

Someone said, once, "Of the making of books there is no end." The same might be said of diaries: "Of the making of diaries there is no end". And just as the Psalmist exclaimed, "Oh, that mine enemy had written a book", so might many ~~xxxx~~^{people} wish that their favorite enemy had set down his weaknesses in a diary.

Almost everyone has kept a diary at some time or another. Nowadays they are usually rather brief and to the point. But in older more leisurely days they were quite voluminous. A man might spend an hour or two or three setting down the events of the day in his journal. Now 15 minutes allotted to such a task would usually be regarded as the maximum.

This evening we will be concerned mostly with English diaries, mainly because they are best known. Some of the ^{American} colonials kept journals, and they turn up now and again down to the time of the Civil War. What would we not give for a few pages of Lincoln's Diary? One of the men in his cabinet--I believe it was Montgomery Blair, P.M. General--kept a diary which at least carries HIS impressions of cabinet meetings and the like. Charles Francis Adams and others of that period kept diaries and from them historians get footnotes to great events, and sidelights on famous personalities.

Recently the publishers of a forthcoming book by Henry Morgenthau permitted the story to leak of what George Sokolsky, the editorial commentator, calls "a monstrous diary" which Morgenthau kept while he was Secretary of the Treasury. It was of such proportions, declared this writer, that it became a subject of ^{common} ~~private~~ discussion as to how anyone could do his work as Secretary of the Treasury and at the same time do the writing or dictating involved in the maintenance of a diary of such magnitude." (end of quote) The present Secy. of the Treasury, Snider, demanded the return of many documents included in the Morgenthau magnum opus.

One of the breeziest diaries of our times was that kept by FPA (the Franklin P. Adams heard weekly on radio's "Information Please")

in various New York papers in which he conducted columns, usually called The Conning Tower. When in June, 1911, he started such a diary on his column in the Evening Mail he had no idea that it might continue more than a few weeks. Since that time it appeared for almost a quarter century, making a total of over 4,000,000 words, making it one of the longer journals in existence. An abridgment of this titled "The Diary of Our Own Samuel Pepys" was printed some years ago in two large volumes by Simon & Schuster.

Adams' diary was written much in the style of the original Pepys, even to oddities in spelling. To designate an automobile, unknown in the elder Samuel's days, Adams called it a "petrol-waggon", a story is a "taylor" (spelled with a "y") and a writer a "scrivener", etc. It contains many an amusing bit like this entry in Aug. 1930: "Up, and read that somebody had said that there were 80,000,000 germs in a pony of brandy, whereat somebody else said, Well, things are pretty crowded these days."

He knew all the most popular authors, poets, musicians, playwrights and the like and saw all the best plays, so that his record is a good picture of the more intellectual New York City in the 1920's and '30's.

People generally loved to read his items which involved so many well knowns, like this one in May, 1926: "So to the park and played a game of croquet, A. Woolcott being my partner against A. Marx, the harpist, and C. MacArthur, the playwright; and we lost, wholly for cause of my ineptitude and poor shooting, which depressed me more than I would say." (Adams, however, was a much better tennis player.) He concludes: So home, and did on my evening suit, and thence to Mistress Alma Gluck's, and had a merry time of it, sitting next to a handsome lady, named Mrs. Parrish."

He also had a lot of shrewd observations on politics and the like. One of his favorite themes in 1931 was "My Lord Calvin" (Coolidge of course) and in March of that year was one entry: "To the office, where I hear there is to be an inquiry made into the doings and non-doings of Mayor Walker,

and I hope that the probers will not make a botch of it, for it is not easy to get a foothold on so smooth a surface as the Mayor's." (end quote) And those who remember Jimmy Walker in his prime will recognize that as a sage observation.

But as we have hinted the greatest diaries have been kept by the English. The first notable one of these was that kept by

Sir William Dugdale

in the reigns of Charles I and Charles II. He fought for the first Charles in the Civil War. His diary began when he was 37 and he kept it up till he was 82, a period of 45 years. He wrote a vivid historical note in his entry of Jan. 30, 1649: "The King beheaded at the gate of Whitehalls?.. His head was thrown downe by him yt (that) tooke it up; bruised ye face. His haire cut off. Souldiers dipped their swords in his blood. Base language upon his dead body."

Yet after Dugdale came one of the most voluminous of the men diarists,

John Evelyn

at age 21, who in 1641/began a diary that he kept for 64 years. He was a contemporary of both Dugdale and of Pepys. "A strain of innocent gaiety and refined enjoyment", says one commentator, "marks Evelyn's life from first to last." He was concerned in the war that led to the execution of Charles I; indeed was in the King's army, but he got away from the country and stayed away 4 years, getting a wife in Paris. When he finally came home to Deptford he settled down to a calm and ofteneventful life which he duly recorded. Kate O'Brien in "The Romance of English Literature", published in England in 1944--one of the handsomest and best written general survey books issued in many a long day--has a chapter, and a fine one, on diarists. She says of Evelyn: "He was too great a man to be as priggish and careful as he was; too intellectually gifted to hunt so consistently with the hares while he ran with the hounds. But he has left us a splendid panorama, crowded but clear, of a time in English history, which was packed with events, with

troubles and with development. As a man, measured by his own powers and opportunities, he is disappointing; but as a diarist he is invaluable." (end quote)

A friend of Evelyn, Samuel Pepys, kept a diary, also, but only for nine eventful years, instead of Evelyn's 65, and this diary, which may have not been intended for any other eyes than his own, has become the most famous of all journals. Not many people have read all of it, but many have read in its full form, or read one of the several volumes of excerpts. But Mr. Cherrington is to dwell on this supreme diarist later in the program. We hope he does ~~Not~~ fail to tell us about the passages in French!

No collector of English diaries can escape the Woodforde family. There were several of them that kept journals, but none better known than

The Rev. James Woodforde.

He began his diary at 18 and kept it up for the remaining 45 years of his natural life. "The Diary of a Country Parson" was the title of an edition of it published by the Oxford University Press in five volumes.

Another British parson, this time one who had a great influence in America, who kept a famous journal, was

John Wesley.

Kate O'Brien, in her survey of the diarists, comments about the journal of the founder of Methodism: (quote) "As a record of sheer unbroken industry alone it defeats most known biographies, and it paints a very remarkable portrait of a man....--emotional, hard-headed, domineering, intellectual, even skeptical, and brave; a conservative reformer, a reactionary radical, an arrogant, self-confident saint--all co-ordinated by singleness of purpose, so that A VERY HUMAN MAN BECOMES A SUPERNATURAL FORCE, to transform the lives and hearts of millions." (unquote)

There are many who have made a study of the subject who think that the most entertaining of all diaries is that of

Fanny Burney.

She was born in 1752, died in 1840. She began to keep her diary when she was 16 and she made her last entry in it a year before she died, when she was 87. Seventy-one years is a long time to devote to one thing and, for time covered, alone, it makes HERS the champion of all personal journals.

She knew a lot of famous people--Dr. Samuel Johnson, who called her "Fannikin"; Reynolds, the painter; Burke, the orator; Windham, who was also a famous diarist; Sheridan, the playwright. For some unaccountable reason this clever woman allowed herself to become Second Mistress of the Robes to Queen Charlotte, the dull wife of the none too bright George III, which began a slavery of five years. She was 33 when she began this work and at age 41 she married some French chevalier and settled down with him in a cottage in Surrey, living on her court pension of £100 a year. For the first ten years of the 19th century she lived in France and her diaries contain a famous account of June, 1815, with "the thunders and repercussions of Waterloo." She wrote about all these things with interest, with understanding and with charm.

Queen Victoria wrote a diary, it would scarcely be known if it were not for her fame, for it is about as dull as dear old Vic was in her later years, and Captain Scott left a memorable journal of many days, including those last tragic ones that he spent in the Antarctic.

Recently there has come out ~~maxed~~ a new edition of a diary by another of the ministers,

The Rev. Francis Kilvert.

Many think that this ranks next to Fanny Burney's as the most consistently interesting of all the well known British diaries. In February a most flattering review of it came upon Pages one and two of the N.Y. Herald Tribune weekly BOOK REVIEW. The review was written by that phenomenal philosopher, Prof. Irwin Edman, of the Columbia University faculty, one of the men who can write about philosophy so that even a lawyer can understand it. ...Kilvert's diary, like Pepys', covers a period of only nine years, from 1870 to 1879.

Rowse,

A noted British historian, who writes a preface to the latest edition of Kilvert, says: "I should place this diary among the best half dozen or dozen ever written in England." and Professor Edman says that Rowse is "not exaggerating."

Kilvert, who died in his 30's, was bachelor most of his life, but rather naively interested in women, and finally he was married. A few weeks after his marriage, when he was 38, he died very suddenly of peritonitis. His diary runs right up to the last spring of his life.

Both Kate O'Brien and Professor Edman agree upon one thing, the vitality of this young cleric, as expressed in his record. Miss O'Brien sums it up thus: "It is the unevenness, the eccentricity and the sheer naturalness of the writer which distinguish this diary. Kilvert puts down everything and anything,--a landscape, a joke, a prayer, or a rhapsody about yet another girl; and, whatever it is, he lights it up; by some curious trick of his vitality and his innocence, he makes everything live that he touches." (end quote)

He records many things lovely and pleasant, but he sets down also pictures of deaths and disease and madness among the poor and the rich alike. Sometimes, too, he is decidedly UN-Victorian as in his approving report of bathing in the nude. "If ladies disapprove of gentlemen bathing in the nude", he asks, "why do they look at them?" A sensible guy!!

I don't pretend to be a literary critic, so I simply cite you the opinion of the great Professor Edman of Columbia: "Kilvert's Diary is a permanent addition to English literature, and Kilvert himself a permanent character in the roster of spirits exquisite and beautiful."

And that brings us to the end of our chronicle of some of the more or less GREAT diaries. There are lesser and more trivial ones; we'll get to those in our table-talk at the end of the program. But right now I want to pass the runner's baton on to my brother in Beta Theta Pi and

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your brother in Symposiarch, H.E.Cherrington, who will tell us of a
~~XXXXXXXXXX~~
supreme diarist, one to whose works and the commentaries on whose works
he has given many years of interested research. And so now here comes
Cherry----

"PEEPING INTO PEPYS"(PEEPS)
