

310 Second Street, S.E.
Washington 3, D. C.

26 October 1954

Mr. David Kahn
Editorial Department
The News
220 East Forty Second Street
New York 17, New York

Dear David:

I was much engrossed at the time of the arrival of your letter of 18 October 1954 and wanted a chance to look at your article. I had a chance to do so last evening and, as you said yourself, "although it contains nothing new," I noted with interest its manner of presentation. I must add, however, that I was sorry to find that in the case of one of your examples (Fig. 3) you merely copied from Bond and at that you introduced an error: the message starts ABABB (= M) and not ABABA (= L). The error may confuse your readers, unless they work out the whole message and find that it reads MAKE HASTE SLOWLY.

I might also point out, in connection with the Balzac "cipher," that the fact that each edition had a different version of the cipher does not "positively" corroborate Bazeries' analysis. In this connection, you will find that in printing the explanation of Francis Bacon's biliteral cipher some editors (or compositors) of later editions missed the essential point of the cipher and messed up the explanation, to the confusion or annoyance of the readers--but this does not prove that there is no biliteral cipher system.

Your letter to the editor of Life, in re Melchior's piece therein, was duly noted by me. That Life could accept such a far-fetched write-up as Melchior's indicates how pressed editors must be nowadays to find suitable material. This, I take it, merely reflects or arises from the superabundance of periodicals in our otherwise wonderful country.

Thank you for your invitation to pay a visit to the New York Cipher Society, but I rarely get to New York nowadays and even if I did get there it would be doubtful if I'd want to pay such a visit--I've got too much publicity as it is.

Finally, I am glad to receive your reiterated thanks for the Riverbank Publications and to note that you still value them.

Sincerely,