

***The Diary of Iris Vaughan*, edited by Peter F. Alexander and Peter Midgley. Sydney: Juvenilia Press, 2004. xxxii + 139. ISBN 0-7334-2155-5. AUD10.00 (paper).**

In October 1897 in Maraisburg, Eastern Cape, Iris Vaughan, then aged seven, began her diary:

Today is my birthday. I am going to write a diry a diray a diery Book. Pop told me I could. [. . .] Every one should have a diery. Becos life is too hard with the things one must say to be perlite and the things one must not say to lie. This is something I can never get right. (1)

Iris, who was to become a journalist and something of a historical novelist, continued her diary until 1903 (though there are some entries that refer to events in 1904 and 1905). In it she provides a child's eye account of life in a colonial administrator's family where social niceties and truthfulness were essential but often conflicting principles at a time when the management of empire was particularly fraught.

Vaughan's father, born in Wales in 1852, served in the native police in Australia from 1871 to 1877, when he moved to Cape Province. After serving with the army during the Zulu War, Vaughan was appointed to the Cape Customs Department and then in 1880 to the Cape judicial service, where he was promoted to Assistant Magistrate (1887) and ultimately Resident Magistrate in 1906. During these years, he was transferred from one posting to another, often in a temporary capacity while a more senior colleague was on leave, slowly moving from smaller to larger towns as his seniority advanced. This is a life that would be familiar to many Australian and New Zealand *AVSJ* readers whose fathers served as school teachers, police officers or magistrates from the 1940s to the 1970s.

The remarkable feature of *The Diary of Iris Vaughan* is that we have this life through the experiences of an astute, precocious child. That Iris was precocious is very clear not only from the exploits she describes, but from the language and style of the writing itself and from the ideas with which she struggled:

I found a pictur of the devil in a book in the libery. He has horns and a pointed tail like dragon flames coming out of his mouth and a long fork. Mr. Damp [Mr. Campion, the local parson] says God sees all you do. [. . .] I said God must be very busy watching all in the whole world like how does He do it. I would never like to be Him. Mr. Damp [Mr. Campion] says we all impossible. We told Coot about the devil and his fork and fire and how he poked you in it and about absalom hanging up by his hair on a tree and we

showed her the pictures of the child's bible Pop bought us and she got a night mare [. . .] Why mare. (75-76)

This precociousness results in a fascinating kind of double vision, where the experiences that loom large in the life of the child and therefore tell us about the child, also give us insight into the social, cultural and political history of the times. When the family arrives in Maraisburg (1898), for example, she notices:

There are no lamps in the street like in Cradock, so everywhere is dark. There is one glass lamp on a pole outside the Hotel with Hotel written on it. It is not a nice hotel. It is worse than at Pearston. The floors are of mud. Every week the floors are smered with mis which is cowdung made soft like mud with water. It has a nasty smell. There is a room where men are sitting and laughing loudly and spitting into white basens on the floor. We got out of the carts and came inside. In the dining room are 3 tables and a big clock. At one table a man was eating and doing much belching and never excuse me please. (9)

We learn a great deal of the social history of provincial South Africa from these sorts of observations, not just in relation to physical conditions (the coming of gas lighting to Adelaide in 1902 provides a fine example of Iris's version of this event), but also in relation to the kinds of stratification that typified life both in the small towns and between the towns and the outlying rural areas. These include the obvious stratifications based on race and class, but also include those between colonial administrators, shopkeepers and farmers, where appropriate behaviour was a mark of social status. Much of this emerges from little vignettes recounted through the "distance" of a child's sense of amusement.

The *Diary* also gives us insights into the cultural history of provincial South Africa. Iris's schooling, her reading habits, the importance of the piano in the family home, the references to popular songs, the games played by the children, the entertainments and the description of municipal celebrations, for example, allow us to piece together a rich picture of private and public culture at the time. By contrast – and as one would expect – political history is present only tangentially, but its presence is felt throughout. For example, references to the Boer War (1899-1902) occur frequently over the first seventy-odd pages. These tend to focus on specific local events (such as the capture of Iris's father for a short time at the outbreak of hostilities) or on occasions involving individual soldiers or local garrisons. Sometimes, though, we get a glimpse of the reality behind the appearances:

The other night we heard shots. We thought it was a battle. It was only one of the sentries thought he heard something. But it was dark and he did not look well. Pop said today that what he did not see was a man called Smuts and his 59 Boers going over the dam wall to Cradock. Pop says it is all this silly pass friend and sentry go business taking up so much time. Boers don't have that and they never get caught. They always see the columns miles away and then come after and pick up all the bullets and guns and tired horses the columns leave behind. What a disgrace Pop says. I think so too. (31)

Views such as these must have been quite common on the ground, even if they weren't palatable to the Imperial high command.

The text itself, then, is both charming and informative. It is made more so by an excellent Introduction and useful footnotes, for which the editors have consulted widely in archives in South Africa and the UK. The Introduction offers a brief but comprehensive life of Iris Vaughan based on the limited details available, sets that life as a coherent chronology of events, and convincingly argues for the authenticity of the text. The original hand written text was presumably destroyed by Iris Vaughan, and there has been some speculation that she might have altered it for publication in the 1950s. The *Diary* was first published in volume form by the CNA (a large South African bookseller) in 1958, following the successful publication of large excerpts in *Outspan* in 1955 and 1956. There are differences between these two versions, and as the editors point out, in the absence of the manuscript, this makes the choice of copy-text problematical. They have chosen what seems to be the most sensible option, which is to use the CNA edition augmented by correct names taken from the earlier *Outspan* excerpts. The footnotes, too, are a great help, especially in relation to popular songs and poems of the time, local geography and flora and fauna, Afrikaan terms and sayings, and details of historical events. They also include some fine detective work identifying buildings and landmarks no longer in existence. Although the Table of Contents refers to a map of the Eastern Cape on page xxxii, this is missing from the text, something that should be corrected in later editions. The text reproduces the John H. Jackson's illustrations from the *Outspan* excerpts.

This edition of *The Diary of Iris Vaughan* has been published by the Juvenilia Press, founded in 1994 by Juliet McMaster at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, and now under the general editorship of Christine Alexander at the University of New South Wales. The Press promotes the study of literary juvenilia and publishes the writings of children and adolescents (up to the approximate age of twenty). Apart from its function as a publisher of literary juvenilia, the Press also has a pedagogic function insofar as it offers valuable opportunities for graduate students to work with experts in recovering and preparing texts for publication. *The*

Diary of Iris Vaughan sits nicely with the thirty-odd other volumes already published in this splendid enterprise.

Jock Macleod

***An Edwardian's View of Dickens & His Illustrators: Harry Furniss's "A Sketch of Boz,"* by Gareth Cordery. U of North Carolina at Greensboro: ELT Press, 2005. 1880-1920 British Authors Series 20. xii + 116. ISBN 0-944318-20-7. \$40.**

Whatever other qualities he may have lacked (modesty and a regard for the sensitivities of other people spring most readily to mind), Harry Furniss could never be indicted for want of energy. One of the most talented and prolific black-and-white artists of late Victorian and Edwardian Britain, he drew regularly (but never exclusively) for *Punch* from 1880 to 1894, edited his own comic magazine, *Lika Joko*, for a few months in 1895, and even-handedly illustrated complete editions of both Dickens and Thackeray. He was, besides, an indefatigable traveller, a copious writer, a tireless public lecturer and a pioneer of cinema (working for Edison in New York in 1912-13 and later producing a still extant short film of himself drawing jingoistic cartoons). If there was a club to be joined, he joined it, and his portly figure was regularly on view at the Gaiety, the Beefsteak, the Savage and the Garrick, where he unflinchingly regaled rapt fellow-members with that torrent of anecdote and reminiscence with which he deluged the wider public in his voluminous autobiographical writings (all handsomely embellished with drawings by, and very frequently of, the author).

Unfortunately, the energy which translated itself into a vibrantly bravura draughtsmanship in Furniss's best caricatures – Gladstone's collars rising up to engulf his craggy features; Harcourt's pendulous jowls deliquescing like candle-wax – too often became bumptiousness in his literary effusions, and his lecture on Dickens's illustrators, premiered in 1905 but published here for the first time, is shot through with an unstinting enthusiasm for himself and a decided lack of it for most of his fellow-practitioners. Cruikshank, to be sure, was "a great artist," but that encomium has to be qualified because he was also "a vain old humbug" and "a very immoral man." Robert Buss's *Pickwick* plates were a "fiasco" and the trouble with "Phiz" was that, despite exhibiting a characteristically British capacity for hard work, he "came of a French family" and consequently depicted most of Dickens's characters with foreign faces and gestures. Cattermole was good on architecture but got Little Nell hopelessly wrong, while the illustrations of James Mahoney and Charles Green were studio-bound and lacked both inspiration and originality. Only Fred Barnard (an acquaintance and colleague) emerges more or less unscathed, but