

From the Grey Papers

IELS KLIM, an incomplete translation from the Danish of Ludvig Holberg, by Thomas De Quincey, edited from the MS by S. Musgrove; **CHARLES ADERS**, a biographical note with some unpublished letters addressed to him by S. T. Coleridge and others, by M. K. Joseph; **UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF THOMAS DE QUINCEY AND ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING**, edited by S. Musgrove. Auckland University College, Bulletins Nos. 42, 43, 44, English series Nos. 5, 6, 7.

(Reviewed by James Bertram)

THESE three modest—but clearly printed and well-produced—bulletins should be of interest on several counts. Literary connections between the old world and the young New Zealand colony in the 19th Century were at one time supposed to begin and end with Alfred Domett and Samuel Butler, with Anthony Trollope as a curious bird of passage. When the name of Charles Armitage Brown was added to the list, it was realised that migrants to New Zealand who were friends or relatives of English writers of importance might have been responsible for bringing to this country material which would understandably escape notice by English literary historians. Some such material may still remain in private hands; thanks to the generosity of a few en-



Courtesy Turnbull Library
SIR GEORGE GREY

lightened early collectors—among whom Sir George Grey and Alexander Turnbull were outstanding—some of it is now to be found in New Zealand libraries.

From the rich and varied Grey Papers in the Auckland Public Library, two

senior members of the English Department of Auckland University College have assembled the unpublished material contained in these bulletins, and edited it with scholarly care and thoroughness. Though the provenance of most of Grey's bequest remains in doubt, Professor Musgrove considers it "inherently probable" that the De Quincey papers came into the hands of Sir George through Colonel Paul Frederick De Quincey, son of the essayist, who came to New Zealand with his regiment in 1861 and later settled here. The letters of Elizabeth Barrett were written to her friend Mrs. Martin, who was Sir George Grey's aunt.

Niels Klim is the first part of a free adaptation of a mild Danish satire in the manner of Swift's *Gulliver*, which De Quincey seems to have begun, possibly for the *Foreign Quarterly Review*, some time in the 1820's. This version is very readable, and some of the variants, with Professor Musgrove's notes, undoubtedly throw light on De Quincey's methods of translation and composition. The letters to Charles Aders (from Coleridge, Wordsworth, Lamb and the painter Francis Danby) are all of some literary or topical interest; and Mr. Joseph has put together—largely from the invaluable diaries of Crabb Robinson—a very interesting running record of this German merchant and his lively wife Eliza, who were equally notable patrons of art and of literature, and whose hospitable establishments in Euston Square and on

the Rhine formed a useful bridge between German and English romanticism. The De Quincey letters, five of which were written from Grasmere in 1811, help to fill a gap in his life, and are remarkable for the keen interest they show in military developments in the Spanish war. Finally, Mrs. Browning's letters—the most interesting of which is from Rome—are highly characteristic: they quote a family opinion of *Aurora Leigh* as being "worse than Don Juan," and further testify to the writer's admiration of Louis Napoleon.

Nothing in these bulletins will cause any literary sensation; but scholars throughout the English-speaking world will be grateful for the details they supply, and Auckland University College is to be congratulated on the continuation of a valuable series of research monographs, and on the notably high standard of editorial competence shown in this English Series.

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