

afforded for their use to the working classes. If the libraries are closed in the evenings, the number of issues (and consequently the actual use of the libraries) is less per annum than the total number of books in the library.

If libraries are open only at stated periods, or require the privilege to be paid for, as in the case of the libraries at mechanics' institutions, the issue of the whole number of books in the library is limited to about *twice* per annum. But if, as in the case of free libraries generally, they are open all day, till about nine o'clock in the evening, the circulation, or issue, of books in the libraries, will average about seven times the total number.

Although the circulation of the books in a public library will, to a great extent, be governed by the proportion of the works of popular authors which it contains, yet it is proved, by the classified returns, that even in the case of learned and scientific works, the proportion of their issues from the new free libraries is many times greater than in other libraries. And whilst the number of issues from the new free libraries is so great, and the benefit derived by the working classes so undoubted, it is one of the most gratifying circumstances connected with these establishments, and, at the same time, one in which there has hitherto been no exception, that the amount of damage done to the books is so small as to be unappreciable.

The damage other than ordinary wear and tear in eight years to the books in the Salford libraries is less than 10s., and the damage to the Manchester libraries less than 20s. As regards public museums, the restricting the hours of attendance to not later than four p. m. has the same effect in preventing the mass of the people visiting them as in the case of public libraries: notwithstanding the incomparable superiority of the British Museum to all others, it appears that the total number of visitors last year, was:

To the British Museum	361,000
Derby Free Museum (Liverpool)	123,000
Royal Free Museum (Salford)	580,000

(The number of visitors to the Salford Royal Museum, in the present year, will exceed 800,000.)

These extraordinary results can only be accounted for on the grounds that, at Salford, the Museum is open from ten a. m. to dusk (Sundays excepted) during the whole of the year, and therefore during the summer months affords great convenience for the visits of the working classes. By the inspection of the articles and specimens in the museum the readers from the library are enabled to obtain a better and more intimate acquaintance with any department of history, science, or the arts, capable of being illustrated by the objects exhibited in the museum. Each branch of the institution, by this means, contributes to the value and usefulness of the other.

In conclusion, it is remarked, that the feelings of independence, and the reluctance to accept anything in the shape of charity, which are entertained by the working classes generally, are in no way interfered with by the operation and management of free libraries. The working people know that as inhabitants and householders they contribute according to their rental towards the cost of maintaining them, and therefore they participate in the enjoyment of the privileges of free libraries and museums on terms of perfect equality with all other persons. It may safely be asserted that these institutions, where they have been already established, have afforded to the mass of the people better means of improving their intellectual, moral and social position, than any other single movement of recent date.

The writer concludes by expressing his own personal hopes that the facts which it has been the object of this paper to exhibit in proof of the very great benefits of free public libraries and museums, supported by a library rate, and under the management of the local authorities, will induce the people of Birmingham, and other densely populated towns again to consider, with anxious and careful attention, and without further delay, whether the time has not already arrived for the immediate establishment of free public libraries and museums in their respective districts.—*English S. S. Teach. Mag. & Jour. of Education.*

8. A VISIT TO THE LIBRARY OF MEMPHIS.

The first which the librarian drew out and showed us were ten in number; the so-called sacred books of the prophets, which treated of the laws relating to the worship of the gods and the doctrines of the divinities. Every one of them was at least thirty feet long, divided into large sections and sub-divisions, and with respect to every one of these subdivisions the laity could easily conjecture the contents by vignette-titles. There were represented in these vignette-titles sacrificial solemnities, processions, various figures of the gods, with all their attributes, and the pictures of the sacred animals. Ten other books, likewise shown us, were on liturgical subjects, and contained prescriptions for worship; two others, hymns and prayers, which the Hieroskolists and singers had particularly imprinted for themselves.

The first glance convinced me that these latter, if they were not rhythmical and measured in our sense, yet had a poetic cast, and were destined to be sung off according to certain regular melodies. The songs were all divided into a number of strophes, some into twenty and more, of equal length, which always begun and ended with the same words. There were the twenty-two religious books, in a closer sense of the term; to them were added fourteen other, which, too, were regarded as sacred, because they treated of the sacred writings in all the relations of hieroglyphics, art of drawing, of geometrical representation, cosmography, geography, topography, &c. I would gladly have more accurately studied these books, but the time was too short and the books too long; and the sacred scribes only could perfectly expound them, who on their part instructed the wealthy young Egyptians in the outlines of the art of sacred writing. I saw merely, by a hasty glance at the titles, that they were thrice inscribed to the great Thoth, the Hermes Trismegistus of the Greeks. The juridical literature was of the least extent. Its basis served eight book-rolls, in which the collective laws of the land were distinguished. They contained the criminal laws, the laws as to marriage, those as to war, and the laws of trade, &c. These were all short and compact, mentioning only the crime and the punishment attached to it from the earliest times.

An innumerable multitude of other rolls contained the papers of the different trials brought down even to the then present day, such as in modern times would hardly find place in a library; the documents of accusation or of defence, and the judgments of the courts. The six medical books, too, which, as is well known, were borne in the processions by the so-called Pastophori, I had laid before me. The first of them treated of the organism of the body; all its single parts were delineated in rough sketches, and described as accurately as possible; and, so far as I could judge, there was more attention bestowed on the outer than the inner parts. The second treated of diseases, a third of cures, the others of surgical instruments, &c. But particularly interesting to me was a little book which the "governor of the books" brought out only after many requests by my little conductor. It was the so-called "Holy Ambres." It contained a short account of all the symptoms of disease and the judgment every time made, whether or not the cure was possible, so that the prophets could decide respecting the life or death of patients seeking counsel of them. The principal Egyptian diseases, such as plagues, leprosy, inflammations of the eye, and others, were here so accurately described in their particular appearance, that I was convinced Moses drew from it his medical wisdom which we find laid down in his books. The number of astronomical and astrological books was large; and especially important appeared to me an astrological work, which I took into my hand, and of which the name of Petosiris was given in the superscription as its author. It contained the secret science of the effects of the planets, and the influence which they exert on the destiny of a new-born child in the hour of his birth, according as they stand in this or that house or decan. Innumerable examples were annexed as an appendix; from Menes even to the time of the Eighteenth Dynasty, the destinies of the most important kings and state officers were collected together with the constellations of their natal hours. The astronomy was also expressed in other books with a surprising accuracy for that period. The place of the fixed stars and the constellations, the planets, the division of the sun's path, the conjunctions and phases of the sun and moon, as well as the rise and setting of stars, the reckoning of time, the whole calendar, and some astronomical periods—the Apis periods, the Phoenix periods, and the Sothis periods, or cycles—were given in them most definitely.

III. Poetry.

1. OUR GOOD OLD FLAG.

Up with the flag—the good old flag
Launch out upon the breeze
St. George's ensign high and proud,
The flag of land and seas
On which the bright sun never sets—
The flag round which of yore
Our fathers built a wall of fame,
Cemented with their gore.

Up mast-high with its heavy folds—
Up, up above them all—
Our flag must float supreme where'er
Our British bugles call.
It brooks no braggadocio's boast—
It side by side may run
In friendly faith—but higher place
That flag accords to none.