

CORAGE, BOSCOMBE.

BOURNEMOUTH.

April 26, 1876.
Rev. C. F. Deems.

My dear Sir,

When I received
your letter, now some weeks
ago, I was under such pressure
of work that it was even
impossible for me to consider
the question you put to me.
Although I have now a
few days of less pressing
labour, it is still out of
my power to say anything.

I have a story in my mind, but until I find that I can arrange to my ~~own~~ satisfaction for its publication here, I can say nothing about America - when also I have had semi-proposals previous to yours that may come in for a share of the consideration necessary.

The size you wish is

also a little larger than I like, now that I am getting older and therefore perhaps inclined to rather shorter books. The last two books I have written, though coming out longer of course, were only pledged to about 156000 words - what you propose is 210000. I merely mention this as an element, seeing

I am writing. But I
only write now to ac-
knowledge & thank
you for your letter.

The book in my mind
would be in character
~~something~~^{very} similar to
the one Routledge is about
to bring out in New York.
Thomas Coingsford, Curator
with perhaps a little more
incident. There can be no
harm in answering your
question as to terms, although
I do not offer you the book
My terms for Magazine & book



afterwards in America
are £350 ^{8/9} stg. That is a
little ^(£25) more than I have
yet received, but that is
what I am now going to
ask.

This is all I can say at
present. Begging your
pardon my delay to which
illness has as usual with
me contributed a share
of operation. I am, my
dear sir, with kind regards,
your very truly
Robert Macdonald.

Biography

GEORGE MACDONALD AND HIS WIFE. By GREVILLE MACDONALD. New York: Lincoln MacVeagh, the Dial Press. 1924. \$6.

TO MANY people of the present generation George MacDonald is known almost entirely as the author of a few fairy tales. How partial are these acquaintances is shown by a glance at the bibliography of his published works. During his creative period there flowed from his pen over a score of Victorian-style "three-decker" novels, as well as some thirty volumes of poetry, tales, fairy stories, sermons, criticisms and translations. The extent and variety of his writings is a trustworthy index not only to his industry as a man of letters, but also to the rich comprehensiveness of his social, religious and family interests.

He was born in Aberdeenshire in 1824. The trend of his mental and spiritual growth was determined to a generous extent by the atmosphere of religious earnestness which was unchallenged in his own home and in his native village. After leaving Aberdeen University he fitted himself for the ministry at Highbury College, London, and was soon after appointed to the pastorate of the Trinity Congregational Church of Arundel. At this point his divergence from the conventional religious thinking of his contemporaries became more and more evident. His broad humanistic interpretation of spiritual dogma received but little sympathy from his church. His parishioners protested against his kindly hope that the heathen would be vouchsafed some form of after-life and he was also accused of unwholesome interest in Teutonic theologies. The situation grew unbearable for both sides and so, in 1853, he resigned and moved to Manchester, where he did a certain amount of courageous pioneer preaching as a strict independent.

In spite of wretched health and constant poverty, he had been unceasingly interested in literature. The appearance, a couple of years after his departure from Arundel, of his first volume, a long dramatic poem entitled "Within and Without," marked the beginning of richer and more satisfying days, and the popular approval of his novel, "David Elginbrod," crystallized his decision to devote himself henceforth to his pen. The new life widened his points of contact immeasurably, and one notices that such names as Lewis Carroll, John Ruskin and Lady Byron occur more and more frequently. In 1872 George MacDonald, his wife, and son, Greville, toured America, the father lecturing and preaching with a success that is said to have been almost that of Dickens. After their return, the entire family went to Italy, where George MacDonald spent the remainder of his productive life. He went back to England to die in Surrey in the early fall of 1905.

In reading this biography one tends, at times, to regret that so few pages have been devoted to criticism of George MacDonald's achievements in the field of letters. The three-volumed novels stick in one's mind and seem to challenge attention *per se*. And yet as one turns the last pages one comes to realize that George MacDonald's books cannot fairly be judged except in reference to his whole life. For there has been no man, perhaps, whose life was more consistent, more truly knit together by a lofty single purpose, more philosophically and calmly ordered to a clearly perceived end. There is no essential difference between this man and his religious beliefs, or between himself and his social philosophy and his novels and his poetry and even his fairy tales. His very home, in Italy, with its characteristic motto: "Corage: God mend al," was to him but another opportunity for the expression of his faith in God and the prodigal giving of human peace and hospitality and kindness. George MacDonald made his contribution as a personality and as a patriarch, as a genius in the love of his fellows. His son understood him thus and in that light has presented him. To have considered his literature merely as literature and his religion as prayers and sermons only would have been misinterpretation as unfair as it was unfortunate.

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