

**THE CATALOGUE OF BOOKS FROM THE
LIBRARIES OR COLLECTIONS OF
CELEBRATED
BIBLIOPHILES AND ILLUSTRIOUS
PERSONS OF THE PAST WITH ARMS OR
DEVICES UPON THE BINDINGS**

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The Catalogue of Books from the Libraries or Collections of Celebrated Bibliophiles and
Illustrious Persons of the Past With Arms or Devices Upon the Bindings by Various

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VARIOUS

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AND ILLUSTRIOUS PERSONS OF THE PAST



MARIE DE MEDICIS.

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INTRODUCTION

HE Club has lately held an exhibition of book-plates, or, as better known in the language of the learned, of "ex-libris." These, designed, engraved, and printed, more or less artistically, and pasted upon the inside of book-covers, serve as marks of ownership; also as advertisements for the return of strayed or stolen volumes. The book-plate, however, is no guarantee as to the past or present ownership of the book in which it is found, for the person who might hesitate to remove a fine old title-page or frontispiece may not scruple to transfer a book-plate, especially if it be that of a noted personage, and thus endow a favored tome with a more illustrious pedigree. Doubtless no real bibliophile would yield to such temptation.

One may imagine that this state of affairs was anticipated by some old lovers of their books when they inscribed their names upon the title-pages to identify themselves with their volumes. If kings and princes, Montaigne, Melancthon, and Grolier himself, did such things, as they all occasionally did, we are prone, if the signature be authentic, to condone the offense, and to

cherish the writing with some feeling of veneration. As a rule, however, inscriptions of this character are but an unprofitable vandalism.

It is evident that every collector or owner of a library cannot well have all of his books bound or rebound, with his arms, name, or device stamped upon them; much less is he justified in making such additions to the bindings of fine old books, although there are instances of this species of vandalism.

The custom of identifying in some manner books with their owners is as old as books themselves. In the early manuscripts personal insignia, or coats of arms, are frequently found emblazoned or interwoven in the decoration of the pages. They were also inserted in the painted borders of early printed books, and one would perhaps prefer incunabula with such proprietary records.

With the introduction, early in the sixteenth century, of bookbindings in morocco and calf-skin, susceptible of delicate and elaborate ornamentation, came the custom, with the more wealthy bibliophile, of causing his name, monogram, or arms to be stamped upon the sides as part of the decoration. With the revival of art and letters came also that of individuality, but we have to regret that the artists so often forgot to record themselves; more mindful of their work and the glorification of their patrons than of their own merit. It is not an idle curiosity which seeks to know something of the men who bound and decorated the fine old books of the sixteenth century, and worked upon them the names of Maioli and Grolier, or the arms