THE ANONYMOUS ROOSEVELT

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The Anonymous Roosevelt is hard to conceive, but it now transpires that the Colonel was the author of a dozen unsigned articles appearing in The Ladies' Home Journal in 1906 and 1917 under a department heading called "Men." So closely was the secret of the authorship guarded, according to the editor, Edward W. Bok, that "until this revelation only five persons have known the authorship." The articles, or an editorial nature, brought forth many guesses as to their authorship, the majority of opinion finally settling upon Dr. Charles W. Eliot, President Emeritus of Harvard.

The revelation of the many-sided ex-President as an editorial writer for a woman's magazine comes in the autobiography of Mr. Bok, which he calls "The Americanization of Edward Bok," just published by Scribner's.

Colonel Roosevelt had already appeared in Mr. Bok's journal through a department called "The President," which consisted of the then President's views on many subjects set forth in interview form by a correspondent.

Several years later, Mr. Bok proposed to Colonel Roosevelt a series of anonymous articles, "feeling that it would be an interesting experiment to see how a Theodore Roosevelt's ideas could stand unsupported by the authority of his vibrant personality." Mr. Bok continued:

"It was just after he had returned from his South American trip. He was immediately interested.

"'But how can we keep the authorship really anonymous?' he asked.

"'Easily enough,' answered Bok, if you're willing to do the work. Our letters about it must be in long hand addressed to each other's home; you must write your manuscript in your own hand; I will copy it in mine, and it will go to the printer thus personally signed by you the proofs; you mark your corrections in pencil, and I will copy them in ink; the company will pay me for each letter, and I will send you my personal check each month. By this means, the identity of the Colonel will be concealed.'"

"Colonel Roosevelt was never averse to hard work if it was necessary to achieve a result that he felt was worth while."

"'All right,' wrote the Colonel finally. 'I'll try—with you!—the experiment for a year: twelve articles...."

"The physical work was great. The Colonel punctiliously held to the conditions, and wrote manuscript and letters with his own hand, and Bok carried out his part of the agreement. Nor was this simple, for Colonel Roosevelt's manuscript particularly when, as in this case, it was written on yellow paper with a soft pencil and generously interlined—was anything but legible. Month after month the two men worked on their special project, each at his own task. To throw the public off the scent, during the conduct of the department, an article or two by Colonel Roosevelt was published in another part of the magazine, under his own name, and in the department itself the anonymous author would occasionally quote himself.

"It was natural that the appearance of a department devoted to men in a woman's magazine should attract immediate attention. The department took up the various interests of the opinions discussed, but so thoroughly had Colonel Roosevelt covered his tracks that, although he wrote in his usual style, in not a single instance was his name connected with the department. Young Abbott was the favorite 'guest' at first; then, after various other public men had been suggested, the newspaper editors decided to use former President Eliot of Harvard University as the writer."

"All this intensely interested and amused Colonel Roosevelt and he fairly bet with the desire to write a series of criticisms of his own articles to Dr. Eliot. However, he persuaded the Colonel not to spoil his more substantial effort than he was already doing on the articles; for, in any case, the editor knew how many letters received, and those Bok answered 'on behalf of the author.'"

"For a year the department continued. During all that time the secret of the authorship was known to only one man besides the Colonel and Bok and their respective families."

"'When the Colonel sent his last article in the series to Bok, he wrote:

"'Now that the work is over, I wish most cordially to thank you, my dear fellow, for your unvarying courtesy and kindness. I have not been satisfied with the work. This is the first time I ever tried to write pleasantly for an audience, and I am not one of those gifted men who can do so to advantage. Generally I find that the 2,000 words is not the right limit and that I wish to use 4,000! And, in consequence, feel as if I had either padded or mutilated the article. And I am not always able to feel that every month I have something worth saying on a given subject."

"But I hope that you have not been too much disappointed,' he added."

"At the same time Colonel Roosevelt handed over manuscript for The Ladies' Home Journal to be edited, with great conscientiousness and propriety. Finally, Mr. Bok revealed that near the close of his life the Colonel had under consideration a suggestion that he accept the leadership of the Boy Scouts of America. Says the new autobiography:"

"'Bok told Colonel Roosevelt that he wanted to have $25,000 a year in American boyhood—the boyhood that he felt was worth while to spend."

"'Although, all too apparently, he was not in his usual vigorous health, Colonel Roosevelt was alert in a moment."

"'Pigs!' he said, with his teeth gleaming. 'Couldn't invent better anywhere. How are you going to do it?'"

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The Anonymous Roosevelt

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"...by asking you to assume the entire headship of the National Boy Scouts of America. Your services to the organization each year as its fixed salary..."

The Colonel stood neatly abroad for a moment, without a word, and then with the old Rooseveltian flash of his fine, fair gleam, he turned to his host, "I see," he called, and said:"

"Do you know that was very well put."

"Yes," answered Bok. "I thought so, too. I guess you're the only one who can recognize the idea."

"That's another matter; quite a different thing. It's not in the examination itself. There are men in it that don't approve of me at all, you know."

Bok explained that the organization had been doing so well that it was entirely unofficial. It was purely a personal thing. He believed that he had done a needed leader; that the Colonel was the man in the United States fitted naturally in high quality to be that leader; that the Scouts would rally around him, just as sure as if it was done by 100,000 Scouts, if there were then, and the organization would get a lot more and be more.

Bok further explained that he believed with the Colonel's experience in the world, his influence with the nation, and his ability to present the organization to the national officers; he believed he would welcome the opportunity. He could not assure the Colonel of any money; he had no authority for saying they would, but was Colonel Roosevelt receptive to the plan?

"At first the Colonel could not see it. He viewed it at first as roughly a half-hour talk permit, and finally the opportunity to make a speech to a work that might prove second to none that he had ever done before it was approved.

"You mean for me to be the acting head?"

"Could anything be else, Colonel?" answered Bok.

"I see, I see, " said the Colonel.

"That's right. Do you know, he pondered over it for a moment, how little we do like something like that. She would figure it would be a bad thing. And the Colonel's smile spread over his face."

"I think, at last, he concluded: 'do know, after all, I think you've said it very well. Let's see how it get along with this trouble of mine. I am not sure, you know, what might be the case for the future. Not all, but you know, not at all."

American was a bit too much. Shouldn't have done it, you know, I think it now. But I am glad you did, and I think it is a great thing."

"Yes," said the Colonel, "it is a great thing; I'd love doing it. By Jove, I think it is a great thing."

"I'm afraid you are wrong there. Millions of boys for real Americanism, as you say. It looks as up it is a great thing."

"I mean, for a month or two."

"I mean, for a month or two."

"It was to be forever-unseasonably, unfortunately. Bok had all along had the idea that very soon the idea that ever came to him, for, after all..."

"You have been too busy, and stand, come too late. He felt, as he will always feel, that the boys of Americanism, as he always was, had that might have led them-where would have been the help of the girls?"

"William the Conqueror."

"Bayard Bok sought and secured the acquiescence of Bayard Kipling, and a few days later the drinking scenes from the first of the Kipling contributions to be published in the book. Your suggestion was of much comment, is told in the present biography. The story was "William the Conqueror.""

"Well, I count it, and said:"

""I count it," and said:"

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""I count it, and said:"

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