the "Cotgreave." I cannot doubt but that he is annoyed at seeing the slow progress of Open Access when a comparison is made, and those who have hitherto wondered at Mr. Brown's interest in the "Chivers" indicator and his two-page notice of it in Greenwood's *Year Book* will wonder no longer.

Mr. Carter's "open mind" in adopting Open Access was "open" indeed, although it hardly shows either a strong or a consistent mind, when his statement to *London* that the Indicator system was the best is considered. I am afraid that Mr. Carter, like one or two others, has been "done brown," and knowing how he is placed, I feel more grieved than hurt at his letter, and I do not hold him entirely responsible for it.

With your kind permission I will take this opportunity of expressing my appreciation of the estimate of my indicator given in your last issue by two gentlemen. One calls it the "Tzar Indicator," and the other the "Familiar Cotgreave Notation F666," following it up by a graceful allusion to 666 being the apocalyptic number of the beast. Really, Mr. Editor, you are to be congratulated upon the refined and generous sentiments expressed by these contributors, and I can only hope they may obtain the full gratification such remarks are likely to give to the minds capable of their conception.

No doubt, after all these weighty compliments and otherwise, I ought to feel somewhat overwhelmed and abashed, yet my friends say that my shadow has grown no less, and indeed, I regret to find, by the scales, that my weight has slightly increased.

Yours faithfully,
A. COTGREAVE.

[In justice to Mr. Gilbert I must point out that his remark on p. 171 of the July *LIBRARY* as to F666 did not refer to Indicators at all, but was intended as a playful reference to a certain class of novels.—ED.]

SIR,—In common with Mr. Carter I "have lately received an anonymous type-written document," containing a philippic against open access, the most recent of a long series of similar documents emanating from West Ham.

This precious document has received quite as much examination as it is worth at the hands of Mr. Carter, but there is one paragraph which I cannot allow to pass altogether without notice. It is marked "N.B.," and runs thus: "It was admitted [*i.e.*, by the reader of the paper referred to in the circular] that if Fiction readers were excluded, some few of the higher-class readers might possibly derive advantages from the system [observe the painful anxiety not to give himself away; the reluctant "possibly" is rich]; but that the systematic use of a good catalogue was far superior, and secured information by means of notes, selections of contents, references to books in other classes, &c., which open access could not provide." This paragraph is a very pretty specimen of that method of misrepresentation by *implication* in which the gentlemen who are engineering this carefully-prepared and zealously-sustained campaign against open access are masters. In the first place, the words imply that it is part of the open access system to *dispense* with catalogues. In the second place, it is implied that the production of "good" catalogues with "notes," &c., is in some way the monopoly of these valiant knights of the indicator. But what do we find? That at the present moment the most prominent advocates of explanatory cataloguing are advocates *also* of open access. That from open access libraries—complete or partial—have emanated cata-

logues which in fulness of entry, in amount and quality of annotation, are leagues beyond those issued by the libraries administered by those who are making these stupendous, though futile, efforts to *bully* librarians and library committees into a fetish worship of the indicator.

But, leaving this, may I, Sir, draw attention to another specimen of the methods by which it is sought to discredit open access, not in the document aforesaid, but in the *County Borough of West Ham Public Libraries' Annual Report of the Chief Librarian for year ending March 25th, 1898*. On page 7 is this paragraph: "The system of issue adopted at these libraries has from the beginning given universal satisfaction, more especially to readers who have previously used libraries working on the 'free access' principle. The comparative popularity of the two systems is best shown by the fact that, while all the London rate-supported libraries, except one or two, use the West Ham method, only *one* library (the one at which it originated) uses 'free access.' At the British Museum, the Bodleian Library, the Bishopsgate Institute, and many other important libraries which have tried the 'free access system,' many valuable books have been lost or damaged while using it." Passing over the apotheosizing of one's own system by generously damning those of other libraries; disregarding the bold ingenuity by which an official report is made the vehicle for a free advertisement of one's own indicator; let us try and grasp the conception of the almost wholesale emigration, the regular *trek*, indeed, from Clerkenwell—the "*one* library" using "free access" to West Ham, which must evidently have taken place before readers who have previously been miserable under the "free access" *régime* could possibly make known their preference for, and happiness under, the indicator system!

Let the curious in controversy also study another pretty example of misrepresentation by implication, which is contained in the above quoted paragraph. It is *not* pointed out that open access *as worked at Clerkenwell*, and the "free access" systems in vogue at the British Museum, the Bodleian Library, &c., are radically different, but it suits the writer's purposes to lump together, as though of common mechanism, the Clerkenwell and other systems of "free access," and by so doing to confuse the issues, and lead astray the ignorant. Of the ethics of the process the less said the better. We are given plenty of figures¹ to prove the predominance of *the* indicator *before* 1894-5, but a mysterious reticence is observed as regards recently opened libraries. But perhaps this reticence is not so very mysterious after all when we investigate things a bit, and find that since January, 1895, six places have adopted *the* indicator, while *twenty-three*, just as important, have decided for other systems of issue, including open access, and other varieties of indicator. This is poor, indeed, as compared with the "good old times" prior to 1895, when I calculate—I speak subject to correction from the gentleman who knows best—that the average annual adoptions of *the* indicator by new libraries was something like eight or nine; it seems now to have dropped to something like two or three. This decrease of royalties is a good reason for increased energy in pushing sales, but as a reason for misrepresenting a system which is quietly spreading without any aggressive proselytising being made on its behalf, it cannot be said to rank high.

Finally, Sir, allow me to enter my strong protest against this bring-

¹ According to *Recent Notes on the Colgreave Library and Office Indicators*, 1897, p. 16, 123 towns had adopted this indicator out of the 330 which had then adopted the Acts, and the whole of these, with six exceptions, had established their systems before open access was in the field.

ing of discredit upon the whole library profession by associating it with a spirit of rampant commercialism, in defiance of all that ordinary professional etiquette would dictate.

I am, Sir,
Faithfully yours,
L. STANLEY JAST.

Peterborough Public Library.

DEAR SIR,—I am unable to share Mr. Carter's apprehensions as to the effect of attacks upon open access libraries coming from the source which he indicates. The manner in which the arguments and advice are tendered against every system of issue, *save one*, is enough to convince any business committee that here is no guile, but only a notable lack of humour, coupled with an earnest desire for orders, which we must all applaud. As for the Bishopsgate Librarian, I cannot imagine a better advocate of open access. Has not his advocacy damned every cause he ever espoused, from the indicator at Lewisham to his recent attempts to act as the censorious mother-in-law of the Library Association? What I admire about Mr. Goss is his whole-hearted and conscientious manner of attacking things. Here are a few of his choice expressions about open access, which I am sure can only be humbly accepted as a most flattering testimonial:—"System which was pronounced rotten some forty years ago." "The whole scheme is one of makeshift." "This dished up, miserably weak experiment." "I protest against this raked-up method." ". . . Public Librarians . . . have unanimously pronounced the scheme as antiquated, unworkable, and rotten." "This *best-we-can-get-out-of-a-bungle* system." "This abominable system of issue." "A plan which has become detestable in the sight of all other librarians." And so on. After this, it says much for the elasticity of Mr. Goss's conscience, and his accommodating versatility, that he was able to accept an appointment at Bishopsgate, where open access had been adopted by the managers at the outset. Most librarians would find it difficult to reconcile the sentiments towards open access, quoted above, with the acceptance of a post which postulated the absence of all scruples. Far from being bound by any feeling of loyalty towards his employers in making an honest effort to do the best with an "abominable" "*best-we-can-get-out-of-a-bungle* system," Mr. Goss seems to deem it his duty to act as devil's advocate in the interests of a gentleman with an indicator for sale. I believe there are several gentlemen like Mr. Goss among public librarians—alert, confident, and able, as a Cornishman would say, to bolt their scruples about open access in one *clunk*, when a sufficient stipend is offered. Whether they would all imitate Mr. Goss in supplying that "contributory negligence" which causes things to look like failures, and occasions such "lapses" as have been mentioned, I really could not say. It all depends upon individual elasticity of conscience.

One word in conclusion. But for the enthusiastic condemnation of open access by the West Ham Librarian and his associates, I doubt if that system would ever have become known outside the confines of Clerkenwell. From a business point of view I fancy this out and out opposition has been a complete mistake in tactics. "To damn with faint praise" would have served the purpose much better. At any rate, the efforts of opposing librarians have rendered any special advocacy of open access absolutely unnecessary.

Yours truly,
JAMES D. BROWN.