

JULIEN-OLIVIER THOULET

Julien-Olivier THOULET, justly called the patriarch of French oceanography was born in Alger on February 6th, 1843. He died in Paris on January 2nd, 1936, being nearly 93 years of age. He began his long career in oceanography with the study of marine deposits on the shores and in the depths of the ocean. A Doctor of Science in 1880, he was nominated Maître de Conférences (Lecturer) at the *Faculté des Sciences* of Montpellier; and later at that of Nancy (1882) and in 1884 became head professor of mineralogy and geology in that faculty. Under orders from the Ministère de la Marine, he headed a scientific expedition to Newfoundland on board the naval station-ship, *la Clorinde*. The Navy sponsored the publication of his first important work, a Treatise on Oceanography in two volumes (1890). Several years later he started the publication of a *lithological chart of the coasts of France*, which was a continuation of the former work of DELESSE. Becoming connected with Prince ALBERT DE MONACO, he made two cruises on board the yacht *Princesse Alice-II*. It was at his suggestion that Prince ALBERT undertook the publication of the great *Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans* (1903-1904). In 1904 he brought out a book relating to the *Ocean, its laws and its problems*. Having been retired in 1913 he wished to settle down in Alger, his birthplace; but there he was unable to find the cooperation he had hoped for in order to continue his work and he returned to Nancy. Then came the war. THOULET was obliged to abandon his laboratory when Nancy was bombarded and his data was destroyed. With the peace, he settled in Paris where the *Institut Océanographique* gave him a small laboratory. He continued work there almost up to the day of his death. In his last years his research was centred on the problem of the circulation of the surface and deep waters; in these he thought particularly to discern the effects of eruptive submarine activities, to which he always attached great importance.

THOULET has left us the memory of an original mind, very active and productive. The complete list of his books, articles, notes and communications comprises more than 500 items.

He was called up for service in 1914 and, being appointed Master Mariner, he went through the war as Captain of a trawler and was awarded the Croix de Guerre.

In 1920 he continued his oceanographic expeditions on board the *Powquoi-Pas ?* which he had presented to the National Natural History Museum and which was the maritime research laboratory of the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes.

This steam-ship, 45 m. (147.6 ft.) long, rigged for sail and built of wood, was commissioned for three months annually by the Navy. CHARCOT carried on the researches which he had begun in 1912, 1913 and 1914 in the North Atlantic, the Bay of Biscay and the Channel. In 1921 he landed on the rocky islet of Rockall and made a geological study of its neighbourhood which he continued in 1922 and 1925 at the same time as that of Porcupine Bank. He worked in the western Mediterranean also, particularly in 1923 as the result of a request from the International Conference for the Exploration of that sea. Always attracted by the polar regions, he went every year, from 1925 on, to the Faeroes, to Iceland, to Jan Mayen and to Greenland, where he mainly frequented Scoresby Sound, the vicinity of the Bløseville Coast and the port of Angmagssalik. (1)

In 1928 he took part in the search for GUILBAUD and AMUNDSEN, the latter being his friend, and in succeeding years he gave valuable cooperation in the preparation and fitting out of the expedition sent by France to Scoresby Sound for the International Polar Year of 1932-33. He collaborated with and was a friend of the celebrated Danish Explorer Ejnar MIKKELSEN.

He was universally known and appreciated as a Scholar, an Explorer and as a man. He was an excellent writer, as may be judged from his book : *Christophe Colomb vu par un marin* (1927) ; a keen seaman with great experience of navigation in the ice, he was a Commander in the Naval Reserve and liked to be addressed as Commandant CHARCOT. A courageous and tenacious man, he prepared his expeditions with attention to the minutest detail and surrounded himself with a staff of competent scientists, whom he attracted and made his friends by his high spirits, his ardour, his exquisite courtesy and his conversation full of interesting memories. He died the death which his seaman heart would have wished for.

He was a «Membre libre» of the Académie des Sciences since 22nd March 1926, a Member of the Académie de Médecine from 4th February 1930, and of the Académie de Marine, Vice-President of the Société de Géographie, a Member of the «Comité de perfectionnement» of the Oceanographic Institute, Director of the Maritime Research Laboratory of the Ecole des Hautes Etudes and Scientific Adviser to the Naval Hydrographic Service. He was a Grand Officer of the Legion of Honour and had been awarded the gold medals of the Geographical Societies of Paris, London, New-York, Brussels and Antwerp.

P. V.

19th September 1936.

(1) *Annales Hydrographiques* 1921 to 1935.