

FELICITAS

On the 5th December, 1963, Rev. Fr. Dr. H. Santapau, S. J., completed his 60th birth-day. During his long and continued services in India, extending well over three decades and a half, amidst odds and adversities, physical or otherwise, Rev. Fr. Santapau strove hard to hoard all his energies to be of service to Science, leaving an indelible impression on our contemporary Botanical Sciences. The result of this self-imposed discipline has been the enrichment of Indian Botanical literature through his scientific publications, numbering no less than 215 within a span of just two decades. Such a burden shouldered by this savant suggests the key to the character and the spirit of his pontificate.

Hermenegild SANTAPAU was born on the 5th December, 1903 at La Galera, prov. Tarragona in Spain. After his early education at School, he worked at classical and modern languages for three years between 1920 and 1923, which was followed up immediately by his work for dissertations for the Ph.D. in Philosophy of the Gregorian University, Rome during 1923-1928 and in Botany from 1936 to 1940. From the London University he obtained the B.Sc. and Ph.D. degrees; further he holds the Associateship of the Royal College of Science (A.R.C.S.) and diploma of Imperial College (D.I.C.). In connection with the study of Foreign languages, he visited France for 3 months in 1927, Portugal for 10 months in 1935-36, Italy for 3 months in 1936, and he passed the German test at Royal College of Science, London in 1937.

Rev. Fr. Santapau first arrived in India in 1928 and he worked as a teacher in St. Xavier's High School, Bombay until 1932. Later, he took up the post of Professor of Botany in St. Xavier's College, Bombay in 1940.

Rev. Fr. Santapau is a Fellow of the Linnean Society, London, since 1947, of the National Institute of Sciences, New Delhi, India, since 1952-53 and of the Indian Botanical Society since, 1954-55, besides being a member of several learned societies and scientific committees and organisations such as the British Ecological Society, Asiatic Society of Bengal, Indian Botanical Society, Bombay Natural History Society, International Society of Plant Morphologists, Phytopathological Society of India, Entomological Society of India, National Institute of Sciences of India, Indian Science Congress, Agri-Horticultural Society of Bombay, Ecological Committee of Bombay Biological Association, Pharmaceutical and Drugs Centre, C.S.I.R., Parks and Gardens Committee, Atomic Energy Commission Establishment, Trombay, Publication Committee & Biological Committee, C.S.I.R., Advisory Committee National Botanic Gardens, Faculty of Science, Bombay University, Board of Botany, University of Bombay, Board of Botany, University of Poona, Botanical Society of Bengal etc. He was also President of the various Scientific Bodies as Indian Botanical Society (1955), Bombay Natural History Society (1950), Indian Ecological Society (1942) and Vice President of the Bombay Natural History Society.

Recently, he has been elected President for the Botany Section of the Indian Science Congress to be held at Chandigarh (1964). We are all very happy to know that he shall be awarded the Birbal Sahni Medal by the Indian Botanical Society next year. He is now the Director of the Botanical Survey of India since 1960.

As an enthusiastic botanist, Rev. Fr. Santapau has been botanising various places in and outside India at various times. Among his most important botanical expeditions, mention may be made of his explorations on the Eastern Pyrenees in 1934, on Italian Alps in August 1936, in Baluchistan during the summer of 1946, and within Indian territory, in Saurashtra during 1946-54, Khandala, Purandhar and Mahabaleshwar from 1932 to 1961, North Kanara in 1954, Andhra in 1956, Dangs Forests during 1950-55, and various parts of Bombay from 1940 to 1961.

The long list of Rev. Fr. Santapau's publications would spotlight his botanical labours on diverse topics and every title therein represents a work of real importance. His works on the *Flora of Khandala*, *Orchids of Bombay*, *Acanthaceae of Bombay*, *Bibliography of Indian Botany*, *Identity and nomenclature of Indian Plants* etc., with others, are not only popular with research workers and botanists but also indispensable in scientific pursuits.

With the increasing momentum gained in more recent years in Systematic Botany and Taxonomy in various countries, there has been an awakening in these branches of Botanical studies in India also. Indian Botany owes a great debt to Rev. Fr. Santapau for his untiring efforts in initiating, popularising and maintaining the disciplines of Taxonomy by his devoted services in this particular field with the full realisation that to be at Taxonomy is to be at the hub of Botanical Sciences. He holds an undisputed sway as a prefect in Systematic Botany and Taxonomy and his very careful and ever willing latinisation of the too numerous texts referred to him from several quarters on new discoveries, is as much a precious memento of personal regards he holds for botanists in India as public service. Patience and perseverance, duty and determination are his guiding principles and to this sagacious savant, in salutation on this happy event, our most humble tributes are inscribed with joint prayers for his long, un-interrupted and ever increasing services to Indian Botany to the pride of Hindoostan.