

A Curious Historic Device.

THE annexed illustration represents the cover of a book in my possession, bought many years since from Mr. W. Pickering, of Piccadilly. The book, a fifteenth century illuminated "Book of Hours," with miniatures of French execution, and measuring $3\frac{7}{8} \times 2\frac{3}{8}$ -in., is in brown morocco, the back "powdered with ermine," and the sides prettily tooled, having in the centre a monogram formed by two letters R, reversed and interlaced, with S in black letter on the four sides. The binding (sixteenth century) was quoted as the work of Dusseuil, but I think, from the similarity of the tools to those on the books bound for Marguerite de Valois by Clovis Eve, it was executed by the latter binder.

Can any student of bibliography or heraldry explain the meaning of the S, which occurs on the four sides of the centre monogram?

In the "Historic Devices" of Mrs. Bury-Palliser, p. 125, is the following passage, "Henry IV [of France] introduced the punning S *trait* (an S with a stroke running through it) for Gabriellè d'Estrées," but this explanation cannot, I think, be applied to the example before us.

Bouchot in "Les Reliures d'Art à la Bibliothèque Nationale" describing a monogram on a book which belonged to Claude N. Fabri de Peiresc (plate 22), says:—"Avec l'S *barrée*, que signifié en rébus *Fermesse*, c'est-à-dire *Constance*." And Guigard in his "Armorial du Bibliophile," second edition, p. 22, gives the same signification, but expresses some doubt as to its *general* application. This is on the assumption that the diagonal line drawn in forming the S has the same meaning as the "bar" in heraldry.

I give a list of instances that have come under my notice where this mark is used in a similar manner besides that in Bouchot above referred to:—Marie de Medici Brunet's "La Reliure Ancienne et Moderne," plate 31; Habert de Montmor, Conseiller au Parlement de Paris, plate 77; Guigard's "Armorial," vol. I. Henry II., p. 22; Diane d'Angoulême, p. 117; Gabrielle d'Estrées, p. 158; vol. II. Léon Bouthillier Comte de Chevigny, p. 85; Valentin Conrart, one of the founders of the "Académie Française," p. 160: and other books

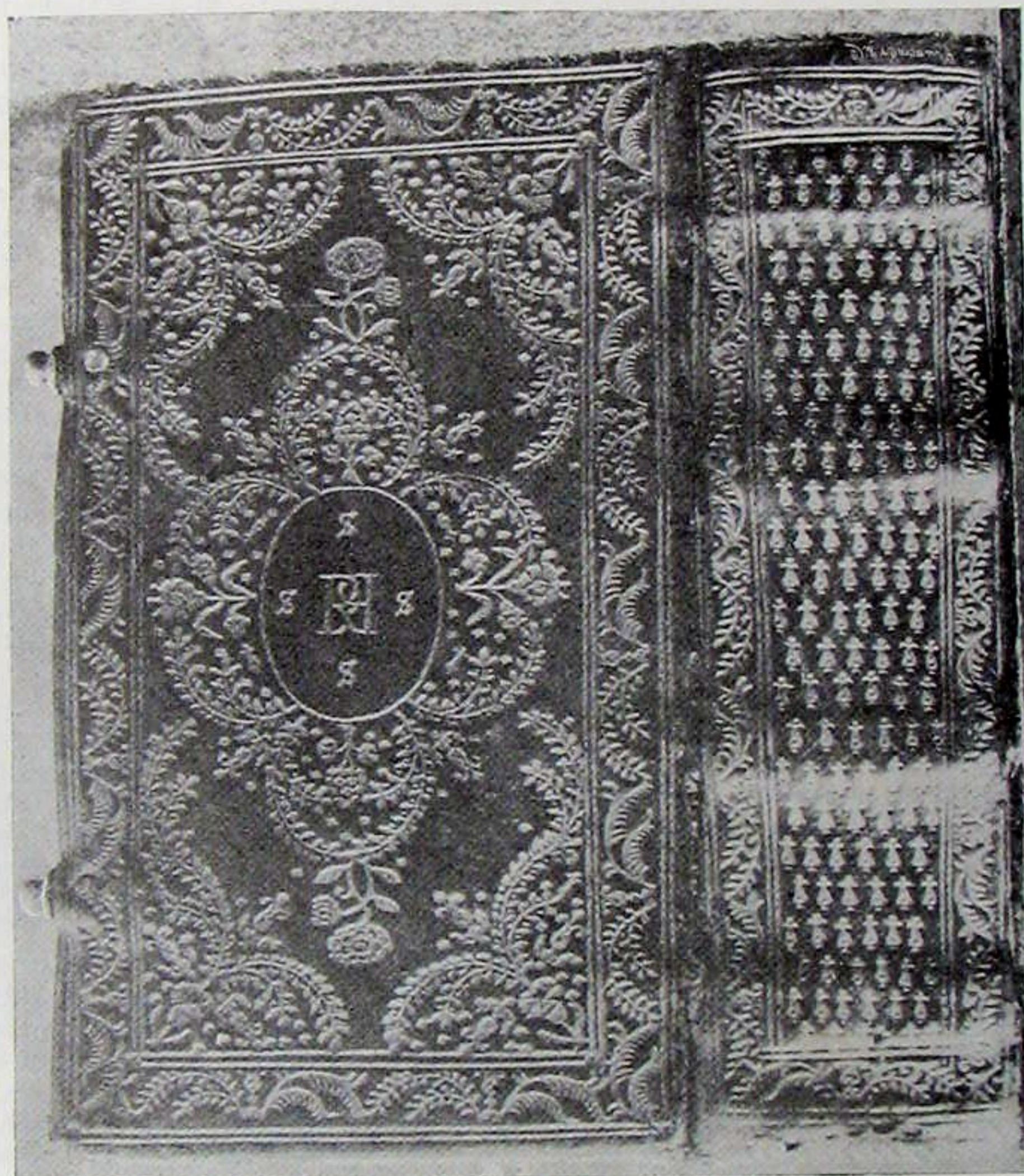
with monograms of Catherine de Médicis, P.C., M., M.D.C.L., and another having the devices of the double interlaced triangle and double Greek Phi.

Communications on the subject will be very acceptable.

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BACK NUMBERS OF THE BRITISH BOOKMAKER are gradually getting exhausted. Our friends desirous of completing their sets for binding should order soon, as two or three numbers are nearly out of print.



ONE of the most expensive books brought out this year has failed to sell because it had a dull coloured cover. It was richly illustrated and elegantly printed, and as a further effort to make it unique a leather binding was adopted. That killed it. The booksellers offered it to their lady customers, but the ladies listened to nothing that was said for it. They brushed it aside with the remark: "Its not pretty," or, "It will not match anything in the house." Vastly inferior books with a splash of red on the cover, or with gold or silver chasing on the binding, were sold as fast as they could be printed.—*Stationery*.