

Dr D. F. VAN SLOOTEN †.

On March 7, 1953 the Rijksherbarium suffered a severe loss by the sudden death of its honorary co-operator Dr. D. F. van Slooten, the well-known specialist particularly of *Dipterocarpaceae*. To honour his memory the following lines may serve as an obituary note.

Dirk Fok van Slooten was born in Amersfoort on 17 March 1891. In the local gymnasium his biology teacher was the later Prof. A. Pulle, who was again his master at the University of Utrecht where he was matriculated in 1910. His doctor's thesis of 1919 was dealing with the *Combretaceae* and *Flacourtiaceae* of the Dutch East Indies.

A few months after obtaining his Ph. D. he left for Java, the country in which he was to spend more than 30 years, first as a botanical assistant to the Buitenzorg (now Bogor) Herbarium, from 1931 as its director. In 1934—1935 he was acting director of the famous Botanical Garden "s Lands Plantentuin", which position he again filled from 1940—1943. From 1 January 1949 to 1 February 1950 he was director of the Royal Botanical Garden of Indonesia, the last director under the Dutch regime. On the last-named date he was succeeded by Ir. (now Prof.) R. Kusnoto, the first Indonesian director, whom the botanical world welcomed as a man of outstanding ability.

Next to the plant families mentioned, Van Slooten devoted his attention to the *Stylidiaceae* and, above all, the *Dipterocarpaceae*. Together with Dr. C. A. Backer, he wrote the well-known illustrated handbook on Javanese tea weeds.

In the beginning of 1951 Dr. and Mrs. Van Slooten returned to the mother country, where their children had preceded them. He found an abode at Amsterdam and a working place in the Royal Institute for the Tropics (the former Royal Colonial Institute), where he continued his studies on the Dipterocarps in his quiet, unobtrusive way.

As a scientist, Van Slooten was a slow but painstakingly meticulous and extremely reliable worker. He was a man who, though perhaps lacking the flair of the artist, yet displayed a wealth of thoroughness which was something of an art in itself. He was not a man of adventurous tours and hazardous expeditions, he was rather a closet scholar, an unusual type in a tropical country; yet his tropical career was indubitably a success. For in spite of his rather shy and seemingly hesitant demeanour and his unathletic and frail stature, he will be long remembered as a man of character, faith and firmness who, though never striving for a high position and glory, stood for his task like a man, once responsibility was laid upon his shoulders. For if ever he seemed hesitant, this was due to his strong self-criticism, his mild and impartial opinion of others, rather than to any weakness.

He was unusual insofar as he was one of those rare men who know exactly the limits of their innate capacities; and this was a greatness for which I have admired him ever more as we grew older together. He had himself incessantly under control, and he was strictly honest and unimpeachable. These features made him a meritorious president of some important local societies, an accurate editor of that beautiful monthly "De Tropische Natuur", and above all a respected member of the Rotary, for which he some time was an acting district governor.

It may be stated without exaggeration that his firm attitude during the Japanese occupation saved the Botanic Garden of Bogor from being wiped away and becoming a tool in inexperienced hands. In those days he fought for his duty with great courage and many a family owes him a debt of gratitude for his unselfish support. All his life he lived up to the sense of the quotation he chose for a motto to one of his well-considered addresses which often betrayed his wide interest and range of reading: *Quidquid agis, prudenter agas et respice finem.*

H. J. LAM.