

The Year of '95.

We are most indebted to Cedric Baring-Gould for providing the main item in this newsletter by Irene Widdicombe under the title 'Uncle Sabine', complementing the pieces she wrote which appeared in nos.6 & 7 before she died. This really settles the question of the third volume of Sabine's Reminiscences - although the term 'suppressed' still leaves open the possibility of discovery!

For the moment however we are entering the realm of these centenary reviews where there is no formal autobiographical material to draw upon.

It was an active and varied year in the literary field. There was one novel: Noemi, a Story of Rock-dwellers, illustrated by R. Caton Woodville, who made his name as a war artist in the Illustrated London News. It is a story of the rivalries between the English and French factions, and between the peasants and the 'Free Companies', in the Dordogne area at the end of the Hundred Years' War. It is quite a racy read, of derring-do by the eponymous heroine, and vivid descriptions of burning out rock castle (ch.X), an execution (ch.XI), and an oubliette (ch.XVI). Here is another gift for television along the lines of the recent 'Robin Hood'.

The year also saw the publication of four 'collections': Old English Fairy Tales, A Book of Nursery Songs & Rhymes, A Garland of Country Song, and English Minstrelsie -published by T.C. & E.C. Jack in eight volumes, concluding in 1897. This work was subtitled 'A National Monument of English Song', "collated and edited, with notes and historical introductions" by SBG with "the airs, in both notations, arranged by H. Fleetwood Sheppard, F.W. Bussell & W.H.Hopkinson" and "dedicated by gracious permission to Her Majesty the Queen". Odd numbered volumes have SBG's essays, with numerous illustrations including some of his own sketches, while each volume has between 6 and 17 pages of notes on the songs, and from 112 to 128 pages of music; each volume has two sepia portraits of contemporary singers, and volume 1 has a striking portrait of SBG as a frontispiece. The final volume has a chronology of the airs as well as a general index of the songs and illustrations. Altogether a fine piece of work. In addition he managed to find the time to produce one pamphlet, one report, and ten articles on cultural, architectural, literary, archaeological and ecclesiastical matters!

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