

I. EDITORIAL

Arithmetics and Economy. The cover plate was drawn by the editor himself and shows some parts of a dissected flower, the whole page measuring 20 by 15 cm. The flower thus analyzed was first boiled up and examined under water against a grid. This can be found on so-called millimetre paper, or be engraved in plastic petri-dishes (like the glass one figured on page 431 but smaller and the lines 2 mm apart), which are quite cheap and available from Dr. J. van Brummelen, Rijks-herbarium. They are mostly used for counting colonies of bacteria. The parts are drawn under a standard magnification of 5, 10, 15, or 20, on a paper which has a 1 cm grid; such paper is now also on sale. Such drawing can indeed, as Corner says, be learnt like arithmetic.

In (too sporadic) use since at least one century, and only in degree perfected since C.B. Clarke, F. Gagnepain and others drew their dissections on a small strip of paper which they later stuck to the sheet, this method serves to make a 3-dimensional flower visible in one plane. It takes about 1-1½ hour to make a thorough, annotated analysis of a flower, and ideally, for each species, several have to be prepared. All this is well-known. Yet more than one fellow-taxonomist who had prepared a number of such sketches, put them away among his notes. Even if he took care to preserve the dissected flower fragments, it is evident that his labours thus are lost to others. The place where such an analysis belongs is with the specimen from which it was drawn, and which only then can be easier and more fruitfully examined. If we realize that each drawing easily costs taxonomist-time equivalent to \$ 6-12, it seems even economical to have the sketches xeroxed (which can be done very well if sharp pencils are used) and copies glued to all duplicates, as a kind of service to other institutes, who often went to great expense to send materials on loan. It is much better for the specimens, too, if they only need to be plundered once.

This drawing shows a plant, still unidentified, from New Guinea.

Flora Malesiana. Volume 7 part 4 was proofread in December 1975. This part will conclude the volume, containing the Dedication to Professor H.J. Lam, the Index, and revisions of the Leeaceae (by Ridsdale), Balanophoraceae (by Hansen), and Taccaceae (by Drenth). It can be ordered from Academic Book Service Holland, P.O. Box 66, Groningen, Netherlands. An agreement has been made to print it again on first quality paper.

Volume 8 part 2 will go to press in the course of 1976, and will probably contain the Anacardiaceae (by Ding Hou),

Iridaceae (by Geerinck), Lentibulariaceae (by Taylor), and Symplocaceae (by Nooteboom).

Contents of the Bulletin. In the Preface to the Cyclopaedia of Collectors, Second Supplement (Flora Malesiana i 8. 1974), Mrs. M.J.van Steenis-Kruseman alluded to the possibility of continuing to provide information. Such items (occasional, however, and restricted to main issues) are thankfully placed in Chapter V: Expeditions and other Exploration, which is therefore subdivided into (a) Field Work, which covers the subject as before, and (b) Cyclopaedia of Collectors, Additions.

In answer to our queries, long lists of publications are sent by some institutions. But convinced as we are that a bibliography has real value only if each item can be provided with a brief critical annotation, we need the actual publications. After examination, the editor then will gratefully forward them to the Rijksherbarium library. As said on page 2305, everything goes into the Flora Malesiana files, not everything into the Bulletin.

It should be remembered that neither this issue nor the others are a composition, but assembled in an essentially haphazard manner. The same holds good for Personal News. If an item comes to the editor's knowledge and seems worth printing, this does not imply a comparison with others. Neither is length of an item in itself an indication of praise. So we offer congratulations but no apology to colleagues unmentioned.

Never a great dispatcher of Christmas and New Year's Cards, the editor is nonetheless thankful for those he may receive. But on seeing what opportunities were missed by the well-wishers to fill blank spaces on these cards with information for the Bulletin, he sighs. Good botanists too often suffer of unjust modesty. Even at a lecture in the Rijksherbarium room, they tend to fill the back rows first. Such things must end forever. Where there are interesting things to be heard or to be said, botanists should not hesitate to take their place in the front ranks.

Value of FMBulletin. "This is a very important publication for those concerned with the Malesian Flora. It gives a lot of fundamental information on herbaria, expeditions, staff, developments etc. and contains also in each issue a section of book-reviews and a list of recently published literature, which is very useful." Numbers 1-27 (altogether 2300 pages) for DM 410. All according to a recent catalogue of Otto Koeltz, referring to this Bulletin. Certainly the editors feel grateful for these kind words. However, in the same catalogue, the Flora Malesiana is offered, with scant comment, up to vol. 7 (2) incl. (altogether 3900 pages), for DM 620.

It means that on average, one page of Flora Malesiana is cheaper than one page of the Bulletin ... second hand. How our time seems to prefer ephemeral news, and unfulfilled promises (of which too many, alas, were committed to paper under Progress in Malesian Botany!) over solid scientific achievement! But tropical botanists, like the salmon, have learnt to swim against the current, and to relish their independence of the fads and foibles of the day. Surrounded by indifference, and often by incompetence, with nothing to drive them but personal enthusiasm, they proceed, stumbling and groping but botany-crazy, aware of the pitfalls of: administration; machinery; talking about teaching, social relevance, and the origin of life; attending meetings; and the persuasion of the welfare state to work shorter hours.

Thanks are due to Mrs. M.J.van Steenis-Kruseman who kindly prepared the Index to numbers 25-28 in her meticulous critical way, to Dr. C.G.G.J.van Steenis who prepared the Bibliography so far as this was not done by Dr. W.J.J.O.de Wilde during the former's 3-months absence, and to all who supplied the editor with information, gossip, and views.

P.S. The Reviews are not completely alphabetical, but all items have been incorporated in the Bibliography, and reference is made from there.