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Thomas Frognall Dibdin
Frontmatter
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Bibliophobia

In 1809, Thomas Frognall Dibdin (1776–1847) published the first edition of *Bibliomania*, focussing on the contemporary craze for book collecting. Introduced in English at the end of the eighteenth century, the term ‘bibliomania’ – or ‘book-madness’ – gained popularity with the publication of Dibdin’s book, in which bibliophiles conduct dialogues on the nature and history of book collecting, and the symptoms of and possible remedies for this ‘fatal disease’. Published in 1832 under the pseudonym Mercurius Rusticus, *Bibliophobia* is a short pamphlet, which presents itself as a letter to the author of *Bibliomania*. The narrator, a book-lover himself, goes on a ‘bibliopolistic pilgrimage’, only to find out that ‘bibliomania is no more’, and that ‘books are only the shadow of what they were’. From book-lovers to collectors, and from booksellers to libraries, the narrator carries out his entertaining yet melancholic investigation all the way to the Bodleian Library.

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Bibliophobia

*Remarks on the Present Languid
and Depressed State of Literature and
the Book Trade.*

*In a Letter Addressed to the Author
of the Bibliomania*

THOMAS FROGNALL DIBDIN



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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore,
São Paulo, Delhi, Dubai, Tokyo

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108015592

© in this compilation Cambridge University Press 2010

This edition first published 1932
This digitally printed version 2010

ISBN 978-1-108-01559-2 Paperback

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BIBLIOPHOBIA.

REMARKS

ON THE

PRESENT LANGUID AND DEPRESSED STATE OF

LITERATURE

AND THE BOOK TRADE.

IN A LETTER

ADDRESSED TO THE AUTHOR OF THE

Bibliomania.

BY

MERCURIUS RUSTICUS.

—
WITH NOTES

BY CATO PARVUS.

—
“FEAR is the order of the day. To those very natural and long established fears of bailiffs and taxgatherers, must now be added the fear of *Reform*, of *Cholera*, and of Books.” p. 6.

LONDON :

HENRY BOHN, 4, YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN.

—
1832.

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ERRATUM.

Page 17, note, last line but 3, *for* “ Wallis,” *read* “ Goodall.”

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The ensuing pages would never have seen the light, but that, on shewing them in MS. to a neighbouring friend—who lives just across the moor—he was pleased to express a very favourable opinion of their probable good tendency, if given to the world; adding, that a few NOTES, which he would cheerfully supply, might perhaps help to promote the object in view. As I knew him to be well versed in the arcana both of black-letter and of modern publications, and most regular in his annual visits to the Metropolis, I thankfully accepted his offer. I hope therefore that the text and notes together may prove acceptable to the kind-hearted reader, who cannot but sympathize with their author in the present melancholy prevalence of the disease of Bibliophobia; which is altogether new in its characteristics, and ominous of the most direful results.*

The first two notes of my friend bear his name: CATO PARVUS, or the Initials: afterwards, they have neither name nor initials. My own few notes bear the initials M. R.