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THE ARMSTRONG BROWNING LIBRARY’S GEORGE MACDONALD COLLECTION

Cynthia Burgess

The Armstrong Browning Library (ABL) of Baylor University is a nineteenth-century research center committed to a focus on the British-born poets Robert Browning (1812-89) and Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806-61). Because of the Brownings’ stature in the literary world of nineteenth-century Britain and America, they became acquainted with most of the famous writers of their era and developed personal friendships with many. Alfred Tennyson, Matthew Arnold, Thomas Carlyle, John Ruskin, Charles Dickens, Joseph Milsand, Isa Blagden, James Russell Lowell, and Harriet Beecher Stowe were only a few of their intimate friends and correspondents. Over the years, the ABL has broadened its collecting focus to include these and other associated nineteenth-century writers, including George MacDonald, as well as resources that reflect broader aspects of nineteenth-century literature and culture.

The founding of the ABL can be attributed to the vision and dedication of Dr. A. J. Armstrong (1873-1954), head of the Baylor University English Department for forty years (1912-52). Armstrong became interested in Robert Browning early in his career, admiring the optimism and spiritual values found in the work of the poet. During a trip to Europe in 1909 he visited Robert Wiedeman Barrett (Pen) Browning in Italy. There, he saw many of the autograph letters and manuscripts, books, works of art, and household and personal effects that the Brownings’ son had carefully preserved. After Pen Browning’s death in 1912, executors ordered the sale of his possessions, including those of his parents. In 1913, Sotheby’s auction house in London conducted a six-day sale; and soon after, Armstrong secured a copy of the auction catalogue with notations of the purchasers’ names and the prices realized for the 1,417 lots of Browning items. He set a lofty goal to acquire and preserve as much of this material as possible and to make it available to scholars at Baylor University.

Armstrong presented his personal Browning collection to Baylor in 1918, with the understanding that the university would support his
efforts to build an outstanding Browning collection. A dynamic individual of tremendous drive and energy, “Dr. A,” as he was fondly called by his students, conducted educational tours to Europe for twenty years (1912-32) and booked readings and performances throughout the Southwest for the leading poets and artists of the day, always using the profits to acquire more Browning-related material. As early as 1925, the London *Times* cited Baylor University as having “the best collection of Browningiana in the world.” By 1943, it was clear that a facility larger than a room in the university’s main library was required to house the special collection. Armstrong, even at the age of 70, had a grand vision. He desired an outstanding building to house the world-recognized collection; and he wanted it to be similar in quality, construction, and detail to fine structures in Europe. Through the combined efforts of Armstrong and the Baylor administration, funds totaling over $1.7 million were raised. Groundbreaking for the new three-story building took place in May 1948. Named in tribute to the driving force behind the endeavor, the Armstrong Browning Library was dedicated in December 1951.

Today the ABL is the home of the largest collection of materials relating to the lives and works of the Brownings and attracts scholars from around the globe. Because of the library’s incomparable mixture of handcrafted architecture, elegant furnishings, breathtaking stained glass windows, and unique exhibits, it attracts over 20,000 visitors a year. It is open to the public, free of charge, and alongside its primary focus as a research center, functions much like a museum. The ABL strives to share its remarkable building and collections with both the world at large and the Baylor community, working to encourage the understanding and appreciation of the Brownings and others of their era.

The ABL’s collections have continued to grow, both in volume and importance, under the succeeding directorships of Mary Maxwell Armstrong (1954-59), Dr. Jack W. Herring (1959-84), Dr. Roger L. Brooks (1987-94), Dr. Mairi C. Rennie (1996-2002), Dr. Stephen Prickett (2003-08), and Rita S. Patteson (2009-present). The collections include over 400 poetry and prose manuscripts of Robert or Elizabeth Barrett Browning, with over 150 additional poetical and literary manuscripts by Browning family members and contemporary Victorians; over 2,800 letters written either by or to Robert or Elizabeth Barrett Browning, with an additional 2,000 letters written by or to Browning family members and prominent, as well as lesser known, British and American figures; some 27,000 book volumes (26,500 titles), half of which are considered rare; over 6,000 bound periodical volumes
published before 1901; and art objects, personal effects, furniture, and other memorabilia associated with the Brownings. The Library has been active in digitizing portions of its collections, including its letters to and from the Brownings, and a collection of nineteenth century volumes published by women poets. In addition, the ABL supports an internet resource on the Brownings—The Brownings: A Research Guide (www.browningguide.org). The Guide, a comprehensive research tool to facilitate the study of the works and lives of the Brownings and their circle, is free and updated yearly.

The George MacDonald Collection

The George MacDonald Collection at the ABL was established under the directorship of Stephen Prickett, Regius Professor Emeritus of English at the University of Glasgow; an Honorary Professor of the University of Kent, at Canterbury; and President of the George MacDonald Society. In addition to beginning the collection, Dr. Prickett organized an international conference on MacDonald, “George MacDonald and His Children: The Development of Fantasy Literature,” held September 16-19, 2005, at the ABL. Although MacDonald items are still actively acquired by the Library, the bulk of the existing collection was purchased from 2003-08. While relatively small, it includes a good representation of MacDonald’s stories, novels, and poetry—first editions and other nineteenth-century publications, as well as later editions and current scholarship on MacDonald. In total, the collection includes 4 autograph letters written by MacDonald; 66 book titles (94 volumes); and various appearances of MacDonald’s work, and contemporary reviews, in nineteenth-century periodicals. Subscriptions to North Wind: A Journal of George MacDonald Studies and Wingfold: Celebrating the Works of George MacDonald are also part of the collection. A detailed list of MacDonald Collection holdings appears at the end of this article. Full bibliographic records of the collection are available on the internet via BearCat, Baylor University’s online catalog (http://bearcat.baylor.edu), by doing the following Title Search: George MacDonald Collection.

The ABL’s collection has 4 book titles (11 volumes) from MacDonald’s personal library. Seven of these volumes have MacDonald’s bookplate with the motto, “CORAGE! GOD MEND AL,” an anagram of his name, and an image derived from William Blake’s Death’s Door. There are also 4 MacDonald titles, 3 of them first editions, with the bookplate of MacDonald’s great grandson, Christopher Peter MacDonald. This bookplate is similar to George MacDonald’s, with the Blake image and the anagram, but
with the addition of a Latin phrase, “Per Mare per Terras Domum tu erras,”
translated by Dr. Simon Burris, Baylor Classics Department, as “Through
the sea, through the lands, you wander homeward.” One of the MacDonald
library books is a first edition of Robert Browning’s *Christmas-Eve and
Easter-Day* (1850), with MacDonald’s penciled markings in the margins
throughout the first half of the text, indicating that he used this volume as he
prepared his essay “Browning’s Christmas Eve,” published in the May 1853
issue of the *Monthly Christian Spectator*. Additional titles from MacDonald’s
library are the 4-volume first edition of Browning’s *The Ring and the Book*
(1868–69), inscribed by MacDonald as a gift from his wife at Christmas,
1868; *Relics of Shelley*, edited by Richard Garnett (1862); and a complete
works of Friedrich Schiller, *Schillers Sämmtliche Werke*, 10 volumes in
5 (1844), with several slight pencil markings in volume 9, possibly by
MacDonald.

The collection also includes 3 MacDonald presentation volumes:
A first edition of *A Book of Strife in the Form of The Diary of an Old Soul*
(1880), inscribed to his sister Charlotte Goodwin, and eventually going to the
great grandson Christopher Peter MacDonald; a first edition of *A Threefold
Cord: Poems by Three Friends*, edited by MacDonald [1883], inscribed “with
very kind regards” to J. B. Minlees[?]; and the first 1-volume English edition
of *The Vicar’s Daughter* (1881), inscribed to his son-in-law King Jameson,
and with the later family inscription, in 1943, of MacDonald’s daughter
Winifred Louisa Troup to her grand-niece Daphne MacDonald. Thirty-three
of the collection’s book titles are nineteenth-century editions; 17 of these are
first editions. The majority of the nineteenth-century editions are in original
cloth, many with gilt titles on the spines and attractive gilt decorations on the
front boards. In addition, the ABL collection includes numerous important
illustrations of MacDonald’s work in both books and periodicals.

The Armstrong Browning Library’s MacDonald Collection cannot
compare with an extremely rich collection of MacDonald materials such as
that held at Yale University’s Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library,
with over 3,500 letters to and from members of the MacDonald family, as
well as manuscripts, photographs, newspaper clippings, books, and other
printed material. However, a search of *Orbis*, Yale University’s online
catalog, against the ABL’s MacDonald Collection book holdings reveals
that the ABL holds 31 editions by or about George MacDonald which are
not at a Yale University library. Some of these are late nineteenth-century
reprints of MacDonald novels and others are more current scholarship on
MacDonald. The more interesting titles held by the ABL which are not listed in Orbis are: The Imagination and Other Essays (Lothrop, [c 1883]), a first American publication, published in England in 1882 as Orts; Phantastes: A Faerie Romance, illustrated by John Bell (Chatto and Windus, 1894), the edition suppressed by Greville MacDonald who disliked the illustrations; The Princess and Curdie, with 30 illustrations by Helen Stratton (Blackie and Son, [191-?]); Scotch Songs and Ballads (Smith, 1893); and A Wise Woman: A Parable (Strahan, 1875), a first edition.

While the Beinecke holds the “new edition” of Phantastes: A Faerie Romance for Men and Women, edited by Greville MacDonald, with 33 new illustrations by Arthur Hughes, and published in London by Arthur C. Fifield in 1905, which the ABL does not have, the ABL holds a similar edition which is not held by Yale. This is the “new edition” of the same title, edited by Greville MacDonald, with 33 new illustrations by Hughes, but published in London by J. M. Dent and Sons, [1905]. This edition appears to be quite rare, with OCLC’s WorldCat showing it held by only 3 libraries. Another relatively rare title, held by only 21 libraries according to WorldCat, including both the Beinecke and the ABL, is George MacDonald: A Bibliographical Catalog and Record, compiled by Mary Nance Jordan in 1984, which includes a reprint of A Centennial Bibliography of George MacDonald by John Malcolm Bullock, published by the Aberdeen University Press in 1925. The ABL’s copy is number 3 of a limited edition of 100, and was the gift of the compiler.

The Armstrong Browning Library is interested in promoting the use of its MacDonald Collection by scholars and MacDonald enthusiasts worldwide. The Library holds a representative collection of MacDonald materials, including some unique items, within a much larger collection of resources focusing on nineteenth century literature and culture. More information about the ABL is available online at www.browninglibrary.org. The Library offers a visiting scholars program of one-month research fellowships to those pursuing doctoral, post-doctoral, or equivalent research. Detailed information about this program can be found on the ABL website by clicking “Visiting Scholars Program,” under Research. Questions about the Armstrong Browning Library, the ABL’s MacDonald Collection, or this article can be directed to Cynthia A. Burgess, Curator of Books and Printed Materials via phone (254-710-4959) or email (Cyndie_Burgess@Baylor.edu).
THE ARMSTRONG BROWNING LIBRARY’S GEORGE MACDONALD COLLECTION — A LIST OF HOLDINGS

AUTOGRAPH LETTERS (FIRST LINES TRANSCRIBED)

George MacDonald to Joseph Noel Paton. 31 December 1867.

*Let the 16th be as a law of the Medes*

George MacDonald to Joseph Noel Paton. January 1868.

*My visit to Edinburgh is clouded by your grief.*

George MacDonald to John Rooker. 21 July 1895.

*Best thanks for your kindness*

George MacDonald to John Rooker. 6 August 1895.

*Mrs. MacDonald was too much unwell*

BOOKS FROM GEORGE MACDONALD’S LIBRARY


With the ownership inscription of George MacDonald on the front free endpaper, and his bookplate with the motto, “CORAGE! GOD MEND AL,” an anagram of his name. With penciled marks in the “Christmas-Eve” portion of the text, including numerous brackets marking portions of text, several instances of the words “remark” or “remarks” written in the margins, and two instances of brief scansion marks.


Inscribed on the title-page of vol. 1 by MacDonald: *George MacDonald/ from his Wife --/ Christmas/ 1868*, and with the additional ownership inscription in vol. 4 of Allan Park Paton, 19th-Century poet and librarian of the Watt Library, Greenock, Scotland. With some slight penciled marks scattered throughout, particularly in vol. 3, but no words written in the

MacDonald’s copy, with his bookplate. With no markings in the text.


MacDonald’s copy, with his bookplate in each volume, and his ownership inscription in vol. 9/10. With slight penciled marks in red or blue pencil on the following pages of vol. 9: 39, 84, 105, 117.

**BOOKS — BY GEORGE MACDONALD**


With a frontispiece by Authur Hughes.


*A Book of Strife in the Form of The Diary of an Old Soul*. [1st ed.]. London: Printed for the Author, and to be had by writing to Mr. Hughes, 1880. (Shaberman 66)

With the text of the poem printed on the rectos of the leaves only, as described in the dedication. Inscribed by MacDonald on the title-page: *Charlotte Godwin/ with love from her brother/ George MacDonald*, and with the bookplate of MacDonald’s great grandson, Christopher Peter MacDonald.


With the text of the poem printed on the rectos of the leaves only.

*David Elginbrod*. London: Hurst and Blackett, [188-?]. Hurst and Blackett’s Standard Library.
With a frontispiece illustration by Edward Hughes.

*Dealings with the Fairies.* Illus. Arthur Hughes. [1st ed.]. London: Alexander Strahan, 1867. (Shaberman 31)

*A Dish of Orts. Chiefly Papers on the Imagination, and on Shakespeare.*
Enlarged ed. London: Sampson Low Marston and Co., 1893. (Shaberman 94)

*Donal Grant.* Boston: D. Lothrop Co., 1883. (Shaberman 76)
With a frontispiece illustration signed “RL.”

(Bullock, p. 19)
With a frontispiece illustration signed “LH.”

With the bookplate of MacDonald’s great grandson, Christopher Peter MacDonald.


With a frontispiece illustration by G[ordon] B[rown].

The Devotional Library.

*George MacDonald in the Pulpit: The ‘Spoken’ Sermons of George MacDonald.* Comp. J. Joseph Flynn and David Edwards.
Whitethorn: Johannesen, 1999 (2nd printing).
The original recorded publication dates range from 1871-1901.


First published under the title _Orts_, London, 1882; first American publication.


_Orts._ [1st ed.]. London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, and Rivington, 1882. (Shaberman 72)
Includes the review essay “Browning’s Christmas Eve.”
With a frontispiece and 24 illustrations by Bell. MacDonald’s son Greville attempted to suppress this edition, as he and his mother passionately disliked the illustrations.

MacDonald’s first story to be published in book form.
With 33 new illustrations by Hughes.


Both volumes are extra-illustrated, with what appears to be images cut from periodical publications, then pasted in: vol. 1 contains a photographic portrait of George MacDonald by Elliot and Fry, a photograph of the house in Huntly where MacDonald was born, and an additional photographic portrait of MacDonald as an older man; vol. 2 has photographic portraits of MacDonald by J. Milman Brown of Shanklin, and by Sarony, dated 1872.

Inscribed by Sendak, without signature, to Arthur Yorinks, and dated Christmas, ’79.
—. Another copy, being an uncorrected proof, as sent to reviewers.

With a frontispiece and 30 illustrations by Stratton.

_Ranald Bannerman’s Boyhood._ Illus. Arthur Hughes. London: Blackie and Son, [191-?].
With 36 illustrations by Hughes and cover design by Laurence Housman.

_Robert Falconer._ Boston: Loring, [1876]. (Shaberman 36)
First American publication.
—. New ed. London: Hurst and Blackett, [191-?].

_A Rough Shaking._ [Illus. W. Parkinson]. [1st ed.]. London: Blackie and Son, 1891. (Shaberman 89)
With the bookplate of MacDonald’s great grandson, Christopher Peter MacDonald. Missing 1 of 12 plates by Parkinson.

_Scotch Songs and Ballads._ Aberdeen: John Rae Smith, 1893. (Shaberman 96)

_Short Stories._ Illus. F. D. Bedford. London: Blackie and Son, [192-?].

_Sir Gibbie._ London: Hurst and Blackett, [1880?]. Hurst and Blackett’s Standard Library. (Shaberman 64)
With a frontispiece illustration by E. Hughes.


_A Threelfold Cord: Poems by Three Friends._ Ed. George MacDonald. [1st ed.]. London: Not to be had of any bookseller, but by application to Mr. W. Hughes, [1883]. (Shaberman 75)
A presentation copy, inscribed by MacDonald: _J. B. Minlees [?] / with very kind regards/ from/ George MacDonald._
Raphael Shaberman, in _George MacDonald: A Bibliographical Study_, identifies the three friends as George MacDonald, his brother John Hill MacDonald, and Greville Ewing Matheson
(Shaberman, p. 77).

The Vicar’s Daughter. An Autobiographical Story. London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, and Rivington, 1881. (Shaberman 49)
First 1-volume English edition. A presentation copy, inscribed by MacDonald to his son-in-law on the title-page: King Jameson [above title, and signed] George MacDonald; and with the later family inscription of MacDonald’s daughter Winifred Louisa to her grand-niece: Daphne MacDonald/ from her great-aunt/ Winifred Troup/ Xmas 1943.


(Shaberman 54)
With the bookplate of MacDonald’s great grandson, Christopher Peter MacDonald.


BOOKS — ABOUT GEORGE MACDONALD


—. Another copy. (Shaberman 133)


The collections of bound volumes in three special libraries: the Marion E. Wade Collection, Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois; the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University; and the Houghton Library, Harvard University. Including comparisons of the earliest editions and descriptions from these and other bibliographical sources.


Originally published in 1911 as the third chapter of *From...*
A Northern Window: “Papers, Critical, Historical and Imaginative,” a volume of essays on Scottish topics compiled by Frederick Watson and published by James Nisbet and Co., London.


The essays collected in this volume derive from the Baylor conference “George MacDonald and His Children: The Development of Fantasy Literature,” held Sept. 16-19, 2005 at the Armstrong Browning Library.


Signed by the author, limited to 500 copies.


IN 19TH-CENTURY PERIODICALS AND ANNUALS — BY AND ABOUT GEORGE MACDONALD


Good Words for the Young. Ed. Norman MacLeod, 1868-69, and George
(Shaberman 40)
In addition to his work as editor, MacDonald contributed the following, all first appearances in print: “At the Back of the North Wind,” “Ranald Bannerman’s Boyhood,” “The Princess and the Goblin,” “The History of Gutta-Percha Willie,” “The Wind and the Moon” (poem), all of which were illustrated by Arthur Hughes; and “Willie’s Question” (poem), “The Foolish Harebell” (poem), and “The Snow Fight” (short story), which were not illustrated.


MacDonald, George. “Browning’s Christmas Eve.” *Monthly Christian Spectator* 3 May 1853: [261]-73. (Shaberman 2)
ABL has article only.
The first of MacDonald’s fairy tales to be published.
(Shaberman 13)
(Shaberman 57)
A sequel to *Malcolm* (1875). (Shaberman 58)
Serialised anonymously. (Shaberman 10)
—. “Wilfrid Cumbermede. An Autobiographical Study.” *Scribner’s Monthly* Nov. 1870-Mar. 1872. (Shaberman 42)

“Novels of the Week.” Rev. of The Vicar’s Daughter, by George MacDonald. *Athenaeum* No. 2337, 10 Aug. 1872: 175-76. (Shaberman 49)
—. Rev. of Sir Gibbie, by George MacDonald. *Athenaeum* No. 2694, 14 June 1879: 755-56. (Shaberman 64)
—. Rev. of The Gifts of the Child Christ, and Other Tales, by George MacDonald. *Athenaeum* No. 2844, 29 Apr. 1882: 537-38.
(Shaberman 71)
—. Rev. of *Weighed and Wanting*, by George MacDonald. *Athenaeum* No. 2871, 4 Nov. 1882: 594-95. (Shaberman 73)
—. Rev. of *What’s Mine’s Mine*, by George MacDonald. *Athenaeum* No. 3058, 5 June 1886: 744-45. (Shaberman 80)

“Our Library Table.” Rev. of *The Wise Woman, A Parable*, by George MacDonald. *Athenaeum* No. 2518, 29 Jan. 1876: 161. (Shaberman 54)

“Robert Falconer.” [Letter of complaint], by George MacDonald. *Athenaeum* No. 2127, 1 Aug. 1868: 146. (Shaberman 27)

Rev. of *The Disciple and Other Poems*, by George MacDonald. *Athenaeum* No. 2110, 4 Apr. 1868: 491-92. (Shaberman 34)

Rev. of *Within and Without: A Dramatic Poem*, by George MacDonald. *Athenaeum* No. 1445, 7 July 1855: 783. (Shaberman 6)

Works Cited
