

## OUR BOOKSHELF.

*The Log of H.M.S. Encounter. Australian Station, 1910-1912.* By Herbert Wilson. (London: The Westminster Press, 1912.)

It may be more often than is generally known that a petty officer in his Majesty's Navy keeps a private log; it may be seldom that such a log sees daylight in the form of print; but it is approaching a unique occurrence when such a log is published in book form, and records in considerable detail a complete story of an eclipse expedition.

The particular log to which reference is here made is that of H.M.S. *Encounter*, covering the period 1910-12. In this period, which was her last commission on the Australian station, the total solar eclipse of April, 1911, occurred, and for that event she was placed on special service to assist the British and Australian expeditions; needless to say she did signal service on that occasion.

It may be remembered that Dr. W. J. S. Lockyer and the Rev. Father Cortie, S.J., were in charge of the British parties, while Mr. Baracchi was chief of the Australian contingent. All the parties went to Vavau, one of the islands of the Tonga group, but the British expeditions from England were conveyed from Sydney to their station by H.M.S. *Encounter*.

The author of this book is not only an excellent observer, but, further, he can commit his observations clearly to writing. The account of his experiences at the eclipse station is only one of many incidents which he records in an interesting manner in these pages. To take an example in other fields, he writes:—"We ran into a great storm area—great atmospheric disturbances. There were intermittent downpours of rain, accompanied by great rolls of thunder and most vivid lightning—in fact, a magnificent, typical tropical storm." Being a practical man, he further narrates: "We always take advantage of times like this to wash our dirty clothes in nice soft rain water." Halley's comet was first recorded by him in his entry of March 21 (1910), and he subsequently makes numerous remarks as to its appearance on different occasions.

This log is accompanied by numerous reproductions from photographs taken by his shipmates, and the volume forms not only a valuable memento to those who served through the commission with him, but an interesting survey of a petty officer's life on and off duty.

*The Statesman's Year-Book: Statistical and Historical Annual of the States of the World for the Year 1913.* Edited by Dr. J. Scott Keltie; assisted by Dr. M. Epstein. Pp. xcvi + 1452 + 10 plates. (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1913.) Price 10s. 6d. net.

"THE Statesman's Year-Book" with the present issue reaches its fiftieth year of publication, and by way of signalling this event certain new features are added which not only are appropriate to it, but also enhance the utility of the work. A number of statistics for the British Empire and for the other principal countries are furnished

to afford comparison between the conditions of years about 1860 and of the present day. There is a semi-tabular retrospect of recent history. Certain comparisons covering the same period also appear under the individual headings of some of the countries. Map-work also plays an important part; there are maps, side by side, of each continent for the years 1863 and 1913; on some of these (e.g. Europe and America) the graphic representation of railway extension is perhaps the most noteworthy feature; from the maps of Africa we have evidence at a glance of the wonderful extension of exploration in the half-century. The year-book always deals exhaustively with the subject of defence, and we now have diagrams illustrating the "growth of displacement, horse-power, and speed of capital battleship types," and the "varying ratio between weight of heaviest gun, its penetrative power, and the protection afforded to ships," during the last fifty years.

It is scarcely necessary to say that the accustomed features of the book are maintained at their usual standard: the Franco-Spanish treaty is dealt with by means of both map and text, and in the same way the recent important extensions of Ontario, Quebec, and Manitoba are indicated. The introductory matter further includes a variety of valuable detail such as the substance of the treaty of Ouchy, a table of cases brought before the Hague tribunal, and material dealing with the naval and land defences of the British Empire. It is clear that in making up this book the problem of space is very carefully watched, and even the important additions mentioned here have not caused the volume to become unwieldy.

*Cambridge County Geographies: Lincolnshire.*

By E. Mansel Sympson. Pp. viii + 193. (Cambridge University Press, 1913.) Price 1s. 6d.

DR. SYMPSON'S account of Lincolnshire is unusually interesting, and will appeal in many ways to scientific readers. The geology, natural history, climate, and peoples are all dealt with as fully as the limited space allowed. Honourable mention is made, among the distinguished men produced by the county, of Sir Isaac Newton, Sir Joseph Banks, and Sir John Franklin. Altogether the volume well maintains the high standard of the series.

*Atlas Notes.* By J. C. Chute. Pp. 82. (London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, n.d.) Price 1s.

"THESE notes are intended as a guide to a revision of the subject, for boys who have dabbled in its various departments and who now wish to make good their knowledge of the chief facts contained in a good political and physical atlas," says the author in his preface. If boys are set to study geography in school they should not be allowed "to dabble," but should be encouraged to work methodically and with all the thoroughness the time available permits. In that case the boys would themselves make the notes required for any future revision, which is better than having them already made.