ANDREW JAMES BELL: A GREAT TORONTO BOOK-COLLECTOR*

The library of Andrew Bell, Professor of Latin at Victoria College, Toronto from 1881 to 1927, must have been one of the greatest private collections in Canada. According to Sissons' *History of Victoria University* Bell had already laid the foundation of this library at the age of twenty-five:

The staff was strengthened in 1881 by the appointment of Andrew James Bell to assist Wilson in Classics. Stately and impressive as was his person in later years, a certain awkwardness and shyness of manner at this stage and his rather overwhelming scholarship created some dissatisfaction among the students at first. Whereupon Nelles called a few of the leaders in and told them that a man of great learning had come among them, the best-read man of his acquaintance, whose library put them all to shame. Thus incipient discontent was stayed.¹

At the time of his death on Christmas Eve, 1932, his collection contained over thirty thousand volumes.

Bell was born at Janesville, Ontario on May 12th, 1856, of Scottish parentage. In 1878 he graduated with first-class honours in both Classics and Moderns from University College, Toronto. After teaching for three years in St. Thomas Collegiate Institute he joined the staff of Victoria University, then in Cobourg. At the first opportunity he secured leave of absence and after three years of study under the famous Classicists Studemund² and Hertz³ at the University of Breslau he won the degree of Doctor of Philosophy; the topic of his thesis was *De Locativi in prisca Latinitate Vi et Usu*.⁴ In 1900 he was offered the first

*The author gratefully acknowledges the assistance and encouragement of Miss Sybille Pantazzi; the staff of the E.J. Pratt Library, Victoria College; Mr. Richard Landon, and the late Professor D.O. Robson.

¹C.B. Sissons, *A History of Victoria University* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1952), pp. 191-2.

²Wilhelm Studemund (1843-1889), the author of several works on early Latin grammar and prosody.

³Martin Hertz (1818-1895), textual critic and promoter of the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*.

⁴Andreas Bell, *De Locativi in prisca Latinitate Vi et Usu* (Breslau: Friedrich, 1899). Studemund was a great admirer of this work and is said to have been reading it when he died.

university professorship in Toronto — in Comparative Philology. To prepare himself for this position he studied at Leipzig under the eminent Classical philologists Brugmann, Leskien, Windisch, Hirt, and Heinze and acquired a knowledge of Sanskrit, Zend, Old Persian, Gothic, Lithuanian, Old Irish, and Oscan and Umbrian. In 1923 he published his great work *The Latin Dual and Poetic Diction*.⁵ He retired in 1927 and died on the 24th of December, 1932, at the age of 76.⁶

Douglas Bush,⁷ a distinguished pupil of Bell's, has written an affectionate sketch of his teacher which first appeared in the *Canadian Forum*.⁸ R.J. Getty in his biographical notice for Bell's colleague, Norman Wentworth DeWitt,⁹ says:

In Latin studies the partnership of Bell and DeWitt had no equal in Canada . . . The years when they worked together and their association with J.C. Robertson, the Professor of Greek, and C.B. Sissons, the future Nelles Professor of Ancient History comprised a great era in the history of Classical teaching at Victoria.¹⁰

Bell, the teacher and scholar, was also a passionate collector of books. Bush has vividly described his house at 17 Avenue Road, Toronto where one had "to thread one's way dexterously over floors almost covered with tall piles of books which frequently tottered, but by a miracle never fell"¹¹ and where "college tradition, for once authentic, told how a possible collapse of the house had necessitated the summoning of an engineer."¹² Ten different rooms were filled with books, many of which were piled high on the floor, with those on the shelves in double rows and piled tightly against each other.¹³ Even the steps of the staircases had piles of books on them. Bell had been collecting for more

⁵Andrew J. Bell, *The Latin Dual and Poetic Diction* (London: Oxford University Press and Toronto: Victoria College Press, 1923).

⁶The biographical information in this paragraph is taken from N.W. DeWitt, "Memorial Address," in *In Memoriam Andrew James Bell 1856-1932* (Toronto: Published for Victoria University by Clarke, Irwin, 1934), pp. 1-8.

⁷Douglas Bush, a graduate of Victoria College, Toronto in Classics, and Professor of English Literature, Harvard University from 1936 to 1966.

⁸Douglas Bush, "A Classical Scholar," *Canadian Forum*, 9 (1929), 423-4. Reprinted in *In Memoriam Andrew James Bell 1856-1932*, pp. 9-16; Douglas Bush, *Engaged and Disengaged* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966), pp. 69-75; *Renaissance and Reformation*, 7, No. 2 (1971), 26-9.

⁹Professor of Latin, Victoria College, Toronto, from 1908 to 1944.

¹⁰R.J. Getty "Norman Wentworth DeWitt," in *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Canada* (Ottawa, 1963), pp. 79-81.

¹¹Bush, p. 423.

¹²*Ibid.*, p. 423.

¹³Margaret V. Ray, *Report to Dr. Barber Concerning Professor A.J. Bell's Library*, TS, February 7, 1933, [2] 1. Bell Papers, E.J. Pratt Library, Victoria College, Toronto.

than half a century and in the 1910's and 1920's had set up a sheaf catalogue as an index to his library; at his death there were over 26,000 entries in this catalogue as well as thousands of entries which had not yet been pasted in.¹⁴ From the cataloguing done by Victoria College after it received the library in 1933, the entire collection was found to include about 30,000 books, which was the estimate made by Bell shortly before his death.

Preserved in the Manuscript Room of the E.J. Pratt Library of Victoria College is Bell's catalogue of his books. DeWitt has said that Bell's library was his real monument;¹⁵ this catalogue is the only record of that library in its entirety. It is a ledger (13 inches in height and 8 inches wide) of 600 pages with approximately 70 entries on each recto and 20 on each verso. Each entry was written in ink on slips of onion-skin paper of varying sizes (generally about 2" by 1½"), and the left edge was pasted down, with subsequent entries overlapping each other across the page.¹⁶ The entries are arranged alphabetically mainly according to the author, although some are by subject. For example, all editions and critical works on Virgil are under "Virgil"; the books on astronomy are under "Astronomy", and for such subject entries there is almost always a "vide" slip to refer the reader from an author to the subject (e.g., "Chant v. Astronomy"). A typical entry consists of the following: an accession number in the upper left hand corner; the location of the book in the upper right hand corner; the author's name in as complete a form as the title-page provides; the title of the book; the pagination; a reference to any editor, introduction, illustrations, portraits; the publisher; the place of publication; the date of publication; a note on the binding of the book, e.g., "cloth", "vellum", "boards", "wrappers"; a note on any inscriptions by the author or previous owners; a note about a limited edition, e.g., "no. 217 of 500"; a note about anything else of bibliographic interest, e.g., "editio princeps"; some entries, especially in Classics, have a superimposed "R" in red ink (unintelligible). It is difficult to reconstruct Bell's system of references for the location of his books since they were transferred to Victoria College and the house has since been demolished. Locations such as "Cellar", "Attic", "Parlour" are self-evident. All of his Erasmus collection were located at either "H Up St. 4", "H Up St. 5" or "H Up St. 6". Typical references to the locations of his Plautus are still more complicated, e.g., "N. St. 6 II 6", "N. St. 6 V 8", "N. St. 6 IX 4". The copyright date in the front of this ledger is Feb. 9, 1909; hence the catalogue was begun after this time. In a diary for 1910 Bell records that on May 23rd he began to list [for his catalogue] books in the lumber room, continuing the next day. On July 14 he also mentions listing "many books". It is obvious that several of the entries were made at the same time: the numbers for Erasmus range from about 9,400 to 9,700 and were written with the same colour of ink.

¹⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁵ [Norman W. DeWitt], *Opening of the Bell Library*, TS, [2] 1. Bell Papers. E.J. Pratt Library, Victoria College, Toronto.

¹⁶From the point of view of this reader at least, an extremely cumbersome and awkward arrangement.

The two largest groupings in Bell's collection were in Classics and English literature, but the best literature in all modern languages was well represented. A large percentage of the collection was history and biography and there was as well a fair amount of Canadiana and a number of books on theology. There was very little on philosophy, mathematics or science. His Erasmus collection was outstanding and has been catalogued elsewhere.¹⁷ This paper will briefly describe a few typical titles in the categories mentioned above but will concentrate on examples of his outstanding collection of early editions of Classical works.

As a scholar Bell was primarily a Classical philologist and was recognized as such. Among his papers is a letter from a Justice of the Supreme Court of Ontario asking if there was any relationship between the genitive case in Greek and the Greek conception of the matter of light.¹⁸ As a result of this great interest in philology his collection naturally contained the famous works of the day, most of which were written by German scholars. In addition to works by his own teachers, Brugmann (over eleven of his books are listed) and Hertz, the following are representative: Dräger's *Historische Syntax der lateinischen Sprache* (Leipzig, 1881), Ruddiman's *Institutiones Grammaticae Latinae* (Leipzig, 1823), Dowson's *Grammar of the Urdu or Hindustani Languages* (London, 1908), and Harwood's *Bibliographical Dictionary of Books in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Arabic, Persian, Coptic to the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century* in eight volumes (London, 1802-6). Bell also possessed two of the great Classical reference manuals of the nineteenth century, the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* (Leipzig, 1900-1913) and Pauly-Wissowa-Kroll *Real Encyclopädie* (Stuttgart, 1894-1913).

It is instructive to examine the works by and about one Classical author in Bell's catalogue, and Lucretius is a typical example. Of texts of the *De Rerum Natura* without commentary Bell possessed one incunabulum (Venice, T. de Ragazonibus, 1495), a Baskerville edition (Birmingham, 1773), and the three Teubner editions (Leipzig, 1852; 1894; 1909). Of texts with commentary he owned the Lambinus text (1st ed., Paris, 1563), the Plantin edition with Gifanius' notes (Leyden, 1595), Daniel Pareus' text with his *Lexicon Lucretianum* (1st ed., Frankfurt, 1631), the Havercamp variorum edition with the notes of Lambinus, Gifanius, Faber, Creech, and Pius (Leyden, 1725), the Wakefield edition with Bentley's notes (Leyden, 1801), the Forbiger edition (Leipzig, 1821), two copies of the edition with the notes of Creech and Bentley (London, 1835), as well as the standard later nineteenth century editions of Lachmann (Berlin, 1871-2), Munro (Cambridge, 1893), Bockemüller (Stade, 1874), and Giussani (Torino, 1896-8). He also owned seven editions of individual books of the *De Rerum Natura* (all dating from the turn of the century), four translations (including Creech's, London, 1683), and 33 critical studies, 24 of which were in German and all of which dated from between 1824 and 1932. A comparison with Bell's holdings for Lucretius and the bibliography in Cyril Bailey's defini-

¹⁷ Marie Tremaine, *Handlist of Erasmiana in the Bell Collection of Victoria College*, TS, [49] 1.

¹⁸ Letter to Bell from Mr. Justice W.R. Riddell, January 10, 1921. Bell Papers, E.J. Pratt Library, Victoria College, Toronto.

tive edition of the *De Rerum Natura*¹⁹ shows that, of the works which Bailey refers to, Bell possessed all of the texts with commentary and all of the critical studies on Lucretius which had been written before he died. His list of texts and studies of Lucretius then is an impressive one; it would have enhanced the University of Toronto Library of his own day, and would still do so in our day. A comparison with another scholar's library is also illuminating. William Dale was a professor at University College, Toronto, from 1880 until 1895 and himself a Latin scholar and bibliophile; in his large collection of Classical works there were no more than four books on or by Lucretius. An examination of Bell's listings, on the other hand, opens up the whole field of Lucretian scholarship.

A glance at the list of over 110 entries under "Homer" reveals such landmarks in Homeric scholarship as F.A. Wolf's *Prolegomena ad Homerum* (1st ed., Halle, 1795) as well as Wood's *Essay on the Original Genius of Homer* (3rd ed., London, 1824) and Blackwell's *Inquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer* (1st ed., London, 1735) — the two books which awakened Goethe's interest in the Classics.

Under "Horace" in addition to Bentley's notorious text (1st ed., Cambridge, 1711) Bell owned the following early editions; Venice, Bonellus, 1562; a 1566 edition edited by Lambinus and printed by Paulus Manutius; a 1580 Basel edition, and a Plantin edition (Leyden, 1611).

Bell had listed and identified one *editio princeps* in his catalogue: the *Orationes* of Aristides (Florence, Junta, 1516).

Virgil was Bell's favorite Classical author and we are told that perhaps nothing could have increased his devotion to the poet except the discovery that he had been born in Scotland!²⁰ Imagine the delight that he must have taken in the possession of an incunabulum of the Georgics. In his list of over 110 entries under "Virgil" there is one text dated from the fifteenth century, five from the sixteenth, one from the seventeenth, and five from the eighteenth, with the majority being the important and "working" texts of the nineteenth century. Mention must also be made of one other remarkable book that he owned — a beautiful mid-eighteenth century facsimile of the Codex Mediceus of Virgil in the Laurentian Library.

In general it is accurate to say that for each Classical author Bell had an average of four sixteenth century texts, four seventeenth, and five eighteenth, with the majority being the texts and critical works of the nineteenth century — perhaps the greatest in the history of Classical scholarship. His early texts moreover were by no means limited to only the famous authors: he possessed two sixteenth and two seventeenth century editions of Lactantius and an *Opera Omnia* of Ausonius (Florence, Junta, 1517).

Bell's natural interest in the famous Classicists of the past is also reflected in his collection. He owned first editions not only of Bentley's *Lucan* (Strawberry Hill, 1760) but also of his rival Burmann (Leyden, 1740). In addition to first

¹⁹Cyril Bailey, ed., *Titi Lucreti Cari De Rerum Natura Libri Sex* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1947), III, 1782-5.

²⁰Bush, p. 423.

editions of Bentley's *Horace* and his arrogant rewriting of *Paradise Lost* (London, 1732) he owned Richard Johnson's attack on Bentley, *Aristarchus Anti-Bentleianus Quadraginta Sex Bentleii Errores Super Q. Horatii Flacci . . .* (Nottingham, 1717). The "Battle of the Books" can be followed by entries in the catalogue beginning with Boyle's *Phalaridis Epistolae* (2nd ed., Oxford, 1718) and followed by Bentley's reply *Dissertation on the Epistles of Phalaris* (London, 1877). Bell's catalogue lists a three volume edition of Bentley's works (London, 1836-8) and a *Bibliography of Bentley* (Cambridge, 1908). In addition to Jebb's biography (New York, 1882) Bell had a copy of the famous biography of Bentley by Monk (London, 1833, an inscribed copy) which Virginia Woolf reviews with such charm in *The Common Reader*.

As well as Classical philology and literature Bell was interested in French, German, and Italian authors and there are more than a dozen entries for Corneille and several dozen for Dante. His second great interest however was English literature. Bush tells us that he was devoted to Burns, and indeed we find 45 books on or by Burns. There are more than fifty entries for the Brownings. Bell's collection of works by and about English authors, however large, is not as distinguished as that in Classics. Although he read omnivorously and had catholic tastes he had perhaps neither the interest nor the funds to collect early editions in the field. Of over 220 entries under "Shakespeare" all were late nineteenth century editions and critical works. His editions of Burton, Browne, and Bunyan, and Pope, Swift, and Johnson all date from the nineteenth century and of nineteenth century works he possessed the standard complete sets of such writers as Dickens, Scott, and George Eliot.

What is perhaps more interesting is the number of works, the variety, and the number of first editions of British and American authors of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth which were represented in his collection. That a man devoted to Virgil and Burns should purchase works by Henry James, Virginia Woolf, Ezra Pound, and Walt Whitman demonstrates a surprisingly catholic taste. As well as later editions of their other works Bell owned first editions of novels by the following authors: Joseph Conrad: *Almayer's Folly*; *The Arrow of Gold: A Story Between Two Notes*; *Tales 'Twixt Land and Sea*; *Typhoon and Other Stories*; *Under Western Eyes*; *Victory, An Island Tale*; [and with Ford Madox Hueffer] *Romance*.

Ralph Waldo Emerson: *The Conduct of Life* (an inscribed copy).

E.M. Forster: *Howard's End*.

Thomas Hardy: *A Changed Man and Other Stories*; *Jude the Obscure*; *Poems of the Past and Present*; *Satires of Circumstance*; *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*; *Time's Laughing Stocks and Other Verses*; *The Well-Beloved*; *Wessex Poems*; *The Dynasts*.

Ezra Pound: *Lustra*; with earlier poems; *The Spirit of Romance*.

Mark Twain: *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*; *Life on the Mississippi*; *Extracts from Adam's Diary*; *Extract from Captain Stormfield's Visit to Heaven*; *The £1,000,000 Bank-Note and Other Stories*; *The Curious Republic of Gondour and Other Whimsical Sketches*.

Virginia Woolf: *Night and Day*.

W.B. Yeats: *The Cutting of an Agate* (1st English edition, 1st American

edition); *Poems; Reveries Over Childhood and Youth*, [and edited by] *Irish Fairy Tales; Samhain, An occasional Review* (an inscribed copy).

Bell was also interested in books about books. He owned Brunet's *Manuel du Libraire* (Brussels, 1838-45) and subscribed to *The Bookman* and *The Canadian Bookman*. Other representative titles include Richard Garnett's *Essays on Librarianship and Bibliography* (London, 1899), *Catalogue of Presentation and Vellum Copies of the Kelmescott Press* (London, 1914), and three works by Dibdin: *Rare and Valuable Editions of the Greek and Roman Classics* (London, 1808), *Bibliomania* (London, 1876), and *A Bibliographical, Antiquarian, and Picturesque Tour in France and Germany* (London, 1829).

In an age of anti-heroes nothing seems more foreign than hero-worship. E.J. Pratt in his last years read every book he could find on Napoleon. Bell had just such an interest in biography and history and in his library there were at least a dozen books on each of Oliver Cromwell, Andrew Jackson, Abraham Lincoln, David Livingstone, Wellington, Napoleon (as well as fourteen books on the Battle of Waterloo), Hannibal, and Frederick III.

Bell's library was also well stocked with books on travel, the theatre, and religion. One is sure to find at least six or eight books on each well-known country in the world: under "Australia" are listed two travel books, one history, three on the exploration of the country, and three on Australian literature. DeWitt tells us that Bell had a great knowledge of the theatre and of famous actors²¹ and his diary of 1910 indicates that he was an avid theatre-goer. This interest is represented by such titles as Ellen Terry's *The Story of My Life* (London, 1908), W.S. Gilbert's *Bab Ballads* (New York, 1883) and *Original Comic Operas* (New York, 1856), and by three books on David Garrick and his circle. Bell's large collection of books on religion consisted not only of theological works and Biblical commentaries but also of works on Buddhism (of which, for example, there are eight).

The story is told that Dr. and Mrs. Bell used to read one detective novel aloud each evening. There are as well in his catalogue a number of books on more frivolous or unusual interests: eight books on golf, books on boxing, two books on electricity, six books on astronomy.

Many of his books were commonly found in libraries of the turn of the century: the works of Andrew Lang, W.E. Gladstone, John Morley; the histories of Froude, J.R. Green, Lecky; the essays of Macaulay and Carlyle; the eleventh edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

There was a fair amount of Canadiana in the collection, much of which is by his colleagues, e.g., the works of his friend Coleman²² and the writings of the Edgar family.²³ In addition the following are representative: J. Ross Robertson's *Landmarks of Toronto*. 6 vols. (Toronto, 1894-1914), K.M. Lizars' *The Valley of the Humber* (Toronto, 1913), Norman Robertson's *History of the County of*

²¹DeWitt, *Opening of the Bell Library*.

²²Arthur Philemon Coleman (1852-1939), Professor of Geology in the University of Toronto from 1901 until 1922.

²³Sir James David Edgar (1841-1899), Matilda, Lady Edgar (1844-1910) and their son Professor Pelham Edgar (1871-1948).

Bruce (Toronto, 1906), Sandford Fleming's *The Inter-Colonial* (Montreal, 1876, autographed by the author), and A. Picken's *The Canadas From Original Documents Furnished by John Galt* (2nd ed., London, 1836).

The most valuable section of Bell's library was his collection of Erasmiana. It has been described as the greatest in Canada²⁴ and a special issue of *Renaissance and Reformation*²⁵ has been devoted to the Erasmus collection of the Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies at Victoria University, Toronto (the bulk of which collection was gathered by Bell). David Hoeniger speaking of Bell's collection of Erasmus in his general introduction to this issue says:

Brief attention, however, should be drawn to two sad facts. The first is that the original collection as assembled by Professor Bell was, when it reached us, neither complete in every sense nor in perfect condition, though reasonable efforts had been made to look after it properly when library staff was scarce. We do know that some scarce volumes on Erasmus, and for that matter many other early books once owned by Bell never reached us. During the difficult years immediately after Bell's death in 1932, much seems alas to have been lost.²⁶

Evidence of the bibliographic interest taken by Bell in this important section of his library is provided by a sentence of DeWitt's in his account of the opening of the Bell library (a house on Bloor Street in which some of Bell's books in Classics and English literature were later housed), "This collection [the Erasmus] is so unique that it even contained a volume by a printer unknown to the authorities of the British Museum and was once the subject of a correspondence between Dr. Bell and the Library of Congress".²⁷ An examination of Bell's Erasmus collection reveals something of the provenance of these books. Thirteen of them have the book-seller's label of Thornton's of Oxford. Thirteen others have the signature of Jacob Bernays, an additional nine have both his signature and annotations on the front end-paper, and an additional 23 have his annotations. In the volumes which contained either Bernays' signature and/or his annotations a number was found in the upper right hand corner of the title page. A further examination revealed that a total of eighty of the three hundred and fifty early Erasmus books in Bell's collection have these numbers, running approximately from 1725 to 1792, and all written in the same script. Jacob Bernays was a German Classical philologist who lived from 1824 to 1881. He taught at the University of Breslau from 1853 to 1866 and at Bonn from 1866 until his death. Near the end of his life he was contemplating writing an extensive monograph on Erasmus²⁸ — hence his collection of early editions. Bell went

²⁴F.D. Hoeniger, "General Introduction," *Renaissance and Reformation*, 7, No. 2 (1971), 23.

²⁵*Renaissance and Reformation*, 7, No. 2 (1971).

²⁶Hoeniger, p. 24.

²⁷DeWitt, *Opening of the Bell Library*.

²⁸J.E. Sandys, *A History of Classical Scholarship* (Cambridge: University Press, 1908), III, 178.

to Breslau in 1886 to study for his doctorate and it was probably then that he purchased the eighty volumes of Erasmus which had belonged to Bernays. It may even have provided the inspiration for further collecting.

As well as Hain's *Repertorium Bibliographicum* (Stuttgart, 1826-38) Bell owned the Bibliographic Society of America's *Census of Fifteenth Century Books Owned in America* (New York, 1919); a reading of this record revealed that Bell had reported his holdings and that he then owned 13 incunabula, listed at the end of this article.

Only one of Bell's diaries has come to light. It is for the year 1910 and in it he mentions the booksellers from whom he purchased books during that year. They include the names of Mudie, Smith, Glaisher, Thompson, Daniell, Edwards, Higham, Denny, and Thimm of London, MacLehose of Glasgow, Commin of Exeter, Mayer and Müller of Berlin, and John Britnell and Eaton's of Toronto. Of these Mudie's, Smith, Glaisher and Britnell recur with the most frequency. Unfortunately only in about half of the cases in which Bell mentions receiving parcels of books does he record the amount that he paid. Nevertheless for 1910 he records money orders to England for a total of £97/14/11 and the amount spent locally adds up to \$350.68. Among Bell's papers are letters and invoices from the following antiquarian booksellers for the years 1918 and 1919: R. Atkinson, P.J. & A.E. Dobell, and Maggs Bros. of London, James Miles of Leeds, Walter Benjamin and Patrick F. Madigan of New York, William H. Allen of Temple, Pa., and John Britnell and Williamson of Toronto. However these invoices deal almost entirely with purchases of autographs²⁹ and very few with books. D.O. Robson,³⁰ another student of Bell's, tells of Bell mortgaging his house on more than one occasion to buy books.

It was always Bell's desire that his library should become the property of his college and after his death in 1932 his widow generously offered to donate it. This gift was cordially welcomed but proved at the moment embarrassing because the college library lacked the space for storage of 30,000 volumes even in packing cases. The difficulty was temporarily overcome by renting the Bell residence at 17 Avenue Road with the books *in situ*. In May 1933, Margaret Ray, the assistant to the librarian of Victoria College, and three graduate students moved into Bell's house to begin the task of clearing out rooms "literally filled with books".³¹ They worked for a year and listed and packed over 18,000 books. Since the lease of the house was due to expire in May 1934, and as a great many books were still to be dealt with, and there was no further storage space available in the college buildings, it was decided to move the remainder of the books to a newly-purchased house at 131 Bloor St. West (just north of Victoria College), and to open two rooms there as extra reading rooms for the library, to be known as the Bell Library. These reading rooms were opened in the fall of 1934 and contained approximately 4,500 books in English literature and Classics. In addition some 2,000 books were catalogued and added to the shelves of the Victoria library.

²⁹Another aspect of Bell as a collector too large to be discussed here.

³⁰Professor of Latin, Victoria College, 1947-1975.

³¹Margaret V. Ray, *op. cit.*

On March 30, 1933, George H. Locke, the chief librarian of the Toronto Public Library and a former pupil of Bell's requested permission to remove temporarily the Erasmus collection to the Central Library to be catalogued:

My reason is that on going over the sheaf catalogue which Dr. Bell prepared I find that these books seem to be of very special value. This morning I compared the entries with those in the British Museum catalogue and found a number of books which were not in the British Museum. Now I have in my Reference Library an assistant who is capable of doing this bibliographical work because of her study with Esdaile of the British Museum and the University of London. She is Miss Marie Tremaine, a graduate of Victoria College. On talking the matter over with her I said that I would write you and suggest that this be allowed, and she and I would do this bibliographical work on Erasmus, and the result of the cataloguing would be given to Victoria.³²

As a result the *Erasmiana* (about 350 volumes) was catalogued by Marie Tremaine, a *Handlist of Erasmiana in the Bell Collection of Victoria College*³³ prepared, and the collection returned to the Victoria College library.

The remaining 23,000 books were stored in the basement of the library of Victoria College where they remained for thirty years. In 1966 the Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies was formed at Victoria using as its nucleus Bell's Erasmus collection, his early Classical books, and other early books of his which fell into the period (approximately from 1450 to 1650) on which the Centre wished to concentrate. At about the same time the remaining books in the basement of the Victoria library as well as the books from the reading rooms at 131 Bloor St. W. (since demolished to make way for the Colonnade) were sorted; most of the rare books were preserved and the vast bulk which remained sold in a series of sales in 1969.

As one reads through Bell's great catalogue one is impressed again and again by the diversity of his interests. He is described in the *Macmillan Dictionary of Canadian Biography* as "a great scholar of the old-fashioned type"³⁴, that is, one who took the whole of humanistic learning as his province. Traherne says, "Men do mightily wrong themselves when they refuse to be present in all generations". So Bell if he had read the majority of his books — as all who knew him well repeatedly assert³⁵ — must have been present in the world of the mind in all times and in almost all places. That is not — one hastens to add — to say that he knew only a little about a lot: his knowledge of Virgil alone refutes that suggestion.

³²Letter to F.L. Barber, Librarian of Victorian University from George H. Locke, March 30, 1933. Bell Papers, E.J. Pratt Library, Victoria College, Toronto.

³³Tremaine, *op. cit.*

³⁴W. Stewart Wallace, *Macmillan Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1963) p. 46.

³⁵Bush, p. 423.

Classicists believe that a respect for words is the beginning of learning. Andrew Bell's whole life centred on words and on learning. The subject of his great work *The Latin Dual and Poetic Diction* is words and their relationship to each other; the major purpose of his great library was the advancement of his own learning. His immense linguistic and literary education however did not merely end with an admiration of great literature but with something perhaps even greater — a possession of its power of utterance. And it is interesting to note that a man who was an outstanding teacher, scholar, and book-collector was also a master not only of the Latin but also of the English language.³⁶

A library that has lost its collecting genius is as dead as a body that has lost its soul. Bell has been dead for 45 years and the great library which he assembled is now dispersed; the Erasmus collection alone remains as a glowing fragment. In his college however his memory has recently been rejuvenated. His portrait once again hangs in its halls, and a bookplate commemorating his great gift has been entered into those early works and editions of Erasmus which once were his and now are housed in the Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies at Victoria College, Toronto. In this Centre as well has been erected a small bronze plaque with a simple Latin inscription:

Andreas Iacobus Bell
1856-1932
Linguae Latinae Professor 1881-1921
cuius ex Erasmianis, incunabulis, editionibus antiquissimis
haec bibliothecae Victorianae pars est orta
sui memores alios fecit merendo.

Appendix

List of Incunabula owned by A.J. Bell as reported in the *Census of Fifteenth Century Books Owned in America 1919*.

Anselmus, Saint, archbishop of Canterbury. Opera et tractatus. Nuremberg: Hochfeder, 1491, 27 Mar. f°.

Augustinus, Saint Aurelius. Opuscula plurima. Strasburg: Flach, 1491, 11 Aug. f°

Boethius, Annius or Anicius Manlius Torquatus Severinus. Opera. Venice: J. & G. Gregoriis, 1499, 8 Jul. (De arithmetica, de musica, geometria, philosophia consolatione, de scholarum disciplina); 1497, 10 Feb. (De consolatione et de disciplina scholarum). f°.

De consolatione philosophiae; cum commentario Thomae de Aquino. Cologne: Koelhoff, 1488, die Joh. Chrysostome [Jan. 27]. 4°.

Fenestella, Lucius; Andreas Dominicus Fiocco or Fiocchi. De Romanorum magistratibus. 4°.

³⁶As seen, for example, in the Latin prose of his thesis *De Locativi in prisca Latinitate Vi et Usu* and in the English prose of "The beginnings of Latin poetry," in *In Memoriam Andrew James Bell*, p. 17-29.

Gerson, Jean. *De consolatione theologiae*. Cologne: Koelhoff, 1488.

Laetus, Pomponius. *De Romanorum magistratibus*. 4°.

Lucretius Carus, Titus. *De rerum natura*. Venice: T. de Ragazonibus, 1495, 4 Sept. 4°.

Pistorio, Cinus de; Guittoncino de Singibuldi. *Lectura super codice*. f°.

Politianus, Angelus; Angelo Poliziano; Ambrogini. *Opera et alia lectu digna*. Venice: Aldus, 1498, Jul. f°.

Suetonius Tranquillus, Caius. *Vitae XII. Caesarum*. [Commentaries of Beroaldus and Sabellicus.] Venice: Bevilaqua, 1496. f°.

Vergilius Maro, Publius; Virgil. *Georgica* [with commentaries]; Deventer: Pafraet, 1496, 7 kal. Sept. [Aug. 26.] 4°.

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