

L. C. P. Kerling, 1900-1985

D. Hendrina Wieringa-Brants and Francis W. Holmes



Louise Catharina Petronella Kerling was born in The Hague. She studied biology at the University of Leiden and passed her "doctoraal" examination in 1925. Her doctoral thesis dealt with the anatomical structure of leaf spots, a subject advised by Professor Johanna Westerdijk. She graduated in biology at the University of Utrecht on July 2, 1928. In June 1929, she left for Jogjakarta, Java (Dutch Indies) to teach at a secondary school. From 1936 to 1942 she taught at Medan, Sumatra, and later again at

Jogjakarta. The Japanese occupation caused the closing of the school. With the help of Professor Thung she was appointed at the "Algemeen Proefstation voor de Landbouw" at Buitenzorg, Java. One year later she was interned in "Kamp Halmaheira" at Buitenzorg. For two years she tried to help the camp population with teaching, lecturing, and investigations on dysentery. After the liberation in 1945, her health was so bad that she was evacuated for recovery to Australia.

Professor Quanjier invited her to join the staff as a plant pathologist at the "Laboratorium voor Mycologie en aardappelonderzoek" of the Agricultural University at Wageningen. For six years Kerling taught the practical courses for advanced students and carried out research. We often thought that she knew every biologist in the Netherlands; she recognized "her" students without hesitation when she occasionally met them

decades later.

When Professor Westerdijk retired, Kerling succeeded her as an extraordinary professor at the Universities of Utrecht and Amsterdam and as director of the "Phytopathologisch Laboratorium Willie Commelin Scholten" at Baarn, starting November 1, 1952.

Her interest in plant pathology was clearly shown in her inaugural lectures both entitled "De Phytopathologie, wetenschap van het dynamisch evenwicht." In some fifty publications, she demonstrated her interest in morphogenesis and her great ability for accurate observation. She was also greatly interested in plant virology. Together with Professor van Slogteren and Professor Thung she founded the "Nederlandse Kring voor Plantevirologie" in 1958.

She lectured at the two universities and guided both education and research at Baarn. Besides the heavy duties of these posts she was a member of the board of several institutes. For her outstanding work, H. M. the Queen bestowed on her the honour of nomination to "Ridder in de Orde van de Nederlandse Leeuw." At her retirement in May 1970 a special issue of the Netherlands Journal of Plant Pathology was edited in her honour.

Her tremendous energy and self-discipline were a great stimulus to everyone in the Phytopathological Laboratory. Anyone who had the privilege to attend one of her carefully prepared and enthusiastic lectures will remember this. Her cheerful personality gave her many friends. After a short illness, she passed away peacefully surrounded by her loyal friends. She is sadly missed by her former students and by her colleagues, whose welfare as individuals was always of great concern to her.