

The Sunday Tribune's News and Reviews of Books and Authors

Diary of a Middle Class Man

By Charlotte Dean

SAM BLICK is a middle-aged man. That simple fact is enough to damn him in these days of dangerous ages. In view of the middle-aged men lately presented to a tolerant reading public, various ferments may legitimately be suspected to be at work within Mr. Blick. One middle-aged man after another appears, all blindly, miserably unsuccessfully trying to nose out happiness, and the consequence is that the oblique glance of suspicion falls on the most recent recruit to the ranks of middle-aged heroes.

It looks bad for Mr. Blick, too, that he is unblushingly set forth in a diary. What a chance is here! He can tell, if he cares, his exact reactions to an excruciating, a lady's broad-couch in a violet silk cover, to a glimpse of Natalie's fluffy head silhouetted against a pile of yellow lumps. Sam Blick's Diary is not even his prosaic name can save him. Wasn't Babbitt named Babbitt?

But something did save him—presumably Stephen Noland. Mr. Blick has his troubles, but they are not psycho-pathological. He makes no dark and secret exploration into the recesses of his soul. He is probably abnormal. He makes none of the futuristic excursions into the Fairy Land of the Second Blooming indulged in by the well-balanced, average, middle-aged man of to-day's fiction. He rises to the zenith of ecstasy, and sinks to the nadir of despair, but not on an erotic roller coaster.

Sam Blick is the answer to a question that has bobbed up in at least one reader's mind—must a middle-aged man be a blind groper after beauty in order to enter the literary lists of the year? That answer is a negative. When I read the jacket copy on "Sam Blick's Diary" it seemed that no book dealing with such a person as Mr. Blick had been published since the days of the blurb writer insisted that Diaries nowadays are associated with thoughts of introspection and the subconscious, or sometimes with intimate revelation, and the contemporary great. Could a diary of a middle-aged man live up to such statements of the publisher, as these: "Sam Blick's Diary is as photographically real—and as funny—as a snapshot of a family reunion. Sam isn't trying to be funny; he is trying to be truthful. He is a plain American citizen who records his incidents each day at home and office."

The Kaiser's Alibi

By Will Cuppy

THE KAISER'S MEMOIRS. By Wilhelm II. Emperor of Germany, 1888-1918. Harper & Bros.

WONDER why I am always asked to review the books that look a little off color, somewhat queer and fishy, not quite bright or otherwise beneath the notice of the rest of the literary community, I appointed feeble-minded editor of this paper I should like to know it at once and also the nature and amount of the editorial emoluments appertaining to the position.



A caricature of Max Beerbohm, author of "Rossetti and His Circle"

the royal palaces, restored the White Drawing Room, and arranged for most of them to go to a better world. As a parting kiss to the remainder he gives them in his memoirs detailed advice on how to get themselves killed off. He would have seen to this himself if some one hadn't nipped his plans in the bud. Even in his own time he was surrounded by encirclers and bud-nippers, so that his heart was always bleeding. For whom? I give you three guesses.

Resides love for others, his main interests lay in art, literature, science and religion. He produced "Assurbalpi," a play on the subject of Assyriology, the leading character in which was an archeological excavation. The drama was hissed by encirclers. He honored Homer by going to Ithaca and stepping upon the places mentioned in the "Odyssey."

He was especially fond of chemical research, as he saw in it great possibilities for making his fellow creatures everywhere healthier and more comfortable. His religious views, which he set forth at great length, seem to me to smack slightly of heresy. And it came as a surprise to learn that God had "revealed Himself" to the person of the Kaiser's grandfather, Wilhelm the Great, who explained the main religious message which glows throughout the memoirs—get right with this world.

You see her daily in the London Tube, the Paris Underground, the New York Subway—Lilian, poor, beautiful and alone; fascinating and disturbing.

"Dash it!" you say to yourself, "what business has a girl like that working in an office for her living!" You are right; she has no business in an office. Her talent is to please, and her business is marriage—and a good marriage. But you are afraid to tell her so. Arnold Bennett isn't. His new novel is of and for Lilian. He knows her and he isn't afraid to tell her the truth about this monstrous behavior of hers. And Lilian listens. She listens, and blushes. But something inside her acknowledges that she is listening to the truth.

LILIAN

By Arnold Bennett

Author of "Mr. Prohack," "The Old Wives' Tale," etc.

Woodrow Wilson at Versailles

By William L. McPherson

WOODROW WILSON AND WORLD SETTLEMENT. By Max Baker. 3 Vols. Doubleday, Page & Co.

WHEN Mr. Baker was publishing his book serially in "The New York Times" he gave it a different title: "America and the World Peace." The change to "Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement" is to be commended on the score of greater pertinency and accuracy. Does it also argue a clearing up of the author's original perspective?

"America and the World Peace" was a misnomer for a work dealing, as this does, exclusively with Mr. Wilson's activities at Paris. Mr. Baker tactfully waves aside the broader and more perilous question: What had America—the real America—to do with those activities? Only the peculiarities of our constitutional system allowed Mr. Wilson to go to the peace conference. He was the single major power negotiator there who did not have a parliament at home behind him. He had asked the people of the United States to give him a vote of confidence by re-electing a Democratic House and a Democratic Senate. They balked at doing so. They distrusted his leadership in foreign affairs. They dreaded the idea of allowing him a free rein in the peace negotiations.

Mr. Baker has therefore wisely abandoned the attempt to identify the Wilson policy with what America policy should have been and probably would have been had this country been fairly represented in the peace conference. He presents the Wilson adventure for what it was—a personal failure rather than a national failure.

Have Some Fun, Enjoy the Social Season

Let Your Social Errors Cheer You On

Donald Ogden Stewart, author of that tremendous hit "A Parody Outline of History," has rung the bell again in his new book PERFECT BEHAVIOR. On all sides you are being assailed with advice about your social conduct. If you want to laugh at it all and enjoy the funniest book of the year, read what follows and buy PERFECT BEHAVIOR at once!

ments were not disclosed to him until after he reached Paris. Tinent a most astonishing statement. Mr. Baker admits that Mr. Lansing knew of some of these agreements and that Mr. Balfour talked with Colonel House about others. The names of the major European Allies in 1917 by the Russian Bolshevik government and were published as Mr. Pooley says in his "Japan's Foreign Policies," in Russia, China, the United States and this country (Great Britain). Pooley declares that if the President did not know of them officially he must have known of them unofficially.

This is the conclusion frankly stated by Mr. Walter Lippmann, one of Colonel House's assistants, in the controversy between him and Mr. Baker carried on last spring in "The Nation." He says he believes that Mr. Wilson knew about the Treaty of London at that time (May, 1918) because everybody else did. He holds that Articles VIII and IX of the Fourteen Points and the "Four Big Principles" of the League of Nations on the assumption that their author understood the secret treaties. He, therefore, agrees with Pooley that the President was unofficially cognizant of the secret treaties. It is most disingenuous in his book to remain "officially ignorant of them." Mr. Baker's chapter dealing with the obstacles raised by American "ignorance" of the secret treaties is the most misleading in his book.

Whatever may have been the President's lack of technical preparation, a greater handicap was his moral unpreparedness. He was morally unprepared to negotiate peace because he never understood the war. He struggled to keep out of it. As to the merits of the struggle he was disinterested. He believed it ought to end in a peace without victory, in which the United States should play the rôle of impartial mediator. That was his fundamental policy, and even up to February 1, 1918, he was negotiating with Bernstorff to promote a diplomatic settlement in which he should figure as the neutral umpire.

Franklin K. Lane wrote of him on February 25, 1917, after American participation in the war was unescapable: "I don't know whether the President is an internationalist or a pacifist; he seems to be mildly national—his patriotism is covered over with a film of philosophic humanitarianism that certainly doesn't make for 'punch' at such a time as this. Through 1917 and 1918 this attitude persisted. The President went to Paris with the idea that it was his mission to curb the wild claims of the major European Allies and to secure a 'peace without victory' as far as possible."

Miss Atkina's Plays

ZOE AKINA is to have a book of plays published this season by Boni & Liveright. Two of the three plays in the volume—"Declasse," in which Barrymore appeared, and "Daddy Rambeau," with Marjorie Bonham, known. The third play, "The Nightingale," is to be presented this month with Johanna Howard leading the cast. This play has been tried out in Chicago under the title "Greatest." It is a comedy dealing with what is known as the artistic temperament. It wastes effort—wasted, certainly, so far as his own country is concerned. They are a valuable contribution to history, however, in the way of illustrating to light data which should have been made public property long ago and which are now released as a matter of private enterprise.

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