

SAMUEL
PEPYS'
DIARY



PASSAGES FROM
THE DIARY OF
SAMUEL
PEPYS

EDITED AND WITH AN
INTRODUCTION BY
RICHARD LE GALLIENNE

THE
MODERN LIBRARY
NEW YORK





Random House IS THE PUBLISHER OF
THE MODERN LIBRARY

BENNETT A. CERF • DONALD S. KLOPPER ROBERT K. HAAS

Manufactured in the United States of America

Printed by Parkway Printing Company Bound by H. Wolff

INTRODUCTION

THE diary of Samuel Pepys is like no other book in the world. To those who love humanity and vivid, unconscious writing, it is infinitely delightful and precious, scarcely to be over-valued. One reason, of course, for this is that its writer had no idea of making a book at all. It is plain beyond doubt that he never dreamed of human eyes falling upon his blessedly frank and naked page. The record was a secret between himself and his own soul, not forgetting his God—whom, as will be seen, he is far from forgetting, and whom he invokes on many curious occasions. Most diarists have written with an eye to publication, or, at all events, with the fear before them of posthumous inspection by the family. They have, therefore, more or less posed themselves as they would have others see them. Most of us have kept diaries in our youth. They are for most people merely the pool of Narcissus. With that dwindling sense of our own importance, as contrasted say with the planet Jupiter, which comes with maturity, most of us have abandoned them. With the abdication of the ego, they become tiresome to us, and absurdly self-important. Pepys, however, though certainly not an egoist, in our modern sense of the word, never lost interest in himself or his affairs. That may perhaps be regarded as one of the many signs of that robust health of mind and body with which his diary abounds. But it is a childlike, boyish interest. It is not so much himself that interests him, nor merely the things that happen to himself, but the people about him and the things that are happening to everybody, all the time, to his nation as well as to his acquaintance. It is the

world in which he lives that is so immensely interesting to him every minute—never was the world so full of a number of things as to Samuel Pepys, and the gusto with which he plunges into his experiences is good to see. The smallest happy trifle delights him. When he gets a new watch, for instance, he exclaims upon his “old folly and childishness,” because “I cannot forbear carrying my watch in my hand in the coach all this afternoon, and seeing what o’clock it is one hundred times.” He was then a grown man of thirty-two! Perhaps other grown men of thirty-two have been equally childish—and engagingly human—but, of course, they have kept it to themselves. Without any doubt, too, they have been as human as Pepys in other directions,—and kept that, too, to themselves. In that matter of women, for instance. There have existed, and still continue to exist, and in numbers so far from small as perhaps to constitute a majority of male humanity, men as susceptible to women as Pepys—it is idle to deny it—but these men have kept that amiable weakness, and still continue to keep it, to themselves; just as Pepys thought he was doing, and, for the most part did. “Respectable” readers, of course, hold up their hands at the frank memoranda of amorous dealings with the numerous fair and frail women, from pretty serving-maids—sweet “Nan” or “Deb” or “Sue” or “Doll”—to “merry wives” of loftier station, each one of them flashingly alive before us, often by the mere mention of their names. Those terrible Restoration times! Well, I wonder if the lives of our big business men, and men in public office, as was Pepys, would stand writing any better than his. Indeed, I don’t wonder at all. And as for the madness of woman-worship, it is a question if any previous age has surpassed the present in that particular form of dementia. Pepys was well aware of his weakness, and periodically repentant. “Strange slavery that I stand in to beauty,” he exclaims, “that I value nothing near it!” This was *à propos* a call upon “Doll, our pretty ‘Change

woman, for a pair of gloves trimmed with yellow ribbon, to match the petticoate my wife bought yesterday, which cost me 20s; but she is so pretty, that God forgive me! I could not think it too much." "However, musique and women," he admits elsewhere with a sigh, "I cannot but give way to, whatever my business is." "Unrefined" as I suppose some of his amorous encounters are to be regarded, there is no question that they were all inspired by an intense and catholic love of beauty. No one can bring the charge against Pepys that he ever kissed a homely woman. He reproaches himself, on one occasion, for wasting good business time on some unattractive ladies. "She grows mighty homely and looks old," he says, "thence ashamed of myself for this loss of time." Had it only been Lady Castlemaine, the lovely mistress of the King! In Pepys' disinterested, hopeless worship of her, perforce at a distance, seen in a box with Charles II at the theatre, or walking in Hyde Park, or, as once, in dreams of the night, he attains to something like romance. It is enough for him to fill his eyes with her beauty from afar. It is his own phrase over and over again. "Where I glutted myself with looking at her," he says of seeing her once at White Hall. His diary saddens at any hint of her falling out of the King's favour, and whatever she does is right; for "strange it is how for her beauty I am willing to construe all this to the best and to pity her wherein it is to her hurt, though I know well that she is"—well, no better than she should be. The sight of her petticoats on a clothesline at White Hall thrills poor Pepys to the marrow. "And in the Privy Garden," he says, "saw the finest smocks and linen petticoats of my Lady Castlemaine's, laced with Irish lace at the bottom, that ever I saw, and did me good to look upon them."

This weakness for women, that is pretty women, Pepys never, it has to be acknowledged, overcame. It occasioned no little trouble between him and his spirited young

French wife, of whom, for all his marital airs of authority, he stood in marked dread, and for whom, in spite of his philandering—again not so different from his fellows—he had a deep affection. The domestic passages in all their homely, old-world simplicity, are among the most attractive in the diary; their constant quarrels and makings-up, their young fun, jaunts and outings together, their delightful “scenes” with their long processions of servants—not yet, for many a long year, known as “help.” The picture thus given of an English middle-class household of those days is far from unattractive, with its greater familiarity and gaiety of intercourse and sense of shared family-life; and no book so well as this diary gives one an idea of what was once meant by “Merry England”—an England which died with its “Merry Monarch,” and the accession of his dull and sinister brother. Music and drinking made a great part of the merriment. Of both the diary is full, and it will be noticed that, when gentlemen got together in a tavern, they were never long without a song—and good singing, too. Pepys, indeed, as will appear, was a learned virtuoso of music and was himself a good performer on several instruments. The day seldom began, however early, or ended, however late, without a song—in which the pretty “mayde,” or the “rascal” boy, were usually able to take part—or without some brief melody on lute or violin. How excellent and charming a practice, and how far removed from the uncivilized tradesman’s world we live in to-day!

As for the drinking: here after a brief, but pretty thorough apprenticeship to Bacchus, Pepys is early seen developing a strength of character, which comes rather as a surprise, though it is an earnest of the success his life was to be, and is the more to his credit when one considers the habits and temptations of his time. The diary has not gone very far when we find him abandoning those “mornings” at taverns—draughts of wine, ale,

or other malt and spirituous liquors which for our hardy ancestors took the place of breakfast—and “taking the pledge” to himself not to “indulge” for certain stated periods on pain of certain “forfeits” to the poor box, and such like deprivations, methodically arranged between himself and his own diary-keeping soul. He makes similar “vowes” against too many “theatres,” and the buying of too many books; and more feebly on that matter of “beauty.” For the most part, he keeps these vows—except as regards “beauty”—manfully; but, on occasion, as the reader will discover, he has ways of evading them with an amusing, quite childish casuistry. Wine, however—with the exception of occasional friendly or family bouts few and far between—he practically renounces for good—and again and again, we find him recording his satisfaction in being able to do so, to the great good of his health and his business. “But thanks be to God,” we find him saying, early in January, 1661, when he was not yet twenty-eight, “since my leaving drinking of wine, I do find myself much better and do mind my business better and do spend less money and less time lost in idle company.” Later, we find him disposing of his well-stocked cellar, and congratulating himself on the monetary equivalent. And it is now time to say that Pepys was by far from being a fool, far indeed from being the mere sot and sensualist which those who only know his diary by hearsay, or by an occasional preposterous quotation, are apt, with absurd injustice, to regard him. He was, on the contrary, a serious-minded business man, and conscientious public servant, clever, shrewd and painstaking, if not brilliant, and honest as men with his opportunities for “presents” and “perquisites” were in those days, far more honest, indeed, than his detractors—just as honest in fact, as business men ever have been, or ever will be. He was, in addition, a scholar and man of taste, a learned musician, as we have seen, a lover of books and pictures, and so far interested in the growing “science”

of the day as to be made President of the Royal Society. He left a valuable library to his alma mater, Magdalene College, Cambridge, and he died, having succeeded in his life's aim as is given to few men to do: the admirable aim of making an honoured and comfortable place in the world for himself, his family and his descendants. And this he did mainly with his own hand, his one asset at the beginning being his relationship, as "first cousin one remove" to Sir Edward Montagu, afterwards Earl of Sandwich, the "My Lord" of the diary, who, however, proved throughout something more than kin to him, and his constantly helpful friend and "patron." It was through Lord Sandwich's influence that Pepys began his career in the Navy office as "Clerk of the Acts," a post equivalent to the post of Permanent Under Secretary at present, and in this capacity as in the post of Secretary to the Admiralty to which he later succeeded, Pepys was brought into frequent contact with the Duke of York (afterwards James II), who was Lord High Admiral, and by whom, as by the King himself, he was frequently complimented on his services to the department. That department had never been in worse case, and evidence is unanimous that it was the energy and industry of Pepys in its reorganization that laid the foundations of the British Navy as we know it to-day. Many other posts, with their responsibilities, honours, and "perquisites," were afterward added unto Pepys, all evidence of his efficiency.

Samuel Pepys was born February 23, 1633, and died May 25, 1703. The name Pepys, by the way, has always been pronounced by the family "Peeps." His diary extends over but eight and a half years of his life, the first entry being made on January 1, 1660, the last on May 31, 1669. The cause of its discontinuance, as the reader will find by referring to that last solemn entry, was the rapid failure of his sight. Henceforth, he says, his diary will have to be "kept by my people in long hand, and must

therefore be contented to set down no more than is fit for them and all the world to know"—no slight difference for posterity!—adding characteristically, with a last flash of the old spirit, "or, if there be anything, which cannot be much, now my amours to Deb. are past, and my eyes hindering me in almost all other pleasures, I must endeavour to keep a margin in my book open, to add, here and there, a note in short-hand with my own hand."

The diary, in six calf-bound volumes, stamped with Pepys' arms and crest, was deposited, at Pepys' death, with the other bequeathed books, at Magdalene College, Cambridge, and attracted no particular notice, till at the instance of the Master of the College, an undergraduate, the Rev. John Smith, undertook to decipher it, and beginning his work in the spring of 1819, completed it in April, 1822, having worked on it, he tells us, from twelve to fourteen hours a day, for nearly three years. The system of shorthand used by Pepys was that invented by Thomas Shelton, a copy of whose treatise on what he calls "Tachygraphy" is in the Pepysian Library. The diary was first published in 1825, edited by Lord Braybrooke, and was reviewed by Sir Walter Scott in "The Quarterly Review."

"That curious fellow Pepys," was Scott's way of referring to him, and he certainly had some curious and absurd ideas. With what extreme seriousness he took himself, certainly without humour in regard to his physical existence and well-being, many quaint and outspoken instances which I have had reluctantly to omit from this edition bear amusing witness; but one of the oddest of his whims is mentionable. On March 26, 1658, he had undergone a successful operation for stone in the bladder. Therefore, the reader will find him, on every annual recurrence of that date, giving what he calls his "stone-feast," a dinner to his most intimate friends in memory of the occasion, and as a token of gratitude to Almighty

God. Also we find him having a case made in which to keep the stone, which he had solemnly preserved. He had his superstitions, too. He wore a hare's foot as a charm against the colic, and the reader will find some rhyming spells quoted in his text. Certainly Pepys was a "curious fellow," and as a human document the Diary is literally unique. For some readers it will have a still greater value for its historical importance. The Restoration period lives in the Diary as in a magic glass; and Pepys was either a spectator of, or a partaker in, many picturesque and strange happenings. He was on the ship which brought the King into his own again from Holland. How the joy of the occasion lives again in all its flashing colours and tumultuous happy noise! He went through the Great Fire and the Great Plague, saw London burning, and saw the grass growing in the streets. His accounts of both are masterpieces of description, and his conduct during the Plague is deserving of comment, particularly as he has got (that is, given himself) a certain reputation for cowardice. While the Court, the great doctors, and most of his business associates fled the city, he stuck to his guns, and, almost single-handed, carried on the business of the Navy office. In a letter to one of his colleagues, Sir William Coventry, he writes: "The sickness in general thickens round us, and particularly upon our neighborhood. You, sir, took your turn of the sword; I must not, therefore, grudge to take mine of the pestilence." He was the heart-broken witness of the Dutch burning English ships in the Medway. He saw the heads of Cromwell and other regicides exposed on pikes at Temple Bar, and in Westminster Hall, and he often saw and talked with the lazy, kind-hearted, sad and merry King, against whose wish that barbarity was committed.

"And did you once see Shelley plain?" Well, I think Pepys did better, for he saw Nell Gwynne, time and again, in her tiring room at the King's Theatre, "dress-

ing herself and all unready," "very pretty, prettier than I thought," and heard her curse—"how Nell cursed"—"for having so few people in the pit"; and the way she did it seemed to poor, infatuated Pepys quite "pretty."

Well, Pepys saw these and a thousand other gallant and gay, heart-aching and tragic things, which he enables us to see again, as I said before, as in a magic glass; for how good a writer, how exceptionally vivid and various, he is has never been sufficiently acknowledged. From this reference to his destroying the manuscript of an early college romance of his "Love a Cheate," one might gather that he had some sneaking literary ambition, but he never published anything except his valuable "Memoirs of the Navy." Robert Louis Stevenson comes nearest to a just appreciation of his literary gift. Stevenson's essay, indeed, is the fairest estimate of him all round that is known to me. I cannot do better than quote this passage on Pepys' style: "It is generally supposed that as a writer Pepys must rank at the bottom of the scale of merit; but a style which is indefatigably lively, telling and picturesque, through six large volumes of every-day experience, which deals with the whole matter of a life and yet is rarely wearisome, which condescends to the most fastidious particulars and yet sweeps all away in the forth-right current of the narrative, such a style may be ungrammatical, it may be inelegant, it may be one tissue of mistakes, but it cannot be devoid of merit." But this leaves more to be said. "Cannot be devoid of merit!" That is, after all, a somewhat lame conclusion, and it is no such negative praise that a style so brimming over with the colour and sound of life demands. For giving us "the thing seen" absolutely as he saw it, and in its own peculiar atmosphere, no professional writer need patronize Samuel Pepys. Read his account of the burning of London, or his gloriously lugubrious account of the death of his brother Tom, with all the death-bed, and funeral horrors and humours. It is quite Shakespearian

in its quality. And not infrequently Pepys attains real beauty of writing, particularly in some of his pictures of trips into the country, filled with country comeliness and mirth, the freshness of fields and lanes and the fragrance of wild flowers; for Pepys' love of beauty was not limited to beauty in women. It is evident that he had a sensitive dreaming eye for beautiful effects in nature too, a sensitiveness not common in his day.

But it is time I left this "curious fellow" to speak for himself, and I will only add that he is not so inadequately represented in the following selections as might be supposed from the fact that the standard edition of the Diary (Mr. H. B. Wheatley's) from which they have been made is in eight volumes and here, therefore, is but an eighth of the whole material. Yet the nature of the Diary is such that nothing characteristic is thereby lost, for in the original there is, of necessity, much repetition of the same, or similar happenings, from day to day. Here the reader has, I believe, all the extraordinary happenings, with sufficient of the ordinary happenings of Pepys' every-day life—not forgetting his almost every-day dalliances—to justify him in feeling that he knows Samuel Pepys and the world he lived in, as thoroughly as though he had read the whole eight volumes—to which, at all events, this volume cannot but prove a seductive invitation.

RICHARD LE GALLIENNE.

PASSAGES FROM THE DIARY
OF SAMUEL PEPYS

Passages from the Diary of

SAMUEL PEPYS

(1660)

BLESSED be God, at the end of the last year I was in very good health, without any sense of my old pain, but upon taking of cold. I lived in Axe Yard, having my wife, and servant Jane, and no more in family than us three. My wife . . . gave me hopes of her being with child, but on the last day of the year . . . [the hope was belied].

The condition of the State was thus; viz. the Rump, after being disturbed by my Lord Lambert, was lately returned to sit again. The officers of the Army all forced to yield. Lawson lies still in the river, and Monk is with his army in Scotland. Only my Lord Lambert is not yet come into the Parliament, nor is it expected that he will without being forced to it. The new Common Council of the City do speak very high; and had sent to Monk their sword-bearer, to acquaint him with their desires for a free and full Parliament, which is at present the desires, and the hopes, and expectation of all. Twenty-two of the old secluded members having been at the House-door the last week to demand entrance, but it was denied them; and it is believed that [neither] they nor the people will be satisfied till the House be filled. My own private condition very handsome, and esteemed rich, but

indeed very poor; besides my goods of my house, and my office, which at present is somewhat uncertain. Mr. Downing master of my office.

Jan. 1st (Lord's day). This morning (we living lately in the garret,) I rose, put on my suit with great skirts, having not lately worn any other clothes but them. Went to Mr. Gunning's chapel at Exeter House, where he made a very good sermon upon these words:—"That in the fulness of time God sent his Son, made of a woman," &c.; showing, that, by "made under the law," is meant his circumcision, which is solemnized this day. Dined at home in the garret, where my wife dressed the remains of a turkey, and in the doing of it she burned her hand. I staid at home all the afternoon, looking over my accounts.

2nd. In the morning before I went forth old East brought me a dozen of bottles of sack, and I gave him a shilling for his pains. Then I went to Mr. Sheply, who was drawing of sack in the wine cellar to send to other places as a gift from my Lord, and told me that my Lord had given him order to give me the dozen of bottles. Thence I went to the Temple to speak with Mr. Calthropp about the £60 due to my Lord, but missed of him, he being abroad.

4th. Early came Mr. Vanly to me for his half-year's rent, which I had not in the house, but took his man to the office and there paid him. Then I went down into the Hall and to Will's, where Hawly brought a piece of his Cheshire cheese, and we were merry with it. Then into the Hall again, where I met with the Clerk and Quarter Master of my Lord's troop, and took them to the Swan and gave them their morning's draft, they being just come to town. I went to Will's again, where I found them still at cards, and Spicer had won 14s. of Shaw and Vines. Then I spent a little time with G. Vines and