KEATS. ENGLISH MEN OF LETTERS

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Keats

by

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"LIFE OF WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR" ETC.

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PREFACE.

With the name of Keats that of his first biographer, the late Lord Houghton, must always justly remain associated. But while the sympathetic charm of Lord Houghton's work will keep it fresh, as a record of the poet's life it can no longer be said to be sufficient. Since the revised edition of the *Life and Letters* appeared in 1867, other students and lovers of Keats have been busy, and much new information concerning him been brought to light, while of the old information some has been proved mistaken. No connected account of Keats's life and work, in accordance with the present state of knowledge, exists, and I have been asked to contribute such an account to the present series. I regret that lack of strength and leisure has so long delayed the execution of the task entrusted to me. The chief authorities and printed texts which I have consulted (besides the original editions of the Poems) are the following:

1. Lord Byron and some of his Contemporaries. By Leigh Hunt. London, 1828.
2. The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley. By Thomas Medwin. 2 vols., London, 1847.
3. Life, Letters, and Literary Remains of John Keats. Edited by Richard Monckton Milnes. 2 vols., London, 1848.
4. Life of Benjamin Robert Haydon. Edited and compiled by Tom Taylor. Second Edition. 3 vols., London, 1853.
5. The Autobiography of Leigh Hunt, with Reminiscences of Friends and Contemporaries. 3 vols., London, 1850.
6. The Poetical Works of John Keats. With a Memoir by Richard Monckton Milnes. London, 1854.
7. The Autobiography of Leigh Hunt. [Revised edition, edited by Thornton Hunt.] London, 1860.
8. The Vicissitudes of Keats's Fame: an article by Joseph Severn in the *Atlantic Monthly Magazine* for 1863 (vol. xi., p. 401).
9. The Life and Letters of John Keats. By Lord Houghton. New Edition, London, 1867.
10. Recollections of John Keats: an article by Charles Cowden Clarke in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1874 (N.S., vol. xii., p. 177). Afterwards reprinted with modifications in Recollections of Writers, by Charles and Mary Cowden Clarke. London, 1878.

11. The Papers of a Critic. Selected from the writings of the late Charles Wentworth Dilke. With a biographical notice by Sir Charles Wentworth Dilke, Bart., M.P. 2 vols., London, 1875.

12. Benjamin Robert Haydon: Correspondence and Table-Talk. With a Memoir by Frederic Wordsworth Haydon. 2 vols., London, 1876.

13. The Poetical Works of John Keats, chronologically arranged and edited, with a memoir, by Lord Houghton [Aldine edition of the British Poets]. London, 1876.

14. Letters of John Keats to Fanny Brawne, with Introduction and Notes by Harry Buxton Forman. London, 1878.

A biographer cannot ignore these letters now that they are published; but their publication must be regretted by all who hold that human respect and delicacy are due to the dead no less than to the living, and to genius no less that to obscurity.

15. The Poetical Works and other Writings of John Keats. Edited, with notes and appendices, by Harry Buxton Forman. 4 vols., London, 1883.

In this edition, besides the texts reprinted from the first editions, all the genuine letters and additional poems published in 3, 6, 9, 13, and 14 of the above are brought together, as well as most of the biographical notices contained in 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 10, and 12; also a series of previously unpublished letters of Keats to his sister; with a great amount of valuable illustrative and critical material besides. Except for a few errors, which I shall have occasion to point out, Mr. Forman's work might for the purpose of the student be final, and I have necessarily been indebted to it at every turn.

16. The Letters and Poems of John Keats. Edited by John Gilmer Speed. 3 vols., New York, 1883.

17. The Poetical Works of John Keats. Edited by William T. Arnold. London, 1884.

The Introduction to this edition contains the only attempt with which I am acquainted at an analysis of the formal elements of Keats's style.

18. An Æsculapian Poet — John Keats: an article by Dr. B. W. Richardson in the *Asclepiad* for 1884 (vol. i., p. 134).

19. Notices and correspondence concerning Keats which have appeared at intervals during a number of years in the *Athenæum*.

In addition to printed materials I have made use of the following unprinted, viz.:

I. Houghton MSS. Under this title I refer to the contents of an album from the library at Fryston Hall, in which the late Lord Houghton bound up a quantity of the materials he had used in the preparation of the *Life and Letters*, as well as of correspondence concerning Keats addressed to him both before and after the publication of his book. The chief contents are the manuscript memoir of Keats by Charles Brown, which was offered by the writer in vain to *Galignani*, and I believe other publishers; transcripts by the same hand of a few of Keats's poems; reminiscences or brief memoirs of the