VIEWS OF READERS.

The Tennessee Mountain Romances of John Fox and Alice MacCowan Considered from Several Points of View-le a Brick Square?—As to the Word Amerind.

Various Communications.

New York Times Esturday Review of Books: OTH as a native of the Tennesses mountains and as a great pleasure in a recent read-ing of two books lately rewriter myself, I have taken viewed in your columns, I think I have read, out of sheer interest, pretty nearly

everything of merit that has been written about the Southern mountaineer within the past ten or fifteen years; and I am deeply gratified to see the improvement in the delineation of my own people's life and character that has been made in that time.

To the first who rode the mountain trails crossing Kentucky and the Carolinar, the Isolated cabin homes in caves and spring hollows held only queer spectniens of an uncouth and shiftless, not to say degenerate, breed of homanity. Their inspressions reached the public exaggerated and burlesqued, for it-was at the period when Dickens's example had made such a course legitimate in fiction writing. Afterward came a host of tomancers who, having scraped a Summer hotel acquaintance with the quaint customs of the country, proceeded to invent all the characters they needed to go with them, working from the better known Now England and cracker types as a foundation. Their output was what our folks call a "mixtry "-various ungainly habits of speech mingled in a confusion of tongues never heard in the mountains or anywhere else, and unconvincing and unlovable people who were little short of monstrous.

At last Miss Murfree made an advance in the right direction by devoting honest study to the psychological and tempermental types with which she had to deal: and she painted the vast wild land, its light and atmosphere, as few have ever been able to put into words. Then Langdon Mitchell's two or three mountain stories entered perfectly into cortain phases. At last John Fox, who percelved, what James Lane Allen somewhere sketches vaguely—the mountaineer's ethical and political significance us a factor in national life; and he has studied more scriously than any one clse the ideals and traditious of this people.

But in his work the mountaineer is always a man with a gun; and that is but one aspect of the whole matter. Behind that superbly drawn figure there are whole receding series of influences which he seems to have but dimly perceived. For instance, no writer has yet attempted, except in the most superficial mention, to deal with the folk-music of the wild courtry; although as music it is surely worth the attention of composers, and as a reflection of the intimate homelife, and the fundamental religious meas of a vanishing people it is of importance to students of American history. Indeed, leaving out these three essentials so closely interwoven—home life, religion, and music the

tyre, to be fairly comprehended? · Into these matters, Miss MacGowan's Turkey Track stories give an illuminating glimuse now and again. Her main hold is upon the feminine side of mountain life and character, as Fox's is upon the mas-

things a man learns at his mother's knee

-how is the mountaineer, new is any

culine. One thing in the work of both these writers I have found refreshing and satisfactory to the last degree: their use of the dialect. Few are those who can describe any section of our big country without | occasionally mixing the so-called dialects: } the New England and the Western are continually running together, while the 'cracker." the negro, the mountain, and the old-fashioned Southern are extremely liable to confusion. Now the mountain speech is especially worthy of careful hundling. It is no bastard corruption; it cante as straight from the womb of the } mother English as did the Scotch or the Yorkshire, and is, so far as I know, the only true dialect now spoken in America. i have always been annoyed at seeing it distorted and rendered uncouth and ridiculous; for, aithough or times it certainly becomes so, errors are always magnified by printing. It is so much caster to catch up a corrupt form than to appreciate an / archale one, and besides, there never was } a human speech whose sound could be accurately rendered in print; the slurred vowels and softened consonants would require for expression at least double the number of letters contained in our alphapet and discritical markings innumerable. The attempt to reduce the mountain dialect to letters, syllable by syllable, results ? in difficulty to the eye worse than any system of phonetic spelling ever propound- } ed, and to the ear is simply hideouswhich the actual speech of the people is not apt to be. Miss MacGowan and Mr. Fox have my thanks for letting this go; they have shown good artistic judgment j in merely suggesting the sound, knowing | that type can no more; while they have } allowed full value to the turns of phrase and choice of words that do really depict | the peculiar inicilectual landscape of a speakor. Mr. Mitchell's stories were also.

Is a Brick Square?

if I remember, strikingly felicitous in this

regard. EMMA BELL MILES.

Albian View, Tenn., Nov. 29.

New York-Times Saturday Reciew of Books; Not being an architect I hesitate someexplain replying to Mr. -H. Edwards 4 who wish to do so to adopt the better Ficken. Now under "Brick" my dic. tionary wisely refrains from deciding the fierce opposition in same ingritors

question, but under "Squere" it reads. "having four edual eldes."

To a layman the obvious answer to the ogestion "Is a brick square"? is "No: New York, Dec. 1. it's oblong." Perhaps your hyphenated correspondent is English, and again perhaps Mr. Smith has a wee drop of Irish in him-hence the bull. Being a Marylander myself I have nothing but admiration for Mr. Smith and am very loyal to him: that is to say, I buy his books. I merely desired to point out the absurdity of using phrases that are in themselves. absurd. Take, for Instance, the expression "The proof of the pudding is in the eating thereof," which you will find in about every other book. Could anything. be more absurd? Suppose ten hours after esting one of these delicious tasting puddinge a man should die of acute indigestion. Would he he apt to say to the boatman on crossing the river Styx that It was the best pudding he ever ate. I'll W. J. DWYER. wager not.

New York Times Saturday Review of Books:

New York, Nov. 28.

I have been both interested and amused by the two communications that have appeared in your esteemed paper as to the expression "As squere as a brick." I think that both of your correspondents must have the good fortune to be very young. The expression may fairly be called an English "classic" and admirably expresses the idea it is meant to convey. It dates from a time when bricks were "square," or, rather, had two square surfaces; it must be two hundred years old, possibly much more. But bricks are not square and never were: they are cubical and they are rectangular, but not square, as every "architect" certainly knows. If a brick is square, then a yard stick is equare and so is a board, no matter how long it may be. There is but one definition of a mathematical square: it has four equal sides and four equal angles. Properly used it applies only to a surface, READER. Brooklyn, Nov. 30.

The Word "Amerind."

New York Times Saturday Review of Books: Your admirable editorial on "The American Language" in the Review of Nov. 28 was to my mind somewhat marred by a statement which seems to require some comment. It is this: "The Indians are badly misnamed, but nobody is going to call them 'Amerinds' or anything else except their original and mistakenly affixed designation." Now you, of course, have the right to reject Amerind and to stick to "their original and mistakenly affixed designation," but why assume that bobody is going to call them Amerinds when they have been "badly ! misnamed "?

For my part, I am obliged to differ i with you on this point. I call them "Amerinds" frequently when it suits my purpose to de so, and it appears to me that the word is an excellent one and highly desirable. There is a real necessity for a world designation for the American race, the Indians, as you prefer to call them, which shall make it [always clear as to the particular race. one is talking about, and avoid confusion with the real Indians. If one lives in a backwoods hamlet where the real Indian is seldom mentioned or is perhaps unknown he need not be particular, and "Indian" there means nothing else but redskin. But in the world of science and letters the case is different. If the editor of The Times Review will prepare a fnonograph on the comparative folk-lore of ludia and North America, for example, feel sure he will discover that the word ! Amerind is not due to a whim, but to a practicul need. If there is a better word for the purpose, let us have it; but do not condemn "Amerind" till that better one is promulgated. "Amerind" forms perfect derivatives, also, which is a very important matter.

Furthermore, your statement is inexact, for the reason that the word "Amerind" is already in use, and has been added to the next edition of one of the world's greatest English dictionaries. A number of prominent ethnologists now use the term constantly, a notable exau)plo being Dr. A. H. Keans, whose standing as an author needs no expianation, and whose high rank as an ethnoiogist...carries authority. In his recent book, "The World's Peoples," he classifies the races of man as Negroes, Mongols, Amerinos, and Caucasians, and he employs the word Amerind and its derivatives throughout the work. It you will kindly glance over the pages of this comprehersive volume I am sure that you will be impressed with the way in which "Amerind" fills a "long felt want," and perhaps you will be converted. It seems to me much better to say "Amerind Division" of manking than " American-Indian Division." "Amerind" also has the advantage of preserving its origin, while being a perfect substitute for the old designation from whose syllables it is taken. "Indian" may still be used by all who so desire, and for novel writers and newspapers in America it is not greatly objectionable, considering its long service in its mistaken capacity, but do not allow any

term without fear of crucifixion. The

ant attacks on me by reviewers of my solitary reesonable objection to the world viesble in a biographical narratives. Americal it may not be the best pos- When Brain Stoker announced his volsible term, but it is the only one so far.] and as it has gone into use (notwithstanding your atazement to the contrary I, for one, shall continue to employ, it, even without permission, and I beg that you will glance at it from the other side. especially after you have read Dr. Kenne's book. It may have a different

FREDERICK S. DELLENBAUGH

Mistral's Provence.

New York Times Saturday Review of Books: A recent reading of Mintral's Memoirs

and the appendix which supplements the autobicgraphical section gives me the best view I have yet had of the renaissance of a language. I wonder that the promoters of Celtic and other old tongues do not use this volume as: means of aiding the public to understand what it is that they are seeking. To the common reader the undertaking in these lines is merely a sign of another form of collecting—significant only in giving some odd persons a channel for their activity.

Have we any single work which sime primarily to present the services of Dante and his followers in this province? The personality of Dante and the interpretations of his message naually overshadow the inovement itself.

One realizes the parallel between the provincial problems of Britain and France-as illustrated in Ireland and Provence, but this-breaks down in sanity of method on the part of the central government in the former case. Mistral's Provence gives the brighter side of the picture, but when one supplements this view by Daudet's Tartarin and for another province by Rostand's Cyrano the difficulties of the greater freedom in Prance are more apparent. India to-day repeats much of the Ireland of a century ago-vastly different, but a prodigal waste of great humanistic resources by a government best able to invest those FRANK A. MANNY. resources. Kalemazoo, Mich. Dec. 2.

Blography or Biographers?

New York Times Saturday Review of Books: At this hour when Ellen Terry's remlniscences. Bernhardt's confidences, and biographies of Richard Mansfield and Henry Irving have fairly given the literary stage to our dramatic heroes, a pertinent inquiry about one biographical point of view may not be amiss.

We all know that personality is in the ascendancy at present. There is a disposition to find an interest in the person rather than in what he is doing-

amusing, especially to I recall some vall. I which seems to be true of the singer in relation to the opera, the expdidate in "North Americans of Yesterday" and Frelation to his party, and the actor in other books of mine in which I freely use I relation to the play. But how far is the the word. Never has there been advanced a finfusion of the writer's personality ad-

> umes on Henry Irving I awaited them with interest. Stoker was Irring's right hand mair for years. Here, surely, would be a full, clear and authoritative blography. If every one really has one good book in him: then this should have been the one best book of this writer of good books. Yet, has the work groused any great interest? What the reader found was too much Stoker and too little Irving. The writer lost his perspective. Irving became in a measure a background against which Stoker exploited him own; relation thereto. It was versclour, no doubt, and charming it certainly was, but here was a case of projecting the wrong personality.

So with fear and some trembling I took up the new life of Richard Mansfield the other day. The writer, Paul Wilstack, though I think never his secretary, as stated by you m your recent review, was related with much the same intimacy to Mansfield that Stoker was to Irving, an asset indeed, for Dr. Johnson declared: "History can beformed from permanent monuments and records, but lives can only be written from personal knowledge." The performance indicates heed of the Englishman's attitude. The book is impersonal from first to last, betraying no false impression that the public wants Mansfield through Wilstack ienses. Of course that is what they get, but we all know that when our leases fit most properly we are least conscious of them. Now was this writer not right to eclipse himself in the blaze of his subject? In a word, is biography more or less persuasive for an infusion of the writer's personality? Brooklyn, Nov. 30.

Who Was "Agnes"?

New York Times Saturday Review of Books:

In your issue of Nov. 14 W. J. P. Phila, asks for the prototype of Agnes in "David Copperfield."

While I was in England during the Winter of 1900 Dickens's birthday, Feb. 7. was calebrated by a large gathering in. his honor in London. The Daily Mail in announcing the event stated that among other distinguished guests Dickens's sister-in-law, Miss Hogarth, the original of Agnes Wickfield, had consented to be present.

Miss Hogarth was much beloved by Dickens and his daughters and spent a great part of her time with the family at Gad's Hill. It was a matter of honor among the daughters not to question their father as to the outcome of any story he was writing. But shortly before his death Miss Hogarth relates that she found it impossible to refrain from asking him, "I hope you haven't really

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