Behold this treasury of glorious things: The Montreal Caxton Exhibition of 1877

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In 1877, the English-speaking world celebrated the four-hundredth anniversary of the introduction of printing into England by William Caxton. In the nineteenth century, it was generally believed that the *Recuyell of the Histories of Troy* bearing the date 1477 was the first book printed in England, indeed the first example of printing in England. Modern research has pushed this date back, and it has now been shown that Caxton printed his Chaucer in 1476.¹ For the Victorians, however, 1477 was the year and it was celebrated.

In London, during July and August, an exhibition held at South Kensington for the benefit of the Printers' Pension, Almshouse and Orphan Asylum Corporation attracted 24,684 visitors. The chief mover behind the exhibition was William Blades and it was, to use the words of Robin Myers, 'a landmark of bibliophily.' Although only a £1000 was handed over to the Pension Corporation – all from donations, as there was no profit in the celebration itself – the exhibition did produce a catalogue (in various issues), as well as Henry Stevens's catalogue of the Bibles. In all, there was something in the order of 5000 exhibits – 'there are 4,734 numbered items in the later editions of the Catalogue, some subdivided with letters.'² These exhibits were divided into fourteen classes, lettered A to O.

- A. William Caxton and the Development of the Art of Printing in England and Scotland.
- B. The Development of the Art of Printing in Foreign Countries.
- C. The Comparative Development of the Art of Printing in England and Foreign Countries, illustrated by Specimens of Holy Scripture.
- D. Specimens noticeable for Rarity or for Beauty and Excellence of Typography.
- E. Specimens of Printing (steam and commercial printing and newspapers.)

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- F. Printed Music.
- G. Book Illustrations and other Specimens of Engraving, Printing in Colours, and other Processes.
- H. Portraits and Autographs of distinguished Authors, Type-founders, Printers, and Booksellers.
- I. Books relating to Printing.
- K. Curiosities and Miscellanies.
- L. Type and other Printing Materials.
- M. Stereotyping and Electrotyping.
- N. Copperplate Printing, Lithography and Photography.
- O. Paper and Paper-making.³

Under these classes was grouped a remarkable collection of books, including 194 Caxtons (representing 104 distinct works), fifty-seven lent by Earl Spencer from Althorp.⁴ Class C – Bibles and Liturgies – included 810 of the former and thirty of the latter. It began with Earl Spencer's copy of the 42-line Bible and concluded with the Oxford University Press Memorial Bible, printed during the night preceding the grand festival opening at mid-day on 30 June.⁵ Other notable books included Earl Spencer's Valdarfer Boccaccio and the Queen's Second Folio that had belonged to Charles I and bore his signature. Equally remarkable material was to be found throughout the exhibition.

The Celebration was not limited to the exhibition: there were also public meetings, services at Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's Cathedral, and banquets. The exhibition was opened by W.E. Gladstone, and the opening ceremony was followed by a *déjeuner* of four courses and five toasts.

The London celebrations were, all in all, a most elaborate undertaking and provide a useful touchstone for considering the Montreal celebrations. But before coming to this event, there is one other Caxton celebration that warrants attention.

In Toronto, a Caxton Celebration, organized by the Canadian Institute, was held from 13 to 16 June. The celebration began on the evening of 13 June at 8 p.m. with a lecture by the Reverend Dr. Henry Scadding on the subject of 'Prototypography.'⁶ Scadding surveyed the early development of printing, with, naturally, an emphasis on the work of Caxton. The Toronto celebration also included an exhibition of 'Books and Other Objects Illustrative of the Art of Typography.' There were 576 exhibits divided into twenty-two categories, including: Books printed before 1500 – twenty items; books printed between 1500 and 1600 – fifty-seven items; Elzevirs – fifteen items; Aldines – five items; early editions of Erasmus – thirteen items; and examples of early printing from Toronto (twenty-six items), Quebec City (ten), Montreal (fourteen), Niagara (ten), Kingston (five), and

Halifax (two). These books and newspapers were lent by various public libraries in Toronto and by 'private amateurs of books in the city and neighbourhood.'⁷ Unfortunately, the printed catalogue does not indicate who lent what.

The Montreal Caxton Celebration was organized under the auspices of the Numismatic and Antiquarian Society. At the meeting of the Society on 21 March 1877, the Secretary, Gerald E. Hart, proposed that:

In view of the approaching anniversary of the introduction of printing by Caxton ... that a conversazione and exhibition be held in June, to consist of a collection of books from public and private libraries which would illustrate the progress which has been made in printing during the last four centuries, having specially in view the bringing together of books, pamphlets and newspapers printed in any part of the Dominion, as well as antiquities and Numismatics pertaining to it, the whole to be properly catalogued.⁸

This suggestion was received 'with warm approval' and a special meeting was called for 31 March, 'to mature a plan by which the contemplated conversazione may be fully considered and carried out.'⁹ According to an article in the *New Dominion Monthly*, the Society 'believed it would be a very good opportunity for discovering what literary treasures we had in our midst ...'¹⁰ The organization of the celebration seems to have been primarily the work of Hart who was assisted by Henry Mott and George A. Holmes.¹¹

Gerald E. Hart (1849-1936), of the Trois Rivières Harts, was a Montreal insurance agent. A prominent member of the Numismatic and Antiquarian Society, he wrote two works on Canadian history – *The Fall of New France* (1888) and *The Quebec Act* (1891) – and a number of articles. Today, however, he is probably best known as a book collector.¹² Henry Mott is a more obscure figure. Born in England in 1825, he was in 1877 the President of the Numismatic and Antiquarian Society. He seems to have been closely associated with Hart, but in what way is not entirely clear. In 1882 he was superintendent of the Mechanic's Institute Library and Reading Room, and he was assistant librarian at McGill College from 1883 to 1901.¹³ About George A. Holmes, nothing has been discovered.

At a subsequent meeting of the society, a budget of \$500 was provided for the celebration, and the use of Molson Hall at McGill College was suggested. Furthermore, the Governor-General, the Earl of Dufferin, agreed to be the patron of the celebration, although he could not be present as he would be touring Manitoba at the time.¹⁴ In the event, Molson Hall was not available, though a draft of the invitation card exists giving that loca-

tion.¹⁵ The \$500 proved inadequate, and the celebration ran a deficit.¹⁶

The Montreal Caxton Celebration is surprisingly well documented. One whole number of the *Canadian Antiquarian and Numismatic Journal*, for October 1877 (Vol. 6, No. 2), is devoted to a review of the celebration and to a study of Caxton. The *New Dominion Monthly* contained a long article by Henry Mott surveying the celebration and Caxton's career in the August number. The *Revue de Montréal* in its August and September numbers contained a two-part report by P.J.O. Chauveau. Here, as in the *Canadian Antiquarian and Numismatic Journal*, the speeches at the conversazione were given. Chauveau's report was also printed separately. Finally, the *Canadian Illustrated News* contained notices before and after the celebration. In addition, it published a view of the exhibition hall and articles on 'Famous English Printers,' the Gutenberg Bible (with an illustration), the 'Caxton Memorial Bible,' and 'Books Prior to the Art of Printing' by Hart.¹⁷ But of much greater importance for our knowledge of the exhibition is the published *Condensed Catalogue of Manuscripts, Books and Engravings on Exhibition at the Caxton Exhibition ...* (Montreal: 1877). This catalogue of ninety-three pages lists the vast majority of exhibited items – a few are not included because they arrived too late – and provides a list of lenders. It would seem to exist in two issues, one with and one without the preliminary matter (a preface and a list of contributors). There is also a separate catalogue, of which two editions exist, listing the books and Irish manuscripts exhibited by Edward Murphy of Montreal. All this material taken together makes it possible to study the Montreal celebration in some detail.¹⁸

The material for the exhibition was solicited and arranged, more or less, according to a pre-determined schedule or order of classification. There were twelve classes:

1. Missals or Manuscripts Books, prior to the Art of Printing.
2. Books from the Press of William Caxton, Colard Mansion, Wynkyn de Worde and [Richard] Pynson.
3. Books from the invention of the Art, to 1650.
4. Books subsequent to 1650, having merit in illustrating the special development of the Art, 'Editio Princeps,' uncut Editions, large paper Editions, Rare and Curious Books, Works from celebrated Printers.
5. Early and Rare Editions of Bibles and Prayer Books.
6. Illustrated and Illuminated Books from the earliest epoch, to the present day.
7. Books having reference to the early History of Canada, (Nouvelle France).

8. All Books and Newspapers printed in Canada prior to 1840, thereafter, Books illustrative of the progress of the Art in Canada.
9. Prints, Etchings, Woodcuts and Engravings up to 1800, thereafter, specimens illustrative of Canadian Engraving.
10. Specimens of Calligraphy, up to 1700.
11. Maps and Plans relating to America prior to 1800.
12. Coins and Medals.¹⁹

In addition to the books, manuscripts, prints, maps, and coins on display, there was a mechanical section. This included demonstrations of typesetting, printing by a treadle press, lithographic printing, and bookbinding.²⁰ Typesetting was demonstrated by the Dominion Type Foundry. Type was cast at the rate of five pounds per hour, the 'jet' or rough edge of the type was broken, the type polished and prepared and arranged for packing. A 'Peerless' treadle machine was in operation printing a poetical tribute in honour of the occasion by Henry Mott, president of the Numismatic and Antiquarian Society. The eighth, and last, stanza read:

Praise to the men of energy who planned
This princely place, this treasured-crowded hall!
Praise to the friendly ones throughout the land
Who promptly answered to a noble call!
And when these riches, which improve the heart,
Are to their wonted places back consigned,
May this transcendent spectacle of art
Be mirrored in our souls, leaving light behind.²¹

Lithographic printing was demonstrated by Messrs. George Bishop & Co. Bookbinding was demonstrated by Messrs. Dawson Brothers and included a demonstration of the 'marbling' of the edges of a book. Thus, there was no lack of attractions to bring the Montreal public to the exhibition hall.

The Caxton Celebration opened at the Mechanics' Hall, St. Paul Street, on 26 June and continued on the three following days – 27, 28, and 29 June. The evening of 26 June featured the *conversazione* before which the audience 'had an opportunity to inspect thousands of rare MSS, books, pamphlets, prints coins etc., which were ranged and classified chronologically in show cases, reaching the length of the Hall.'²² The description in the *Canadian Antiquarian and Numismatic Journal* continues:

At the rear was placed a small press, type foundry and book-bindery, where the different processes necessary to produce a printed book were well illustrated. And the platform itself presented an imposing appear-

ance, showing well filled book-cases and shelves, bearing costly volumes, and a very large show of Shakespeares and Shakespeariana, etc., etc. About 8:30 p.m. the chair was taken by Principal Dawson ...²³

Others on the platform included, in addition to the speakers, Dr. Hammond Trumbull of Hartford, Connecticut and Theodore Irwin of Oswego, New York.

Principal William Dawson of McGill College spoke about the results of Caxton's art, of 'the immense and rapid dissemination of thought, [and] the extension of education.' He stressed the importance of an unfettered press: 'it has been proved by all experience to be the best of all guarantees for the safety and progress of society.' Printing and, in particular, a free press, and the British Constitution, he said, 'did what was of the nature of an unalloyed good, as much as anything of human invention may claim the title, and for this reason such a commemoration as this is a merited and proper tribute to a great and pregnant fact in the history of our country.'²⁴

The next speaker was the Honourable P.J.O. Chauveau, the first Premier of the Province of Quebec after Confederation. He spoke, in French, and at some length, on the relation between printing and literature. He recalled printing's importance in bringing to light ancient masterpieces and in the creation of new ones. Yet, he stressed, printing was even more a means for 'the realization of that grand religious unity predicted and promised by the Scriptures before the consummation of time.'²⁵ He discussed the influence of Pope Leo X on the Renaissance and compared the development of French and English literature in the first two centuries of printing. He also noted the importance of printing in making known the New World and its many wonders. Chauveau complained briefly of the many works printed that did not merit the light of day and stressed the importance of not pandering to the public taste. He concluded by hoping 'that all our beautiful books will also be good books, and that they will always come at the moment when the needs of society shall demand them, to inspire courage in our trials, and to guide us, under the eye of God, to the accomplishment of our great and glorious destiny.'²⁶

Thomas White, Jr., publisher of the *Montreal Gazette*, spoke of the improvements in the art of printing 'and on the popular result of it – the newspaper press.' He spoke of the problems of typesetting and the difficulties in perfecting a machine to do it. He also complained of the unionization of printers which he said had destroyed excellence, because it meant that printers were journeymen paid by the week and not by the piece.²⁷ In the second part of his address, White described the development of the newspaper press. 'With a free press, the bulwark of the people's liberties, and the parent of reform, human progress was safe.' Every publisher

must recognize the great responsibility inherent in his position; the newspaper press is 'almost the only literature of the masses, moulding their opinions and forming their destiny.'²⁸

The final speaker of the evening was Dr. S.P. May of the Education Department, Toronto. Dr. May began by remarking that much of what he had planned to say had been covered by the other speakers. Nevertheless, he traced the career of Caxton and enumerated the advantages now enjoyed in the cheapness of literature because of Caxton's labours. He described the introduction of printing to North America and spoke of the Eliot Indian Bible. He finished with a brief 'glance over the progress of the art of disseminating news from the advent of the news-letter until the present time,' and congratulated Montreal on its exhibition.²⁹

After this feast of Victorian oratory, the audience went out into the June evening, and at 10:00 p.m., 'the valuable collection was closed to the public for the night.' However, on the following days Montrealers were able to examine at their leisure the some 2,850 items listed in the catalogue, in addition to which there was a significant number of coins and medals.

The exhibition's chief treasure was a 42-line Bible. Dr. Hammond Trumbull of Hartford, Connecticut, brought to Montreal the copy that belonged to the late George Brinley. This was the Erfurt parish church copy, acquired by Henry Stevens for Brinley in 1870. In 1881, it sold at the Brinley sale to Hamilton Cole for \$8,000. It is now the Scheide copy at Princeton. The catalogue comments that this is 'the most important and distinguished work in the whole annals of typography – the first edition of the Holy Scriptures – the first book printed with movable metal types by the inventors of the art of printing.'³⁰ And its rarity was stressed; in 1877 there were seven known copies according to the *Condensed Catalogue*. Canadians were suitably impressed, and the *Canadian Illustrated News* in the number for 28 July included a brief commentary reporting thirteen known copies, and reproduced one page from the famous book.

Dr. Trumbull brought other treasures to Montreal in his luggage: the 1459 Durandus *Rationale* on vellum and a copy of the Eliot Indian Bible of 1661 (the *Condensed Catalogue* gave the date 1681). The catalogue commented that the Indian Bible 'is another literary treasure, for which fabulous prices have been paid. Whenever a copy is exposed for sale, the bibliophiles of the two continents make a rush for it, and lucky is the purchaser who can take it away for less than several times its weight in gold.'³¹ This was one of the seven copies in the Brinley collection. One can well understand why Dr. Trumbull was given a place on the platform for the conversation.

The first section of the catalogue and the exhibition was devoted to 'Missals and mss Prior to the Invention of Printing,' and included a small

but interesting selection of fifteen items. Unfortunately, it is difficult to identify many of these manuscripts with material that is now known. The University of Toronto lent a fifteenth-century manuscript of Lorenzo Valla's *Elegantiarum* and George F.C. Smith, a Montreal insurance agent, displayed his ostensibly thirteenth-century Benedictional. This is a splendid example of a liturgical manuscript, illuminated in gold and colours, and one page was reproduced in black and white in the same number of the *Canadian Illustrated News* that contained the reproduction from the Gutenberg Bible. Hart contributed a short article on mediaeval manuscripts to this issue. The Smith manuscript is now McGill Mediaeval MS 3; however, it is not of the thirteenth century, but is rather dated to shortly after 1462 and was made for use in the Diocese of Amiens. A few other manuscripts are listed elsewhere in the catalogue.

Turning to early printed books, the organizers of the exhibition were faced with a problem: a Caxton celebration with no Caxtons would be an embarrassment. To remedy this, they arranged with Elliot Stock, the London publisher, to have proof sheets of his forthcoming facsimile of Caxton's 1477 *Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers*. This precaution proved to be unnecessary, however, although the facsimile was exhibited. Joseph W. Drexel of New York City provided his copy of the second edition of Caxton's *Chronicles of England* (1481). And at the last minute, Theodore Irwin of Oswego, New York arrived with his copy of Caxton's 1490 edition of Virgil's *Aeneid*. In addition, there were books printed by Wynkyn de Worde and Richard Pynson. One of the de Wordes and the two Pynsons belonged to Gerald Hart.

The total number of incunabula exhibited is not entirely clear because of the way the catalogue is arranged. According to Chauveau in the *Revue de Montréal*, there were about fifty, and it is of interest to note where they came from. Gerald Hart exhibited nine, the Université Laval five, the Reverend Thomas Musson, of West Farnham, Quebec, five, the University of Toronto five, P. J. O. Chauveau, Quebec City, four, Dr. Trumbull two, Theodore Irwin two, J.W. Drexel, New York City, two, and John Fairbairn, Montreal, Congregational College, Montreal, the Séminaire de Montréal, Dr. Marsden, Quebec City, Oscar Dunn, Quebec City, McGill College, George F.C. Smith, Montreal, École Normale Jacques Cartier, Montreal, and others, one each. One wonders where many of these have gone. The McGill 'incunabulum,' the Stephanus *Terence*, 1499, is, of course, not an incunabulum. The colophon clearly states 1542, and the title-page, lacking in the copy exhibited, gives 1541.³² Finally, to this list should be added the *Nuremberg Chronicle* lent by William Kingsford of Ottawa. It is not mentioned in any description of the exhibition, but it is in the catalogue, although undated (item 97).

In the next category, books printed before 1650, some 500 to 600 books in all were exhibited: works of the Fathers, secular and ecclesiastical history, the classics, and a respectable number of Aldines. Of this large number, three can be mentioned because of their special interest for Canadian and North-American history: Hart's copy of *Joyfull News Out of the Newe Found Worlde* of 1580 (item 202), *Narrative of the Manners and Customs of the Inhabitants of Virginia*, 1590 (item 223), lent by the Education Department, Toronto, and Du Bry's *America*, 1617 (item 311) belonging to J. Wingate Thornton of Boston.

The next category of the exhibition was that of 'Books from 1650 having merit in the development of the Art.' This group of more than 500 books was something of a catch all. It began with the second edition, 1651, of Richard Baxter's *Saints Everlasting Rest*, from Congregational College, Montreal, and included Reginald Scott's *Discovery of Witchcraft*, 1665 (item 545) belonging to Hart, John Evelyn's *French Gardiner*, 1672 (item 557) from the Numismatic and Antiquarian society, the 'first edition' of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, 1674 (item 563), Hart's copy (the true first edition is of course 1667), and Kingsborough's *Mexican Antiquities*, 1831-1848 (item 891) from McGill College. The publisher H.O. Houghton of Cambridge, Massachusetts, lent one Aldine, two Bodonis, and a facsimile of the Bay Psalm Book (item 941) among other works most of which fell into this section.

The section 'Books relating to Canada' was also rich and varied. Early voyages included the Ramusio of 1556 (item 982) and the Champlain of 1613 (item 986), both belonging to Romeo A. Stephens of Montreal. Hart's copy of Charlevoix's *Histoire et description générale de la Nouvelle France*, 1744 (item 1006), early Quebec City and Montreal imprints, and many nineteenth-century works found their place here. This class, like others, was greatly enlarged by late additions listed elsewhere in the catalogue.

The section 'Early and Rare Editions of Bibles, Prayer Books and Psalters' included numerous sixteenth- and seventeenth-century editions, including McGill College's 1535 Coverdale Bible (item 1133), and a Bible and Prayer Book of 1780 (item 1215) said to have belonged to Dr. Samuel Johnson. The latter was lent by James S. Grinnell of Greenfield, Massachusetts. In all, there were some ninety-five items in this class, not counting similar material that appeared in other classes.

Shakespeare and Shakespeariana, a class not listed but included as a separate section in the catalogue, included many eighteenth- and nineteenth-century editions, a good number of which were lent by the Kuklos Club, an organization of Montreal journalists, professional men, artists, and men of letters. However, the stars of the Shakespeare section

were undoubtedly the copies of the four folios brought by Theodore Irwin. In the Music class, an original edition of Handel's oratorio *Sampson* [sic] (item 1833), with corrections in the composer's hand, was exhibited by the Kuklos Club. The classes of Newspapers, Prints and Etchings, and Manuscripts contained far too much material to be mentioned here.

The catalogue, because of the many late additions, contains a lengthy appendix supplemented by additional lists. All of Theodore Irwin's books are in the appendix. Among the additional lists worth mentioning are the books and Irish manuscripts of Edward Murphy of Montreal; these included five Irish manuscripts of the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries.³³ J.G. Papineau, the Montreal notary, lent five school books of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries used by members of his family. Georges Baby, M.P. for Joliette, exhibited several Aldines and Elzevirs. Others to be noted here among the supplementary lists include Oscar Dunn and Cyrille Tessier of Quebec City, Université Laval (173 items), the Legislative Library, Fredericton, and from Montreal, Major L.A. Huguët-Latour, James Provost, H.J. Ibbotson, the Jesuits, the Catholic Commercial Academy, the Collège de Montréal, the Oblate Fathers (books in Indian languages), and the École Normale Jacques Cartier (forty-four items including an incunabulum).

The wealth of material displayed makes it almost impossible to give a true impression of the exhibition and the catalogue repays close study. Nevertheless, one final book should be mentioned to conclude this survey. This work, although listed in the catalogue (item 883), received no special mention in any report of the exhibition; yet it was one of the great treasures on show. McGill College lent its copy of the Audubon double-elephant folio *Birds of America* (1827-1838). This contemporary neglect suggests how much perceptions have changed in the last 115 years.

In this inspection of some of the books on exhibition, the names of some of the lenders have been noted, and it is now time to consider them in more detail. The catalogue lists the names of 156 lenders. Of these, one was from England (the publisher Elliot Stock), twelve from the United States, sixteen from Canada outside the Province of Quebec, sixteen from the Province of Quebec outside Montreal, and 111 from Montreal. The numbers for Montreal and the Province of Quebec are not surprising, but those for elsewhere in Canada and for the United States are more unexpected. Furthermore, thirty-five institutions or companies and 121 individuals lent material; of the thirty-five institutions, twenty-two lent six items or more, and of the 121 individuals, forty lent six items or more. Of the lenders from the United States, three are of the first importance: Dr. Trumbull with the Brinley books, Theodore Irwin, and, not yet mentioned, Joseph Sabin and Sons of New York who lent twenty-seven items.

The Sabin books included William Hubbard's *A Narrative of the Troubles with the Indians of New England*, Boston, 1677 (item 573); Louis Hennepin's *Déscription de la Louisiane*, Paris, 1688 (item 622); reprints of some early Americana; volumes of prints; and a number of histories of printing, including S.L. Sotheby's *Principia Typographica*, London, 1858 (item 971). Brinley's books were sold in the 1880s. Irwin's collection, including the Caxtons, was bought en bloc by J. Pierpont Morgan in 1900 for \$200,000, and is now at the Pierpont Morgan Library.

Important lenders among Canadian institutions outside the Province of Quebec included the Department of Education, Toronto, the University of Toronto, and the Legislative Library, Fredericton. All three contributed important books from their important collections. Of course, Quebec institutional libraries contributed a large number of books: the most important in terms of numbers being the Séminaire de Montréal, Congregational College (whose books are now largely at McGill), the Jesuits, and Université Laval. The McGill College Library, while providing some very important books, contributed in terms of numbers relatively few. Its days as an important institutional collection were still in the future. The other important lender in this category was the Kuklos Club of Montreal. The president of this club of journalists, professional men, artists, and men of letters was Thomas D. King, the Montreal dealer in prints, antiquities, and rare books. It is more than probable that most if not all the Kuklos items were, in fact, his – perhaps his stock in trade. King's Shakespeare collection of 214 volumes, rich in eighteenth-century editions, was acquired for McGill by Donald Smith and William Macdonald at King's death in 1884.³⁴

Among the private lenders, some had important collections of books: P.J.O. Chauveau (a catalogue exists at the Bibliothèque de l'assemblée nationale), Oscar Dunn (his books were sold at auction in 1885 and a catalogue exists),³⁵ John Fairbairn, Major L.A. Huguet-Latour, the Reverend Thomas Musson (his books came to McGill in 1919), and Cyrille Tessier. But none of these rivalled Gerald Hart in terms of the size and importance of their collections. He was the most active and serious collector among this group. It was clearly he who was the moving force behind the Caxton celebration, and he who used his contacts with collectors in the United States to get the Brinley and Irwin books to Montreal. Hart provided nine of the incunabula in the exhibition, this being the largest number from any single source. Many other important works were his and some of them have been mentioned. What is most remarkable, however, is that in 1877, Hart was only twenty-eight years old. He continued to collect throughout the 1880s, and then in 1890 his library was sold at auction by Libbies in Boston. The sale contained 3,191 lots of which 2,591 were books, the rest

being maps and manuscript documents. There was a second Hart sale of autograph letters and historical documents in 1895. The first sale catalogue lists an important number of mediaeval manuscripts, the second and fourth Shakespeare folios, and the Kilmarnock edition of Burns. Hart was a serious collector indeed.

This brief review of the Montreal Caxton celebration of 1877 should dispel any doubts about the existence of serious book collecting in nineteenth-century Canada. Not only was there at least one major collector; there were others who were prepared to acquire interesting and important books. Despite the importance of the loans from outside Montreal and Quebec, most of the books exhibited were owned locally. Furthermore, although institutional libraries provided important books and important numbers of books, it was the private collectors who contributed the bulk of the material. Nor can it be assumed that all local collectors were represented. Frederick Griffin, whose library of Canadiana included many books that had belonged to the Sewells, died in 1877, and none of his books was exhibited. Griffin's library of some 2,700 volumes went to McGill in the same year. Another name missing from the list of lenders is that of Judge Robert Mackay, whose large library of Canadiana went to McGill in the 1880s. His absence was noted, among that of others, in the *Revue de Montréal*.³⁶ And one further name, J.B. Learmont, whose library was sold in four sessions at the Anderson Galleries in 1917-1918, should be recorded among the absent. In this case, it may well be that Learmont had not begun collecting in 1877. However, his wife appears in the list of lenders with a few minor items.

In conclusion, then, one can assuredly say that the Montreal Caxton celebration of 1877 is a landmark of nineteenth-century Canadian bibliophily. Not only does it demonstrate the rich holdings in nineteenth-century Canadian libraries, but it compares very favourably with the Caxton Exhibition held in London. Montreal, too, was able to muster a rich and varied show of important books. Furthermore, this study of the Caxton celebration suggests how rich is the field for further exploration. One would like to know a great deal more about some of these collectors – what other books they had, where they came from, and what has become of them. The origins of many twentieth-century institutional collections are to be traced in the libraries of these nineteenth-century collectors, and the Montreal Caxton exhibition is a part of their history. But for the moment, the first line of Henry Mott's ode in honour of the Caxton Celebration that provided the title for this study also provides a fitting conclusion to it:

Behold this treasury of glorious things.

NOTES

- 1 Robin Myers, 'The Caxton Celebration of 1877: A Landmark of Bibliophily,' in *Bibliophily*, ed. Robin Myers and Michael Harris (Cambridge/Alexandria, VA: Chadwyck-Healey, 1986), 162 n. 3.
- 2 Ibid., 62 n. 8.
- 3 George Bulken, ed., *Caxton Celebration, 1877. Catalogue of the Loan Collection of Antiquities, Curiosities, and Appliances Connected with the Art of Printing* (London: [s.n., 1877]), vii-ix.
- 4 Myers, 143.
- 5 Ibid., 147
- 6 Published in *Canadian Journal of Science, Literature and History*, n.s. Vol. 15, no. 96, (October 1877): 574-600. This lecture was also published separately (CIHM 13364).
- 7 *Canadian Journal of Science, Literature and History*, n.s. vol.15, no. 96, (October 1877): 601-14.
- 8 *Canadian Antiquarian and Numismatic Journal* 5, no. 4 (April 1877): 193.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 *New Dominion Monthly* 21 (August 1877): 119. This article was by Henry Mott president of the Numismatic and Antiquarian Society.
- 11 *Canadian Antiquarian and Numismatic Journal* 6, no. 3 (January 1877 [sic]): 154-55.
- 12 The Gerald E. Hart papers in the McCord Museum of Canadian History, Montreal, do not contain any information about the Caxton Exhibition and very little if anything about his book collection. Bruce Whiteman is currently investigating Hart's book collecting.
- 13 See 'Henry Mott and His Family,' an unpublished typescript by Jim Collins. Copies are on file in the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, McGill University Libraries and in the McGill University Archives. Henry Mott's papers, MS 640, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, McGill University Libraries, do not appear to contain any information about the Caxton Exhibition.
- 14 *Canadian Illustrated News* 15 (12 May 1877): 294.
- 15 The draft invitation is bound into a volume of pamphlets, including a copy of the *Condensed Catalogue*, collected by William McLennan and now held in the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, McGill University Libraries (Acc. 163173; 155 .M22 v.2).
- 16 *Canadian Antiquarian and Numismatic Journal* 6, no. 3 (January 1877 [sic]): 156 and passim.
- 17 *Canadian Illustrated News* 15 (12 May 1877): 294; (23 June 1877): 390; 16 (14 July 1877): 18-20; (21 July 1877): 43; (28 July 1877): 50, 60-61; (11 August 1877): 83.

- 18 There is a file of minutes of the celebration committee in the records of the Antiquarian and Numismatic Society, Montreal.
- 19 *Canadian Antiquarian and Numismatic Journal* 6, no. 2 (October 1877): 69.
- 20 *Ibid.*, 82, 84.
- 21 *Ibid.*, 82-83.
- 22 *Ibid.*, 50.
- 23 *Ibid.*
- 24 *Ibid.*, 51-53.
- 25 *Ibid.*, 55-56.
- 26 *Ibid.*, 54-65. Cf. *Revue de Montréal* 1 (1877): 406-415.
- 27 *Canadian Antiquarian and Numismatic Journal* 6, no. 2 (October 1877): 66.
- 28 *Ibid.*, 65-67.
- 29 *Ibid.*, 68.
- 30 *Condensed Catalogue of Manuscripts, Books and Engravings on Exhibition at the Caxton Exhibition ...* (Montreal: [s.n.], 1877), viii.
- 31 *Ibid.*
- 32 In the *Library of McGill College: Catalogue of Authors* (Montreal: Lovell, 1876), the book is also dated 1499.
- 33 Four of these Irish manuscripts are now in the manuscript collection of the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, McGill University Libraries. They were acquired commercially in the 1920s.
- 34 The career of T.D. King is the subject of my current research.
- 35 *Catalogue d'une bibliothèque canadienne: Ouvrages ... collectionnés par feu M. Oscar Dunn ...* (Québec: A. Côté et Cie, 1885).
- 36 *Revue de Montréal*, 1 (1877): 466.