

OBITUARY

JACQUES BERLIOZ (1891-1975)

Professor Jacques Berlioz, retired director of the laboratory of zoology (birds and mammals) of the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle (Paris) died on December 21, 1975 in Paris, after an illness of only a few months. He was born in Paris, in the 9th Arrondissement, near the Church of the Trinity, on December 9, 1891, of a family of artists and scientists. Hector Berlioz was his great uncle.

He was an old-fashioned man of great taste and discernment, a perfectionist in all he did. Never seeking honors, he was an Officer of the Légion d'Honneur. He was an honorary member of the American Ornithologists' Union, British Ornithologists' Union, Deutsche Ornithologen Gesellschaft, Zoological Society of London, and Société Ornithologique de France. He was an editor of *L'Oiseau et la Revue Française d'Ornithologie* for many years, and participated actively in international ornithological congresses and affairs of the International Committee for Conservation of Birds all his working life.

Beginning as a small boy he collected rocks, botanical specimens, insects and birds. Latterly his principal interest was in his beautiful collection of Colibri, on which subject he was an unexcelled expert. This absorbing interest in collecting added greatly to the value of the National Museum's collections. His travels carried him over the world, but most often to England, where he had many friends. He used to dine often with A. L. Butler, with whom he shared a great interest in hummingbirds. Both his English and German were faultless, though spoken with a strong accent. Authorship was difficult for him, although his style was masterly. Perhaps his most important task appeared in three chapters on taxonomy, distribution and migration in *Traité de Zoologie* (vol. 15, 1950, pp. 845-1088), although he published a great deal on his favorite Colibri.

The Museum and its collections were his great preoccupation, and although he held the title of professor, he took few students under his wing. Those he did learned to respect him, held him in great affection, and acquired an understanding of natural history.

Following his father, his early studies were concerned with medicine and pharmaceutical chemistry, and he was awarded his doctorate in the latter discipline in 1917. He had been working as what might be called a junior amateur at the Museum for twelve years before that, beginning in the department of entomology. His interests and knowledge were broad. In 1920 he was appointed assistant in the laboratory of mammals and birds under peculiar, and sometimes difficult supervision. Seven years later he became "Sous Directeur de Laboratoire (Assistant Curator), and in 1949, Chief Curator and titular Professor. He retired officially in 1962, but his consuming interests were pursued almost to the last.

Leisure hours were spent in a small apartment crowded with collections and overflowing with books, all overseen during his middle years by the nurse of his babyhood. He never married. His friends were many and affectionate; sometimes he gave charming small parties, usually for musicians. Eugène Simon was an intimate friend, and at his end bequeathed his library and splendid collection of hummingbirds to Berlioz. Parties were few and life was quiet for him as a rule. During the war (1940-1945) he trudged from his apartment to his work—two hours in rain or shine. All who knew him somehow wish to see him again.—J. C. GREENWAY, JR.