



THE AUTHOR AND THE PUBLISHER

By A. S. FERGUS



VERY few writers are aware of what is likely to happen after the long-sought-for publisher has at last been found. If the manuscript is thought worthy of publication, and the publisher desires it, you will be so notified, and one of the three following propositions will most likely be made to you:

1. They will publish the work at your expense.
2. They will publish the work at their expense, and pay you a royalty on all copies sold.
3. Or, they will buy the manuscript from you, paying you a certain sum down.

IF the first proposition is made, you will have to pay the entire cost of publishing. The first step is to consider the nature of the work, and what style of book it would be most befitting to pattern after. It is wise for you to select, wherever possible, a book as near as can be had such as you would like yours to be, in paper, type, size, binding, and number of pages, leaving some margin in the cost for originality in design of cover. Having decided this point to your mutual satisfaction, the next point will be to have an estimate made.

AN estimate of the cost of publishing the work will be submitted to you. Publishing means issuing the work complete for delivery to the public. Do not confuse the word "printing" with this, as the use of these two terms are confusing, and has often led to much trouble and annoyance. When a publisher states "it will cost so much to print the book," this does not necessarily include the binding, etc. Publishers are much to blame in this respect. The estimate sent you will vary in form according to the custom of the house. Many simply send an estimate in a lump sum, as \$500 per thousand copies. Others will itemize the estimate as so much for composition per thousand ems, or so much per page, so much for paper, printing, folding, sewing and binding, covers, stamping, etc. The latter is the more satisfactory, as it enables you to see the various items that go to make up the cost. It invariably happens that the estimate is higher than would be the case were you to have the work done by some job printer. But, on the other hand, you are saved much annoyance and care, for it follows that any reputable house that accepts your manuscript will issue it in a creditable and perfect manner, and will attend to all details; besides, you have the advantage of the publisher's imprint, or name, on your work.

THE chances are a separate estimate will be made for electrotyping; in other words, making a set of plates from which succeeding editions can be printed if desired. Whether to do this or not is a very difficult and important question. You will be called upon to decide this. You should seek the advice of your publisher on this point, as he is better able to judge, from the nature of your work, whether other editions are apt to be needed, though he, even, is very likely to err. For no one can tell—except in such cases where the nature of the book appeals to a very limited class of readers—how a book will sell. The great advantage of electrotyping is that you are ready at a moment's notice to print other editions if called for, and thus you are saved the cost of composition, that is, the compositors will not have to set up the work in type again. On the other hand, if the first edition is not sold, and consequently there is no call for a second, you have a worthless set of plates on hand, from which you can derive no profit save selling them for old lead. This is one of the great risks of publishing.

ANOTHER important item is the size of the edition. Shall it be 500, 1000 or 5000? This you will also have to decide; again seek the advice of your publisher on this point. There is a considerable saving in issuing a large edition at once than issuing the same total at different periods, say 500 or 1000 at a time, the cost of press work and binding being a very important item. This is a very difficult problem to solve, and is another one of the great risks of publishing. If the book is a success, and you have a large edition on hand, you can supply the demand at once, and this is very important. It is a serious mishap if the book is selling and in demand, and it goes temporarily out of print until the new edition is published. Not only are sales lost, but the very success of the book is jeopardized, for the public is fickle in such matters, and if not to be had when asked for, is not apt to ask for it again. If it is not a success you have a large edition of worthless books on hand worth only so much waste paper. A sad ending to your speculation and success as an author, but, alas, a very common one.

HAVING decided these questions, an agreement will be drawn up. You cannot be too careful in seeing that it is as complete as it is possible to make it. Don't leave anything to verbal understanding. Let it state

the exact amount of money you are to pay and for what, and how much is to be paid you; and at what times you are to pay and to be paid. The size of the edition, the exact style of the book, similar, say, to the one selected, how many editor's copies are to be used, what additional expense you are to be liable to in pushing the sale of the work, and the exact date when the book is to be issued, etc.

THIS done, the publishers will proceed with the work. Before beginning, however, you will have to pay them one-half the amount of the estimate, and before completion the balance must be paid. In addition to this, you will have to pay for all show-bills, circulars, and newspaper advertising, and you must supply, free of cost, from 100 to 150 copies for editorial purposes. Your publishers, on their part, will advertise in the trade papers, see that editorial copies are sent out, that the book is shown to the trade. They will distribute them to the trade throughout the country, with show-bills and circulars. They are not likely to charge you the cost of sending them, as they are apt to be sent with other goods. But if the goods are returned to them, being unsold, the cost of postage or expressage is apt to be charged to you. They will generally pay you one-half the retail price. For instance, if your work retails at \$1.00, they will pay you fifty cents for each copy sold. An account will usually be rendered every three or six months, as may be agreed upon, and whatever is due you will be paid.

IF they accept your manuscript, and feel satisfied that it is a good work, they will take the risk of publication themselves. In that event, you are at no risk whatever, nor are you liable for one dollar of expense. They will generally pay you a royalty of ten per cent. on all copies sold. That is, supposing the retail price is \$1.50, you will receive fifteen cents per copy on all that are sold, with the exception of such as are used for editorial purposes, or become damaged in handling and thus rendered useless. Such copies as you desire for your own use are generally supplied to you at one-third off, or \$1.00 per copy, net.

THEY may offer to accept your manuscript and pay you a certain sum down, which if accepted deprives you of any further proceeds. They own the manuscript absolutely. This has two sides, of course. If the book turns out a failure, they lose and you win. If, on the other hand, it has a large sale, they reap the profits, and it is your turn to feel bad. This often happens. It is another one of the delightful risks of book publishing. The author should not depend entirely upon his publisher to push his book. He can do much himself in bringing the book to public notice, requesting friends to talk about it and ask for it; by sending copies to noted persons, in short, the ingenuity of the author should be exercised to its utmost limits, but not exceeding the bounds of propriety and dignity.

A GIRLS' LITERARY CLUB

By LEIGH NORTH

A CLUB for girls with the aim of mutual improvement and profit, may be organized in some such manner as this: The girls need not necessarily be of equal capacity or identical tastes. In fact, some diversity in these respects would be for the general advantage. But all who take part should be interested in reading and study, and have in some measure the desire and capacity to produce. The meetings may be held weekly or at longer intervals. The time occupied in reading, studying and discussing the various questions that will naturally arise. Once a month each member should hand in a story, sketch or poem (without signature), which should be read aloud, in turn, by the presiding officer, or an appointed reader. No name being appended, the party should feel free to discuss the merits of each manuscript submitted, criticize and suggest improvements, while at the conclusion a vote should be taken as to which of those offered should be entitled, in the general opinion, to the highest place. Each girl should endeavor, not so much to copy the style and manner of any particular friend, or admired writer, but to improve, prune and embellish her own natural production. At stated intervals, some older and experienced literary friend should be invited to be present, and give the benefit of his or her opinion and criticism. One subject might be agreed upon as the theme for all pens, or each individual could be left to her own inclinations, and the intermediate readings or study would, of course, bear upon the articles written. Patience, perseverance, and good-nature are most essential to the success of any such undertaking. Nothing would be accomplished were it pursued intermittently, or taken up and presently dropped again. Nor unless all agreed to a free expression of opinion, without offense, would the general criticism be of service. To this object, the absence of signatures would greatly conduce; though, doubtless, in time, some, if not all of the writers, would come to be recognized by their style. Faithfully carried out, such a plan forms a useful school for the young writers of the future.