



November 1956

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### Recommended Citation

Colby Library Quarterly, series 4, no.8, November 1956, p.145-147

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Three years later Moore wrote his autobiographic *Confessions of a Young Man*, in which he pertinently remarks: "Books are like individuals; you know at once if they are going to . . . madden you in blood and brain, or if they will merely leave you indifferent, or irritable, having unpleasantly disturbed sweet intimate musings, as might a draught from an open window."



### A NEW KIND OF FORGERY

By THOMAS REDIVIVUS WISE

FOUR or five years ago, when Professor A. K. Chapman addressed the Colby Library Associates on the centenary of the birth of the Portland publisher, Thomas Bird Mosher, he remarked that "Mosher had the reputation of being a pirate, a reputation which he doubtless deserved, although his piracies were of a benevolent sort . . . , more likely to be beneficial than harmful to his victims."

Some English authors whose wares Mosher made use of uttered less polite language when they referred to Mosher's unauthorized activities; and if we have no comment on them from Swinburne, whose vituperative powers excelled those of Professor Chapman, it is doubtless because Swinburne had no knowledge of what was going on in Portland, Maine.

Jacob Blanck, writing in the *Publishers' Weekly* about Mosher's uninhibited activity throughout the thirty years (1893-1923) of his career as a publisher, called this activity "one of the final episodes in the history of literary piracy in the United States." This is not the time or place to debate the accuracy of the word "final," but it is an appropriate time to call attention to one of Mosher's acts which has just come to light in the Colby College Library.

The presence of Mrs. Frank Cowdery's extensive book-

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plate collection in our library\* has led to an *Ex Libris* alertness in our cataloguing department, so that whenever a new book has arrived bearing a hitherto unrecorded book-plate (unrecorded, that is to say, in the Colby College Library), that fact has been noted and a new card inserted in our *Ex Libris* catalogue. When, therefore, a copy of *Edward FitzGerald: an Aftermath* by Francis Hinde Groome arrived, Mr. R. Webb Noyes, our head-cataloguer, promptly spotted the fact that it bore a book-plate, and one of which we had no previous knowledge or record. Investigation followed.

The book-plate bears the name "E. FitzGerald" and shows an angel holding a shield with a diagonal cross. "This unpretending device, which might so easily fail at first glance to attract attention, is nevertheless as interesting as any in existence." So we have learned from Egerton Castle's *English Book-Plates Ancient and Modern* (London, George Bell & Sons, 1893, second edition, page 191). "In the first place, it was drawn by William Makepeace Thackeray, and in the second it was designed for his friend, Edward FitzGerald. . . . It is supposed that in the angel Thackeray intended to portray [*sic*, p. 192] Mrs. Brookfield. . . ."

On the subject of this interesting book-plate, Egerton Castle quotes a letter he once received from Edmund Gosse: "I have just come across a note I copied out of a letter by Edward FitzGerald, dated March 19th, 1878, referring to the book-plate: 'Done by Thackeray one day in Coram (Joram) Street in 1842. All wrong on her feet, so he said—I can see him now.—E.F.G.'"

Any reader of these lines can well imagine the excitement in the Colby College Library when the words just quoted brought with them, not only the information that we have acquired a specimen of the book-plate designed for FitzGerald by Thackeray, but also the implication that

\* See "Bookplates at Colby" by Edward F. Stevens, COLBY LIBRARY QUARTERLY for March, 1945, pages 165-168.

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the book itself to which the book-plate is now pasted was once in FitzGerald's library and had once upon a time been held in his hands.

Alas! that pleasant dream soon faded. Edward FitzGerald died in 1883, before T. B. Mosher had ever published a book. F. H. Groome's *Aftermath* came from the printing press of Smith & Sale in Portland, Maine, in 1902, and when Mosher published this book FitzGerald was safely in his grave and unable to denounce the insertion of his book-plate in it. That that insertion was Mosher's own doing was suggested to us by the fact that the book-plate is printed on exactly the same kind of paper as the end-papers of the book itself; and that this theory is correct was demonstrated to us quite recently when a second copy of *Edward FitzGerald: an Aftermath* arrived. This second copy is printed on what Mosher called "Japan vellum" instead of on watermarked paper, and it is not bound in the Morris-gray-paper (over boards) in which our Copy Number One is bound. But in all other respects, the second copy is identical with the first, including the end-papers and the book-plate.

If any other owner of a copy of Groome's *FitzGerald: an Aftermath* will look closely into it, we prophesy that he will find the Thackeray-FitzGerald book-plate, with its implication that the book came from the library of "old Fitz" (Tennyson's name for his Cambridge classmate). The provenance is, of course, quite fictitious, and we have acquired one more bit of evidence as to the imagination and resourcefulness of Thomas Bird Mosher. However, even if this Portland-made book was never in the library at Boulge or Woodbridge, present owners of a copy may console themselves with the thought that they have a reproduction (even though it be piratical) of the book-plate designed by "the great Thackwhack" for his friend.

