

THE YEAR OF 1893

The year which began with the marriage of his daughter Mary to Harvey Dickinson (11 Jan) is passed over in silence in *Further Reminiscences*. But it was not without its literary ventures. April saw the publication in 3 volumes of *Mrs. Curgenven of Curgenven* which had first appeared the previous year in *The Cornhill Magazine*. Methuen reprinted it in July and reissued it in one volume in November. Hailed by the contemporary press as 'a novel of vigorous humour and sustained power', in my view it deserved its early popularity.

Set in the country around Liskeard, it tells the story of two ladies who are rivals for the eponymous title. The first is the daughter of the Revd. James Pamphlet, whose chief concern was his own ecclesiastical advancement - and to her "social standing was all -in- all". The second, we are led to believe, had the prior claim to the title, though she was of humbler origins. The style of the book is reminiscent of Jane Austen, though the characters are more diverse, more interesting, and despite the heavy irony, more believable. There is also more plot, and more action than the typical comedy of manners, and some graphic depictions of Dartmoor. It is a thoroughly good read, and would make an excellent television drama, with Diana Rigg as the first Mrs. C. and Stephen Fry as the sly solicitor, Mr. Physic.

Cheap Jack Zita was another popular novel, this time set in the fens of East Anglia (see Raymond Scott's article IX/2f).

A continuation of SBG's article on Trewartha appeared in J.R.LC, vol. II p.289f and the following issue.

If anyone has a copy of *The Two Brents* (SPCK Penny Library of Fiction) they have a rare item, which it would be good to reissue one day as a special edition of the Newsletter.

Freaks of Fanaticism & Other Strange Events was the new title given to *Historical Oddities & Strange Events* (2nd series) which had first appeared in 1891. Whereas the first series deals with "eccentric individuals and extraordinary events ... which would be out of place in a general history", the second contains accounts of religious, racial and political fanaticism, most of them of European rather than British provenance.

The remaining items published in 1893 were *A Hymn for Children* found in *Church Monthly* vol. 6; and three articles in *Good Words* for that year, recently come to light - The Cheshire Salt Region (p.59-63), *Cider Making* (p.318-324), and The First Artists Of Europe (p.600-610).