

## SBG's ARTICLES IN 'GOOD WORDS'

In addition to the SBG book titles that were published by Isbister & Co. ('A Study of St. Paul' 1897; 'Perpetua' - originally serialised in 12 parts in *The Sunday Magazine* 1897; and 'In a Quiet Village', 1900), at least 4 articles are to be found in *Good Words* in the 1890s, under the editorship of the Very Revd. Donald Macleod, 'one of Her Majesty's Chaplains'.

The 1895 volume contains 'Death on the Stage', a 3<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> page unillustrated piece recounting the occasions in the previous 200 years when actors had actually expired on stage, or collapsed and died shortly afterwards. Several instances occurred in conjunction with appropriate - usually Shakespearian - death dialogue. Some near fatal accidents are recorded also in suitably entertaining style.

The contribution to the 1896 volume is entitled 'An Old Maid's Letters'. A dozen letters, mostly written in the year 1809 by one Jane Davies to SBG's great uncle Edward Sabine (later KCB and President of the Royal Society), and presented here with interwoven commentary, cover 13<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> pages in 3 parts and include 5 photographs (including two of Edward and one of his father, the first Governor of Gibraltar). There are fascinating references not only to the retreat from Corunna and the ill-fated Walcheren expedition, but also to the postal services of the times, and the inscribing of envelope covers by noblemen or MPs as a 'frank' or freepost. A modern sounding note is struck by the comment that "tea is not always to be had upon the road, or if procurable is not often good", and SBG's own observation upon youth: "Young men nowadays have hardly this habit of being gracious to and maintaining lasting association with old ladies; perhaps this is why so few of them have that courtesy of manner and kindly deference towards their elders that marked those of the old school, to which their grandfathers belonged". Arcane medical customs and the administration of the bolus, drenches, castor oil, leeches and Gregory's powder are graphically described.

The 1897 material is rather more antiquarian. 'On Sideboards' is a 3<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> page article illustrated by Arthur Twidle documenting the style and usage of the display table or court cupboard from Roman to Stuart times and its 'ancestry' in the common kitchen dresser. 'The Early Christian House at Rome' is described in detail over 7<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> pages in two parts, and is illustrated by the previous artist together with 'M. Baring-Gould' (SBG's second daughter Margaret, later Mrs. 'Daisy' Rowe). Sabine himself conducted parties round this house at the time of the excavations in 1889/90, when the graffiti of a previous era of visitors was revealed.