

IN MEMORIAM
DOCTOR DIRK FOK VAN SLOOTEN
March 17, 1891 — March 7, 1953

(With Frontispiece)

In the midst of his work Van Slooten has been suddenly called away at the relatively early age of 61. It was known that his heart was not too good, but it was expected that living a quiet life he would be able to finish his life's work, the monograph of the Malaysian Dipterocarpaceae, to which he had been able since 1951 to devote all his time and concentration undisturbed by other duties. The striving towards the completion of this work on the most important family of Malaysian forest trees always occupied his mind and had been to a large extent the main object of his life.

Van Slooten's ambition was to produce careful work, meticulous in *all details*. This made him a slow worker, but at the same time one of the trustworthy kind. This trend towards perfectionism expressed itself equally in the preliminaries and routine work towards his objective. Through his method of working progress was steady but unfortunately relatively slow. Other factors beyond his control added to this result. Besides delays due to World War II, Van Slooten performed many other official duties in the same earnest way in which he carried out his research work. Any spontaneity and opportunism he had in his character was suppressed through his orderliness. Only in exceptional and very urgent circumstances would he make decisions *à l'improviste*. It is of course questionable whether one can deduce a man's character from his published writings. Whether this thesis be accepted as a generality or not, it is certain that it held for Van Slooten. His care for details, for straight-forwardness, for trying to find the truth in his work found a remarkable parallel in his office work, and his private life. He wanted things to be clean and orderly. Even on excursions, which he made surprisingly seldom, his clothes were as speckless as they could possibly be in the circumstances.

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Quiet, never spectacular, avoiding the limelight, he lived a life of a rather retiring nature. He always had himself under control and his honesty and integrity could never be doubted.

All this gave a rather grave tinge to his behaviour, at the same time giving it the firmness of one who could be trusted to make decisions with care. To a certain extent a man characterises himself by the devices he chooses; Van Slooten chose for his presidential address to the biological section of the 1935 Science Congress at Bandung: *Quidquid agis, prudenter agas et respice finem* (What you do, do it with consideration, and do not lose sight of the aim).

Writing an obituary note we should know the motives of the deceased. These are, in all respects, far more important to know than the facts themselves. I have had the privilege of working closely with Van Slooten for nearly two decades and I have always felt a great admiration for the noble, tolerant and reasonable way in which he viewed both personal and objective things. No living person is of course devoid of idiosyncracies, of sympathies and dislikes, but Van Slooten appreciated good qualities, even in those whom he would not call his friends. He was always kind and tolerant to his personnel and I have myself on several occasions profited by his generous way of arranging work in the office.

It is clear from the above that he was exemplary in doing his duties for the benefit of the Herbarium and the Botanic Gardens. Official, often dull, routine work was executed with the same care as his scientific research. Vanity was unknown to him, and he accomplished all he had to perform as well as he could. He had few further ambitions. It was certainly with no special enthusiasm that he accepted responsibility when he was on several occasions appointed Acting Director of the Gardens (1935-1936, 1940-1943) and when he was finally made Director in 1949. Still, he did not like to refuse, as he found it his duty to give his full energy if such unasked for obligations were laid on his shoulders.

Manifold were the services he rendered to scientific and semi-popular societies, always showing that he was ready to give, to help, and to co-operate. For several years (1929-1934) he was the chief editor of "De Tropische Natuur," a well-known semi-popular natural history magazine which, under his care, maintained its unique standard. He served the Natural History Society as its president 1933-1942. For several years (1936-1938) he was president of the Buitenzorg Branch of the Royal Physical Society. Later he felt strongly attracted to Rotary, a movement which by its device of mutual help among mankind carried a great attraction for him. He was an active member and served it in several capacities.

I have always felt that Rotary suited him exceedingly well by its appeal to ideals of social ethics which fitted the ideals he carried himself. He tried to fathom the essence of Rotary in his "De kern van Rotary," printed 1939.

A special word should be said about the very difficult period of the Japanese occupation when all of us were under arms save a very few who were appointed to the emergency formation. Van Slooten, then temporary director of the Gardens, tried to organise what he could, both for the dislocated institutes and for the equally confused community. He organized social help, specially for the families of the personnel of the Gardens. Throughout this period his calm, correct behaviour did a lot of good, both in relations with the Japanese civilians serving with their Army and with others. He tried to impress the small European community and the Garden personnel with the need for unselfishness. For all those who tried to make the best of it, his appreciation was alike, regardless of race or nation. Through this exemplary behaviour he was respected by all.

His work on the Dipterocarpaceae, a huge task, started about 1925 and at first revisions of separate genera appeared at fairly short intervals. Coming to the large genera *Shorea* and *Vatica*, he found the intense concentration needed for this kind of work made almost impossible by the official work which fell on his shoulders soon after 1930. In addition, the staff of Herbarium Bogoriense dwindled, owing to the slump of the thirties, to three botanists, viz., a Keeper, a Phanerogamist and a Mycologist, a deplorable situation which lasted until 1940. Also the postwar years immediately following the so-called liberation were entirely unfit for concentrated herbarium work. This opportunity came again about 1950 when his research gradually gained pace and his insight into the large genera *Vatica* and *Shorea* was deepening. After his settling down at Amsterdam, where he could work undisturbed, results seemed to speed up and I had the impression that he had definitely gained command of the situation and that it merely required time to perform the task. Unfortunately Fate had decided otherwise and suddenly deprived him of the opportunity to complete his *magnum opus*. His death means a serious loss to Malaysian botany and forestry.

Dirk Fok van Slooten was born March 17, 1891, at Amersfoort, Netherlands, where he attended the primary school and the grammar school. He entered Utrecht University in 1910, attained his bachelor's degree in 1913 and his master's degree in 1916. He then started to write his thesis on the taxonomy of the Combretaceae and Flacourtiaceae of the

Netherlands East Indies on which he got his doctor's degree in February 1919. He was the first pupil of Prof. A. A. Pulle at Utrecht and was his assistant 1913-1918. In July 1919 he was appointed Botanist in the Herbarium Bogoriense, serving as Acting Keeper July 1929 to April 1930, finally being appointed as Keeper February 1931, and remaining in that position till January 1949, when he was appointed Director of the Botanic Gardens of Indonesia, to be replaced by Prof. Ir. Kusnoto in January 1950, remaining Advisor to Kebun Raya Indonesia, and during the absence of the director replacing him. In January 1951 he went on leave to Holland and retired February 1952, after 33 years of service in the Botanic Gardens. He proceeded in Holland with his studies on the Dipterocarpaceae and through the generous co-operation of the Royal Institute for the Tropics at Amsterdam he obtained a reasonable working space in the herbarium of that institute.

In addition to his other functions he gave lectures on fodder, poisonous and medicinal plants at the Netherlands Indies Veterinary School at Bogor (1922-1927, 1932-1934).

He was elected a member of the "Utrechtsch Provinciaal Genootschap voor Kunsten en Wetenschappen," Utrecht, in 1932.

The great and long services he rendered to the Botanic Gardens at Bogor were recognized by appointing him as Honorary Co-operator of these Gardens, May 18, 1952, a distinction he highly appreciated.

When he definitely settled in Holland he accepted the position of Honorary Co-operator of the Rijksherbarium, Leyden, July 1951.

C. G. G. J. VAN STEENIS

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

1919. Bijdrage tot de kennis der Combretacee'n en Flacourtiacee'n van Nederlandsch-Indië. Proefschrift, Utrecht, (viii), 170, & (3) pp. 2 *pis.*
1922. Index Flacourtiacearum quae anno 1921 in Horto Botanico Bogoriensi coluntur. *In Bull. Jard. bot. Buitenz. III 4: 279-280.*
- Index Combretacearum quae anno 1921 in Horto Botanico Bogoriensi coluntur. *In Bull. Jard. bot. Buitenz. III 4: 281-282.*
- De Nederlandsch-Indisehe *Lumnitzeva-soorten* en hare verspreiding. *In Trop. Natuur, Weltevreden 11: 51-56, 65-70 I, /»,., 1 textmap.*
1924. (With C. A. BACKER:) Geïllustreerd handboek der Javaansche theeonkruiden en hunne beteekenis voor de cultuur. Batavia. 47 & (308) pp. 240 *pis.*
- Contributions à l'étude de la flore des Indes néerlandaises, II. The Combretaceae of the Dutch East Indies. *In Bull. Jard. bot. Buitenz. III 6: 11-64 5 fs., 1 textmap.*
- Contributions à l'étude de la flore des Indes néerlandaises. III. The Styliidiaceae of the Dutch East Indies. *In Bull. Jard. bot. Buitenz. III 6: 65-67.*

1925. Contributions à l'étude de la flore des Indes néerlandaises. VI. The Flacourtiaceae of the Dutch East Indies. *In Bull. Jard. bot. Buitenz.* III 7: 291-421. *IS h.*
1926. Contributions à l'étude de la flore des Indes néerlandaises. VIII. The Diptercarpaceae of the Dutch East Indies. I. The genus *Anisoptera*. *In Bull. Jard. bot. Buitenz.* III 8: 1-17 2 *fs.*
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 Styliidiaceae. *hi Nova Guinea* 14: 195. -1927."
 Combretaceae. *In Nova Guinea* 14: 196-198. "1927."
 Diptercarpaceae. *In Nova Guinea* 14: 222-227 *pi. IS.* "1927."
1927. Contributions à l'étude de la flore des Indes néerlandaises. XI. The Diptercarpaceae of the Dutch East Indies. II. The genus *Diptercarpus*. *In Bull. Jard. tot. Buitenz.* III 8: 263-352 15 *fs.*
 Contributions à l'étude de la flore des Indes néerlandaises. XII. The Diptercarpaceae of the Dutch East Indies. III. The genus *Paraskorea*. *In Bull. Jard. bot. Buitenz.* III 8: 370-380 3 *fs.*
 Contributions à l'étude de la flore des Indes néerlandaises. XIV. The Diptercarpaceae of the Dutch East Indies. IV. The genus *Vatica*. *In Bull. Jard. bot. Buitenz.* III 9: 67-137 13 *fs.*
1928. Het geslacht *Diptercarpus*. *hi Trop. Natuur, Weltevreden* 17: 139-149. *IS fs.*
1929. Contributions à l'étude de la flore des Indes néerlandaises. XVIII. The Diptercarpaceae of the Dutch East Indies. V. The genus *Cotylelobium*. *In Bull. Jard. bot. Buitenz.* III 10: 393-406 5 *fs.*
 Diptercarpaceae. *Apud Merrill, Pl. Elmer, born, in Univ. California Publ. Bot.* 15: 200-206.
 Heinrich Zollinger als Botaniker und seine Bedeutung für unsere Kenntnis der Flora Java's, *hi Mitt. Gruppe niederl. Indien neu. helvet. Ges., Buitenzorg* 8: 15-22 1 *f.*
1931. Yeysmann herdacht bij gelegenheid van het eeuwfeest zijner benoeming tot Hortulanus van s¹ Lands Plantentuin. *In Natuurk. Tijdschr. Ned. Indië* 91: 27-49 1 *portrait, 1 pi.*
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1933. Biologisch en landbouwkundig werk in Nederlandsch Indië. 15. Het Herbarium en Museum voor systematische Botanie van 's Lands Plantentuin. *In Vakbl. Biologen* 14: 161-174.
1934. Zum Geleit. *In Blumea* 1: 7-9.
1935. Mr. Ridley and the flora of the Netherlands Indies. *In Gdns' Bull., Straits Settl.* 9: 44-48.
1936. Wetenschap en Maatschappij. *In Handel, zevende Ned.-Ind. natuurw. Congr., Batavia* 395-402.
1937. Dr J. J. Smith on the occasion of his 70th birthday 29-VI-1867—29-VI-1937. *In Bull. Jard. bot. Buitenz.* III 14: 99-114 *pi. 2.*
 Contributions à l'étude de la flore des Indes néerlandaises. XXXI. The Styliidiaceae of the Netherlands Indies. *In Bull. Jard. bot. Buitenz.* III 14: 169-174 5 *fs.*
 Die Verbreitung von *Lumnitzera* und einigen anderen Mangrovengehäusen. *In Blumea, Suppl. 1:* 162-175 *g fs.*

- Het Proefstation en de flora van Ned.-Indië. Zijn beteekenis voor de kermis van onkruiden. *In* Soerabaiasch Handelsblad, Extra Uitgave ter Eere van het gouden Jubileum Proefsta. Pasoeroean 11-12. Vrijdag 9 Juli.
1939. (With C. G. J. VAN STEENIS:) Dr August Adriaan Pulle 18-V-1914—18-V-1939. *In* Bull. Jard. bot. Buitenz. III 16: 103-105 *1 portrait*.
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1941. *Sertulum Dipterocarpacearum malayensium*. II. *In* Bull. bot. Gdns Buitenz. III 17: 96-138 *50 fs.*
1942. *Sertulum Dipterocarpacearum malayensium*. III. *In* Bull. bot. Gdna Buitenz, III 17: 220-255 *36 fs.*
1949. *Sertulum Dipterocarpacearum malayensium*. IV. *hi* Bull. bot. Gdns Buiten?.. III 18: 229-269 *U fs.*
- Wetenschap: het reserve-kapitaal der maatschappij. *In* Chron. Nat., Batavia 105: 186-190.
1951. Kebun Raya Indonesia. *In* Vakbl. Biologen 31: 130-134.
1952. *Sertulum Dipterocarpacearum malayensium*—V. The Dipterocarpaceae of eastern Malaysia (Celebes, the Moluccas, and New Guinea). *In* Reinwardtia 2: 1-68 *22 fs.*
- In preparation:
- Stylidiaceae. *In* Fl. mal. I 4, — In the press.
- Sertulum Dipterocarpacearum malayensium*—VI.
- Sertulum Dipterocarpacearum malayensium*—VII.