

## The Storisende Edition— An Advance Look

On the following pages we reproduce, by courtesy of Harlan Uman-sky, a brochure that was issued to announce the imminent publication of the Storisende Edition of Cabell's works, i.e., *The Biography of the Life of Manuel*.

Apart from its curiosity value as the publisher's "puff" for these books, this item has interest for several curious aspects.

For one thing, the "specimen page" from JURGEN is not, as indicated, page 3 of the Storisende Edition; the text for that page in actuality starts and ends with different lines. So this is a unique variant.

Odd indeed is the publisher's name that appears in the pamphlet: Methodist Publishing House, of Richmond, Virginia. Not only was the actual publisher Robert M. McBride & Co., of New York, but Cabell was not a Methodist; he was an Episcopalian. He was also, of course, a resident of Richmond, so perhaps this publisher arranged to handle the local distribution of the works of a native son.

Most striking, though, is the fact that the Storisende Edition is described as being in nineteen volumes. In our particular space-time continuum, at least, it contains only eighteen.

A look at the "Chronology" page shows that there is no extra final volume. Indeed, the nineteenth volume is the seventeenth of the Storisende Edition we know, STRAWS AND PRAYER-BOOKS. And it is preceded by what we know as Volume XVIII, TOWNSEND OF LICHFIELD. This suggests that STRAWS AND PRAYER-BOOKS, the Epilogue to the Biography as BEYOND LIFE is the Prologue, was to conclude the set and to be preceded by the final *novel*, TOWNSEND OF LICHFIELD, rather than the odds-and-ends TOWNSEND OF LICHFIELD that actually came to be published. Cabell's original intention of using this title for a novel is plainly stated in the Author's Note to the actual TOWNSEND.

No, the Chronology shows that the added volume was actually to be Volume XVII, THE WITCH-WOMAN — not, presumably, the three-story collection of that title which was published by Farrar, Straus in 1948, but the "dizain," or ten-story collection, that Cabell planned but never finished (as set forth in "A Note as to Ettarre," the preface to the Farrar, Straus volume).

original plans for THE WITCH-WOMAN include in the list of ten projected stories THE MUSIC FROM BEHIND THE MOON, and this is indeed one of the three stories in the book as finally published. But the Chronology indicates that, just as in the actual Storisende Edition, the third volume was to contain DOMNEI and THE MUSIC FROM BEHIND THE MOON.

Can anyone offer an explanation?

*(Facsimile pages follow.)*

---

---

## The *Storisende Edition* of the WORKS OF JAMES BRANCH CABELL

---

THE books of JAMES BRANCH CABELL have earned for their author a position unique among contemporary American writers. To-day still under fifty, at the height of his career, *Mr. CABELL* is recognized, throughout the world of English letters, as one of the great prose stylists of all time: while yet alive, he has become, in the best and most vital sense, a classic. That is conceded.

It is not so generally known that *Mr. CABELL* has been working for twenty-five years on a romantic *Comédie Humaine* which covers the last seven centuries; and that each of his novels and stories, whether it concern itself with Lichfield or with the high history of Poictesme, is an integral part of what he refers to as "The Biography" — a Biography of the life of Dom Manuel of Poictesme, alike as that life was lived by him in the rather widely varying fields of fact and of recorded history, and as that life has been perpetuated in the descendants of Dom Manuel down to our present day. Of this Biography, which will consist ultimately of nineteen volumes, sixteen volumes have already been published, a seventeenth is nearing completion, and the two other books are in process of construction.

Writing of *Mr. CABELL*'s work, Carl Van Doren says: "There seems to be no longer any reason for not associating him with the only comparable American romancers, Hawthorne and Melville. *Mr. Cabell*, more systematic than Hawthorne and Melville in his thinking, is more thorough in his art. He has left behind both his own place and his own age, and has taken refuge in an imagined realm where the very shadows are brighter than the sunshine of Virginia."

Writes Henry S. Canby: "Mr. Cabell has a fully matured style with body and beauty, and a perfect flow which suggests French

prose as often as English. He *is* the ironist that D. H. Lawrence, wrongly I think, thought Hawthorne meant to be. That he is one of our few good writers not many now can doubt."

And H. L. Mencken adds: "Cabell's style is the last word in artful and arduous craftsmanship among us — Paterism somehow humanized and made expansive."

Recognizing, then, the permanent quality of the Cabellian romances, and comprehending the necessity for issuing them in a form compatible with these books' importance, the publishers have prepared a definitive edition of the entire Biography to be known as the *Storisende Edition* of the WORKS OF JAMES BRANCH CABELL. In the manufacture of this collector's edition of nineteen volumes no expense has been spared. The publishers believe this to be one of the most distinguished sets of books, in *format* as well as in contents, which has yet been issued in America.



The *Storisende Edition* has been designed by William Dana Orcutt, and will be printed and bound under his direct supervision at the Plimpton Press, Norwood, Massachusetts. The *paper* is Aurelian deckle edge; the *type* is Caslon, and the *binding* is full cloth, with gilt top.

The *Storisende Edition* will be issued at the rate of three volumes per season commencing with the Autumn of 1927. Each volume will be signed by *Mr. CABELL* and will contain, in addition, a special preface and complete textual revisions. There will be printed fifteen hundred and ninety numbered sets, of which fifteen hundred and fifty will be offered for sale in the United States and England, after which the type will be destroyed.

Although the books may be paid for as issued, it will not be possible to purchase individual volumes or broken sets.

## JURGEN

philanthropy! and deliberate how insufferable would be our case if you and I, and all our fellow parishioners, were to-day hobnobbing with other beasts in the Garden which we pretend to desiderate on Sundays! To arise with swine and lie down with the hyena? — oh, intolerable! ”

Thus he ran on, devising reasons for not thinking too harshly of the Devil. Most of it was an abridgement of some verses Jurgen had composed, in the shop when business was slack.

“ I consider that to be stuff and nonsense, ” was the monk’s glose.

“ No doubt your notion is sensible, ” observed the pawnbroker: “ but mine is the prettier. ”

Then Jurgen passed the Cistercian Abbey, and was approaching Bellegarde, when he met a black gentleman, who saluted him and said:

“ Thanks, Jurgen, for your good word. ”

“ Who are you, and why do you thank me? ” asks Jurgen.

“ My name is no great matter. But you have a kind heart, Jurgen. May your life be free from care! ”

“ Save us from hurt and harm, friend, but I am already married. ”

“ Eh, sirs, and a fine clever poet like you! ”

“ Yet it is a long while now since I was a practising poet. ”

“ Why, to be sure! You have the artistic temperament, which is not exactly suited to the restrictions of domestic life. Then I suppose your wife has her own personal opinion about poetry, Jurgen. ”

“ Indeed, sir, her opinion would not bear repetition, for I am sure you are unaccustomed to such language. ”

“ This is very sad. I am afraid your wife does not

[ 3 ]

---

 CHRONOLOGY
 

---

1. BEYOND LIFE: *Dizain des Démiurges*
2. FIGURES OF EARTH: *A Comedy of Appearances*
3. THE SILVER STALLION: *A Comedy of Redemption*  
[AUTUMN, 1927]
4. DOMNEI: THE MUSIC FROM BEHIND THE MOON:  
*Two Comedies of Woman Worship*
5. CHIVALRY: *Dizain des Reines*
6. JURGEN: *A Comedy of Justice* [SPRING, 1928]
7. THE LINE OF LOVE: *Dizain des Mariages*
8. THE HIGH PLACE: *A Comedy of Disenchantment*
9. GALLANTRY: *Dizain des Fêtes Galantes* [AUTUMN, 1928]
10. SOMETHING ABOUT EVE: *A Comedy of Fig Leaves*
11. THE CERTAIN HOUR: *Dizain des Poètes*
12. THE CORDS OF VANITY: *A Comedy of Sbirking*
13. FROM THE HIDDEN WAY: THE JEWEL MERCHANTS:  
*Dizain and Comedy of Echoes.* [SPRING, 1929]
14. THE RIVET IN GRANDFATHER'S NECK: *A Comedy of  
Limitations*
15. THE EAGLE'S SHADOW: *A Comedy of Purse-Strings*
16. THE CREAM OF THE JEST: *A Comedy of Evasions*  
[AUTUMN, 1929]
17. THE WITCH WOMAN
18. TOWNSEND OF LICHFIELD
19. STRAWS AND PRAYER-BOOKS: *Dizain des Diversions*  
[SPRING, 1930]

METHODIST PUBLISHING HOUSE

417 E. GRACE ST., RICHMOND, VIRGINIA