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The Plunket Society

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The Melrose Library: Reflecting the Life and Works of

Sir F. Truby King



Exhibition List 28 August to 27 November 2015



The Melrose Library: Reflecting the Life and Works of **Sir F. Truby King**

'Truby King was the greatest man in New Zealand, and should have the most imposing monument New Zealand can build to commemorate him.'

George Bernard Shaw, April 1934.

Sir Frederic Truby King (1858-1938) was a scientist, farmer, gardener, doctor, and educator. He was single-minded to the point of obnoxiousness; an eccentric; and a financial incompetent who held beliefs that were often unscientific and glaringly contradictory. Because of his wide interests, King was also a great reader.

About 1933, King's library numbered some 1680 titles. In 1938, he bequeathed many scientific titles to the British Medical Association. In June 1989 the remaining volumes – the so-called Melrose Library – arrived in Dunedin from the Truby King House in Wellington. This collection of some 1000 volumes was collected by King in his lifetime; some are signed; many are annotated. Two-thirds deal with the health of women and children, consisting of both professional and popular texts. The remainder is non-medical, comprising works of general reference and some fiction. Subjects covered include child health, nutrition, paediatrics, child diseases, psychology, horticulture and animal husbandry, gardens, especially rose and rhododendron books, and social issues such as race theory and education. As the collection stands, it has been called 'the best general collection in New Zealand, of publications on the general subject of the health of women and children for the period of 1900 to 1938' (Strachan).

A select number of books from King's library have been used in this exhibition to highlight his life and activities: his early years, his education, his work at Seacliff Lunatic Asylum, and his pioneering work in child and infant care. The establishment of the Plunket Society in 1907 was one of his most tangible and influential parts of his legacy. King died in February 1938. He was given a state funeral, the first private citizen in New Zealand to be given this honour. In 1957 he featured on a postage stamp celebrating the Plunket Society; again the first to be afforded this honour. All in all, Sir Frederic Truby King was a remarkable man.

ITEMS ON DISPLAY

CABINET ONE: BACKGROUND

- Thomas King, c.1860s. Photograph from Mary King, *Truby King The Man.* London: George Allen & Unwin, 1948. Medical WZ 100 K54 1948
- The King Home, New Plymouth. Photograph from Mary King, *Truby King The Man.* London: George Allen & Unwin, 1948. Medical WZ 100 K54 1948
- A.Rollier, *Heliotheraphy*. London: Henry Frowde and Hodder & Stoughton, 1923. Truby King Collection (TK Coll.) WB 480 HF47 1923
- Truby King, c.1866. Photograph from Mary King, *Truby King The Man.* London: George Allen & Unwin, 1948. Medical WZ 100 K54 1948
- Graduation photograph, 1886. From Mary King, *Truby King The Man.* London: George Allen & Unwin, 1948. Medical WZ 100 K54 1948
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- Herbert Spencer, Education. Intellectual, Morals, and Physical. London: Williams & Norgate, 1910. TK Coll. LB 675 57 1910
- Truby and Bella King at the time of their marriage, 1887. From Mary King, *Truby King The Man.* London: George Allen & Unwin, 1948. Medical WZ 100 K54 1948

CABINET TWO: SEACLIFF

- Charles Mercier, *A Text-book of Insanity*. London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1902. TK Coll. WM 100 MJ256 Photograph of Seacliff, Dunedin. Hocken Pictorial Collection
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- John McLennan, A Manual of Practical Farming. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1910. TK Coll. S 501 M447
- F.W. Burbidge, *Cultivated Plants: Their Propagation and Improvement*. Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1877. TK Coll. SB 123 BX89

CABINET FOUR: PSYCHOLOGY

- William James, Talks to Teachers on Psychology and to Students on some of Life's Ideals. London: Longmans Green & Co., 1899. TK Coll. LB 1051 194 1899
- Sir Thomas Clouston, *Morals and Brain*. London: Cassell & Co., 1912. TK Coll. BJ 1411 CM43
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CABINET FIVE: WOMEN & MOTHERHOOD

- J. Matthews Duncan, On the Mortality of Childbed and Maternity Hospitals. Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1870. TK Coll. WQ 27 DW55
- Pye Henry Chavasse, Chavasse's Advice to a Wife on the Management of her own Health and on the Treatment of some of the Complaints incidental to Pregnancy, Labour, and Suckling. 17th ed. London: J. & A. Churchill, c.1908. TK Coll. HQ 759 CG51 1883
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CABINET EIGHT: THE PLUNKET SOCIETY

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