

ARTICLES IN REVIEW

ADMIRAL SIR FRANCIS BEAUFORT

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« The Journal of the Institute of Navigation », London
Vol. XI, No. 3, July 1958

This issue of *The Journal of the Institute of Navigation* of London contains an article by Rear Admiral K. St. B. Collins, O.B.E., D.S.C., Hydrographer of the Navy, commemorating the centenary of the death of the great British hydrographer, Admiral Sir Francis Beaufort, who died on 17 December 1857. The International Hydrographic Review had the opportunity to mention the work of this eminent scientist in the November 1924 issue, in an article by Vice-Admiral Sir John F. Parry, K.C.B., former President of the Directing Committee of the International Hydrographic Bureau.

After having recalled the most important stages of the life of Sir Francis Beaufort, Admiral Collins describes his great achievements in hydrography and various related sciences. It is certainly due to Beaufort that meteorology has at present become an important science with practical applications. Even today Beaufort's wind scale, which has been modified to be adapted to modern conceptions, may be considered as an international memorial.

As for tides, Beaufort encouraged the efforts of such scientists as Lubbock in 1831, and more especially Whewell in 1831 who perfected the cotidal line theory. He organized tidal observation stations in various parts of the English coast, and in 1842 the first Admiralty Tide Tables were published.

It is in the field of hydrography, astronomy and nautical charting that Beaufort's achievements were the most outstanding. When Beaufort became Hydrographer in 1829, the British Admiralty only possessed 883 charts, which were unevenly distributed over the world's surface.

Towards the end of his career in 1855, that is to say 26 years later, this figure exceeded 2 000. Charts were produced at the rate of one a week.

The number of surveys carried out under Beaufort's management is too great for detailed discussion, but one can say that they comprised almost every corner of the earth. One must, however, mention the polar expeditions organized to the Arctic and Antarctic, particularly those of the *Erebus* and *Terror*.

The article of Admiral Collins clearly shows that the directing of the Hydrographic Department by Sir Francis Beaufort was of great benefit not only to his own country, but also to the world at large and to the science of which he is one of the greatest figures.

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