

THURSDAY, MARCH 28, 1912.

GABRIEL LIPPMANN.

Savants du Jour: Gabriel Lippmann. Biographie, Bibliographie Analytique des Écrits. By Ernest Lebon. Pp. viii+70. (Paris: Gauthier-Villars, 1911.) Price 7 francs.

UNDER the able editorship of M. Lebon, who enjoys a considerable reputation in his own country as a mathematician and mathematical astronomer, the enterprising firm of Gauthier-Villars is engaged in bringing out a series of monographs on the lives and achievements of the contemporary men of science of France. Up to the present the numbers published deal with the scientific careers of MM. Poincaré, Darboux, Picard, and Appell. Each memoir occupies from 70 to 80 large 8vo pages, printed on thick hand-made paper with ample margins, and containing a photogravure portrait of its subject, the whole constituting a remarkably handsome work well worthy of the reputation of the eminent publishing house concerned in its production.

The number before us treats of the life-work of Prof. Lippmann, the distinguished professor of physics of the faculty of science in Paris, member and vice-president of the Academy of Sciences, commander of the Légion d'Honneur, Nobel Laureate, and a foreign member of the Royal Society. M. Lippmann is known to all physicists more especially by his work on electro-capillarity, by his enunciation of the law of the conservation of electricity, and his notable contributions to the science and practice of colour photography. He is, however, the author of numerous memoirs in all branches of physics pure and applied. He has occupied himself in turn with the study of the phenomena of capillarity, Carnot's functions, the application of Coulomb's law to electrolytes, electrical measurements, the determination of the ohm, and the theory and mode of use of seismographic apparatus—a range of subjects which well serves to illustrate the many-sidedness of the man and the catholicity of his studies.

M. Lippmann, although born of French parents—his father was of Lorraine and his mother from Alsace—owes much of his inspiration to German influence. On the conclusion of the war of 1870 M. Lippmann had the courage to repair to Heidelberg, where he was welcomed by Kühne, Kirchhoff, Koenigsberger, and Lossen. In the first instance he was attracted by the problems of physiological chemistry, and worked with Kühne on the albuminous phosphates. But he soon abandoned chemistry for physics, and, entering Kirchhoff's laboratory, took up the study of electro-

capillarity, which eventually culminated in his well-known memoir of 1875. He graduated at Heidelberg, and after a year at Berlin, under Helmholtz, he returned to Paris and became attached to the physical laboratory at the Sorbonne, then under the direction of Jamin, whom he eventually succeeded. The physical laboratory of the Sorbonne in those days was a wretched affair, consisting of some sheds and two or three rooms on the ground floor of a house in the Rue Saint-Jacques. M. Lippmann is far better housed to-day, but he has still a tender regard for the old shed in which he had worked with such signal success for upwards of twenty years.

M. Lebon's biographical notice is executed with taste and discrimination. Much of M. Lippmann's work has dealt with problems of the hour, and it has occasionally happened that he has been assailed by questions of priority, especially by certain English authorities. But M. Lebon deals with these matters impartially, and with an obvious desire to mete out strict justice to all concerned.

The analytical bibliography which necessarily constitutes a large part of M. Lebon's memoir has been carefully edited, and will be of great use to those to whom M. Lippmann's many publications are not readily accessible. M. Lebon's work is in every way a worthy contribution to contemporary scientific biography and a record of brilliant achievement, and as such we heartily congratulate both him and its subject on its appearance.

JOTTINGS OF A SPORTSMAN-NATURALIST.

Stalks in the Himalaya. Jottings of a Sportsman-Naturalist. By E. P. Stebbing. Pp. xxviii+321. (London: John Lane; New York: John Lane Company, 1912.) Price 12s. 6d. net.

IN a book with a title and sub-title of such import, there are certain things that one expects to find.

The naturalist—or even the plain unlabelled son of Adam—who has lifted up his eyes to the hills, and has considered the manifold works of the Lord therein revealed, looks for some brief account of their physical features, and of the ways in which these are being changed or confirmed by sun and frost and rain; for some brief account of their fauna, if not also of their flora, and of any adaptations or variations, or seasonal changes that can be discerned or suspected; for some occasional observations and well-founded reflections upon the general facies of the fauna of a tract where two great zoogeographical regions meet and overlap. If he be a naturalist of the old-fashioned kind, he