found, but there is strong reason to fear that many "useless books" were parted with by a former owner of the house. Fortunately for posterity the Verney letters (some thirty thousand in number) remain, and perhaps the most enjoyable hour of the day was that spent in looking over numbers of the actual documents, aided by the constant lucid explanations of Lady Verney, who having edited a large number of these family memorials has made their contents her own peculiar study. The party were then invited to take tea, and at the conclusion of the meal it was proposed by G. Potter :

"That the best thanks of the Library Association be given to Sir Edmund, Lady Verney, and family, for the very kind manner in which they entertained the few members of the association, who, notwithstanding the rainy morning and early hours of starting, fortunately for themselves decided to go to Claydon."

This was seconded by Mr. Ed. Maynard, of Twickenham, and carried by acclamation.

Thus concluded perhaps the most enjoyable trip of the kind in which it has been the good fortune of the writer to take part.

G. POTTER.

MR. FOSKETT AND THE "ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA."

SIR,—Not long since I became involved in a controversy respecting the ninth and last edition of the "Encyclopædia Britannica," which aroused considerable interest. I purpose now to answer numerous enquiries by giving a *précis* of the facts which are not generally known.

During a discursive talk on books and book-buying, as the victim of an interviewer, I casually remarked that some of the articles in the ninth edition of the Britannica were revised after the first few volumes had been published. This information appeared to astonish my interviewer ; but I understood his interest and incredulity when he pathetically explained that he had recently purchased a second-hand copy of the "ninth" edition. He reported me as having said : "These little trade secrets one ought to know before going book-buying," an opinion he regarded as an axiom after due reflection.

The accuracy of the statement that there were sets of the "ninth" edition of varying literary value in the market was, I know, doubted by my *confrères* of the Library Association, who assumed that in an unguarded moment I had possibly fallen into an error or trap set for the unwary. This view was indignantly confirmed by the publishers (Messrs. A. and C. Black) who, in a letter to the *South London Mail*, declared that there were "no little trade secrets" in the matter ; that the statement referred to was "entirely inconsistent with the facts of the case" ; that "to have done such a thing would be unjust," and they asked to be excused "their proper feeling of resentment that such a statement should have been made."

The foregoing protest may stand for what it is worth. It will be seen that I had no alternative but to withdraw or substantiate the statement. In the interest, therefore, of practical bibliography, I submit both statement and denial to the test judgment of fact.

I have on my table two sets of the "ninth" edition, which are supposed to be identical. I open vol. i. of each, and I find that the date, preface, and title agree. I turn to the different parts of the volume, and the pagination and matter appear to be exactly the same. Without special knowledge that would be the verdict. I have before me an advertisement dated 1887, announcing the re-issue of the ninth edition, which was

prior to the completion of the first issue, and I believe both issues were completed concurrently in 1889. No mention is made of any corrections in the earlier volumes, and the natural inference was quite consistent with the publisher's assertion that no revision had been made. I now turn to specific articles in the two copies of vol. i., purporting to be the same.

AGRICULTURE.—Under this subject (p. 416) there is an excision of no less than forty-nine lines of the text. The section of the article deals with agricultural co-operation. In the first issue of vol. i. there is no alphabetical list of the contents to this article, but in the re-issue the omission is rectified by an index of over two hundred references. Unfortunately, however, to make room for the index, and at the same time to preserve the apparent identity of the volumes, it was necessary to omit some of the general text, of which the following is the concluding portion sacrificed :—

“From the foregoing review the moral to be drawn is two-fold : first, that all varieties of tenure, having apparently some natural affinity for the circumstances out of which they have arisen or by which they are surrounded, have presumably some special virtue which ought to secure them against unqualified condemnation *a priori* ; and secondly, that landed tenure should be left absolutely free to adapt itself naturally, by gradual modification, to changing circumstances, without artificial coercion or restraint of any kind. Whatever be the conflicting pretensions of seignorial and peasant proprietorship, or of large or small farming, it must always be, in an agricultural sense, equally impolitic to seek by legal enactment, on the one hand, to bind or hold land together, or on the other to accelerate its subdivision. However patent the superiority of leases over tenancy at will, the statutory prohibition of these and the statutory prescription of those would involve an interference with freedom of contract, equally unwarrantable in either case. Whatever be the virtue latent in industrial co-operation, all virtue goes out from it when, instead of being left to introduce itself spontaneously, it is forcibly obtruded or patronisingly led forward. The only assistance, apart from the organisation of some simple process for the verification of titles to land, which agriculture requires or can safely accept from law, is removal of the artificial obstructions which law has placed in its way—of the legal sanction given to primogeniture and entails in England, of the legal compulsion imposed upon testatorship in France, of all those legal impediments, in short, by which immovable is prevented from being utilised with the same facility as movable property. If in any conceivable circumstances it might be expedient legislatively to foster the growth or arrest the decay of a peasant proprietary, or to promote co-operative farming, the considerations warranting measures of the kind must be social or political rather than agricultural, and, as such, do not fall within the scope of this paper.”

AMERICA.—An illustration of revision similar to the foregoing will be found under this subject. The article first appeared without an index of contents. The omission was supplied when the volume was re-issued, certain portions of the text being deleted to give space for the new matter inserted.

ANATOMY.—The complex nature of this subject, combined with the length of the article, which runs to 110 pages, makes an index of the contents of paramount value to the student who consults it. This essential key is lacking in the first issue of vol. i. ; but it mysteriously appears in the re-issue of the unrevised “ninth” edition. The importance of the index may be gathered from the fact that there are over three hundred references. The last two pages of the article have been mercilessly mutilated, rather than revised, in order to meet the arbitrary exigencies of the stereo. plates.

ARCHÆOLOGY.—The treatment of this most interesting subject in vol. ii. affords a variation in the examples of excision and addition. In the

earlier issue of the volume there is a summary of contents, a list of artists, and one of sculpture and architecture; but these all disappear in the subsequent issue of the same volume. Now the summary and lists were of undoubted importance; but something of still greater value was omitted—viz., a bibliography of the subject, which makes its appearance in the re-issued volume at the expense of the lists referred to. The bibliography is singularly comprehensive, and is of the utmost value. The publishers evidently had a keen sense of this, or they would not have inserted it by sacrificing other valuable matter which, it is to be hoped, will re-appear in a future edition.

The above references and quotations prove that there have been important revisions in the "ninth" edition; and the information which enables a book-buyer to discriminate as to the value of different sets, which appear to be identical, is a "secret" worth knowing. The examples I have furnished of variations in the text, and the addition of indexes to important subjects, very considerably increase the literary and monetary value of the volumes in which they appear, and the work as a whole. This is particularly the case when the volumes are likely to be in frequent requisition, as in a public library.

I do not agree with Messrs. Black as to the injustice of making additions and corrections in the ninth edition; the injustice, if any, was in making them without a notification in the re-issue, and then in impugning the veracity of my statement by denying that the revisions had been made.

EDWARD FOSKETT.

LIBRARY STAFFS.

SIR,—The article by Miss Richardson in last month's issue of *THE LIBRARY* is worth some discussion, and I propose to touch on a point which threatens before long to add another problem to those already existing in an unsolved condition. I refer to the whole question of employment in public libraries. The difficulties in the way of educated men and women obtaining good positions in public libraries are likely to increase as time advances, largely for the reason that the present rate limitation makes it absolutely impossible to pay large salaries to anyone, much less those demanded by persons possessing the qualifications which both Miss Richardson and Miss James have described. The apprenticeship system is a necessity of the financial position in which nearly every public library finds itself, and before the aspirations of well-educated and mature, but otherwise utterly unpractical college graduates are satisfied, it becomes every librarian to see to the advancement of those of his own staff, male or female, who have gone through the mill of elementary librarianship. Colleges and high schools are pouring out young men and women by the score, all with an education sufficiently valuable to rank as a marketable commodity, and numbers of these are clamouring for immediate entrance into libraries at salaries commensurate to their attainments. However much my sympathy goes out to these seekers of genteel employment, my idea of justice moves me to demand that before anything is done for them, something should be done for the small army of public library assistants who have borne the brunt of the toil of bringing British librarianship to its present high state of efficiency, and who have in many cases spent from ten to fifteen years in subordinate positions. I know of many cases in which, on the strength of a comparatively useless classical degree, combined with inside influence, university graduates have been placed in library positions for which their training was practically useless, and who prove and publish their utter incapacity by travel-