

GAU (Jules), born July 21, 1841, Labruguière (Tarn), and died at the same place, November 19, 1909. Mr. Gau, at the age of 20, began work in the administration of Posts and left for Paris as a supernumerary. He successively exercised his functions at Mostaganem and in Tiaret, Algeria. He asked to be sent to Tunisia in the service of the French mission charged with installing the Post and Telegraph Office in the Regency. This favor was granted and the young officer came to Tunis, where he met for the first time those who became and remained for him valuable friends, Cheylos, Jacques, Roy, Hausser and the whole phalanx of hardy pioneers to whom France can credit much of the occupation today. In 1870, Mr. Gau was telegraph receiver at Bardo, and he has often told how his heart was bleeding when he, the sole Frenchman in the palace of Bey, received the news of our losses which he then had to pass to Mohamed Es Sadok, who eleven years later, on May 12, 1881, signed the treaty that General Bréart had presented to him, imposing the protectorate of France.

From Bardo, M. Gau went to La Goulette and this is from this last place that he came to Sfax, four or five years before the occupation. There he replaced Mr. Husson as receiver, and it is in this new position that he gave the best evidence of his energy and courage.

It was he who, on 28 June 1881, had to send the Government a telegram announcing that Sfax rebelled against the authority of the Bey and refused to accept our protectorate. Mr Gau remained at his machine until the telegraph wire between Sfax and Tunis was cut by the insurgents and he was one of the last, along with M. J. Mattei, the vice-consul of France, M. Avvocato, the vice-consul of Italy, both now deceased, to get on a chaloupe to take refuge on board ships which, in the harbor, gave shelter and protection to Europeans fleeing the revolt.

The conduct of Mr. Gau in the circumstances earned him a gold medal and later, during the inauguration of the port of Sfax, the Government of the Republic, remembering this lovely page of the history of his life along with many others, gave him the cross of. Legion of Honor.

In 1884, during the organization of the first municipalities, Mr. Gau was appointed councilor and vice-president of the Municipality, a position he held until his last moments.

It is as vice president of the [205] Municipality of Sfax that M. Gau has become known, appreciated and loved not only by those in high places who knew what he was doing, but everyone who approached him.

It can be said of him, as with the late civil controller, M. Fidelle, that he was one of the men who

most contributed to the development of Sfax. He has worked to solve the most interesting issues and those the most vital to this city.

Sfax totally lacked fresh water before 1894 and, following the advice of M. C. Avvocato, who told him about the water table of Sidi-Salah, M. Gau launched the idea of bringing it to the city by a pipe and he did not rest until the day when the supply of this water came to furnish the Sfaxiens with a precious liquid.

It was he who had also to deal with the construction of the sewer system, the construction of the port, lighting and electrical systems, the roads to the south and the north, etc. etc.

His experience, coupled with a great preponderance of spirit, gave enormous weight to his advice and his word and none of our department heads in Tunisia can admit but that he has listened to Mr. Gau with pleasure, profiting from his conversations and his opinion.

Sfax owes much to him, and his friends knew this so well that a committee was organized in 1908 to celebrate his 25th anniversary as Vice-President of the Municipality. They had reckoned without the modesty of their hero who, despite entreaties from members of the celebration committee, vigorously maintained his refusal, saying that he has only ever done his duty and nothing else.

His many occupations did not prevent Mr. Gau from being involved in other activities. He was a distinguished numismatist and was consulted by those involved in excavations. It is largely to him that we owe the exhumation of the necropolis at Thyna and, at the founding of the Society for Archaeology and Fine Arts, the members of this society named him, by a unanimous vote, as the Chair .

Dr. Gau frequently served at the Consultative Conference before the reorganization of the Assembly in 1905 and at each session, his moving voice was heard in favor of the city he loved and the region where, he also, had buried some capital to restore its ancient fertility. His patriotism, informed and broad had earned the honor in 1902, to be called to preside over the Sfaxien group of "the French Alliance", a work he regarded as one of the most worthy to attract to the city the attention and sympathy of the French abroad.

Mr. Gau was scrupulously honest, with a remarkable delicacy of feeling, and everyone agrees that his integrity was such that no suspicion ever hovered over anything that he did as a public man.

All his subordinates, whether as vice president of the Municipality, or as postmaster, testify and will continue to testify that he was good with them, treating them more as friends than as inferiors.