Correspondence.

"LIBRARY ECONOMICS": A PROTEST.

DEAR SIR,—I am reluctantly compelled to register a strong protest against the string of mis-statements concerning myself presented on p. 357 of the December number of *THE LIBRARY*. As, in the first place, I was totally unaware that Mr. Dent was attacking any form of cataloguing, until his paper appeared in print side by side with mine; and, further, as I almost entirely differ from Mr. Dent's views in this matter, I fail to perceive how I can be shown to be "his partner in the onslaught."

In the second place, I defy the Editor of "Library Economics" to point to any words of mine that can be construed as an onslaught on annotations. As I have consistently annotated all my catalogues during the last nine years, I am probably about the last person likely to oppose the system. As to class guides, I am clearly of opinion that for general purposes they are inferior to dictionary catalogues; but, as I stated in my paper (*LIBRARY*, vol. ix., p. 179), they have several advantages peculiar to themselves, and I should, under certain circumstances, be prepared to issue them myself. But class guides were issued at Nottingham before the Clerkenwell Library existed.

As regards annotations, there is just that modicum of truth in the charge which gives the Editor a *locus standi* in the case. Our use of the Clerkenwell class guides was restricted to the fiction list; and to that we were indebted (1) for the idea of indicating in connection with the works of Scott and Dickens some of the chief characters figuring therein; and (2) for a few items such as "Germany, Art life," &c. The Editor is under a singular misapprehension if he imagines that anything remotely approaching the number he mentions was used. He was presumably deceived by the similarity of notes which, being confined to the fewest possible words, such as "France, 17th century," naturally permitted very little variation. It is always easier to prefer a charge of plagiarism than to rebut it; and I can only quote Mr. Ogle's words (p. 130), and say that "if I were not myself the object of the criticism, I should be inclined to say that the tone of the article is rather regrettable."

So many bibliographical aids were used in the preparation of the catalogue that it was impossible to acknowledge them all without appearing pedantic. I am glad to take this opportunity of stating that Mr. Goss's Lewisham catalogue was of real assistance, in several instances filling in outstanding gaps with pithy notes concerning books of a perplexing character. To Mr. Briscoe and to Mr. Ogle I also acknowledge my indebtedness, and this exhausts all claims so far as library catalogues are concerned.

As I sent out but one copy of the catalogue for review, and that to *THE LIBRARY*, it would appear as if this solitary copy has been handed over to the Editor of "Economics." If this surmise is correct, I can only say that it places both myself and him in a delicate position; but it will not, of course, prevent an unbiased review!

Yours faithfully,

WILLIAM E. DOUBLEDAY.