

I. EDITORIAL

Since the last Bulletin was published we have to regret the loss of four persons who were supporters of Flora Malesiana or collaborated with it in some way or other.

Mr. P. Groenhardt started his career in Java as a botany teacher in the Agriculture School at Malang. He was keenly interested in plants and became gradually specialized in lichens which are, particularly in the tropics, a fascinating group, under-collected and inadequately known. Though an amateur, he gradually elevated his work to a true scientific level and was granted extended leave for this work in the early thirties which he spent at Utrecht University, Holland. From this emanated an enumeration of Javanese lichens and several other papers. Since then he gradually accumulated a large herbarium and a specialized library, devoting all his spare time to the study of Malesian lichens. He was not easily satisfied and the peculiar tropical groups led him to contemplate systematic questions on the division of lichens. The time-consuming work involved with the microscopical structure of these organisms caused much delay and in addition he had to classify a very large collection. It should be added that he was not very ambitious to publish. The main gain to science is a well-ordered large and annotated collection bestowed to the Rijksherbarium, Leyden. A few but important papers will be edited posthumously in Persoonia. A most pleasant, cooperative man.

Dr. J.G.B. Beumée was originally a forest officer in Java. Soon he was appointed in the Forest Experiment Station at Bogor. His interest was taxonomical and plant-geographical. His thesis (1922) dealt with the composition of the undergrowth of the teak forests intended to find a plant-sociological basis for soil conditions and the growth of teak forest, and to trace indicator species, a pioneer work when plant sociology was still in its teens. He became a successor to Dr. J.J. Smith as head of Herbarium Bogoriense, 1924-1931. He acquired here a thorough overall form-knowledge, brought order to the Herbarium, identified or pre-identified an extremely large number of specimens. His keen observation led to many finds, but he felt no or hardly any need for publishing his results, which is to be regretted. True, he paved the way for others, also in the way in which he edited the Bulletin du Jardin botanique. It is hard to say why he left the Herbarium, because I have always had the impression that he was keenly interested in the taxonomy of Malesian plants of which he had an encyclopedic knowledge, which he freely communicated, at least to me. But in 1931 he accepted a higher post in the Department of Agriculture and soon after became director of the Agricultural Research Institute, an administrative post.

Later, in Holland, after the war, he became a lecturer in Plant Taxonomy at the Agricultural College, Wageningen. Attempts to get him involved in Flora Malesiana work, which he recognized as of high importance, failed; at one time he envisaged to revise *Dichapetalum* but this never materialized. His interest in his Javanese period was for a great deal plant-geographic and he wrote several small, but important papers, almost all in Dutch, on correlation of plant distribution with climate, on dispersal by ants, and on pollination. It is to be regretted that we have not more observations in print of his hand.

He was Officer of the Order of Orange Nassau, Commander in the Order of Ismail, and Officier du Mérite Agricole.

It is with very great regret that we lost our dear friend, Ir. Jan van der Ploeg, who died, after a long and serious illness, at Amstelveen, Holland, Sept. 5, 1966, in the age of 65. He was not a botanist, but an agriculturist, who worked contemporarily with us in pre-war Java, especially in the Division "Landbouwvoorlichting" of the Department of Agriculture, first at Bogor, later at Djakarta. A large, strong, energetic man, he withstood the poor life of the war-prison camps, and resumed his work after the war, as secretary-general of the Department of Agriculture. He remained advisor for some time, after in 1950 sovereignty was transferred to the Republic of Indonesia. He was devoted to his work and was certainly of great help to the newly appointed Indonesian chief of the Department, Drs. Hermen Kartowisastro.

In this capacity he was of immense help to establish the Foundation Flora Malesiana which was administratively a difficult affair to get it settled and started. Both Drs. Hermen and he were convinced of its great value for the future scientific development of Indonesia in the botanical section. Later his advisorship became superfluous and he was appointed with F.A.O. for which organisation he worked in Libya for several years. Most unexpectedly he became ill with some nervous attack and had to slow down activity. He was then for some time attached to the Division of Documentation of the Institute for the Tropics at Amsterdam, but his condition became worse and he has lived completely paralyzed, but in full command of his mental capacities, for several years, showing a wonderful courage under this awful condition. In a sense it is fortunate that he had not to endure this longer, without hope for any cure. According to his wish he was buried in his birthplace Vrouwenparochie in Friesland. We will ever remember him for his friendship and kindness, and the essential service he rendered to the successful inauguration of Flora Malesiana Foundation.

We will always keep in memory the sympathy of Victor Jacob Koningsberger, director of the famous Sugar Experiment Sta-

tion at Pasuruan, Java, both for ourselves and for the Flora Malesiana. Though a plant physiologist by profession, he was a man of wide vision which is for example shown by the fact that he found it necessary to add to the Handbook of the Sugarcane Cultivation a volume on weeds (composed by the late Dr. C.A. Backer) which he believed might add to a better knowledge of soil conditions. A great organiser and commanding person, he was instrumental in promoting botany in circles mostly focussing on commercial profit. A great promotor to attract biologists to the tropics, as was his teacher and predecessor in the chair of botany at Utrecht, Dr. F.A.F.C. Went, where he became professor in 1934. He promoted tropical research in no mean degree, and was called to many high posts in Holland, amongst others president of the Board of the Royal Institute for the Tropics where he also displayed his organisational powers.

Several important events come to the fore. We have great pleasure in welcoming, for the second time, Mr. W.J.J.O. de Wilde. When he had done the Najadaceae for the Flora Malesiana, he did extensive field work during 3 years in Cameroon, Ethiopia, and other parts of Africa, under an agreement with Prof. H.C.D. de Wit's Botany Department of the Agricultural Faculty at Wageningen. Now back at the Rijksherbarium, he has started to work on the Passifloraceae for Malesia and Africa.

Some visitors are seeking the spacious accommodations of the Rijksherbarium. Prof. E. Govindarajalu from Madras is studying Cyperaceae with Mr. J.H. Kern for a year. Dr. E. Soepadmo who took his degree at Cambridge with Prof. E.J.H. Corner on a many-sided study of the genus *Quercus*, is now at the Rijksherbarium for half a year to do *Lithocarpus*. Together with *Castanopsis*, which he also recently finished, *Nothofagus*, revised some time ago by Dr. van Steenis, and the new genus *Trigonobalanus*, his work will bring a Flora Malesiana revision towards the final stage of completion.

Exploration in Malesia progressed well. An expedition (together with the Lae Botany Department) was made by Dr. C. Kalkman and Mr. W. Vink to the Doma Peaks, an unexplored mountain massif in West Australian New Guinea.

Field study of a group by a monographer has once more proved to be a singularly fortunate trend in tropical taxonomy. Dr. Ding Hou found in Sarawak no less than a new genus of the Celastraceae - and blessed the day when he decided to merge the Hippocrateaceae with that family. In other parts of this overpopulated world, however, plant families are freely produced "in order to focus attention on them" - whereby the plant taxonomist becomes an impressario ... but scarcely, in our eyes, to promote the interest of his own science. For, being a man to promote order, a taxonomist has undertaken to

make the system of plants not looser, by chopping off taxa and leaving them yet in their former place, but tighter, by discovering relationships.

The senior editor spent a delightful three weeks collecting in Taiwan which he found useful in comparing its mountain flora with that of Malesia. Notwithstanding the useful guidance and cooperation of Dr. DeVol, Prof. H.H.Li, and the two young Chinese companions, it proved very difficult to name the herbaceous plants by lack of a coordinated flora. After that he attended the 11th Pacific Science Congress at Tokyo, a monster Congress (6000 scientific attendants), extremely well organized, though sometimes enduring tropical conditions. Our Japanese colleagues had prepared a meticulously arranged Congress, and it was a great pleasure to meet so many botanists, with whom one had only corresponded or exchanged reprints. The language difficulty was there but could mostly be overcome. The Biology section was most fortunate in having as organisers Prof. Hara, assisted by Prof. Tuyama; by some miracle our section had almost always air-conditioned lecture rooms. During the Congress there were some small botanical excursions, one to Mt Fuji where a new concrete road goes up to 2400 m at tree limit. After the Congress he joined the Special Symposium No 4 on Conservation to the Japan Alps, a magnificent tour ending in Kyoto where he spent a few, too few, happy days.

The new instalment of the Flora Malesiana came from the press in May 1966. It contains the genus *Rhododendron*; the rest of the Ericaceae are now in the press. We congratulate Dr. H.O.Sleumer with this magnum opus: 740 species altogether. With the Ericaceae, volume 6 will be concluded.

Mrs. van Steenis has again made herself most useful to our readers in compiling the index to the numbers 17-20 of this Bulletin, forming volume 4; an indispensable careful work to make its contents readily consultable.

A work which we are very satisfied to see in print is the second volume of Pacific Plant Areas, published as a Supplement to *Blumea*, thanks to financial help of the Netherlands Organisation for the Advancement of Pure Research and Leyden University. We hope that this will attract attention also outside botanical circles and will sell satisfactorily so that a stable financial basis will be founded for future volumes.

We are glad to see finally the revision of Malesian Malvaceae, by Dr. J.van Borssum Waalkes, in print as a Leyden thesis, published in *Blumea*: a major contribution to the Flora Malesiana endeavour.

It is with a sigh of relief that the complete text of volume 3 of Backer's Flora of Java has gone to the press. It will probably be available early 1967. Dr. Bakhuizen van den Brink Jr, Mr. Kern and Dr. van Steenis have tried to edit

this at a satisfactory level.

We may say that with the arrival of Reinwardt in Java, in April 1816, coordinated botanical research began. Thus 151 years after that time, the first complete Flora of Java will have appeared in print. If anything, this shows that our useful science has been under-organized, and that its structure as a whole is in need of clarification, due to the fact that the reasons for its existence have been taken for granted for too long a period, without having been examined, discussed, and evaluated time and again. In absence of an explicit and detailed formulation of aims and means of plant taxonomy in tropical countries, not only botanists themselves are in danger of failing to find the proper arguments to sustain their proposals, but also government officials, who have to be advised and convinced, and cannot be blamed if they take decisions that are, scientifically spoken, short-sighted. The way to improve the climate goes by schools and universities, and it is high time that it be paved.

At present we may emphasize only the point, that the effect and success the Flora Malesiana has found, may partly be ascribed to its solid scientific circumscription. The limits of Malesia are clearly defined on the basis of the plants themselves, and not on the basis of political boundaries with which the plants, our objects of study, have nothing to do. That we often consider it appropriate to forage outside the boundaries of Malesia should not mislead anybody. It is curious that the weight of this principle is so seldom perceived: botanical frontiers for a botanical work - perhaps because it has been expounded rather briefly, in Flora Malesiana I, 1 (1950) lxx-lxxv, and perhaps because it is not realized that a statistical elaboration of the limits of a major floristic region by comparison of all the generic areas, takes comparatively little time. Mr. M.M.J. van Balgooy succeeded in about one year in working out the plant-geographical borders and subdivision of the Pacific for his paper in Blumea 1960. This first stage in the preparation of a Flora completed, the second stage consists of making an inventory of all the collections and literature of the given area; this has for Malesia resulted in the Cyclopedia of Collectors, and in the MS bibliography for all families, which collaborators receive when they begin the study of a group - stage three. It is true that the second stage may (and should) take years, something in the order of 10-20 years, and it is possible to build cheap houses by omitting the foundation, but such things are in a habit of quick delapidation. There may be taxonomists who are so devoted to their daily labour that they do not mind very much, but friends, our discipline is so short of able craftsmen, and the results of their work so indispensable to all whose business it is to handle plants or plant products, that the world cannot afford a taxonomy for

love alone - unless joined with love for utility.

During the whole year the editors file all sorts of information about Malesian botany that comes to their notice. In July a circular is sent to the directors of institutes in the area, who most graciously supply us with the news of their institutes. If we hear of other expeditions, or of taxonomic work started, we make special inquiries. As it is our wish to make the news record complete, we cordially invite persons to communicate freely all news they think fit for the Bulletin, if there is half a chance that we would miss it. The closing date is, for an issue, the 1st of September. Articles and reviews are mostly written on request.

Our column "Dates of Publication" has not been filled in the present issue. This in connection with the preparation by Prof. Dr. F. A. S t a f l e u at Utrecht of a general comprehensive 3-volume work on the same subject. As the first volume can be expected before long, and the work will be acquired by most institutions, Mrs. M. J. v a n S t e e n i s - K r u s e m a n, who has done us so great a service by regularly supplying the Bulletin with this information, decided to hand over her data to Dr. Stafleu. It cannot yet be said when the column in future Bulletins will be resumed.