Sir Ernest Shackleton

WHILE his ship, the "Quest," was lying at anchor off South Georgia, late in the spring of the Falkland Island colonial administration, Sir Ernest Shackleton, the Antarctic explorer, died of heart disease on January 5th. The news of his death reached the civilized world only on the 29th of the month, with the arrival at Montevideo, Uruguay, of the Norwegian tramp, "Fram," bearing the body of Sir Ernest died of heart disease which, so far as we know, had never been observed to be constitutional with him. He had been severely ill with the weather on retiring the previous evening, but nothing was thought of this. At 3.30 A.M., however, he underwent a sudden collapse, and he breathed his last.

Shackleton was born on February 15th, 1874, at Kilkee, in the south of Ireland. He was the eldest son of the local physician. He was educated at Dulwich College and then entered the merchant marine. In 1901 he was third lieutenant of the National Antarctic Expedition, under the late Captain Scott. The interest in such work, and his readiness to undertake it with him for the rest of his life, and supplied the driving influence for most of his later activities. He first became prominent in the field of Antarctic exploration when he commanded the British Expedition of 1907-09. On this trip Shackleton attained the farthest south record of his time sufficient clear water to justify the launching of their boats. Six days later it was laid up in Rio de Janeiro for repairs; and it was from this port on December 18th that Shackleton made his final departure from civilization in the little 200-ton craft.

It was his human side that made Sir Ernest Shackleton such an interesting personality. He was a man of fine impulses, of great fearlessness and of unlimited enthusiasm for his work. He was modest in the estimate of his own accomplishments; always fair in awarding full justice to his subordinates; and more than generous in his recognition of the achievements of other explorers.

German Scientific Books

DESPITE the severe conditions which we must believe the deprecation of the mark to have brought about in German industry, especially of the less essential sorts, the German publishers are beginning to get into their stride again after the long hiatus of actual war times. Within the past few weeks we have received from a single publisher, W. Engelmann of Leipzig, copies of a number of volumes that indicate this. None of them is a new production from the point of view of authorship, but all are new editions, and in some cases it is clear that the entire volume is from new type. Perhaps the most interesting of these items is a sixth edition of Newcomb's *Popular Astronomy*, which carries the name of Dr. L. E. Draper, the title page as responsible for the German form of this edition. The text, tabular matter and illustrations are well up to the high mechanical character of German prewar scientific books.

Another old friend whose tenure of life has been restored by a new printing is Kowalewski's *Die Klassischen Probleme der Analytik des Unendlichen*. In the new edition as in the old we have an admirable example of the ability of the German publishers to elegantly and with complicated mathematical notation. No mathematical library may be considered complete without this work.

For some time it has been the unfortunate case that trigonometric and logarithmic tables of more than four or five places have been available only at a premium, or obtainable only at exorbitant prices. It is therefore a pleasure to chronicle a reprieve, apparently from the old place of Peter's table places, and likewise of the eight-place tables in two volumes that bear the names of Bauschinger and Peters. The former gives trigonometric functions (in the logarithmic form) of the latter log tables of numbers up to 200,000. In both volumes the trigonometric tables are presented for every second of arc. There appears to be no regard for these volumes and others like them. When they were prepared, a little printed card was sent up to accompany them abroad, explaining that owing to the exchange situation a premium of 50 per cent over the quoted prices would be required of all overseas purchasers. Before they were sent out it was found necessary to alter this figure by rubber stamp to 100 per cent; and in the case of those most recently received, the "Futura Aufschlag," which has gone up to 200 per cent. We have had several experiences of late which demonstrate that the surcharge which German tries to make for the doubtful privilege of doing business in his utterly worthless currency customarily multiplies itself by two or three during the interval between his quotation of a price and his customer's acceptance. We don't know just how one can do business on this footing, but keep our capital constantly in mind that the quoted price in marks is so low (not more than 150 marks for any of the above volumes, fairly well bound) that if one really wants them one can afford to pay nearly any price which the publisher may seek to impose upon him for the privilege of purchasing them.

George Baldwin Selden

THE last echo of a curious celebret was heard when the daily press of January 17th chronicled the death in Rochester, N. Y., of the Selden patentee. Mr. Selden, who first began to work on a patent which claimed the aggregation of engine, clutch, fuel tank, carriage, etc., into an automobile; but which really did not cover the modern gasoline automobile as it is today, used to keep constantly in mind that the quoted price in marks is so low (not more than 150 marks for any of the above volumes, fairly well bound) that if one really wants them one can afford to pay nearly any price which the publisher may seek to impose upon him for the privilege of purchasing them.

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