

left, was completely worn out. I doubt if this was, or has been since, the case with any other "Bohn." And the book, of course, was taken out as an introduction to Astrology, and for no "side" interest it might have. It would be curious to have the testimonies of other librarians possessing astrological works in their stocks, as to their circulation among their readers. I fancy Mr. Anderton would then be convinced that the astrological lunatics (I say "lunatics" from respect to those who think with Mr. Anderton that Astrology is a "misleading [*sic*] untruth") are far better represented in "the circle of those whom the books in public libraries affect" than the antiquarian idiots (I say "idiots" in tenderness to the feelings of the astrological fraternity) for whom he would provide the *De Magnis Conjunctionibus* of Albumasar.

I am not concerned with Mr. Doubleday's "protest" against the Editor of *Library Economics* (January LIBRARY), but his assertion that "class guides were issued at Nottingham before the Clerkenwell Library existed" is absolutely incorrect in spirit, and is not even accurate in letter. It is not accurate in letter because the Nottingham publications include no class *guides* at all, only class *lists*. It is incorrect in spirit because the numerous features which give distinction to the Clerkenwell class guides do not exist in the Nottingham class lists, which were in no sense forerunners—as is suggested by Mr. Doubleday—of the Clerkenwell publications.

I am,
Yours faithfully,
L. STANLEY JAST.

ATTACKS ON OPEN ACCESS LIBRARIES.

SIR,—I have lately received an anonymous type-written document entitled "Open Access in Public Libraries: or, Admission of Readers to the Shelves."

As this was accompanied by a notice of "A contents-subject Index of General and Periodical Literature," I presume it was sent by the compiler, the chief librarian of the West Ham Public Libraries.

This is not by any means the first occasion on which members of my Committee and myself have been pestered with similar circulars directed against the system of lending used at Kingston-upon-Thames. As neither my Committee nor myself have ever challenged or objected to the methods in vogue at West Ham, I may be pardoned for protesting against this interfering action of its librarian.

The document itself is an abstract of a paper on open access "read at a recent meeting of the Society of Public Librarians, by a gentleman who had left an open access library for another appointment." Judging by its contents I should say it was high time he changed his vocation, for a more abject confession of incapacity to manage a library I never read before. What is to be thought of a librarian whose own laxity is responsible for "causing a feeling of despair which sooner or later culminated in the officials allowing things to lapse?" The answer is, he "lapsed" to "another appointment." As I have recent reports of all the open access libraries organized on the Clerkenwell System, I cannot understand how the particular one this shy "gentleman" left could be correctly described as "a failure."

But my main object in writing, Sir, is to ask if any reader of THE LIBRARY can favour me with the name of this library that failed, as I may be able by writing to head quarters, to obtain hints which will enable me to avoid the pitfalls which led to our "gentleman's" change to "another appointment."

The West Ham librarian recommends enquirers to "Mr. C. W. F. Goss, Secretary and Librarian, Bishopsgate Institution, Bishopsgate Street, London, E.C." for the addresses of this "gentleman" and others "who have had experience in open access." My first thought on reading this was, why Mr. Goss? But the reason is not far to seek. The West Ham librarian and his friends are *not* concerned with the "Truth about open access" (that illustrated tract notwithstanding); but they *are* doing their best to discredit the system by every means in their power, nor are they too nice about those means. The Bishopsgate Library may be "the most largely attended open access library in the country," but its methods differ very widely from those of Clerkenwell. From an administrative point of view it has been a failure from the beginning, as those who watched its formation knew it would be. As a matter of fact, many of us have always looked upon it as affording a very striking example of what to avoid in the installation of open access. And it is to the librarian of this library, a man who is notoriously bitter against open access, that enquirers are referred for an *impartial* description of the Clerkenwell System. After that, why not recommend an interview with the Clerkenwell Commissioners to those who desire to learn the "merits or demerits" of the indicator? I can guarantee that the enquirer would at least get an honest report and the indicator fair play.

There are just three and a half lines in this remarkable document which have my hearty approval. They are to be found at the beginning of the final paragraph, and are as follows:—

"In considering this question, a Committee will not err in seeking the advice of their own librarian, rather than in depending solely upon that of outsiders, some of whom may be interested in the supply of expensive apparatus and fittings."

Now, some three years ago, when the Kingston-upon-Thames Committee sought the advice of their own librarian on a similar matter, a *certain interested outsider* did all that was possible to influence the members of that Committee, and the local press, against the recommendation of the librarian. But in this instance, as in many others, he deservedly failed.

As one who adopted open access with a perfectly open mind, I protest against the continual attempts which are being made all over the country, often in most unworthy ways, to discredit the system. Such attempted interference with the freedom of committees and librarians is nothing short of an impertinence which I trust other librarians who have been similarly molested will join me in resenting. It is quite time enough for gentlemen interested in the sale of "expensive apparatus and fittings" to tender their advice and criticism when committees and librarians feel so helpless as to require outside aid of this sort.

I am, sir, yours faithfully,

B. CARTER,

Kingston-upon-Thames.

Librarian.

LIBRARY ECONOMICS—ANOTHER PROTEST.

SIR,—For skill in the gentle art of misrepresentation commend me to the Editor of "Library Economics." Although I am loth to trouble you again, and especially as I am not permitted to divulge the name of the gentleman who attacks me under the comfortable shelter of anonymity, I think it due to myself to show that his paragraph on page 146 is another flagrant example of a wilful perversion of facts.