

THE MONRAD COLLECTION

Wellington, 8th January, 1869.

SIR,—I have the pleasure to offer to the Colonial Museum a small collection of Etchings and Engravings, hoping it will be accepted and taken good care of.

Your obedient servant,
D. G. Monrad.

Colonial Secretary's Office,
Wellington, 8th January, 1869.

My Lord,—I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Lordship's letter of this day, in which you offer to the Colonial Museum a collection of Etchings and Engravings, a list of which you enclose.

I have to express, on behalf of the New Zealand Government, the high sense which it entertains of the value of this handsome donation, and of the generous motives which have prompted your Lordship in making it...

Directions will be given to exhibit and take every care of this valuable collection, which will ever form a lasting memorial of the visit to this Colony of your Lordship, who recently held such a distinguished official position in the service of your

Country, with which Great Britain is intimately allied.

Trusting that your Lordship may have a pleasant voyage to England,

I have, etc.,

E. W. Stafford.

SO, in January, 1869, Bishop Ditley Gothard Monrad, his collection disposed of, his affairs in order, his books, plate, and other valuables prudently buried on his estate near Palmerston North against the threatened southward advance of Titokowaru, set sail for Denmark. He had lived in New Zealand a little over three years, time enough to learn that the warm welcome he had received from Sir George Grey was not merely a gesture, and that the hospitality of the ordinary settlers with whom he had mixed was also warm and genuine. This sort of welcome touched the heart of the man who had thought it best to leave his own country because of his unpopularity, and he responded by giving the New Zealand Government his "small" collection of about six hundred engravings and etchings, enclosed in two volumes.

MONRAD was a large-minded man, well used to making the most of apparent misfortune. He was born in Copenhagen in 1811, generously endowed mentally and physically, but in rather meagre material circumstances. When he showed unmistakable signs of his ability, neighbours and friends of his family gave what they could to help him with his education. As he grew older he specialised in philosophy and the Oriental languages. He was the sort of single-minded scholar who reads the Old Testament in the original, and considers normal a working day of sixteen to eighteen hours. At this period of his career, purely for amusement, he translated *The Arabian Nights* into Danish.

From 1820 to 1850 was a stimulating time for young European intellectuals. All over the Continent revolutions were exploding like hidden time bombs, starting fires under stubborn absolute monarchs, who moaned and struggled to their feet, either to fight or fly. By modern standards these revolutionaries did not want very much, and there was a gentlemanly politeness about their methods that reassured, after a time, quaking, gingerbread chancellors like Metternich. Thus in 1839, when King Frederik VI of Denmark died, Monrad attended a meeting held to discuss the propriety of asking the new king for a constitution. A constitution was not granted, and Monrad turned his energies to writing and campaigning for the liberal movement.

The One in a Million

WHEN Christian VIII died in that memorable year 1848, his successor, Frederik VII, granted Denmark a constitution. Monrad joined the new ministry and was given the portfolios of church and schools, on the strength of his prominent association with the folk high school movement. He was elected a member of the Riksdag, the Danish Parliamentary Assembly, and created Bishop of Laaland and Falster.

The Premier resigned at the end of 1863, when he failed to resolve the dispute with Prussia over Schleswig-Holstein. Monrad formed a government, in which he was described as the figure 1 in the million—the six other Cabinet members being ciphers. In his own country he was a big man, but in the field of international *realpolitik* he did not measure up to Bismarck's size, nor did the Danish army approach the deadly efficiency of the Prussian. The Duchies were lost, and in June, 1864, Monrad resigned after popular demonstrations were staged outside his house. The next year, with his wife, two sons,

a daughter, a daughter-in-law, five young Danes and a Norwegian servant girl, he landed in New Zealand, then a colony far removed from violence in Europe.

Bush-Whacking

LORD RUSSELL, the British Prime Minister, had given him a letter to Sir George Grey, who received him sympathetically. With his family and possessions he went by canoe up the Manawatu River and took land at Karere, six miles south of the site of Palmerston North. He is reported to have settled happily into these alien surroundings, helping to clear the bush and build a homestead, taking Sunday services, and joining in what community life there was.

His former position and his naturally strong personality made his home the centre for Scandinavians in New Zealand. Sometimes he was slightly embarrassed by his countrymen. A nephew of Count Friis, Monrad's successor as Danish Prime Minister, was exiled to New Zealand for attempting to elope with the mistress of Frederik VII. By using Monrad's name he gained the ear of several New Zealand politicians with a scheme for Danish settlement in the Colony, but the public outcry against setting aside a large tract of land for this purpose was so great that Monrad had to make a statement disclaiming any connection with the scheme.

Monrad's own piece of land seemed likely to be overwhelmed by the Maori War, and after three years of slogging in the bush, the prospect of a little unpopularity in Denmark no doubt took on a rather different complexion. But although he went back to Denmark with his wife and part of his family, his son Johannes stayed in New Zealand and

(continued on next page)



"Virgin on a Crescent" (etching) by Albrecht Durer



"DR. FAUSTUS'S VISION," an etching by Rembrandt