It is not new, but cannot be got in European gardens, because of the difficulty in distributing it by seed, and live plants could not endure so long a journey. Formerly the Botanic Garden at St. Petersburg got some live plants from Nerchinsk. The bush is low with creeping twigs, and yields brown berries, twice as larger as those of common black currant. It grows only in moist soil, along rivulets. The edible berries ripen late in summer and are very much esteemed by the inhabitants of Eastern Siberia.

4. *Ribes Diacantha*. Pall. Siberian gooseberry. The bush of this variety resembles the currant, but has prickly twigs and leaves. The berries red, subacid and are about the size of common