

I. EDITORIAL

The frontispiece of this number serves to feast our eyes on the daring fecit of Mr. Corner who has now organized the Malaysian Moraceae, a work on which he has spent more than a decade of intensive work, following many years of earlier work in prewar time. Daring because it confronts us with an attempt to make an imaginary picture of the prototype, or archetype, of a family as it emerged from this study. I feel certain that this will stimulate interest in evolutionary thinking on the basis of morphology and anatomy combined with geography. Elsewhere in this number Mr. Corner has let himself go on the subject, how this work grew under his hands and became synthesized in his mind; may especially our younger colleagues be instructed and refreshed by it.

Work on two other similarly forbiddingly large families has been finished. Prof. Holttum submitted his revision of the treeferns, and this is now actually in print. This again is a very large synthesis and the result of many years of labour by our experienced pteridologist who had to tackle the identity of many hundreds of names and wrestle with specific and generic delimitation on the basis of mostly too scanty material.

The third monograph completed is that on Ericaceae, by Dr. Sleumer, a family which is numerous in species and specimens in the montane and alpine regions of the Malaysian tropics. This large work offered not so much problems on generic delimitation as on description and distinction of species. This problem is especially confusing by the occurrence of hybridisation, at least in *Rhododendron*.

All three authors could complement their work on dried specimens by precursory field work in the Malaysian tropics. More and more it appears that it is of paramount importance that monographers of large groups are enabled to work in the field in Malaysia during the time they are engaged in their revision. In this respect we are happy that Dr. Burttt could hunt after gesneriads, Mr. Nicolson after aroids, Mr. Sinclair after trees of the nutmeg family, Dr. Kostermans after *Tiliaceae*, etc., and that Mr. Pennington will do so after the *Meliaceae*, whilst *Dipterocarps* and oaks received plenty of attention in the field by Dr. Ashton, Dr. Meijer, and others.

Besides in precursory papers the work of *Flora Malesiana* resulted in the publication of ser. I, vol. 6, part 2 comprising revisions of the *Najadaceae*, *Primulaceae*, *Simaroubaceae*, *Loganiaceae*, and *Celastraceae*. That on *Celastraceae* is the first part of the family, as *Hippocrateaceae* will, in the *Flora Malesiana*, be merged with *Celastraceae*. Three Identification Lists were issued, viz 16. *Primulaceae*, 17. *Simaroubaceae*, and 18. *Loganiaceae*.

As to Pacific Plant Areas (see Fl.Mal.Bull. no 17, pp.900-902) the welcome news is that the first volume came off the press in Febr. 1963 and that the MSS and Maps for volume 2 were ready to be submitted to the editors in March. The compilation of Pacific Plant Areas has led me to specific elucidation of the palaeogeographical importance of the mangrove genera and to a large essay on the pros and cons of the land-bridge theory in botany, with particular reference to tropical plants (see under Book reviews and Bibliography).

Furthermore it has been a great pleasure to be enabled to see in print four water colour drawings of my MS book on "Javanese Mountain Plants in Colours", in the journal 'Endeavour'. Judging from the astonishing number of requests for reprints, this roused a definite desire among the public. Unfortunately as yet no such enthusiasm for printing the work was found among the publishing firms which I have approached. This is a great pity, as the drawings do not improve with age and valuable material is withheld from publication. A grant or guarantee for a few thousand pounds would be sufficient to ensure printing.

While this Bulletin was in preparation, the nestor of Javanese botanists, Dr. C.A.Backer, passed away, peacefully, at the age of 88, and he is briefly commemorated in section two. By writing almost exclusively in his native tongue he became less well known in international taxonomy. He has had a profound influence on the standing and development of Malaysian botany; the revisions of some families in Flora Malesiana are a fine testimony of the extremely critical standing of his taxonomical work.

Of the last monument to him, the Flora of Java in an English edition, the first of the three volumes is in the press and will have been printed before the end of this year.

The Foundation Flora Malesiana lost three other ardent supporters. We learned to our great regret that Prof.Dr. C. Skottsberg passed away June 14th, 1963, at Göteborg. As a trustee of the Foundation his advice was often searched and we were happy with his warm feelings towards our project. Unfortunately the copy of the first volume of Pacific Plant Areas, which is dedicated to him, did not reach him in time. We learned also with great regret that Dr. C.E.Kobuski, former Curator of Harvard Herbarium, passed away. It is tragic that now he gradually could spend more time on scientific work he has been prevented to finish his monograph of the Theaceae to which he was so much devoted. We learned also of the death of Mr. R.A.Blakelock, Kew, who has been so kind to work on Malaysian Celastraceae to which Dr. Ding Hou could have loyal access.

In succeeding Prof. Lam as a director of the Rijksherbarium, it is a privilege to recall the strong and loyal sup-

port he has given to the Flora Malesiana project for which we cannot, indeed, be too thankful. In fact, without his sympathy we would probably not have overcome the critical stage which arose in 1958 when its financial basis was suddenly threatened. May he live long to be witness of the slow but steady growth of our endeavour.