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The George MacDonald Society

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Together with the Church House and Lion Publishing, the Society recently held its most successful meeting so far. The Archbishop of York, Stuart Blanch, gave an interesting and amusing talk on his personal debt to George MacDonal. We will be producing the talk for our next newsletter. As the Archbishop began, a group of people walked past the closed door talking, making just enough noise to disturb the audience. A lady, sitting near the door, walked quickly out shh-ing to the offenders. She saw, a little too late however, that the Archbishop of Canterbury was leading the group. Following the Archbishop’s talk, Stephen Prickett of Sussex University read an informed and scholarly paper on MacDonald’s visionary works. The final event of the evening was a programme on extracts from a musical version of *The Princess and The Goblin* which was enjoyed by everyone. The energetic performances of the players and tuneful songs rounded off the evening. Those who attended will, I’m sure, wish to pass on their thanks to all those concerned for a most pleasant occasion.

On other fronts, our first journal is taking shape. The contents have been chosen and prepared. The committee is now studying the possibility of selling advertising space to various publishers in other organizations to offset the cost of publication.

In this issue of the newsletter is our “Wants List” for the King’s College Library collection. The accompanying article written by Mrs Freda Sevson explains the MacDonald family’s long ties with King’s College. The committee realize how precious books by George MacDonald are and how difficult it is to find them, we would like to stress that any edition of the books mentioned will be gratefully received. If a member hears of a copy for sale, please let a member of the committee know!

GEORGE MACDONALD BOOKS NEEDED FOR KING’S

1857 Poems

1858 *Phantastes*

1864 *The Portent*

1867 *The Disciple & other Poems*

   *Dealings with Fairies*

1870 *The Miracles of Our Lord*
1871 Works of Fancy and Imagination (collection of poems, fairy tales, Phantastes &c. in 10 small green or blue volumes)

1875 The Wise Woman (or reissue as The Lost Princess)

1876 Exotics

188? Orts (1895 enlarged edition A Dish of Orts)

1883 A Threefold Chord

1885 The Tragedie of Hamlet

1886 Cross Purposes and the Shadows (from Dealings)

1890 The Light Princess and other Stories

1892 A Cabinet of Gems (Sir Philip Sydney)
    The Hope of the Gospel

1893 Heather and Snow
    Scotch Songs and Ballads

1887 Rampoli: Growths from a long planted root (including The Dairy of an Old Soul)
    The Portent and other Stories

1904 The Fairy Tales of George MacDonald (in 5 yellow volumes)

1906 George MacDonald Joseph Johnson

1924 George MacDonald and his Wife Greville MacDonald

[Dates given are those of first publication, but any edition welcome and single volumes of a set as others may turn up]

GEORGE MACDONALD AND KING’S

The George MacDonald Society is delighted that, through the willing cooperation of Mr Ian Angus, King’s College Library has accepted a George MacDonald Collection of books and of papers (such as we can assemble here – most seem already to have gone to American libraries) to form in London a nucleus for GMD studies.

In America there are already considerable collections, particularly of letters in the Beneicke Library at Yale and of books in the Marian Wade collection at Wheaton College, near Chicago. In the UK there are collections in Aberdeen, in the Brander library in Huntly and, for the time being, at The Farm, (now called Green Kirtle) in the care of Mrs Morag Black who welcomes students.
However, George MacDonald spent his adult life in the south and it seems proper that there should be a study centre for the convenience of students in London. Though we have now about 45 volumes to give to the library, there are still a number of books – some of the rarer – we have yet got and we shall include lists in the Newsletters and hope that members may help us acquire those we still need.

The greater part of the books we have belonged to members of the Troup family in Huntly, to whom The Farm collection also belongs. The others have come from the library of the late Miss Muriel Hutton, who, as many members will know, was a dedicated student of the work of George MacDonald. Alas, we shall not be able to benefit from her enormous store of detailed knowledge, but I am sure she would have been glad to know where many of her books have come.

It is particularly appropriate that this collection should come to King’s in view of the long connection of the MacDonald and the closely-related Troup families with the College.

Greville MacDonald (In George MacDonald and His Wife) wrote: “I think it was in 1865 that my father became a lecturer in the evening classes at King’s College, London. That noble institution . . . But in 1866 [he] got into hot water - or rather had a good deal splashed over him, quite tepid – for preaching in a conventicle. Prof. E.H. Plumptre, afterwards Dean of Wells and one of his truest friends, was scandalized as he had actually seen him a communicant at Vere Street. The Principal, Dr. Jelf, appears to have understood the position and honoured the latitudinarian for his candid explanation; at any rate he was content if the lecturer on English Literature undertook that in any public announcements of his engagements to preach he should refrain from mentioning his connection with King’s College. This was easily conceded, as my father would never countenance any advertising of such occasions. So Dr. Jelf did not turn my father out as in 1856 he has ousted Professor Maurice.”

Greville himself, with a good singing voice and perfect pitch, became a chorister and received his (rather unhappy) schooling at King’s, accommodated, he records, with some 500 other boys in the basement of Somerset House, before becoming a medical student at King’s College Hospital, a distinguished ENT consultant and, on retirement, Professor Emeritus. He also funded the King’s College Magazine.

His younger brother, Mackay, and their cousin (your secretary’s father), James MacDonald Troup, both had their medical training at King’s College Hospital. Her uncle, Sir C.Edward Troup (Permanent Under-Secretary of State at the Home Office) was Treasurer of King’s and his brother F.W. Troup, was consultant architect at the College and responsible for the 1931 Pavilion at Mitcham. Furthermore, your acting hon. Secretary and her sister in their youth spent many an evening hour, while being read aloud to, with a daughter of George MacDonald hemming red flannel bedjackets for the inmates of KCH. So you will understand that it is gratifying that the connection is to be maintained – and how pleased those of earlier generations would have been!