

# Mancel Thornton Munn

*January 31, 1887 — November 16, 1956*

Mancel Thornton Munn, Emeritus Professor of Seed Investigations and formerly Head of the Department of Seed Investigations, New York State Agricultural Experiment Station, Geneva, died at his home in Arcadia, California, November 16, 1956, following a long illness.

Professor Munn was born on a farm near Plainwell, Michigan. He received the B. S. degree from Michigan State College in 1912 and the M. S. degree in 1917. He was appointed Assistant in Research in the former Department of Botany at the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station in 1912, becoming Assistant Botanist in 1918, Associate Botanist in 1929, and Professor and Head of the present Department of Seed Investigation in 1936. With his retirement July 31, 1952, the Board of Trustees of Cornell University approved his appointment as Emeritus Professor of Seed Investigations, effective August 1, 1952.

The year 1912 which marked the beginning of Professor Munn's 40 years of service to the agriculture of New York State was also the year in which the Legislature enacted the first of a series of laws governing the inspection and sale of seeds within this State. Professor Munn supervised the official seed testing from that date forward until his retirement. He devised many procedures and technics for testing seeds in the laboratory that are now routine operations in seed laboratories everywhere. He also pioneered the practice in this country of making field performance tests an integral part of official seed testing. This innovation of trueness-to-type testing is of great importance because it recognizes the increasing contribution of superior germ plasm in improving crop production efficiency.

Among scientific and professional societies in which he held membership are the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Phytopathological Society, the Association of Official Seed Analysts of which he was President in 1920, the International Crop Improvement Association, and the New York State Agricultural Society. He was also a member of Theta Chi and Sem Bot, an honorary botanical society at Michigan State University.

Professor Munn traveled extensively throughout the United States in connection with his official duties and attended International Seed Congresses in several European countries as an official United States delegate. He played an important role in formulating regulations governing the movement of seeds in international trade.

Exceedingly productive in the publication of technical articles in scientific and trade publications and of bulletins of the Experiment Station, he also contributed extensively to farm papers and other popular mediums. In collaboration with the Bureau of Plant Industry of the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, with which he cooperated closely in the seed inspection work, he issued a long series of official seed inspection reports. He also served for many years as Editor of the *Proceedings* of the Association of Official Seed Analysts.

Forty years of tireless effort on Professor Munn's part are reflected in the exceptionally high standards which characterize the seed-producing and seed-dispensing business, particularly for farm, vegetable, and flower seeds in New York State, and have won for him the abiding respect of seedsmen, farmers, and professional colleagues alike. His influence for good in the seed industry, resulting in better seed for the planter, will be felt for years to come.

Professor Munn married Eunice Rosser of Traverse City, Mich., July 1, 1913, who survives him. Also surviving are five children, Rachel, Myrta, Helen, Irving, and Roger. Throughout his active career he was interested in young people, particularly in Scouting. He pioneered many innovations and achieved an outstanding record in local Boy Scout circles. He was also quite active in the Baptist Church in Geneva. With Mrs. Munn, he took a leading part in the social life of the Experiment Station and was the first President of the Station Club, a social organization of Station employees.

We share with his family the deep sense of personal loss and the memory of a gracious friend and colleague.

*B. E. Clark, A. A. Johnson, J. D. Luckett*