

## HINTS FROM THE MAIL BAG.

### Author's Troubles.

"FRIEND," Rochester, N. Y., sends her experience with editors to THE NEW YORK TIMES SATURDAY REVIEW: "I came near having just such an experience as 'Author, Roaring Springs, Penn.,' relates in THE NEW YORK TIMES SATURDAY REVIEW of May 11, and in reading his I have been patting myself on the back ever since for having just 'missed a mercy.'"

"Not long ago I had accepted by a local paper a series of articles on a timely subject which were so well spoken of that I was advised to have them published in book form. I accordingly offered the manuscript, with some press notices, to a certain publishing firm, who are apparently the same that our Roaring Springs author dealt with, for many of their propositions, various clauses of their contract, and their enthusiastic urgings are identical in my case with his. They answered me immediately in a most flattering manner, assuring me there were success and money before us both, and inclosing a contract in duplicate which I was to sign and return with my check for \$138, half the cost for an edition of 1,000 copies, I receiving half the profits. This quick success of my first pretentious manuscript was so astonishing that it made me cautious rather than reckless, as I am quite unknown outside of our small city, and I could not believe that the traditional difficulties of young writers could in my case be thus easily overcome. So I sent a duplicate manuscript for a test of its merit in turn to three of the first-class publishers, receiving from each a courteous refusal to undertake its publication, feeling there was no money in it, as there were several books on the same subject already on the market. As I was naturally desirous to see my little work in book form, and so to join the noble army of authors even in this humble way, I was about ready to sign the first firm's contract, inclose my check, and risk it, when the wise woman at my elbow quietly suggested that \$138 as half the cost seemed a good deal; that only 900 copies were to be retailed, (10 reserved for me and 90 for the press;) that there was an additional 10 per cent. of the actual receipts to go to the publishers for postage, &c., and had I not better lay the case before our leading bookseller, a personal friend, before deciding? I did so, and he was so amazed at the cost of publication that I asked for an estimate from one of our local publishers. He would print the whole thousand copies on hand-made deckle-edged paper, cover in stiff cloth, stamped with gold, sixty-four pages, for \$170, and on straight-edged paper for \$115. Here was the whole cost for \$23 less than half the cost that I was asked to pay! I am hardly rich enough to be fleeced without minding it, so, to the great detriment of my amour propre, I declined the proposal, and now am rewarded by escaping what our Roaring Springs friend went through.

I would therefore urge those novices who of course are ambitious to be recognized, but who have no wise woman in the family, to offer their wares to the legitimate firms who know what's what, and to take the best authority, even suffering a temporary set-back, for adding or not to the already overcrowded book counters."

(Ed. Note.) Will Author, Roaring Springs, Penn., kindly send his full name and address to this office, it having through accident been mislaid?

GENEVIEVE L. FARNELL, Brooklyn, N. Y., writes to THE NEW YORK TIMES SATURDAY REVIEW on this subject: "Being among the army of suffering writers, what can one do but take up the cudgel and follow Mr. Benton's lead? We all have our grievances against 'our friend the enemy,' or rather the editor, for the way he is permitted to return a manuscript accepted by his predecessor when he freshly ascends an editorial throne. Perhaps we ought to appeal to the power behind the throne, the management behind the editor, and ask why it is not ready to stand good for a transaction of an authorized employe."

"The other day I took a clock back to a large establishment because it was defective and asked that it be exchanged. I was assured that I would have to abide by the sale. A large daily returned a manuscript of mine because of a change of editors after having accepted it. The paper did not have to abide by the sale. There was no redress. And the manuscript was so marked up and edited that I was at the expense of retypewriting.

"It would appear that a bargain is a bargain whether it concerns merchandise or manuscripts.

"We have no redress if an editor or publisher chooses to lose an entire book manuscript—he coolly tells you it is 'mislaid' or 'lost'; should we not at least be assured that when a magazine's representative accepts our work at a certain price that the bargain holds good even if the representative is replaced by a new one? Let us form an authors' trust!"

### Wired Magazines.

SARAH J. BURKE, New York, writes to THE NEW YORK TIMES SATURDAY REVIEW: "Will you accept thanks for the crusade waged in your columns by your correspondents against the 'Wired Magazine'? Surely they are engaged in a 'holy war.'"

"I recently expressed surprise when a friend criticised adversely a historical novel which is sweeping the country. She laughed. 'I am perhaps no fair judge of that story,' she said. 'The memories of my monthly knuckle-wrenching efforts to hold the magazine in which it was published serially are too recent. Surely the hero of that tale made no braver fight in the hewing down of his enemies than I in the reading thereof. I mean to "take a day off" as regards the historical novel anyway,' she continued, pettishly. 'With "The Garden" and "The Love Letter" it begins to pall. The plots of the more recent are as similar as peas in a pod, and the only conjecture reserved for the reader is whether in the next month's issue the lance of the hero will be thrust under his enemy's left shoulder blade or his right; whether he will be pinioned to the floor or a door.' Then I laughed. 'You are irrelevant,' I said. 'Concerning the wiring? Oh, yes!—one more word on that sub-

ject. While The Atlantic Monthly remains the "pattern shown in the mount," there is no excuse for the present, atrocious methods. That is the one periodical not only good "To Have," but "To Hold!"

ALTA writes to THE NEW YORK TIMES SATURDAY REVIEW on the subject of wire sewing: "Magazine publishers are not going to return to thread sewing; wire clamping is cheaper. But there is a remedy, praise the Lord! And here it is: As soon as you get the magazine open it where the advertisements begin, holding it in your left hand, take hold of the advertising part with the right hand, and a good pull will detach all that part at once. Then loosen the leaves a little and bend the wires down again, being careful not to press them down too tightly. You will then find the magazine will keep open and can be held and read with comfort. If you wish, you can replace the leaf, making the back cover before bending the wire clamps down. You can read the advertisements or not before consigning them to the waste basket. Let all enroll themselves in 'The Magazine Splitting Association.'"

### Shakespeare-Bacon Mattoids.

"AGNOSTIC" writes to THE NEW YORK TIMES SATURDAY REVIEW: "Mr. Charles L. Dana has delivered his orthodox dictum concerning the Francis Bacon cipher story. We have nothing to say in defense of the story. It is a matter upon which we are not informed. Nor do we feel inclined to devote the necessary time to enable us to obtain the information required to form an intelligent opinion on this very complex subject. Having had some personal knowledge of Ignatius Donnelly and Judge Holmes, with a knowledge of other works of these authors than those devoted to Shakespeare, we are ready to affirm that they were neither fools nor lunatics, but were painstaking and very rational, original investigators of subjects that most people are contented to investigate second hand. We are also very well acquainted with those who know Dr. Owen and Mrs. Gallup well, and we are ourselves slightly acquainted with both these people."

"We can assure Mr. Dana that his argument that these people are anything else than very clear-headed and very industrious investigators of an unpopular subject, will neither satisfy nor convert any one who has the pleasure of their acquaintance. We agree with Mr. Dana that Mrs. Gallup has not illustrated the manner of her elucidation of the bi-literal cipher with sufficient clearness to convince the skeptical or satisfy those who wish to learn. The way in which Bacon might inclose his story in his works with two fonts of italic type is perfectly plain. The way in which he did inclose his story has not yet been sufficiently illustrated to enable the unlearned decipherer to prove for himself that the story is really there. It is quite possible that Mrs. Gallup did not intend to reveal too much. It is also quite as possible that she overestimated the clearness of her explanations and underestimated the difficulty of cipher deciphering to the average intelligent reader."

"Be that as it may, Mr. Dana is very evidently to be understood as strictly orthodox in literary matters. His fling at the homeopaths also indicates that he is orthodox in medicine. Now, it is not at all necessary that a man shall be orthodox all around. Brother Chadwick is very heterodox in religion, but he is thoroughly orthodox on the Bacon-Shakespeare question. In that mine of wisdom, the 'Novum Organum' of Francis Bacon, occurs this passage, in Aphorism lxxv.:

"For even they who decide on things so garingly, yet at times, when they reflect, betake themselves to complaints about the subtlety of nature, the obscurity of things, and the weakness of man's wit. If they would merely do this they might deter those who are of a timid disposition from further inquiry, but would excite and stimulate those of a more active and confident turn to further advances. They are not, however, satisfied with confessing so much of themselves, but consider everything which has been either unknown or unattained by themselves or their teachers as beyond the limits of possibility, and thus, with most consummate pride and envy, convert the defects of their own discoveries into a calumny on nature, and a source of despair to every one else."

"This most admirable description of orthodoxy defines Mr. Dana's position exactly."

"When two boys don't dare to join an issue of strength and fight it out, they throw mud at each other and call each other names. Why doesn't Mr. Dana demand that Mrs. Gallup shall publish the dedication of the 1623 edition of Shakespeare (which is all printed in italics) and show what every letter of it means in the bi-literal cipher? Is Mr. Dana afraid that there is a cipher story? If not, why does he throw the mud of orthodoxy instead of matching his opponent in a trial of strength, which alone will settle the matter?"

### Homeopathy in this Country.

JOSEPH HASBROUCK, M. D., of Dobbs Ferry, writes to THE NEW YORK TIMES SATURDAY REVIEW: "Mr. Charles L. Dana, in his review of Shakespeare and Bacon in your issue of May 18, says: 'The mattoid flourishes in America because so large a proportion are half educated minds, and there is no great central authority or respect for such as we do have. His propagandas run in America mainly in political, medical, and religious lines. Left to themselves, they flourish for a time and have a natural life of a few generations.' Witness the dying out of Spiritualism, homeopathy, Shakerism, theosophy, &c."

As a critic of Shakespearean cipher, Mr. Dana probably excels, but his knowledge of homeopathy is sadly in error. Within the last fifty years the homeopathic medical colleges in the United States have increased from one to at least twenty-five, and their clientele a hundredfold, from the most intelligent and refined people. The homeopaths have the only definite law of cure. With the other schools it is merely experiment, and their standard treatment changes at least once in a decade, because they discover so much that is not so.

The homeopathic hospitals and asylums take at least as high a rank as any in the world, and the closer they follow the lines laid down by Hahnemann, the founder, the

better are the results, as can be proved by published statistics. They have conquered recognition from the State, have won the respect of those who do not agree with them, and are more firmly established in the confidence of a growing constituency. Verily, homeopathy is a lively corpse!"

### Women Writers of Books of Power.

GERTRUDE E. CLARK, Hunt, N. Y., writes to THE NEW YORK TIMES SATURDAY REVIEW: "In an article in THE SATURDAY REVIEW of May 4, a correspondent compares Mr. Foster's list of 'Books of Power' to a dynamometer and draws the astonishing conclusion that the comparative intellectuality of women is 2 per cent., and that women furnish 'Books of Power' at an average rate of 'one book in a thousand years.'"

If we wish to ascertain the intellectual standing of women at the present time, will it not be more just to take the last century as a test? In Mr. Foster's list there are only twenty-eight names that can by any possibility be considered of the nineteenth century. Of these, two are the names of women. This makes the rate 7 instead of 2 per cent.

If it is the intellectual capacity of women which is to be ascertained, the comparison is still more unfair.

Suppose the dynamometer should be used to measure muscular strength of a trained athlete, and then of a man of little or no physical training. The result would not be regarded as a true test of the comparative capacity of the two men. From the days of ancient Greece until within the last century women have had comparatively no opportunities for intellectual training. It is not strange that in the intervening time they have produced nothing worthy of a mention in this list. In the century in which Sappho lived, the last half of the seventh, and the first half of the sixth, B. C., although the works of a number of her contemporaries have been preserved, no uninspired author except a woman has a place in this list. In a recent article, President Charles W. Thwing says, 'There can be no doubt that women are becoming the educated class.'"

### Miss Wilkins and Miss Wilkinson.

JAMES MACARTHUR writes from this city to THE NEW YORK TIMES SATURDAY REVIEW: "In your issue of May 18 a correspondent replies to a query concerning the omission of Mary E. Wilkins from the list of favorite authors read in New England. The reasons that your correspondent gives for the lack of any appreciation of Miss Wilkins in that section of the country which she has made famous by her stories are true to some extent, but not altogether just. If Miss Wilkins has 'admirably delineated the hard and fast characteristics of the Yankee and entirely failed to comprehend the strain of mysticism in Puritanism,' it is because she has been dealing with types to which she has been true as an artist, and which types, I will dare to say, are familiar to those who have lived in New England. There are other types compounded of mysticism and hardness, but they are not so generally characteristic of the soil in this territory. I still think that there is a good deal of truth in the saying that sometimes the writer, like the prophet, is without honor in his own country."

"I notice that this letter from your correspondent bears the headline 'Miss Wilkinson's New England Folk.' This, of course, is a typographical blunder, but, curiously enough, there is a writer of this name, Miss Florence Wilkinson, who published her first novel, 'The Lady of the Flag Flowers,' about two years ago, and who has just had a new novel, upon which she has been at work during the last two years, accepted by Messrs. Harper & Brothers. Miss Wilkinson's first work showed decided originality and power and set the critics wondering what she would do next. The novel which she has since written is a remarkable advance on her first book. It is a story mainly of the Adirondacks, with a few chapters laid in New York, and the character of the work may be discerned from the suggestive title 'The Strength of the Hills.' The work, which I have been privileged to read, is, to my mind, and I say this guardedly, one of the most original and striking pieces of literature in American fiction by a new writer that I have read in a long time. The book will be published in September in the Contemporary American Novels Series."

### An Easy Way to Solve a Difficulty.

JOHN PHIN, Paterson, N. J., writes to THE NEW YORK TIMES SATURDAY REVIEW: "The following passage in 'Measure for Measure' (Act IV., Scene 4.) has given rise to much discussion:

"But that her tender shame Will not proclaim against her maiden loss, How she might tongue me? Yet reason dares her No: For my authority bears of a credent bulk, etc."

"It is difficult to make sense of this passage, however readily we may catch the general meaning. All modes of punctuation have been tried without success. But if we change a single letter, a t for an n, making it read 'Yet reason dares her to' (that is, to tongue me,) all difficulty vanishes. When we remember that in the printer's case the box containing the n is directly over that containing the t it is easily seen how readily an n might slide down into the t box and thus cause the whole difficulty."