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***George MacDonald—A Bibliographical Study*, by Raphael B. Shaberman, Winchester: St Paul's Bibliographies, 1990.**

**Rachel Johnson**

**T**o embark upon the compilation of a bibliography of George MacDonald does indeed require “a substantial element of Nesbitian treasure-seeking,” as the author states in his introduction. He is the first to attempt comprehensive coverage since Malcolm Bulloch in 1925. Bulloch put his together in six months; Shaberman has gleaned the material for his over a great many years and has unearthed much obscure bibliographical treasure of the sort one rarely finds if consciously seeking.

In 1984 Mary Nance Jordan produced her bibliography, consisting of Bulloch plus the holdings of Wheaton College and Yale University. **[end of page 25]** Though a useful tool, it does not contain commentary or cover secondary literature relevant to MacDonald studies.

Shaberman's study—although at sixty five pounds somewhat expensive—is a well-produced volume, and includes illustrations of particular interest either because of rarity or, as in the case of Arthur Hughes, due to the long-standing association of the artist with the author.

The study is divided into six parts, the main body of the work being contained in Pt II: Works by George MacDonald.

After a chronology of MacDonald's life (p. xiv), Pt I consists of a classified handlist of first editions. This is a brief listing arranged under eight subject headings ranging from Poetry, through Novels, Books for Children, Sermons, Translations, Essays and Criticism, to Collected Works, and ending with two items only in Miscellaneous. This section is not only useful for gaining an overview of proportion in the diversity of work produced, but also as an entry into Pt II for those less familiar with dates of production. Reference to the classified handlist gives easy access to the full details contained in Pt. II, arranged in chronological order.

The author notes that his guiding principle was “to present the pattern of MacDonald's creative evolution” (Intro. p. xii). This arrangement also shows clearly the interval, sometimes considerable, between serialisation in a periodical (1st publication) and the subsequent publication in book form.

Under the year of first publication in book form, full details of all known editions are given, together with any significant publication history, and note of review material of particular interest. The latter is assessed either by the standing of the reviewer (eg. Ruskin), or by the subsequent history of the book itself. The author has also included information on people and events that made [26] a lasting impact on the life of the MacDonald family.

Where fuller details of any particular item are more appropriately placed somewhere other than at their first appearance, adequate cross-references are given: see, for example, the bibliographical history of stories included in *Adela Cathcart*.

The study includes a clear index referring the user to items by number rather than the less specific page number, and providing quick access to the information sought.

Whilst the author has made the decision to provide details up to the year 1974 for work by and about MacDonald, he has listed translations to the year 1987. The majority of translations appear after 1976, thus bearing out the growth of international interest in MacDonald.

Shaberman concludes by appending several letters and articles, the last two of these being articles by MacDonald not found outside their respective periodicals, though elements of their contents can be found interwoven in his novels. These appendices add a substantial interest for the student of MacDonald.

Though there are omissions, this is implicit in the compilation of any bibliography dealing with a period of literature when databases providing access to information were a thing of the future.

The element of treasure-seeking remains, the result of which has been the production of a personal study to facilitate further understanding and appreciation of George MacDonald in the context of a comprehensive if not definitive list of his work. [27]