at Lick, at the University of Pittsburgh and throughout the United States for manuscripts that relate to his story. Nuggets he has discovered will be treasured by readers interested in such diverse topics as the influence of the Civil War on American society, the professionalization of American science, women’s opportunities in astronomy, astronomical time services, and debate about the appropriate size of telescopes for reliable observations. Indeed, these careful accounts of Keeler’s colleagues and associations occasionally overwhelm the thread of his story.

Finally, in writing the history of science, some scientists make little mention of contemporary historical research. To give a few examples, Osterbrock ignores Marc Rothenberg’s survey of the American astronomical community just before Keeler began his career, Dieter Herrmann’s research on the growing number of observatories in nineteenth-century America, and John Lankford’s comments on the role of amateurs in the rise of astrophysics. He also does not mention A. J. Meadows’s biography of Keeler’s English contemporary and occasional disputant, Norman Lockyer. Such sources might have provided a richer context not only for the story of Keeler’s life, but for evidence presented relating to Osterbrock’s larger theme of the development of American astrophysics.

In summary, Osterbrock has written an impressive life of James E. Keeler. His attempt to make Keeler’s life the centrepiece for an account of early American astrophysics is less successful, in that it neglects useful scholarship and has no strong central theses to shape the welter of detail. Nonetheless, his book only increases the debt that historians owe to scientists who take an interest in the history of their disciplines.

PEGGY KIDWELL

EDDINGTON COMMEMORATED


This is rather a short work, and is the text of two lectures which Chandrasekhar gave in Trinity College, Cambridge as part of the centenary celebrations of Eddington’s birth. The two lectures deal mainly with The internal constitution of the stars and with general relativity. Some attention is given to controversies, with Jeans and later Milne and Chandrasekhar himself. It is difficult for one of the controversialists to write a completely objective account of what went on, which was stirring enough at the time. The reader must judge whether the author is like Samuel Johnson writing Parliamentary reports, and taking care to ensure that the Whig Dogs did not get the best of it.

Chandrasekhar enlivens the text with a number of anecdotes, and I will add another. Eddington used to walk back to the Observatory after dinner, and often came into the dome where I was observing double stars. I always said, “Sir, would you like to see this star?”, and he always applied his eye to the eyepiece. I remember him saying one night, “I cannot understand people who