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THREE BOOKS BY GEORGE MOORE

By Aaron Polonsky

The Colby College Library is the happy recipient of three very rare books by George Moore. They are the gift of Mr. Frank Altschul, the distinguished political scientist who was a Gabrielson Lecturer at Colby in March of this year. All three books are first editions in a state of excellent preservation (two are protected by morocco slip-cases), and two of them contain unusual presentation inscriptions by Moore.

The oldest of the three volumes is a copy of the earliest surviving work of the dynamic and controversial Moore, his *Flowers of Passion* (London, 1878). These words are written in the poet's autograph on the title-page: "Aux pieds de Jenny je depose ces fleurs [erasure] George Moore." Can any reader tell us who "Jenny" was? This book occasioned harsh attacks from the critics and Moore promptly withdrew it from the public. As a result, few copies have survived, and when a copy comes up for sale from time to time, the price it brings is beyond the means of most college libraries.

The second book is *Pagan Poems* (London, 1881), inscribed to William Rossetti, brother of the poet Dante Gabriel Rossetti. *Pagan Poems*, unlike its predecessor, attracted little, if any, critical attention, and George Moore not only withdrew it from the public but scrapped the unsold copies that had been printed.

The third book, *Literature at Nurse; or, Circulating Morals* (London, 1885), is perhaps the most interesting work of the three presented to us by Mr. Altschul. In this pamphlet, George Moore assembled considerable information in defense of the writer's right to freedom from censorship, and presented his claims so effectively as to attract immediate public attention and place his name solidly in the front rank of prominent Anglo-Irish authors.
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-