

was something more than a stenographer or private secretary: he was an educated man, schooled in rhetoric, and chosen for his literary abilities as well as for his skill with the *calamus*. It is quite possible that one of these amanuenses polished up the Commentaries and thus became Caesar's "ghost". The famous "*Veni, vidi, vici*" was probably the inspiration of some journalist in Caesar's employ, just as the "Pericardis alive or Raisuli dead" was the inspiration of an Associated Press correspondent and not T. R.'s, and just as "Lafayette, we are here!" was a good line that occurred to a newspaper man but not to General Pershing.

The Saturday Evening Post and The New York Daily Graphic have sought to recognize the part played by collaborators in those memoirs of people who have distinguished themselves in opera, the prize ring, safe-blowing or murder rather than in the field of literary endeavor. The Saturday Evening Post publishes the by-line in large type, supplemented by a line in smaller type which reads: "In collaboration with So-and-so". The Graphic runs articles signed in large letters, "By Ruth Snyder" or "By Gerald Chapman", and beneath, in smaller type, a line saying "As told to So-and-so".

But "ghost" writing in its unadulterated state flourishes now as probably it never flourished before. The great public will read an article signed by Babe Ruth, Benny Leonard, Jack Dempsey, Lina Cavalieri, the Prince of Wales or Queen Marie of Roumania with greater gusto than it would give to an article signed by an unfamiliar name. In many instances "ghost" writing is a true collaboration. A trained journalist asks a few questions or listens to a recital and later composes an article in the first person to which the famous person signs his or her name. The sentiments are the famous person's, even though the language and the sequence of ideas are not precisely his or hers.

Some of the "ghost" writers are:

Ford Frick of the New York Evening Journal who writes the articles signed by Babe Ruth.

Jack Lait who wrote Ruth Snyder's story of her life.

Carlisle Macdonald who collaborated with Col. Charles A. Lindbergh in the preparation of Col. Lindbergh's newspaper articles.

Zoë Beckley who wrote the articles signed by Queen Marie of Roumania.

Mary Margaret McBride who writes down and elaborates the ideas and memories of Paul Whiteman.

Clark Kinnaird who wrote one "autobiography" of Aimee Semple McPherson.

Frank Menke who writes the articles signed by Jack Dempsey.

Samuel Crowther who wrote the life stories of John H. Patterson and Henry Ford.

Beatrice Fairfax is a trade name owned by William Randolph Hearst. It has been employed by a number of writers on Mr. Hearst's staff. The beauty articles signed by Madame Helena Rubinstein are prepared by Mrs. L. Z. Guck.

Wesley Stout is a "ghost" writer on the staff of The Saturday Evening Post. Antoinette Donnelly, after serving as a "ghost" for the late Lillian Russell as a writer on the care of the complexion and other subjects of beauty, now has her own name copyrighted as an authority on such secrets.

Arthur ("Bugs") Baer, Hugh Fullerton, Damon Runyon, and Miss Hazel Canning have all done "ghost" writing. Miss Canning has to her credit the autobiographies of such personages as the late Jancsi Rigo, the Gypsy Violinist, who married the Princess Chimay and of Mrs. Jean Nash, "the best dressed woman in the world".

It will be recalled that Mark Twain was the "ghost" who prepared the autobiography of General Grant.

An amusing angle of "ghost writing" was revealed when Edwin L. Meyer threatened suit against Samuel Goldwyn, the movie magnate. Meyer alleged that he had been engaged by Mr. Goldwyn to write Mr. Goldwyn's autobiography but that the job had been taken out of his hands and turned over to Miss Corinne Lowe.

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## FOR A BOOK OF MEMOIRS

AMONG the books which appeared during the fall of 1922 there was one now already pretty much forgotten, though it is

of considerable importance in the cultural history of our country. It was a book that aroused a great deal of critical animosity, much to the delight of its perpetrators. If it had been reviewed favorably or received amiably, its authors would have been exceedingly disappointed, for the aim of the book was to stir people up.

The book was called "Civilization in the United States: An Inquiry by Thirty Americans". The title itself was sarcastic, for the essays in the symposium set out to prove that if the United States could boast of any civilization at all it was of the most rudimentary and unsatisfactory character. The editor, Mr. Harold Stearns, made the deliberate mistake in his preface of referring to his collaborators and himself as "intellectuals", knowing full well that what the average citizen in a political democracy resents as much as anything else in the world is the assumption of superiority on the part of others, and that to call oneself an intellectual is to take on airs which the conscious democrat, burdened with a sense of personal inadequacy, finds it hard to tolerate. Mr. Stearns and his collaborators omitted no details which occurred to them as possible factors in provoking hostility and, in calling themselves "intellectuals", they knew they could count on plenty of paragraphs from columnists and editorial writers.

The first I heard of the book was from George Jean Nathan who described it to me as the latest "buffoonery" he and H. L. Mencken were engaged in. During those days Mencken and Nathan were so much occupied with intellectual horseplay that I doubt whether either of them knew when he was serious and when he was just fooling.

"We've got enough professors and New Republicans among the list of contributors," said Nathan, "to put the thing over as a bona fide work of critical indignation. The plan is to get out the meat-ax for everything the American boobery holds sacred — the schools, politics, the home, literature, the theater, big business, the small towns, the newspapers, the movies and all the rest. Nobody will escape. The reviews of the book when it comes out ought to be gorgeously entertaining."

The book was not Nathan's and Mencken's idea, however. The scheme of the book was evolved over a table in Greenwich Village one evening when, among a group of young writers, a common discontent with things as they are in this worst of all possible worlds was crystallized into a flaming resentment against the fact that alcoholic beverages had been made expensive and difficult to obtain by the enactment of the Eighteenth Amendment to the Federal Constitution. Young, sanguine and exuberant, for all their intellectualism, they resented a rigid chaperonage of their conduct by a finicky and puritanical government and, chafing under the yoke of a tyranny as yet only theoretical (for they had not been put to much inconvenience, really, to get what they wanted to drink) they enlisted in the service of abstract justice by demanding for all people the privilege they themselves enjoyed under the outlaw beneficence of bootlegging.

Once the plan of the book was outlined and a number of writers were told off to cover some of the various subjects, fortnightly meetings were called in the comfortless basement of Stearns' rickety house in Barrow street. One reached the place by elbowing one's way through a swarm of Italian children and climbed a wooden stoop, which shook as though it were falling to pieces. After pushing a door-bell which did not work and pulling a bell-cord which had no bell attached to it, one finally hammered on the door until the noise would rise above the yelling of the children in the street and penetrate to Stearns' hearing on the top floor. Then Stearns would come down and usher one up to a study littered with cigarette stubs, burnt matches, candle grease, papers and books. Stearns had always a pre-occupied air and the look of a bewildered small child in need of protection against the rough usages of life, so one felt as though one had rather eat one's hat and stick than suggest that he trouble himself to tell where one might lay them. There was a low, broad bed, but it was one of the few places to sit; there were no jutting nails or hatracks; and in discouragement one finally dropped one's hat in the dust of a corner or turned out a gas jet in the hall and hung it there.

When the collaborators were assembled Stearns led the way to the basement which served him as a dining-room and kitchen and where there were some tables and chairs on which to sit. John Macy, a gaunt, literary looking person with steel-gray hair, dressed in white linen and wearing a flowing black Windsor tie, was there to write the article on newspapers. Lewis Mumford, who was to tell what was wrong with the American cities, usually came in after a hike in the country — a hulking fellow dressed like a mining prospector in the movies. Walter Pach, the artist and critic, a grave and quiet man with an overhanging mustache, then engaged in translating Elie Faure's "History of Art"; Paul Rosenfeld, a rosy and globular little fellow with a merry countenance and a blond toothbrush mustache; Ernest Boyd, dressed from head to toe in brown to match the rust-colored beard which gives him the appearance of the traditional portraits of the Christus; J. E. Spingarn, clothed in severe good taste, a tall, darkish man, like the hero of a novel by E. P. Roe; Van Wyck Brooks, neat, sharp-nosed, nervously diffident, bowing from the waist with a mechanical precision and stiffness; Hendrik Willem Van Loon, huge, fattish, urbane and with a monocle; Katherine Anthony in sombre black; Deems Taylor, looking like a mischievous small boy; and perhaps a half-dozen others would range themselves about the room.

Ostensibly these meetings were held for the discussion of the book, but very little of anything was ever discussed, beyond what was the most suitable title and who was to handle the subjects which were not yet assigned. Every one was eager for the trifling routine to be done with and the real business of the evening — a party at some one's place — to get started. The whole thing was a lark; there was no evidence of that zealotry which is supposed to characterize meetings of this sort. Now and then part of one of the essays that had already come in would be read aloud amid chuckles of approval and amused speculations as to how it would be greeted in certain quarters. Nevertheless, for all the apparent lack of dignity and high seriousness, these essays were



*Adolf Dehn 1927*  
Robert Wolf, sketched at The Dome, Paris, by Adolf Dehn

prepared with care and sincerity; they were stringently critical but accurately and poignantly so; they were well documented, most of them, even when they contained wide generalizations. The book was a manifestation of a tendency then in the air, a tendency to challenge the existing order of things, to examine our customs, and institutions with a critical eye, and to shake up the American complacency. It was a tendency which gave us "Main Street" and "Babbitt", "Miss Lulu Bett" and a great number of other books of fiction and of essays. The editor of "Civilization in the United States" anticipated the question demanding why, if he disliked the country so much, he did not get out, by sailing for France several months before the book was off the press; and he has not yet returned.

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## CABELLIANA

IN the preface to the Storisende Edition of "The Silver Stallion", James Branch Cabell tells how heaven protected that book from destruction. Cabell does his own typing and takes no carbons, because he says that no one can decipher his handwriting and seven times out of ten he inserts the carbon paper wrong side up. When his manuscript is ready for the printer, it is the one and only copy, complete with revisions.

He mailed the manuscript at Dumbarton. The express trains do not stop at the station there. The mail-bag is hung upon a kind of gibbet from which it is caught by a steel arm projecting from the mail car as the train rushes by. The mail-bag in which the manuscript of "The Silver Stallion" was deposited was caught low by the steel arm and ripped open. The only piece of mail that fell out was Cabell's manuscript. It lay in the ditch for thirty-six hours before being discovered. And during that time, Cabell records, rain was miraculously withheld and the manuscript preserved from destruction.

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Readers of "The Cream of the Jest" will recall how Felix Kennaston found the top of his wife's discarded cold cream jar serviceable as the Sigil of Scoteia. It is quite apparent that, although Cabell brings conscious effort to bear upon the revisions and elaborations of his tales, his work is, probably more than that of any other contemporary American writer, the outpouring of a rich subconscious, in which are stored the memories of prodigious reading. It also would appear that Cabell employs a form of crystal-gazing to set his subconscious free. At all events he lets his imagination play upon very homely objects until they become in his mind the paraphernalia of magic. The curious will find in Chapter 46 of "Something About Eve" allusions to the various things that have served him as representatives of something more romantic and recondite — a porcelain box of ointment, a great saw, a blue hat, a large iron comb, a palm branch, and two enormous, rusty keys marked with the monogram S. P.

The idea for "Figures of Earth" came to

him one spring afternoon in May 1919 when he looked out of the windows of his study and saw his wife and child returning to the house. He writes that he "reflected that it would be, upon every personal ground, regrettable if, as the moving window unclosed, that especial woman and that particular child proved to be figures in the glass and the window opened upon nothingness. For that, I believed, was about to happen. . . . Well! there was not. I once more enjoyed the quite familiar experience of being mistaken. It is gratifying to record that nothing whatever came of that panic surmise, or that second-long nightmare — of that brief but over-tropical flowering, for all I know of indigestion — save, ultimately, the 80,000 words or so of this book".

Cabell had learned about the existence of Dom Manuel only from his early romances and had read about his death in the fourth chapter of "Jurgen". He had, then, to write a book about Manuel and he had the germ of it in that instant when "Dom Manuel opens the over-familiar window, in his own home, to see his wife and child, and all the Poictesme of which he was at once the master and the main glory, presented as bright, shallow, very fondly loved illusions in the protective glass of Ageus."

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For those whose minds work that way, there is amusement to be derived out of discovering the anagrams in Cabell's work. As suggestions it might be pointed out that in the new novel, "Something About Eve", Caer Omn is an anagram for Romance; Doonham for Manhood; Lytreia for Reality; Turoine for Routine; and the Land of Dersam, of course, is the Land of Dreams.

There are a number of anagrams in "Jurgen", as there are in his other books; but one of them is an anagram which probably did not occur to him as being an anagram. Anattis is an anagram for Insatiation; but it is on record that while looking for a name under which Aphrodite appears as a goddess of love in the myths of other languages beside the Greek, he was captivated by the umlaut in Anattis, who was the Aphrodite of Armenian folklore, and so chose it.

B. R.