Longfellow's "Slave's Dream," Whittier's "Maud Müller," &c., and two poems of the lecturer's own composition. Mr. Foscett possesses great powers as a reciter, and he was followed with keen interest throughout by those who were privileged to hear him.

A MEETING of the Library Assistants' Association was held at 20, Hanover Square, on Wednesday, March 11th, when Mr. Henry R. Plomer read a paper entitled "The Vitality of Books." Mr. A. H. Carter presided.

A MEETING of the Library Assistants' Association was held on Wednesday, March 25th, at 20, Hanover Square (Mr. MacAlister in the chair). Mr. W. E. Doubleday, librarian of the Hampstead Public Libraries, and Hon. Secretary to the Summer School Committee, read a paper entitled "How Assistants may best avail themselves of the opportunities afforded by the Summer School of 1896." In the discussion which followed, Miss Petherbridge, Mr. MacAlister, Mr. Peddie, and others spoke, and several practical suggestions were made, Mr. Doubleday promising that they should receive full consideration.

F. M. R.

Correspondence.

CATALOGUE CRITICISM.

SIR,—Great pressure of work, and the fact of my having mislaid the number of *THE LIBRARY* containing it, is my reason for not having replied before this to the letter of your reviewer, anent my criticism of some criticism of his on my last published Class List.¹ Your reviewer says: "Surely most people would expect to find a volume of the 'English Men of Letters' series at least under Biography of Literature." That is as may be, but if one is to take publishers' series headings as one's guide, one should classify Amos' *Science of Politics* under Science, because it belongs to the "International Scientific Series," and Gomme's *Village Community*, under the same heading, because it belongs to the "Contemporary Science Series." In the "English Men of Letters" series there are biographies of Locke and Bacon. Your reviewer would therefore place them in Biography of Literature, not in Biography of Philosophy, as I have done, and why? Because they *happen* to be included in the "English Men of Letters" series. And I can only suppose that, if the library had also contained biographies of these men in an "English Philosophers" series, *they* would have gone in Biography of Philosophy, for precisely the same reason that the other biographies went in Literature. Either there is virtue in a series heading, or there is not. If not—and most modern librarians, I think, absolutely disregard series headings in classifying, as they must do, if actual subject matter is alone to be considered—why use it as an argument? As to why I did not place Bunyan under both headings, Literature and Religion, instead of under the latter only, my explanation is simply that I adopted the rule of making no cross

references in Biography because I did not consider that any were necessary. Your reviewer asks me whether *I catalogue The Pilgrim's Progress* under 244 (religious allegories, fiction, &c.), or under 823'42 (English fiction : Bunyan), "as recommended by Dewey"? Your reviewer italicises the word *catalogue*, but Dewey says nothing about cataloguing ; he recommends that *The Pilgrim's Progress* be *classed* in 823'42, thus making an exception of Bunyan's work, because of its "literary prominence." This is a good enough reason for Dewey for departing in this *one* case of *The Pilgrim's Progress* from the usual rule of placing religious allegories in 244, but it is not a good enough reason for me. And I think I can give a better reason for refusing to make this exception than Dewey's for making it. A borrower wants religious allegories. He is referred by the subject index to 244. He goes to the books numbered 244 on shelves or in catalogue, and finds all the religious allegories except *the* religious allegory of our literature. (This is not a question of cross-referencing, but of the merits of a particular classification.) What earthly practical *gain* is there to justify this departure from the rules laid down by Dewey himself for the guidance of the classifier, to wit, classify by subject matter, and place books in the most specific division that will contain them? Why shouldn't Froude's *Oceana* go in fiction because of its "literary prominence," just as much as Bunyan's allegory? It is literature, very good literature, and, I am given to understand, very good fiction too.

Yours, &c.,

L. STANLEY JAST.

Peterboro' Public Library,

April 17th, 1896.

Important to Readers.

THE LIBRARY can now be obtained at Messrs. Smith and Sons' principal bookstalls—and by order from any of them.