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Canada

**RETAILING FASHION IN MONTREAL.  
A STUDY OF STORES, MERCHANTS  
AND ASSORTMENTS, 1845 - 1915**

**Elizabeth Sifton**

**A Thesis  
in  
The Department  
of  
Art History**

**Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the degree of Master of Arts at  
Concordia University  
Montreal, Quebec, Canada**

**March 1994**

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ISBN 0-315-90891-2

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## ABSTRACT

### Retailing Fashion in Montreal. A Study of Stores, Merchants and Assortments, 1845-1915

Elizabeth Sifton

In the period covered by this study, Montreal developed into the largest industrial center in Canada. Dry goods-related industry and trade represented a high proportion of the commerce of the city, the dry goods merchants of Montreal supplying the growing nation's needs for textiles as wholesale importers and distributors. Some of these dry goods merchants concentrated on the developing retail trade in Montreal, and acquired a reputation for fine quality merchandise. They became fashion retailers, and by the 1890s some of their shops would become department stores, offering not only textiles, but a wide variety of manufactured products. Parallel with the development of merchandise assortments, there were major changes in store buildings. Technological advances in design and construction were incorporated, as were customer services of various kinds. By the first decade of the 20th century, store assortments increasingly featured ready-to-wear fashions. At the same time, advertising, a newly developing profession, emphasized to the customer the importance of always owning 'the newest'. By catering to this new type of consumer, merchants changed dry goods retailing into fashion merchandising.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The information in this thesis has been accumulated over a period of years, and from a variety of sources. The librarians at both Concordia and McGill Universities were extremely helpful, making the hours of research that much easier. I particularly wish to thank Nelly Reiss in the Lande Collection of Canadiana at McGill for her informed help. Michel Godin at the Bibliothèque nationale du Québec went out of his way to locate an elusive engraving. Pamela Blackstock of Parks Canada generously shared her grandmother's memoirs with me.

Jacqueline Beaudoin-Ross, Curator of Costumes and Textiles at the McCord Museum of Canadian History, gave me enthusiastic support and encouragement when, after a long absence from university, I started my graduate studies. More recently, as my thesis supervisor, she has shared generously her knowledge of costume history, and has provided the much-needed comments and criticisms that have helped me shape my thoughts. I owe her a great debt of gratitude for this and for her meticulous editing of my manuscript. The final critique by Brian Foss gave the work additional clarity. My family has been patient and supportive throughout the past few years, and by his active interest in my work, Nicholas has helped in ways that only he understands.

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## INTRODUCTION

The most frequently cited name in the history of Canadian retailing is that of Timothy Eaton, who opened his first small dry goods shop in Toronto in 1869. At this date in Montreal, Colonial House, a dry goods store, which had been founded by Henry Morgan and David Smith in 1845, had such an extensive wholesale and retail business that it occupied a four-storey building, designed and built especially for it.<sup>1</sup> During the late 1860's, many more dry goods stores were opened in Montreal, three of which were soon in competition with Colonial House; these were the businesses owned by James Ogilvy (established 1866), John Murphy (1869) and Samuel Carsley (1872).

The dry goods retailers sold the textiles for all apparel and household needs. In addition, there were many other retailers, smaller in size and specialists in their own fields, who supplied the various needs of an expanding metropolis. Milliners were specialists in women's bonnets and fashion accessories, and were frequently dressmakers; and merchant tailors supplied made-to-order men's apparel and haberdashery. In addition there were jewellers, furriers and boot and shoe makers. Among these retailers were those who developed a reputation for style and quality, and who soon became the fashion retailers who catered to discriminating Montrealers.

This thesis will study a representative group of these

fashion specialists, but will concentrate on the major retailers, whose names have already been mentioned. These stores - Morgan's, Carsley's, Murphy's and Ogilvy's<sup>2</sup> - by the last decade of the 19th-century, had evolved from dry goods stores into department stores.<sup>3</sup> As the 20th-century began, these large stores assumed the role of fashion directors for much of their clientèle. The copy in many of the advertisements from this time combines an attitude of superiority with a tone of condescension, which is in startling contrast to the ingratiating tone of early advertisements. This example is from a Morgan's advertisement in February 1910:

Forceful demonstration of this store's ability to interpret correctly the most approved modes will shortly be emphasized in our displays of the newest and most exclusive of the world's creations...."<sup>4</sup>

The development of fashion retailing can be studied from many aspects, the most obvious being business history in which the development of a store (or group of stores) is traced through the analysis of statistical information and other company records. An example of this is Timothy Eaton and the Rise of his Department Store by Joy Santink (Toronto, 1991).

There are a number of books which provide biographies of major retailers; two of the most useful are A History of the Department Store by John Ferry (New York, 1960) and The Grand Emporiums by Richard Hendrickson (New York, 1979). The first has an international scope, and the latter concentrates on

stores in the United States. In a similar way, Retail Trading in Great Britain 1850-1950 by James B. Jefferys (Cambridge, 1954) concentrates on English merchants. There are a number of store biographies, the content of these varies from the rather anecdotal, in Richard Lambert's The Universal Provider, a Study of William Whiteley (London, 1938), to the very comprehensive corporate biography of a French merchandising giant, The Bon Marché, Bourgeois Culture and the Department Store, 1869-1920 (Princeton, 1981) by Michael Miller. Shops and Shopping (London, 1981), written by Alison Adburgham, studies not only the development of retail stores in England, but also describes fashion trends in relation to that development. Other studies of merchants emphasize the social and cultural impact of the stores' activities, an example being the recently published Land of Desire: Merchants, Power and the Rise of a New American Culture by William Leach (New York, 1993). There are also some corporate biographies of Canadian merchants, the most outstanding one being the previously mentioned Timothy Eaton and the Rise of His Department Store by Joy Santink, which drew extensively on the business and private documents preserved in the Eaton Archives. Published at about the same time, David Morgan's The Morgans of Montreal (Toronto: n.p., 1992) studies the complex personal relationships of a family-run business that served Montreal for a century and a quarter. However, a comprehensive history of fashion retailing in Canada has yet

to be written.

The present study concentrates on Montreal retailers. Rather than studying statistics, it will look at the stores themselves, and the merchandise they sold. Extensive use of contemporary quotations will assist in reconstructing how the early dry goods merchant developed variety in his assortments, first by adding to his stock such items as gloves and parasols, and later ready-made items such as mantles and ladies' under-garments. In the final decade of the century, the merchandising giants known as department stores offered manufactured goods of every conceivable kind, fashion apparel and accessories, and house furnishings and sporting goods, to mention only a few.

The best source of information on the evolution of merchandise assortments is to be found in retail advertisements, although some care in interpreting these is necessary, since 'honesty in advertising' was not a 19th-century concept. Investigative reading for this thesis concentrated on the advertisements found in Montreal newspapers and various other 19th-century publications. Generally, the most informative advertisements appeared at the start of the merchandising seasons, April/May and September/October. Additional reading was done around the dates of new store openings, particularly to learn more about the merchants' attitudes and the customers' reactions to these stores and their merchandise assortments. The Pilot and The



Transcript and Daily Advertiser were the most informative newspapers for the early years, as was The Montreal Daily Star for the later period.

As investigation of the merchandise content of the stores was progressing, it became increasingly obvious that the store buildings themselves were important. There were fashions in commercial architecture as well as in dress, and Montreal retailers proved to be alert to both. A brief study of some store buildings will help to recreate the atmosphere in which fashionable Montrealers shopped. This thesis is divided into two sections; the first "From Shop to Palace to Theatre", deals with the changes in store architecture, and the second "From Purveyor of Merchandise to Arbiter of Taste", with the development of fashion assortments.

An understanding of store architecture is a necessary part of a study of fashion retailing, since the setting in which the merchandise was offered became increasingly important as the century progressed. Retailers vied with each other to offer not only the latest styles from the fashion capitals of the world, but to have a "palace"<sup>5</sup> in which to sell them. This was the transformation of the modest shop, where the owner and family lived in rooms above, into a palace of merchandising where the merchant prince<sup>6</sup> walked in splendour and received his customers as honoured guests.

By the turn of the century, electric lighting, telephones, elevators and richly decorated ladies' "waiting"

rooms were to be found in all large stores. Retailers incorporated more and more customer services into their businesses, offering the customer not only merchandise, but conveniences she may not have had in her own home. These palaces of merchandising helped to create a new type of shopper - one who visited the store not necessarily to buy, but to be entertained.<sup>7</sup> Santa Claus and his magical grotto was a feature at Carsley's in the 1890's and later came the Easter flower shows at Ogilvy's. In 1911, John Wanamaker even installed an enormous pipe organ in his Philadelphia store.<sup>8</sup> The dry goods shop which had become a palace had now become a theatre.

Section II of this thesis, "From Purveyor of Merchandise to Arbiter of Taste", deals with the developments in merchandising. The first part of Section II, "Developments in Retail Practices", describes some of the changes in retailing procedures which occurred almost simultaneously in Europe and America during the 19th century. These included the establishment of fixed prices, rather than individually negotiated prices; prices clearly marked on each item; and the adoption of a cash payment system rather than barter or extended credit. The concept that a customer could enter a store and look at merchandise without the obligation to make a purchase was an innovation which ultimately led to the leisure-time activity of "shopping". These and other changes in retail policies and operation occurred over a period of

years from about 1840 to 1890, and had an impact on all stores regardless of size. Their implementation in this city is illustrated by excerpts from the advertisements of various Montreal retailers.

The second part of Section II, "Montreal's Retailers of Fashion", looks at merchandise assortments as they evolved from the bolts of textiles, and packages of thread, tape and buttons typical of the stock-in-trade of early dry goods stores, to the full-line department store assortment, which by 1915 included a myriad of consumer goods from buttons and teapots to ready-to-wear evening gowns and dining room suites. First we will study some of the fashion specialists from whom Montrealers purchased their shoes, their hats and their furs. These specialists often were looked to for fashion direction, and their assortments were essential to completing the costume of a well-dressed person. The developing assortments of dry goods stores are then reviewed. One important retailer has been selected as the focus of study for each decade between 1850 and 1890. Material in the Morgan Archives<sup>9</sup> provided information from the 1850's. An advertisement of the H. & H. Merrill Company suggested the theme for the 1860's, as did a Brown and Claggett advertisement for the 1870's. Samuel Carsley's informative "columns" from The Montreal Daily Star gave insight into the developing competition of the 1880's.

In the last decade of the 19th-century, the fashionable center of retailing moved "uptown", closer to the developing

residential areas of the city:

...Close students of the trend of business in Montreal have not failed to note that it is constantly working toward the West, specially in St. Catherine Street, which of late years has come to be the great artery of retail trade in the city....<sup>10</sup>

As the retailers moved into new, larger premises, they increased the variety of merchandise in their assortment. The era of the department store had arrived in Montreal. How the major retailers approached this decade is reviewed. Fashion retailing in the first years of the 20th-century was marked by two significant changes: the increasing predominance of ready-to-wear in the merchandise assortments, and the format of the advertisements, in which the message stresses the importance of buying for the pleasure of owning the "latest". The dry goods retailer of the 1850's had developed into the fashion merchandiser, an interpreter of fashion and an arbiter of taste.

The reader will note that there are no French names among the retail merchants discussed in this thesis. The decision to concentrate on English-speaking merchants only was forced by the exigencies of space. There were many successful merchants in the French community, even though the Montreal retail scene was dominated by Scottish and English merchants. English-speaking merchants advertised regularly in La Presse as well as the English-language newspapers, obviously attracting a French-speaking clientèle.<sup>11</sup> Best known among the

French merchants was the respected Canadian firm of Dupuis Frères, which was founded in 1868, at about the same time as Ogilvy's (1866), Murphy's (1869) and Carsley's (1872). Although Dupuis occasionally advertised in the English newspapers, as did other French merchants, their primary clientèle was in the French community.<sup>12</sup> A study of Dupuis Frères and the other French merchants could provide sufficient material for another thesis. They deserve more space than could be allotted to them in this work. There is still much primary information on fashion retailing in Montreal to be discovered, read and analyzed. This thesis is an introduction to a rich and fascinating subject.

## Introduction

### End Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Since the term "dry goods" will be used throughout this thesis, a definition is appropriate. The term seems to be of American origin; in England, dealers in textiles were called "mercers" or "drapers". The Oxford English Dictionary defines a mercer as "One who deals in textile fabrics, especially a dealer in silks, velvets, and other costly materials", and a draper as "A dealer in cloth, and now by extension in other articles of textile manufacture: often qualified as woollen, linen, draper." The Oxford definition of dry goods is "a name (chiefly in North America) for the class of merchandise comprising textile fabrics and related articles: things of drapery, mercery and haberdashery (as opposed to groceries)". The Oxford English Dictionary, 2nd edition, s.v. "mercier", "draper", and "dry goods". In Montreal, the terms 'mercier' and 'draper' appear in advertisements early in the 19th century. The term 'dry goods' also appears, and is used with increasing frequency until by the 1840's its use is almost universal. The classified directory of Mackay's Montreal Directory of 1854 lists only dry goods merchants, not mercers or drapers.

In discussing the evolution of department stores in The Grand Emporiums, Robert Hendrickson gives the following colourful description of the origin of the term 'dry goods'.

Dry goods stores take their name from shops run by New England merchants, many of whom were ship owners and direct importers in colonial times. Their two chief imports were rum and bolts of calico, which were traditionally carried on opposite sides of the store - a "wet goods" side containing the rum and a "dry goods" side holding the calico... "Wet goods" disappeared from the language... but stores that sell piece goods... are still occasionally called dry goods stores. Robert Hendrickson, The Grand Emporiums (New York: Stein and Day, 1979), p. 30.

- <sup>2</sup> Ogilvy's is included in this group although as we shall see later, their assortments were not broadened to include house furnishings, and household accessories. They concentrated on fashion merchandise and maintained their reputation for fine quality household linens.

- <sup>3</sup> ...department stores were retail enterprises with a central location, i.e. drawing their clientele from the whole town.... The department store was also characterized by the fact that it carried a far greater variety of merchandise lines than the traditional retail store. Furthermore, these different lines of merchandise were not carried in a heterogeneous assortment... but along a new principle.... Each merchandise line had a distinct location in the store, its own buyer, a separate salesforce, and separate accounts were kept for it. H. Pasdermadjian, The Department Store (London: Newman Books, 1954), pp. 10-11.
- <sup>4</sup> The Montreal Daily Star, 10 February, 1910.
- <sup>5</sup> The use of "palace" to describe a commercial building was an accepted term in the second half of the 19th-century. A.T. Stewart built a "Marble Palace" for his New York dry goods store in 1846, and other American merchants were quick to emulate this grand style. In Montreal during the 1860's a number of new retail premises were constructed, and the words 'palace' and 'palatial' were frequently used in describing them. This usage continued until the end of the 19th-century. For further information on this architectural phenomenon see the interesting article by Winston Weisman, "Commercial Palaces of New York, 1845-1875", The Art Bulletin, 69 (1954): 285-302.
- <sup>6</sup> "Merchant Prince" was another accepted term. The obituary of Samuel Carsley in 1908 bore the headline "Samuel Carsley, one of Canada's merchant princes, has passed away." (The Star, 21 November, 1908.)
- <sup>7</sup> Traditionally in department store parlance the customer is always referred to as 'she'. This will be further discussed in Section II part 2.
- <sup>8</sup> John W. Ferry, A History of the Department Store. New York: MacMillan, 1960. p. 107.
- <sup>9</sup> The Henry Morgan Papers, held at McGill University, include letters written in the late 1840's and invoices for merchandise shipped from Scotland during the first years of the 1850's. These were of particular interest to this investigation. There are also various ledgers and business diaries which date from later in the century.

- <sup>10</sup> E.J. Chambers, The Book of Montreal (Montreal: The Book of Montreal Co., 1903), p. 199.
- <sup>11</sup> In 1881 Morgan's advertised for a "first-class salesman for our silk department, must speak both French and English". (The Star, 3 May 1881.) From this we may infer that there was a French carriage trade which shopped at Colonial House.
- <sup>12</sup> The English dominance in the retail field is further demonstrated by a full-page feature entitled "Les Grands Magasins à Départements" published in La Presse on December 11, 1909. Fourteen stores are illustrated, only five of which have French names, and Morgan's, Murphy's and Ogilvy's among other English merchants, are featured prominently over them.



## SECTION I: FROM SHOP TO PALACE TO THEATRE

### 1. Store Architecture and Location

...Streets of noble buildings, palaces dedicated to commerce attest to the growing wealth of Montreal traders....<sup>1</sup>

In Montreal, as in the rest of the Western world, developments in industry and technology during the 19th-century led to an increasingly urbanized population, and the growth of the middle class. The manufacturing capacity of factories increased as more and more machines replaced hand labour. Textiles especially were produced in greater quantities than ever before. The mills of Yorkshire and Manchester in England and the Merrimack Valley in New England produced textiles in varieties and quantities unimaginable before the advent of the power loom. The invention of the sewing machine just before the middle of the century had an equally important impact on the production of wearing apparel. In 1853, Brown and Childs, who had installed sewing machines in their Montreal boot and shoe factory in 1847,<sup>2</sup> advertised that they had

...been appointed sole agents for Canada for the sale of the celebrated [Singer's Patent] sewing machines... These machines are capable of sewing cloth or leather at the rate of two-hundred and fifty stitches a minute, better than can be done by hand....<sup>3</sup>

The development of a large-scale ready-to-wear industry was now possible; however this took a number of decades. Machines were early used in the production of women's capes

and mantles and undergarments, retailers having most of these garments made in their own workrooms. By the 1890's the assortment of a dry goods store included not only textiles, trimmings and thread, and some ready-made garments, but also a whole proliferation of manufactured items for the wardrobe, for the household and for the new recreational activities. The innovative retail merchant who capitalized on these merchandise opportunities was able to transform his dry goods store into a department store, a concept that came to describe a building as much as it did a merchandise assortment.

The study of 19th-century store architecture is a research topic in itself. However, some of its elements must be discussed with specific reference to Montreal stores in order to enhance the understanding of the development of fashion retailing. During the 19th-century, the design of store buildings underwent a dramatic evolution. Small, poorly-lit ground-floor shops, with a plain counter or two, were typical of the first years of the 19th-century. By the last decades of the century, the term "palace" was frequently used to describe an elaborate store building. The environment in which the merchandise was sold was seen to be as important as the merchandise itself. Now the rich architectural detailing of the exteriors was matched by opulently decorated interiors. Elevators were installed for the convenience of the customers, as were electric lights and telephones. A much appreciated feature was the comfortably furnished ladies'

room.<sup>4</sup> These palaces of merchandising created an environment which turned shopping into a social activity to be enjoyed in pleasant surroundings. "Shopping as a new social art and the department store as a new social institution rose simultaneously, complementing one another."<sup>5</sup> In the 20th century, special events, such as fashion shows and other examples of showmanship, turned the palaces into theatres.

One of the early descriptions of the heart of Montreal is found in Newton Bosworth's Hochelaga Depicta. This was written in 1839, and demonstrates that the merchants of Montreal were already beginning to provide pleasant and attractive shopping environments to house their merchandise assortment.

Both in Quebec and Montreal the windows in many of the old stores and shops are small, not larger than those of ordinary dwelling-houses, very little calculated for display, and not giving indications of the extensive depositories of goods that may be found within. The modern shops, however, are much better furnished with windows, giving every facility for the exposure of articles intended for sale. A great number of the recent shops are elegantly, and some of them splendidly, fitted up. Perhaps there is scarcely in any part of the commercial world, either in Europe or in America, a more superb or exquisitely finished room, for its size, than the shop of Mr. McDonald at the corner of Place d'Armes and Notre Dame Street. It forms the principal ornament in a block called Muir's Buildings, a recent erection, which is itself an ornament to the spot on which it stands in one of the most public places in the city.<sup>6</sup>

This quotation refers to Place d'Armes and Notre Dame Street as "the most public place in the city." Maps of Montreal dating from the French régime show Place d'Armes as the city's focal point. The original church of Notre Dame was on the south side of this square, but was located across Notre Dame Street, effectively forming a barrier to traffic. The demolition of this building, when the present church was completed in 1829, opened up Notre Dame Street, changing it into an important commercial thoroughfare of which Place d'Armes was a central square. A series of George Murray engravings dating from ca. 1843 shows a number of views of this area, indicative of the pride Montrealers had in their new "city center". The area mentioned in Hochelaga Depicta is illustrated in the Murray engraving Southwest View, Notre Dame Street, Montreal. (ill. 2) The store on the right of this image has been identified as the shop of Mr. R. Graham, who sold books and stationery.<sup>7</sup> The shops to the left, which must illustrate the area referred to in the quotation, unfortunately cannot be identified by name.

Until the last decade of the 19th-century, Notre Dame and St. James Streets were the retail streets of Montreal. From the Cathedral Block and the Crystal Block (commercial buildings which are described later in this section) near St. Lambert Street (now St. Lawrence Boulevard) to Victoria Square on the west, fashionable Montrealers could shop for furs, shoes, jewellery, millinery and fine silks and woollens in a

variety of attractive buildings. By the turn of the century, most fashion retailers had moved "up the hill" to St. Catherine Street, led by Henry Morgan, who moved his Colonial House in 1891. St. Catherine Street remained the retail center of Montreal until the suburban explosion of the 1950s and the proliferation of suburban shopping malls. (A map showing the locations of the stores mentioned in this thesis is to be found as illustration 1, page 144.)

In Montreal, as indeed everywhere, the earliest shops were located in the ground-floor front room of a building, with the shopkeeper's living quarters above. By the beginning of the 1840s, however, buildings were being constructed specifically for rental as retail premises, as was demonstrated by the reference to 'Muir's Buildings' in the quotation from Hochelaga Depicta. An advertisement in Mackay's Montreal Directory for 1843 illustrates such a building: Albion House (ill. 3). It is a three-storey building of grey limestone, showing the neo-classical influence which was typical of much of the architecture in Montreal at that time.<sup>8</sup> The St. Helen Street façade is severe and unornamented, but the Notre Dame Street façade has restrained use of Tuscan capitals on the piers and a rhythmic series of blind arches on the second story. The three wide windows at street level are inviting to the passer-by, allowing natural light to supplement the shop's gas or oil lamps. The corner window is a particularly elegant feature.

This building stands on the south-west corner of Notre Dame and St. Helen Streets. Today it is still clearly identifiable although more than half of the western section has been demolished.<sup>9</sup>

Another building dating from this decade is illustrated on a receipted bill dated 1843 (ill. 4). James Connell's shop was at 133 Notre Dame Street in a building just to the east of Place d'Armes, on the north side of the street.<sup>10</sup> It is likely this building that partially screens the spire of the English cathedral in the Murray engraving (ill. 2). The builder has duplicated one design to create four shops at street level. The narrow section which separates the two identical wings contains the double doors behind which a stairway would have led to the upper floors. Like Albion House, this building was obviously built for commercial use, as indicated by the wide ground-floor windows, the upper floors being not so generously illuminated. This façade, too, shows a restrained neo-classical influence, four narrow bays with rounded arches being separated by pilasters with Tuscan capitals.

Another dry goods shop of this era was that of H. & H. Merrill (ill. 5). This illustration was originally engraved in about 1852, and was thriftily used by that company in various advertisements and on its bill head until the 1860s (ill. 6). Merrill's was located on the south side of Notre Dame Street to the east of Place d'Armes, about opposite the Connell building. In contrast to the latter building, the

stone of this building is almost unornamented except for a slight suggestion of a Tuscan capital on the piers. It too appears to have been built as a commercial premises, with large ground-floor windows, and a centrally located shop door. The door to the left of the façade would have led to the upper floors which might have been used as living quarters or as workshops.

A very attractive store dating from the 1850's was illustrated in The Montreal Transcript in May 1854 (ill. 8). This building, identified in the illustration as the shop of J. & M Nichols, was located at 204 Notre Dame Street, just a few steps west of Albion House. This was where Henry Morgan and David Smith opened their dry goods shop in May 1845.<sup>11</sup> Henry Morgan occupied this building until April 1854, when he moved his shop, by then called Colonial House, to 102 McGill Street.<sup>12</sup> During the course of his occupancy of 204 Notre Dame Street, Morgan made many alterations to the interior of the building. We learn this from references in his letters to his brother James, who was at that time still in Glasgow. In January 1847 Morgan wrote:

We find our premises getting too small.  
We are going to build up a back court  
which will make them as large again.<sup>13</sup>

By May of the same year he reported:

We have enlarged our premises, we now  
have a commodious and attractive store.  
We have a number of elated customers and  
have a fair proportion of the business

that is done here.<sup>14</sup>

Morgan's business continued to improve and he continued to make alterations to his store. In July 1850, he reported that the "...improvements upstairs are nearly completed...."<sup>15</sup>

An intriguing question remains: when was the façade altered? Were these alterations recently completed or in progress when Morgan moved to McGill Street in early April 1854? A small advertisement from The Pilot of March 23, 1854 suggests this possibility.

<b>FOR SALE,</b>	
<b>T</b> HE WHOLE of the CUT STONE Front occupied by Mr. HENRY MORGAN Notre Dame Street. Parties requiring the whole or part thereof, may meet with a bargain from GEORGE MORRISON. Corner of Craig and Amberst Streets. Montreal, March 15, 1854. <span style="float: right;">216</span>	

J. & M. Nichols opened his new store on May 22, 1854,<sup>17</sup> proudly advertising the fact in The Transcript (ill. 8).

Possibly the original façade of this attractive building was similar to that of the Merrill store (ill. 5); the alteration to a store-front which was almost entirely glass demonstrates the use of new building techniques, which significantly changed commercial and industrial buildings in the second half of the 19th-century. Encouraged by the success of the large-scale use of cast iron post-and-lintel construction in the Crystal Palace of the Great Exposition of 1851,<sup>18</sup> builders began to use "skeleton" construction in which



heavy masonry walls were replaced by stone piers and cast iron columns. This not only opened up interior space in the building, but allowed for the incorporation of more windows in the exterior walls. As a result, the interiors became more flexible and easier to adapt to various commercial purposes. This building shows good use has been made of skeleton construction in its renovation, allowing almost the entire façade to be filled with glass.

While the window spaces in this building show a dramatic increase in size, it should be noted that the windows themselves still consist of small panes of glass set into mullions. Plate glass was imported from Europe and in 1846 was still enough of a novelty even in New York to provoke this comment, in which the writer refers to the Marble Palace then being built by the dry goods merchant, A.T. Stewart:

...a most extraordinary, and I think useless, piece of extravagance. Several of the windows of the first floor, nearly level with the street, are formed of plate-glass, six feet by eleven, which must have cost four or five hundred dollars each, and may be shivered by a boy's marble or snow-ball as effectively as by a four-pound shot....<sup>19</sup>

According to an advertisement in The Gazette, as early as 1844 Montreal builders could have ordered English plate glass from Forsythe, Richardson & Co., "Agents for Thames Plate Glass."<sup>20</sup> Whether much was ordered for use in the chancey Canadian climate at this early date is not known. However, the descriptions of the stores built in the last decade of the

century always include specific references to plate glass,<sup>21</sup> indicating that it remained a noteworthy feature.

The increased use of glass in the Morgan/Nichols building provided improved illumination on all floors. With more natural light on the upper floors, the retailer could use this area as selling space. This expansion of stores vertically meant that larger stores were possible without increasing street frontage, where space was at a premium, and correspondingly expensive. This expansion was limited to about three floors until the development of the passenger elevator, after which height was no longer a restriction.

Another innovative concept in retail architecture is demonstrated in the commercial building known as the Cathedral Block (ill. 9). In 1856 a fire destroyed the Anglican Christ Church Cathedral, the spire of which is visible in the Murray engraving of Notre Dame Street (ill. 2). The diocese decided to construct its new church building in the fashionable new "up-town" residential area near Phillips Square. The Cathedral's former Notre Dame street site was developed in 1859 as a retail-commercial building called the Cathedral Block.<sup>22</sup>

...Avec le Cathedral Block, les boutiques  
delaissent donc les rez-de-chaussée des  
bâtiments résidentiels pour se regrouper  
dans un véritable complexe intégré. La  
structure de poutre et colonnes assurent  
une flexibilité optimal permettant une  
adaptation au besoin et au goût des  
locataires... [et] permet de dégager de  
grandes vitrines, characteristic  
fondamental de cette nouvelle

architecture commerciale. Les magasins sont modularies - ils font tous 22.5 pieds de largeur sur 100 pieds de profondeur - et l'affichage est standardizé...<sup>23</sup>

The engraving shows a three-storey building clearly designed entirely for commercial use. The neo-Renaissance style is restrained, the piers having Corinthian capitals on the ground floor, and capitals of the plainer Tuscan order on the upper floors. Note the large plate glass windows, which must have measured about six feet in width. Another feature is the flat roof, with its overhanging cornice, which, by preventing accumulations of snow and rain being dumped on unsuspecting pedestrians, encouraged customers to "window-shop" at those attractive wide windows.<sup>24</sup>

The tenants of this handsome building were among the most fashionable merchants in the city at that time, and their names are clearly shown in the original engraving (ca. 1859). Illustration 9 is reproduced from an 1869 publication, when Savage and Lyman were the only original tenants.<sup>25</sup> In 1859, the druggists Lamplough and Campbell occupied the shop at the eastern end of the building (extreme right in the illustration). Beside Savage and Lyman was the fashion retailer, A. Lazare. He was an "...importer of French fancy dry goods...Paris embroideries and laces...French flowers ...French millinery...."<sup>26</sup> Established since 1817, the jewellers Savage and Lyman moved into the Cathedral Block in 1859, remaining at this location until 1872 when they moved to St. James Street, near Victoria Square.<sup>27</sup> The fourth tenant

was J. and T. Bell, a retailer of fashionable footwear. A contemporary description of the interior of this latter store is included in the next section. Four tenants such as these made this commercial block a very prestigious address indeed; most advertisements refer not to the street number, but just to "the Cathedral Block" as the store location.

On the west side of this building, also on Notre Dame Street, was the Crystal Block, of which we have found no image. Probably it was similar: an 1855 reference in The Transcript calls it "the new and elegant block of stores."<sup>28</sup> One important tenant here was the well-known hatter and furrier, John Henderson, whose store must have been spacious indeed if the following advertisement is to be believed:

...Notwithstanding the thousand and one different styles of Hat and Caps, manufactured in England, France and the United States, the Crystal Block can exhibit them all. Silk Hats, Felt Hats, Felt Caps, Railway Caps, Waterproof Hats and Caps, Children's Fancy Caps, Smoking Caps and every other Cap worn in great variety. Infants' Felt Hats and Ladies' Hats, the latest fashions and most becoming shapes. FURS IN GREAT VARIETY. Hudson Bay Sable, Canada Mink in Capes, Half Capes, Victorines, Muffs, Mitts, Cuffs, etc. etc. ....<sup>29</sup>

In the late 1860s, Montreal shoppers had a number of new retail stores to visit, and, in addition, two established retailers moved to new buildings; these were H. & H. Merrill and Henry Morgan. The new store of H. & H. Merrill (ill. 10) was located on the south side of Notre Dame Street just about

opposite the Cathedral Block. (It still stands today at 60 Notre Dame Street, West, having sustained only minor exterior modifications). It is typical of many commercial buildings constructed in Montreal at that time, being heavily ornamented with carved stone. The architect seems to have taken his inspiration from some Venetian palazzo, using a variety of ornamental devices on the columns, the capitals and the window surrounds. This building is a good example of "the palazzo mode [that] was the overwhelmingly popular style in commercial architecture and remained so for the next twenty-five years...."<sup>30</sup> In Montreal, the Island City, Kathleen Jenkins quotes a visitor who described

...Notre Dame Street as flashing with plate glass and displays of jewellery and brocade. H. and H. Merrill's Dry Goods Store he considered to be the finest in the country. Four stories high and well lighted, the front windows alone of the main floor Retail Department were twenty two feet wide.<sup>31</sup>

Merrill's customers must have found this building an altogether more pleasant place in which to shop than his old store. It was possibly with a degree of irony that Merrill later occasionally referred to itself as "the Grand Granite Store".<sup>32</sup> The company continued business in this location until 1885, when it went into bankruptcy.<sup>33</sup>

In 1866, as the Merrill building was being constructed, Henry Morgan moved his store, Colonial House, from the assembly of old buildings on McGill Street where it had been

located since 1854.<sup>34</sup> This new store, on St. James Street at Victoria Square, had been designed and built to Morgan's specifications.<sup>35</sup> Its measurements were impressive; frontage on St. James Street was 85 feet and the depth of the building was 90 feet.<sup>36</sup> There were four floors and a full basement, making it the largest store in Montreal, indeed in Canada, at that time. Morgan's Colonial House occupied this building for twenty-five years. The Commercial Sketch of Montreal, published in 1868, devotes two pages and an illustration to an enthusiastic description of this big dry goods store. It reads in part:

...The building is not rendered conspicuous by a tasteless display of flimsy architectural ornamentation, but presents the appearance of a plain, solid and substantial business structure, in every way appropriate for the purpose it was designed. This firm is par excellence the retail house of Canada....<sup>37</sup>

An illustration from the Canadian Illustrated News (ill. 11) shows this "substantial business structure" in its setting, effectively dominating the street by sheer size without resorting to "flimsy architectural ornamentation". A later photograph of the building shows a fifth storey in the form of a mansard roof, which was added in the late 1870s (ill. 12). After Colonial House moved uptown to St. Catherine Street in 1891, this building was used for a variety of purposes. Morgan retained part of it as warehouse space, while another retail company, Henry and N.E. Hamilton, proudly moved into it from two nearby locations.<sup>38</sup> By 1896 however,

the Hamiltons realized that another move was necessary to keep them in the mainstream of the retail trade, and they too moved to St. Catherine Street.<sup>39</sup> This building was demolished in 1908 to make way for the Bank of Nova Scotia Building.<sup>40</sup>

Still standing today on Notre Dame Street at the corner of St. Helen Street is Recollet House (ill. 13). In the 1870s this name identified not only the building but also the prestigious retail dry goods firm of Brown and Claggett. This impressive Italianate building was constructed in 1868 on the site of an old Recollet Church, which had been demolished in 1866.<sup>41</sup> The upper stories of Recollet House are ornamented with richly carved details, cornices and window pediments. The façade at street level has large show windows separated by piers with heavily ornamented Corinthian capitals. The windows themselves incorporate large sheets of plate glass. Although Brown and Claggett do not seem to have done so, this building could indeed have been referred to as a "palace".

Recollet House stands on the south-east corner of Notre Dame and St. Helen Street; on the south-west corner of the same intersection is Albion House, the first building we discussed (ill. 3). Thus, side by side we have two buildings which demonstrate a stage in the evolution of store architecture in the 19th-century. Albion House typifies the serene, almost modest, neo-classical style of the 1840s. Recollet House, incorporating more lavish architectural detailing, common in the buildings of the late 1860s,

foreshadows the opulent styles of many of the buildings of the 1890s.

One merchant who preferred to remain in one location and expand his selling space by moving into adjacent buildings, altering them to his needs, was Samuel Carsley. Moving from Kingston, where he had been in the dry goods business since 1862, he opened his Montreal store in 1872.<sup>42</sup> This first store was located at 393 Notre Dame Street, on the north side of the street, just to the west of St. Alexis. In 1880, when he claimed to be "the largest dry goods establishment in Canada, either wholesale or retail,"<sup>43</sup> his store occupied numbers 393, 395, 397 and 399 Notre Dame Street. An 1891 article challenged the reader to

...imagine a building fronting over 200 feet on Notre Dame Street and extending back 100 feet, affording with the basement five floors of that area, divided systematically into from 40 to 50 departments.... There are two hydraulic elevators and the whole establishment is equipped with every available facility for the prompt dispatch of business....<sup>44</sup>

A wood engraving (undated, but likely ca. 1885) shows the store with its diverse façades, unified by the store name repeated twice on each (ill. 14). It bears a striking resemblance to the London store of William Whiteley, England's "Universal Provider".<sup>45</sup> Possibly it is no coincidence that in his advertisements Carsley frequently called his store "The Universal Provider of Montreal".<sup>46</sup> Carsley stubbornly remained



at his Notre Dame Street location for a decade after all fashionable retailers had followed Henry Morgan's lead by moving to St. Catherine Street. In 1894 he tried to justify this decision, featuring this statement prominently in one of his advertisements:

...IT IS WELL KNOWN that ladies do not like to do their shopping immediately in the neighbourhood of their residences... [and] we have therefore found it necessary as stores MOVE UPTOWN to increase our stock of High Class Goods.<sup>47</sup>

Samuel Carsley expanded his Notre Dame Street store yet again. By the time of his death in 1908,<sup>48</sup> his store stretched from St. Alexis to St. Peter on Notre Dame Street with a northward extension to St. James Street adjacent to Molson's Bank.<sup>49</sup>

A major change in the pattern of retail business in Montreal took place during the last decade of the 19th century. The Notre Dame - St. James Street area, with its congested streets and ageing buildings had ceased to be an attractive area for fashionable merchants. A retail palace had to have a convenient and attractive location. Henry Morgan was among the first to recognize this, and

...in 1889, to the alarm of a considerable number of people, resolved to move uptown, and somewhat westward, about half a mile from their then place of business; and bought for that purpose, land fronting on St. Catherine Street, Union Avenue and Aylmer Street, whereon to erect the largest store in Canada, plans for which were not drawn until after consulting the principal architects, and visiting the largest

stores in America.<sup>50</sup>

Far from being a reckless gamble, Morgan's decision was sound, based on taking his merchandise closer to his customers and presenting it in a new building which incorporated all the modern features that were becoming a necessary part of retailing (ill. 15). The new building was designed to have "a floor space...three and half times greater than that [of the present] premises...".<sup>51</sup> Designed by Montreal architect J.P. Hill, the style of the sedate building was described as "a composition of Renaissance and Romanesque."<sup>52</sup> The cost was variously estimated at from \$350,000 to \$400,000.<sup>53</sup> A small measure of economy was achieved as the sandstone for the building travelled from England as ballast in ships which then returned to Europe with cargoes of grain.<sup>54</sup>

...The basement will be of Montreal limestone and the upper structure of red sandstone from the Heyton quarries, Northumberland, England. The columns are to be of polished Gananoque granite...the seven show windows will be twenty-five feet wide and eighteen feet high...all the windows in the building are to be of the finest plate glass.<sup>55</sup>

The original architectural plans had called for a five-storey building, but this was reduced to four when Colin Morgan became uneasy about the size of the building.<sup>56</sup> This new building allowed Morgan's to augment their assortments, expanding not only their traditional dry goods lines such as dress goods, household textiles and carpets, but also adding new merchandise lines, such as furniture, china and glassware,

and boots and shoes.<sup>57</sup> By doing this, Morgan's became a "full-line" department store, offering Montreal shoppers a comprehensive assortment of manufactured goods for wardrobe and household. The customer response to this new store was so great that in 1902 an extension was added on the Aylmer Street side, and in 1923 a major expansion took place.<sup>58</sup> In 1964, another expansion filled the city block to what is now de Maisonneuve Boulevard.<sup>59</sup> Morgan's immediate success in the uptown location encouraged other fashion retailers to make the move. In 1894 Henry Birks relocated his jewellery store to Phillips Square across from Morgan's.<sup>60</sup> There, like Morgan's, the building still stands without any extensive exterior alterations (ill. 21).

Also in 1894, the dry goods firm of John Murphy & Co. moved from a large building on Notre Dame at St. Peter Street, near Carsley's, to a "Grand New Palace Store"<sup>61</sup> on the north side of St. Catherine Street at the corner of Metcalfe (ill. 16). The building, constructed of red Cumberland sandstone, was described as

Byzantine in general design and massive and substantial in structure...The five stories and the basement will be light and airy, magnificently upholstered, and beautifully finished and fitted up in every detail, as well as equipped with the latest facilities for the dispatch of business.<sup>62</sup>

As had Henry Morgan, John Murphy took advantage of this move to broaden his fashion assortment. By 1895, he had opened a "Basement salesroom [with] the finest and most

complete assortment of kitchen furnishing goods ever shown in Canada."<sup>63</sup> In April 1909, work was started on an extension to this building, the intentions being to "double the store in size and duplicate our present premises."<sup>64</sup> Murphy's had been purchased by the Robert Simpson Company of Toronto in 1909, but the store was operated under the Murphy name until 1929,<sup>65</sup> when this building was demolished to make way for a new Simpson building.<sup>66</sup>

In 1866, James A. Ogilvy had established a small dry goods shop on St. Antoine Street near the corner of Mountain Street.<sup>67</sup> Outside the fashionable shopping area, it was nevertheless strategically located opposite the St. Antoine Market, where householders had to come regularly to purchase their meat. Ogilvy's business prospered in the single-counter shop and a succession of expansions and moves were necessary; but the store was always housed in modest buildings, and always in the same general location. As an aside, it is interesting to note that "Mr. Ogilvy had always adhered to the old fashion of living over his store, both Mrs. Ogilvy and himself applying themselves closely to the business."<sup>68</sup> In the late 1880's Ogilvy's opened a branch store on St. Catherine Street at the corner of Buckingham Street.<sup>69</sup>

In 1896, James. A. Ogilvy & Sons moved uptown, the Canadian Pacific Railway tracks into Windsor Station having isolated his shop from his uptown customers. The location for the new store was the northeast corner of St. Catherine and

Mountain Streets (ill. 17). The store was designed by Ogilvy's son, David, who was a professional architect.<sup>69</sup> The description of the building which accompanied the announcement of the forthcoming move reads in part:

Almost the entire fronts on the ground floor are glass, the plate glass surface of the upper stories being relieved by a sufficient number of stone piers to give the necessary appearance of stability.... The ornamental detail on the faces of the building, principally on the massive stone entrances will be carried out in the Renaissance style....<sup>71</sup>

Although this building was designed and constructed to carry an additional three stories,<sup>72</sup> when time for expansion came yet another building was designed. Located on the northwest corner of St. Catherine and Mountain Streets, this building too was designed by David Ogilvy (ill. 18). It was opened in time for Easter 1912.<sup>73</sup>

This new Ogilvy building is somewhat similar in appearance to the older one, particularly in the incorporation of the spacious windows on all floors. Heavily rusticated limestone adds solidity to the lower floors of the structure. The fifth floor, which was added in 1928,<sup>74</sup> is poorly incorporated and destroyed the original elegant cornice line, as can be seen by comparing the present building to our illustration. It is apparent that as much thought had been devoted to the design of the interior of the store as to its exterior:

Considerable thought too, has been bestowed upon the problem of handling

crowds to best advantage so that customers will get into each other's way as little as possible.... The accommodations are such that 1,100 people can be standing at the counters at one time, and still have the aisle space for a couple of thousand more. All these items were carefully thought out by the architect before the building was started....<sup>75</sup>

This statement hints at the fact that the design of retail stores was about to enter a new phase. In the 20th century it would no longer be enough to build a 'palace' in which to sell merchandise. The store building had to be functional and efficient to serve the changing systems of commerce and to appeal to customers whose lives and demands were changing just as rapidly. The last two store buildings we discuss, Goodwin's and Scroggie's, will underline this fact.

In studying the stores and their locations, we frequently noted a succession of merchants occupying the same premises. We have referred to Henry and N.E. Hamilton proudly announcing their move to Morgan's old St. James Street location (see page 26). Henry Hamilton's former premises were occupied, in turn, by another dry goods retailer, Alphonse Valiquette, whose store was called "Au Bon Marché".<sup>76</sup> Many more examples of such moves can be found in the advertisements. One important block on St. Catherine Street was the site of an almost bewildering succession of tenants: this is the location of the present Eaton store, which is the final result of a series of buildings and ownerships which started in the 1880s. The

sequence is complicated but worthy of explanation.

In the 1880s, the site on St. Catherine Street between University and Victoria Streets was known as the Queen's Block, so named for the Queen's Theatre which shared the site with a number of small commercial buildings.<sup>77</sup> In 1883, W.H. Scroggie purchased the retail dry goods business of "G.A. Brouillet, Importer of French, English and American Dry Goods", whose shop was located at 1301 St. Catherine Street in this block.<sup>78</sup> Although Scroggie's presence in the retail dry goods trade is not evident in newspaper advertising until the turn of the century, "Shop after shop was added until nearly the entire block [was] devoted to Mr. Scroggie's establishment."<sup>79</sup> Scroggie's was always a tenant in this block, but was apparently able to make alterations to suit his business. In September 1899, while excavations were taking place in the basement, the entire University and St. Catherine Street corner of the building collapsed.<sup>80</sup> The block was subsequently demolished and a new building constructed for the Scroggie Company. This is the severe and functional building pictured in the advertisement in illustration 19.

In 1906, the Samuel Carsley Company purchased this building from its owners, the estate of John Ogilvie, with the intention of expanding and remodelling it to suit their needs.<sup>81</sup> For the time being, however, W.H. Scroggie remained a tenant in the building. In April 1909, 6 months after the death of Samuel Carsley, Carsley's announced the imminent

opening of a new uptown store located at the corner of St. Catherine and University Streets:

...The public will please bear in mind that this new uptown store is to be absolutely distinct and apart from the S. Carsley Co. Limited downtown store.... We will carry all classes and qualities of merchandise from the medium to the very best....<sup>82</sup>

Preparations for the new store included "the complete renovating of the entire interior."<sup>83</sup> However, Carsley's had not reckoned with the tenacity of the occupying tenants, who had to be forcibly evicted.<sup>84</sup> Scroggie's, with much ill grace, relocated their business to a store at the corner of St. Catherine and Peel Streets, which had previously been occupied by the Hamilton Company.<sup>85</sup> In June 1909, Carsley's Uptown opened, their advertisements over the following weeks recording for their customers the progress of the various renovations and expansions. In September of that year, scarcely ten months after the death of Samuel Carsley, and only three months after their move to St. Catherine Street, Carsley's uptown store building and the company's entire inventory was sold by his heirs to a consortium of Toronto businessmen.<sup>86</sup> This group was headed by Andrew Edward Rea, an established manufacturer of whitewear.<sup>87</sup> The advertisement reproduced in illustration 20 suggests that the Carsley inventory was dated, and required drastic action to liquidate.

The Rea name appeared on the store and in the newspaper advertisements for little over a year. In March 1911, a group



of Montreal businessmen purchased the company,<sup>89</sup> and the store came to be known as Goodwin's Limited. The opening advertisement stated "...TO-DAY, a new store under a new name, will formally, and we trust completely, pass into the possession of the Montreal public." Following this statement was a list of various features:

...solely for your comfort and safety. Yes, safety! A fire-proof building the new one is, with spacious stairways and elevators, supplemented by two wide fire-proof emergency exits, by which, in case of fire or panic, every floor can be emptied of its crowds, into the streets, in a few minutes - and that is something worth thinking about....<sup>89</sup>

This advertisement included, almost as an afterthought, a reference to "Robes, Gowns and Dress Novelties - just unpacked", but the clear message was that of safety and service. Goodwin's department store remained in this location until 1925, when it was purchased by the T. Eaton Company of Toronto. A series of renovations and additions done between 1925 and 1931, and a major expansion in 1959, created the Eaton building of today.<sup>90</sup>

Scroggie's was still to make a mark in the Montreal retail scene. Subsequent to their move to the St. Catherine and Peel Street location, their advertisements appeared regularly in the newspapers. In 1913, an article in The Star gave a lengthy account of "Scroggie's new \$4,750,000 Store of Wonders", soon to be opened on the southwest intersection of St. Catherine and Bleury Streets.<sup>91</sup> The store frontage was an

impressive 360 feet (ill. 22), and "the features...were designed to secure a better class of help and to make the store more attractive to customers." The "novel features" included an undertaking establishment, a cafeteria and tea room large enough to feed 2000 during the lunch hour, a pet shop, with a resident lion, selling monkeys and pedigreed cats, a butcher's shop, a fish store, and in the Laurentian Mountains "Scroggie's Highland Farm" to supply all the store's dairy products. This list goes on, resembling in almost every detail the services originated by the English merchant William Whiteley, London's "Universal Provider".

Emphasis is placed on the safety features of Scroggie's new building, "stairways and elevators being terra-cotta encased." There were also two 40,000-gallon water tanks on the roof, and nine ground-floor exits. Significantly, the building is never described as a palace. The Star article concluded with the statement that the "opening will be not only a commercial but almost a civic event." Unlike the other store buildings we have discussed, Scroggie's is constructed of brick, with decorative plaques of terra-cotta between the windows and at the cornice line. There is no unnecessary ornamentation; indeed, the series of advertisements published at the time of the opening emphasized this point. This store "marks the advent of a new industrial era" reads one: the artwork in another shows the image of the store supported by a framework of rivetted steel construction beams.<sup>92</sup> Scroggie's

disappeared abruptly from the retail scene a little more than a year after this "civic event", going into bankruptcy in January 1915. Their building, however, still stands at 372 St. Catherine Street West, easily identifiable from the illustration.<sup>94</sup>

Clearly the last two buildings we have discussed demonstrate that the era of the retail "palace" was over. The Rea/Goodwin (ill. 19) building and that of W.H. Scroggie (ill. 22) both lack the ebullient detailing evident in Morgan's Phillips Square store (ill. 15). The 1912 Ogilvy store (ill. 18) has echoes of the old in architectural details, but incorporates much of the new in interior design. The Goodwin and the Scroggie buildings both look ahead to the clean industrial lines of later 20th-century architecture. As we shall see in the next part, merchants would increasingly rely on services and entertainments to attract and keep their customers.

Section I, part 1End Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Commercial Sketch of Montreal (Montreal: Chisholm and Dodd, 1868), p. 34.
- <sup>2</sup> Gerald Tulchinsky, The River Barons (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), p. 220.
- <sup>3</sup> The Montreal Transcript and Commercial Advertiser, 2 May, 1853.
- <sup>4</sup> A visitor to A.T. Stewart's newly built "Cast Iron Palace" in New York calls this "a most admirable thought." Godey's Lady Book, May 1863, p. 430.
- <sup>5</sup> Gunther Barth, City People. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 136. This very interesting book discusses some typically American institutions including the baseball park, the vaudeville theatre and the department store. Barth's interpretation of the impact of these on the development of modern urban society gives insight into the great changes that took place in peoples' lives and attitudes in the late 19th-century. The department store in particular was instrumental in altering women's lives by offering a sort of entertainment to some, while at the same time offering a source of income to others.
- <sup>6</sup> Newton Bosworth, Hochelaga Depicta (Montreal: Wm. Greig, 1839), p. 212.
- <sup>7</sup> Mary Allodi, Printmaking in Canada, The Earliest Views and Portraits (Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 1980), p. 199.
- <sup>8</sup> Henry Morgan worked in this shop briefly after his arrival from Scotland in 1844. In 1845 he and David Smith left Albion House and went into partnership. Their first shop is discussed later in this section.
- <sup>9</sup> A photograph of this building is found in Architecture commerciale III: les magasins, les cinémas (Montreal: La Communauté urbaine de Montréal, 1985), p. 33. There it is incorrectly identified as 370, Place Royale.
- <sup>10</sup> Mackay's Montreal Directory, 1845.
- <sup>11</sup> The Gazette, 19 May, 1845.

- 12 The Pilot, 4 April, 1854.
- 13 McGill University, Henry Morgan Papers, M1002 C4, 29 January, 1847.
- 14 Ibid, 12 May, 1847.
- 15 Ibid, 29 July, 1850.
- 16 The Pilot, 23 March, 1854. Mackay's Montreal Directory of that year identifies George Morrison as a "Builder".
- 17 The Transcript, 20 May, 1854. J. & M. Nichols were at this location until 1858, when their partnership was dissolved (The Pilot 23 March, 1858). Subsequently, the "New Retail Establishment" of Dufresne and Grey occupied 290 Notre Dame Street. (Mackay's Montreal Directory 1862-63, p. 265.)
- 18 Joseph Paxton, the designer of the Crystal Palace, based this construction on the principle used in greenhouses. His use of pre-formed standard-size cast iron structural members anticipated the use of structural steel in construction by many decades. For further information see Anthony Bird, Paxton's Palace. (London: Cassell, ca. 1976.)
- 19 Allan Nevins (ed.), Diary of Phillip Hone, 1828-1856. 2 Vols. New York: n.p., 1927. Quoted in H. Resseguie, "A.T. Stewart's Marble Palace", The New York Historical Quarterly, Vol. 48 (1964): 140.
- 20 The Gazette, 16 May, 1844. Some years later, Peter Redpath advertised that as sole agent for the Union Plate Glass Company of Liverpool, he was "prepared to take orders for ...plate glass in any size...." (The Transcript, 3 May, 1853).
- 21 For example, in describing Morgan's Phillips Square building, then under construction, an article stated "...all the windows in the building are to be of the finest plate glass....", (The Star, 11 January, 1890).
- 22 This block, still in daily commercial use, is at numbers 11-21 Notre Dame Street West. It is much altered at street level, and has an additional storey which destroyed the original cornice. However, the windows of the second and third floors are clearly recognizable.
- 23 Architecture commerciale III, (Montreal: La Communauté Urbaine de Montréal, 1985.) p. xviii.

- <sup>24</sup> The broad paved sidewalk in front of these stores would also have been appreciated in a city where muddy streets were quite usual. A contemporary photograph of the Savage and Lyman store also shows a paved sidewalk, proving that the engraver had not taken artistic license. (Notman Photographic Archives, Mp 067-80).
- <sup>25</sup> The original is reproduced in Architecture commerciale III, p. 20. Note that there it is incorrectly dated as ca. 1839, twenty years before the Cathedral Block was constructed!
- <sup>26</sup> Business Guide to the City of Montreal (Montreal: Lovell, 1860) p. 29.
- <sup>27</sup> Canadian Illustrated News, 30 November, 1872, p. 339.
- <sup>28</sup> The Transcript, 23 April, 1855.
- <sup>29</sup> Business Guide to the City of Montreal. (Montreal: Lovell, 1860) p. 37.
- <sup>30</sup> Harry Resseguie, "A.T. Stewart's Marble Palace", The New York Historical Society Quarterly, Vol. 48 (1964): 144.
- <sup>31</sup> Kathleen Jenkins, Montreal the Island City, (New York: Doubleday, 1966), p. 386. This measurement refers not to the individual windows, but to their total expanse in the storefront.
- <sup>32</sup> The Star, 20 September, 1879.
- <sup>33</sup> La Presse, 21 February 1885. Dupuis Frères used the Merrill store as the location for the sale, which offered the merchandise at "40 cents dans la piastre". On an earlier occasion, as Dupuis Frères was offering the bankrupt stock of Jolicoeur Frères, a line in the advertisement reads "...you may have noticed that we make a speciality of buying almost all the bankrupt stocks that are offered on the market..." (The Star, 3 February, 1880). In 1894 Carsley's advertised the "bankrupt stock of Messrs. Bédard & Vincent" which consisted of ladies and children's capes and coats "all now being sold at from fifty to seventy cents in the dollar" (The Star, 10 December, 1894). Obviously this was an accepted practice, as other examples have also been noted.
- <sup>34</sup> In 1858, Morgan expanded his shop into an adjacent building which fronted on St. Joseph Street (now Notre Dame), this gave his shop an L-shape. The McGill street façade of this building can be identified in a contemporary engraving, it is that of R. Campbell's Montreal Carpet

Store. Campbell moved here immediately after Morgan. (Canadian Illustrated News, 22 July, 1871, cover.)

- 35 Morgan tradition credits Montrealer Harrison Stephens (1801-1881) with the design of this building. Dictionary of Canadian Biography, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), vol. xi, pp. 850-1.
- 36 Commercial Sketch of Montreal (Montreal: Chisholm and Dodd, 1868), p. 20.
- 37 Ibid. p. 20.
- 38 The Star, 25 September, 1890. This advertisement anticipated the actual move by about 7 months, obviously the Hamiltons were proud of their new prestigious address. This move was also an opportunity for N.E. Hamilton and Henry Hamilton (of Ligget and Hamilton) to form a single larger company. Thomas Ligget remained independent, establishing his own carpet store.
- 39 The Star, 5 March, 1896. The Hamiltons first located near the corner of Peel Street (site of the present Dominion Square Building). A few years later, they moved to a location a few blocks west on St. Catherine Street, between Drummond and Mountain streets, beside Ogilvy's. This building still stands.
- 40 Guy Pinard. Montreal, son histoire, son architecture v. III, (Montreal: Les Editions La Presse, 1986), p. 190.
- 41 Canadian Illustrated News, 28 December, 1872, pp. 407, 410, 412.
- 42 The Dominion Illustrated, "Special Number devoted to Montreal the Commercial Metropolis of the Dominion," December, 1891, p. 176.
- 43 The Star, 23 September, 1880.
- 44 The Dominion Illustrated, "Special Number devoted to Montreal the Commercial Metropolis of the Dominion," December, 1891, p. 176.
- 45 An illustration of that store can be found in Richard Lambert, William Whiteley, The Universal Provider (London: G. Marrapo, 1938) p. 89.
- 46 The Star, 23 November, 1895.
- 47 The Star, 7 September, 1894.

- 48 The Star, 21 November, 1908.
- 49 The Star, 22 October, 1896. An advertisement from this period shows a bird's eye view of this enormous building complex. (The Star, 12 September, 1896.) Unfortunately it could not be reproduced clearly enough for inclusion here.
- 50 F.W. Terrill, Chronology of Montreal (Montreal: Lovell, 1893), p. 160.
- 51 The Star, 11 January, 1890.
- 52 Ibid.
- 53 Ibid.
- 54 David Morgan, The Morgans of Montreal (Toronto: n.p., 1992), p. 72.
- 55 The Star, 11 January, 1890.
- 56 Colin Morgan, a nephew of Henry and James, had by that time a determining voice in the company's affairs. (See David Morgan, op. cit. p. 70).
- 57 The Star, 23 April 1891. It is part of the company lore that the store closed on Victoria Square one evening and opened the next morning on Phillips Square (see David Morgan, op. cit., p. 72). This is not quite the case. The old store closed at the end of business on Friday April 17, the new store opened on Monday April 20. (The Star, 17 April, 1891.) There was likely little time off for employees that weekend.
- 58 The Gazette, 13 November, 1923.
- 59 Architecture commerciale, III, p. 209.
- 60 Ibid. pp. 164-166. Henry Birks started work as a clerk in the jewellery store of Savage and Lyman in 1857, becoming a partner in 1868. In 1879, he started in business on his own at 222 St. James Street (The Star, 20 November, 1907).
- 61 The Star, 27 January, 1894. An illustration of Murphy's original building on Notre Dame Street can be found in The Dominion Illustrated. "Special Number devoted to Montreal the Commercial Metropolis of the Dominion." December 1891, p. 132.
- 62 The Star, 10 March, 1894.



- <sup>63</sup> The Star, 19 September, 1895.
- <sup>64</sup> The Star, 26 April, 1909.
- <sup>65</sup> C.L. Burton, A Sense of Urgency (Toronto: Clarke Irwin, 1952), p. 184. An advertisement published in January 1909 emphasized the improved merchandising capabilities of the new company, stating "The Robert Simpson Co. of Toronto and the John Murphy Co. of Montreal...are organically the same, we are one." (The Star, 9 January, 1909.)
- <sup>66</sup> Architecture commerciale III, pp. 228-231.
- <sup>67</sup> The Commerce of Montreal (Montreal: George Bishop, 1888), p. 50. The illustration which accompanies this article shows a "handsome brick structure...with three floors and a basement." It is, however, very modest in comparison to what we have seen on Notre Dame Street.
- <sup>68</sup> The Star, 25 March, 1912.
- <sup>69</sup> The Star, 18 September, 1895. Buckingham Street ran north from St. Catherine Street between Guy and St. Matthew Streets. A review of this location in Lovell's Montreal Directory of the time shows a number of shops in this area, reflecting the westward expansion of the city.
- <sup>70</sup> The Star, 9 March, 1894.
- <sup>71</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>72</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>73</sup> The Star, 25 March, 1912.
- <sup>74</sup> Architecture commerciale III, p. 215.
- <sup>75</sup> The Star, 25 March, 1912.
- <sup>76</sup> The Star, 20 February, 1892.
- <sup>77</sup> The Star, 18 September, 1899.
- <sup>78</sup> Lovell's Montreal Directory, 1885-86, p. 569.
- <sup>79</sup> E.J. Chambers, The Book of Montreal (Montreal: Book of Montreal Company, 1903), p. 200.
- <sup>80</sup> The Star, 18 September, 1890.
- <sup>81</sup> The Star, 3 and 4 April, 1906.

- <sup>82</sup> The Star, 24 April, 1909.
- <sup>83</sup> The Star, 10 April, 1909. The series of advertisements published in the The Star during April and May 1909 by Carsley's and by Scroggie's supplies much more information than could be included in this brief summary.
- <sup>84</sup> The Gazette, 14 September, 1909.
- <sup>85</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>86</sup> Ibid. The buildings on Notre Dame Street were not included in this transaction.
- <sup>87</sup> Whitewear was the word used to describe ladies undergarments. An early Rea advertisement with the headline "Whitewear of Character and Elegance Direct from Factory to Wearer" shows a cloud of petticoats, camisoles, nightgowns and drawers fluttering through the air from the Rea factory in Toronto to the St. Catherine Street store. The Star, 7 January, 1910).
- <sup>88</sup> The Star, 18 March, 1911. For a time the advertisements carried the cumbersome identification Goodwin's Limited (owning and operating A.E. Rea & Co., Montreal). W.H. Goodwin, Managing Director of the new company had extensive retail experience, having been the advertising manager for Eaton's in Toronto: in Montreal he had been general manager of Murphy's, which was then owned by Simpson's.
- <sup>89</sup> The Star, 20 April, 1911. This emphasis on the fire-proof qualities of the building may have been prompted by the recent Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire in New York in which 140 employees were killed when trapped in a building with inadequate exits.
- <sup>90</sup> Architecture commerciale III, p. 182.
- <sup>91</sup> The Star, 18 October, 1913. All subsequent information and quotations in this paragraph are from this article.
- <sup>92</sup> The Star, 24 and 25 November, 1913.
- <sup>93</sup> The Star, 28 January, 1915. Scroggie's "Bankrupt Stock" was purchased by Almy's Limited who carried on the established retail business at the same location. One of their early advertisements patriotically featured a "Made in Canada Exposition" (The Star, 15 February, 1915).
- <sup>94</sup> The ground floor façade has been substantially altered to accommodate a number of small shops and restaurants, but the upper stories are not altered.

## SECTION I: FROM SHOP TO PALACE TO THEATRE

### 2. Store Interiors and Customer Services

...For architectural style and beauty the building is unsurpassed by any store on the continent, while the interior fittings are, in a point of chasteness and elegance of design, quite in keeping with the exterior....<sup>1</sup>

It is evident from the preceding section on changes and developments in store architecture that fashion retailers took pride in their store buildings. Increasingly important were the furnishings of the stores, and the services that were provided to make the customer feel like an honoured guest.

We were able to illustrate the change in store architecture with a fairly representative group of images, the pride of merchants in their prosperity being reflected in the number of illustrations which were published of their handsome buildings. It has been much more difficult to document the evolution of store interiors. Images are rare, even in the last decades of the 19th century, when the camera recorded so much of Montreal history. Narrative descriptions, while useful, still leave much to the imagination.

In the 1839 quotation from Hochelaga Depicta (see p. 15) Newton Bosworth is very impressed with the "superb, exquisitely finished room" of Mr. McDonald's shop on Place d'Armes. This suggests that Montreal retailers were early aware of the importance of shop environment in attracting a clientèle. The comparison of this shop to any in Europe or America may be something of a hyperbole, but the statement

itself reiterates the fact that Montrealers were very aware of business and fashion trends in the major cities of the world, and that not having a market potential the size of New York or London did not deter them in their efforts to be up-to-date.

The earliest image of the interior of a Montreal store which we have discovered was published in Mackay's Montreal Directory of 1854 (ill. 23). Arthur's Queen's Arcade was located on the south side of Notre Dame Street just to the east of St. Peter Street. The "interior of this elegant establishment"<sup>2</sup> is long and narrow, the side walls being fitted to the ceiling with shelves which hold bolts and rolls of various fabrics, and boxes of other merchandise, probably trimmings, laces, ribbons and threads.<sup>3</sup> The customers are served at counters which parallel the walls. The store is illuminated by gas chandeliers, and additional light would have come from the store-front windows and the skylight, which can be seen in the illustration. A stairway at the side may have led to the second-floor mantle showrooms. An earlier illustrated advertisement (a rarity at this time) indicates that these were part of Arthur's merchandise assortment:

Cloaks! Cloaks!  
450 more of the new BALMORAL SHAPE as  
worn by Her Majesty in passing through  
Liverpool and Manchester...at 12s 6p and  
upwards.<sup>4</sup>

From the Montreal Directory, it appears that Alex Arthur occupied this location for only two or three years, since in 1856 another drygoods firm, Ringland and Ewart, advertised

their business at this address.<sup>5</sup>

In 1868, Henry Morgan's Colonial House on St. James Street was still new enough to merit two pages of description in the Commercial Sketch of Montreal:

...[On] the ground floor...we behold with one sweep of the eye its great extent. Six counters stretch out before us, clustered alongside of which is a continuous row of customers...[and in] the Show Rooms above...we notice the Millinery and Mantle rooms.... The centre of the Show Room having two handsome counters, running its extreme length, is occupied with mourning goods and silks.... The remaining portion of this floor is occupied with cloths, embracing every style and make....<sup>6</sup>

The third and fourth floors of the building were devoted to workrooms and stock storage. (Morgan's at that time still operated a wholesale division.) The basement of the building was the salesroom for floor coverings:

...The whole of this large area of space is taken up with countless piles of carpets, huge rolls of oil cloth, and a general assortment of house furnishing goods....<sup>7</sup>

This description of Colonial House gives us general information on the interior organization of the store, but one wishes that the writer had been less terse. The interior of Stewart's "Cast Iron Palace" in New York is described in Godey's Lady's Book (May, 1863) in much more generous detail. Similarities between the two stores can be noted, a feature of both being a large staircase leading to the second floor showrooms; one can imagine that this would have been a good

location from which to view the store's activity. It may also have been a favourite place to be seen.

A photograph of the interior of Colonial House, undated but likely taken in the early 1870's (ill. 24), shows the "great extent" of the ground floor. The counters, described in the Commercial Sketch as being "a confused mass of Heaped up goods...[with a] general disordered appearance...denot[ing] a busy day"<sup>8</sup> have been tidied for the camera, and the customers and sales clerks are acting out their roles with serious dignity. The architectural detail is interesting, showing light-coloured walls with molded panelling and a ceiling of richly ornamented plaster. "The graceful Corinthian columns of cast iron pure in color as marble", which are described as a notable feature in Stewart's,<sup>9</sup> can also be seen in the photograph of Colonial House.

The illustration of the elegant jewellery store of Savage, Lyman and Company found in the Christmas 1875 issue of the Canadian Illustrated News shows similarities to the interior of the Morgan store (ill. 25). The detailing in the décor of the jewellery store is somewhat more lavish, in keeping with the lines of luxury merchandise being offered. The description of the Savage, Lyman and Co. store reads in part:

...For architectural style and beauty the building is unsurpassed by any store on the continent, while the interior fittings are, in a point of chasteness and elegance of design, quite in keeping with the exterior...the interior...is

admirably fitted up with beautiful rose-wood counter cases by J.D. Bennett and ...handsome floorings by A.M. McIntyre.<sup>10</sup>

The display fixture and counters seen in the photograph of Morgan's are very modest and utilitarian by contrast, but they served to display scarves and gloves and laces for many years. In 1891, when Colonial House was moved to the new building on Phillips Square, this line appeared in one of their advertisements: "FOR SALE - Fixtures on ground floor of Old Store."<sup>11</sup> Savage, Lyman and Company did not long stay in their luxurious surroundings. Financial difficulties forced liquidation of the company in 1878.<sup>12</sup> It subsequently moved to a smaller building on the opposite side of St. James Street, the name having been changed to Savage and Lyman.<sup>13</sup>

A staircase such as that shown at the rear of Savage, Lyman & Co. was also a feature in Colonial House. Although it is not visible in the photograph, the 1868 description describes a

...broad staircase [which] at the elevation of a few steps branches off into two circular sweeps to the Show Room above....<sup>14</sup>

These stairs were the only way of reaching the upper selling floors until 1878, when Morgan's installed a passenger elevator.<sup>15</sup> Samuel Carsley and John Murphy also installed hydraulic elevators in their Notre Dame Street buildings.<sup>16</sup> The installation of passenger elevators was another important development in the history of retail stores. The use of cast iron columns freed up interior space and allowed more

effective organization of store counters, and the installation of plate glass windows improved illumination. Both of these architectural modifications helped to create shops that were more open, airy, and generally more pleasant spaces in which the customer could spend time selecting merchandise. The development of safe passenger elevators provided the solution for vertical expansion of that selling space. Long flights of stairs were no longer a deterrent to inviting customers to shop on the third or fourth floors. Passenger elevators were installed in the existing buildings of Montreal stores in the last quarter of the 19th-century. Both passenger and freight elevators were incorporated into all the new dry goods palaces which were constructed after 1890.

There was one more feature that was common to most of the retail buildings constructed during the second half of the 19th-century: the light well. In New York, A.T. Stewart incorporated one into his "Marble Palace" in 1846, and again in 1862 into his "Cast Iron Palace":

...The Marble Palace had a light, airy atmosphere because of its spacious central rotunda.... This innovation was quickly adapted by other retail stores....<sup>17</sup>

In Montreal, the commercial building known as the Cathedral Block (see p. 22) had light wells incorporated into its architecture. We learn this from an article describing the interior of the J & T Bell shoe and boot store, which was immediately beside Savage, Lyman & Co. The article reads in



part:

...[The store is] 45 feet in width by 100 feet in length. The salesroom is very tastefully laid out, the counters and other woodwork being grained in imitation of oak. The walls, on either side of the store, and running its entire length, contain a number of cases.... The shop is furnished with a number of handsome settees, for the accommodation of customers. In the center of the shop a large staircase leads to the upper parts of the building... [and] immediately above the staircase [a light-well] is so arranged as to throw the light directly down on that portion of the first flat furthest removed from the street windows. The effect of this ingenious contrivance is all that could be desired....<sup>18</sup>

In 1883, L'Opinion Publique published a two-page illustration of the main façade of the newly constructed Au Printemps department store in Paris. The accompanying article includes lengthy descriptions of the many mechanical and engineering innovations incorporated into the building. One of the most striking features of this building, of which all customers would have been very much aware, was the central light well, about which the floors curved like large galleries, being illuminated by "la lumière du jour... abondante et franche". It is referred to in the article as "'un hall' immense". The measurements were indeed impressive:

...cinquante metres de longueur sur douze de largeur, prenant jour par un vitrage de six cents metres de hauteur.... La lumière du jour arrive abondante et franche dans toutes les parties du bâtiment....<sup>19</sup>

Morgan's Phillips Square store built in 1891 also

incorporated a light well, which was inelegantly described as "a well-hole, twenty four feet by thirty three in the center of the building for lighting purposes".<sup>20</sup> The light well of the 1895 Ogilvy building, while lacking the impressive dimensions of that of the Paris store, is described in such a way that we can almost picture what must have been a very attractive feature:

...Through the center of the building from the roof to the ground floor is a large well for light which adds very much to the interior view. Around this well on each floor will be an ornamental guard railing of polished brass and used for exhibiting hanging goods of every description....<sup>21</sup>

With natural light flooding from both the large plate glass windows and this light well, the interior of Ogilvy's must have been a bright and pleasant place to shop. In later advertising, Ogilvy's sometimes referred to itself as "The Daylight Store."<sup>22</sup>

There was, however, some merchandise that was best seen in a different light. The quality of a light source can change the appearance of a color: a hue which is attractive in natural light can seem to change significantly in appearance when seen in artificial light. This could have disastrous consequences if a silk evening gown, carefully selected to flatter the complexion and hair of the wearer, did just the opposite in a gas-lit ball room. The thoughtful fashion retailer, such as A.T. Stewart in New York, provided a solution. The author of the article in Godey's notes that

...we were dazzled by a display of delicate and gorgeous fabric.... Some of these could only be seen in their full perfection by the aid of artificial light, under which they are intended to be worn. They were shown to us in a separate apartment, from which the daylight is entirely excluded, lighted brilliantly by jets of gas....<sup>23</sup>

Probably this interesting feature was also incorporated into the silk showrooms of the better Montreal fashion retailers, but we have found no documentary evidence to confirm this until 1891, when it was important enough to be mentioned in a description of Morgan's Phillips Square store:

...Adjoining are the fitting rooms, one being dark and lighted with electricity. Here goods and dresses to be worn at night will be examined and fitted....<sup>24</sup>

Store owners were quick to incorporate such conveniences as elevators, electric lighting and telephones into their existing buildings. As we have noted, Morgan's added an elevator to the Victoria Square store in 1878, and by 1887 Ogilvy's was regularly including their telephone number in their advertisements. However, the Morgan's store on Phillips Square was the first in Montreal to incorporate all these features as part of the original structure. At that time, the municipal power supply apparently was still rather erratic, since we read that the store had its own dynamos

...which supply electricity to the 5 h.p. motor for the cash system, the motors for passenger and goods elevators, and for lighting... [and] altogether there are 80 arc and 26 incandescent lights through the buildings....<sup>25</sup>

The cash system which is mentioned in this quotation was a novel idea. Stores had previously relied on young boys to act as runners, carrying sales bills and cash from the sales counter to the central cashier's desk, and returning with the change and the receipted bill. In 1868 a customer at Morgan's noted

...above the confused hum of many voices, the sharp call of cash from the clerks, set in motion the many boys whose duty it is to attend to the circulating medium....<sup>26</sup>

The confusion and congestion this must have created on a busy day can only be imagined. Morgan's was proud to replace this system with "Martin's Electric Cash System":

...One of the most noticeable features of this store...is the cash collecting system. The cashier's desk...is in communication with every department by means of little steel tracks overhead. Along these the cash boxes are propelled by means of an endless cable....<sup>27</sup>

This mechanical device must have fascinated small boys, one of whom later recorded in his memoirs his impressions of the system in Carsley's:

...There were no cash registers in those days, so when a customer paid the bill, the salesgirl hauled down by piece of rope, a small metal container, put the sales slip and the cash inside, let it go up and then jerked the ropes, and the box went whizzing to the main cash desk....<sup>28</sup>

These systems were likely similar in appearance to the Fuller Cash Carrier which was advertised in the Canadian Journal of Fabrics in 1890 (ill. 26).

Thoughtful retailers also considered their customers' physical comforts and began to install restrooms, which were delicately referred to by many names. In 1862, New York's A.T. Stewart included "a neatly decorated ladies' dressing room" in his "Cast Iron Palace". This was considered "a most admirable thought" by the writer of the article in Godey's from which we have already quoted.<sup>29</sup> Morgan's incorporated this convenience into its Phillips Square store and even elaborated on it:

...This is the only drygoods house in the city having a ladies' waiting and reception room. It is most richly furnished and carpeted, with immense mirrors set on the walls. Connected with this are lavatories with mahogany fixtures....<sup>30</sup>

In 1895, Samuel Carsley came up with a novel way of keeping his customers informed. He installed in his store a telegraph line similar to that used by newspapers to receive news reports. "Any lady wishing to know the latest news going on in the world has just to step into Carsley's waiting gallery and read it there."<sup>31</sup> As Ogilvy's built their first St. Catherine Street store in 1894, they too thought of the comfort of their customers:

...The ladies' sitting-room is designed of the most beautiful interior work in the house, furnished with writing table and chairs complete with electric heating apparatus and detailed throughout with cherry woodwork with Italian Renaissance decoration....<sup>32</sup>

An artist's impression of a store's "Reception Room" is

among the illustrations included in a long article on the department store published in Scribner's Magazine in 1897.<sup>33</sup> In the illustration we can see that the customers seem to be very much at home, scanning the newspaper, writing a note, and even nodding off to sleep (ill. 27)! It seems obvious that by the last decade of the 19th-century, the customer was being treated as a respected guest, and being offered comforts and conveniences which in many cases she would not have had in her own home. For a time she could enjoy the luxuries of a palace.

Competition among retailers to attract customers, always an important factor in business, became keener in the last decades of the 19th-century. Customer services and conveniences such as those we have described were offered by most major stores. Advertising, as yet unrecognized as a profession, would change the methods of competition in the 20th-century. The advertisements of the 19th-century consist typically of lists of merchandise, with little or no qualifying descriptions. In the last quarter of the century, we note that frequently these advertisements include the suggestion that the customer should see the store window in order to appreciate the full range of the merchandise advertised. An American, writing in 1892, suggested that store windows should

...prove an attraction to the people upon the street.... Their attention must be diverted from their original intention sufficient to excite in them the desire

of possession....<sup>34</sup>

Savage, Lyman and Company seem to have achieved this result in 1872 with a display of Christmas gift suggestions:

...The gorgeous display in the shop windows has for the past few days had such an attraction for admiring passers-by, that the pavement has been thronged literally "from morn till dewy eve."<sup>35</sup>

An illustration from the Canadian Illustrated News dating from about the same time recreates the thronged pavement (ill. 28).

A few years later, when Samuel Carsley wanted to give special emphasis to his lace department, he incorporated a touch of showmanship into the window display. The first paragraph of his newspaper column read:

...Dead or Alive! The figure in our window making lace causes some warm disputes as to whether it is a real woman or a wax figure worked by machinery....<sup>36</sup>

A decade later, when Carsley was advertising the superiority of a line of whale-bone corsets, a lesson in natural science awaited the customers: "...a portion of a whale can now be seen on exhibition in one of the windows...."<sup>37</sup>

Windows entertained and informed the passersby, but it was important to get the customer into the store to make a purchase. In 1894 Colonial House encouraged the needlewomen of Montreal to see the

...Silk display...at the Society of Decorative Arts Room [where there] are several pieces of Beautiful Embroidery, worked with B & A Wash Silks.... Every

lady should see this magnificent piece of art-work, THE TABLE COVER that took a medal at the World's Fair....<sup>38</sup>

Thus entertained, the customer could be encouraged to buy the requisite embroidery silk in order to try her own creative skills. Not to be outdone, Carsley advertised an

...Oriental Exhibit...Ladies and Gentlemen say the Exhibit beats anything of the kind in either London, Paris or New York. The Indian, Japanese and Old English Hand-Carved Chairs, Tables, Ornaments and Sideboards are very choice....<sup>39</sup>

John Murphy offered a more practical form of entertainment when he invited "Miss Mary W. Watson, Graduate of the Philadelphia School of Cookery" to give a Free Cooking Lecture with a

...practical demonstration [of] the mixing and making of Hot Biscuits, Boiled Rice, Boiled Cabbage, Hamburg, Steak, etc. etc. Ladies will be afforded an opportunity of consulting Miss W. on Cooking and the management of the kitchen generally. Don't miss this chance of obtaining valuable "Pointers" free....<sup>40</sup>

Not all entertainment offered by retailers to their customers was as practical as learning how to boil rice and cabbage. Stores also capitalized on the presence of celebrities, including Vice-regal guests. Shortly after his new St. Catherine Street store opened, John Murphy welcomed the Countess of Aberdeen, wife of the Governor-General of Canada, who,

as President of the Irish Industries Association, will inaugurate the opening of a section devoted to Irish Hand-made Lace, Handkerchiefs, Homespuns, etc. A



cordial invitation to attend it extended to all....<sup>41</sup>

This lace department apparently became a profitable feature at Murphy's. Over a decade later an advertisement read: "...Of particular Interest to Tourists...Our Irish Lace Department [is] perhaps the best in America, certainly the best in Canada...."<sup>42</sup>

At about this time, in the 1890s, retailers began to offer their customers small gifts with their purchases. In an advertisement for dress fabrics, Morgan's offered "One of Butterick's Patterns gratis to each cash purchaser of Two Dollars worth [of fabric]...."<sup>43</sup> Carsley's offered

...With each pair of Kid Gloves...we will give one root of the Chinese Sacred Lily...free of charge. Also sufficient pebbles to grow it. All put up neatly in a strong paper bag....<sup>44</sup>

A customer visiting Murphy's in March 1896 could count on a dramatic sensory experience:

Music! Perfume! Flowers!  
...Be Entertained by Mr. Gould with the newest selections of music and a rare display of flowers, while discoursing on the merits of the perfumery and spraying every one with their favourite odor.<sup>45</sup>

By 1893, Carsley's was offering their customers the grandest feat of showmanship that had yet been attempted in Montreal retail stores: a real Santa Claus (ill. 29)! Starting the first week in December, a series of letters from Santa Claus was published in "Carsley's Column", in both The Star and La Presse. These recorded the trip from the

### North Pole and Santa promised

...to read all [the children's] letters and answer them when they call on me. I can read and speak French and English, so all can write to me. I have thousands of boxes of candies for the children...[so] tell them to meet me at [Carsley's] grotto...<sup>46</sup>

In 1894 the grotto featured not only "The Real Live Santa Claus with his Sleigh and Team" but also

...Tableaux representing the different scenes of Cinderella and the Glass slipper.... The Grotto which now presents an appearance most Fairy-like...is a pretty sight and will not easily be forgotten, but in after years be remembered as one of the delights of happy childhood....<sup>47</sup>

One little girl remembered these delights when, years later, as a grandmother, she wrote that

...One Christmas [I was taken] to see Santa in the Grotto [at Carsley's]...and I was so thrilled and excited when I saw Santa and he asked me what I wanted I said "I would like a bug and a jowl"; what I really wanted to say was a jug and bowl...How he laughed but he sent it to me along with wonderful doll's parlour furniture in red plush....<sup>48</sup>

Today Christmas has become so commercialized that it is difficult to appreciate what a source of wonder and entertainment the first "real" Santa Claus must have been.

In April 1912, for the opening of their new store, Ogilvy's started a tradition to celebrate another Christian festival:

...The spirit of Easter pervades this store. Hundreds of songsters send up their glad warblings of thanksgiving for

life and happiness. Birds and flowers are here in attractive array. Bright sunlight and pure air penetrate to every nook and corner....<sup>49</sup>

Montreal retailers also disguised sales promotion as entertainment. An A.E. Rea advertisement from March 1911 invited customers to ...interview our expert corsetière, Miss Dougherty who was sharing her "corset beauty secrets [which ensured a] splendidly impressive presence, which marks the well dressed woman...."<sup>50</sup> The same Rea advertisement featured a large section listing events planned for "Sample City". Apparently a section of the store was set aside for manufacturers to demonstrate their products and give out samples. In this advertisement, among the goods offered by 37 manufacturers listed we note such diverse consumer products as Canadian Shredded Wheat, Jell-o, the McClary Mfg. Co. (stoves) and the Berliner Gram-o-phone Co. Another attraction at Sample City was a

...special performance in the Theatre... Numbers will be rendered by the Sample City Orchestra. Between each orchestral selection. Mr. Eckstein, the popular pianist, will perform and Miss Eleanor Forbes will sing. This is...FREE TO ALL.<sup>51</sup>

At the same time Rea's offered "Classes in Art Needlework.... We have an expert in charge, and the very newest ideas in Fancy Work are carefully taught and explained...."<sup>52</sup> These lessons must have been very popular, since a year later Goodwin's invited their customers to "...bring your own work and make yourself perfectly at

Home...."<sup>53</sup>

In September 1913, The Garden of Allah arrived at His Majesty's Theatre in Montreal. This stage spectacular, a lush fantasy of love and adventure in a desert setting, had become a tremendous popular success in the United States, providing thematic inspiration for interior décor and commercial art.<sup>54</sup> In April 1912 Philadelphia's leading department store, the John Wanamaker Company, had staged a fashion show with The Garden of Allah as the setting, hiring members of the cast in costume to provide added atmosphere. Over a year later, Scroggie's "presented to the public" in his store

...turbulent sons from the burning sands of the Great Sahara Desert. The famous Sheik Hah-Med and 20 tribesmen in their native costume, as they appear daily in "The Garden of Allah" at His Majesty's theatre....<sup>55</sup>

The items advertised for sale in the rest of this advertisement give no indication that there was any effort made to have merchandise which would complement the presence of these exotic guests.

Fashion shows were an innovation in American stores in the early 20th-century, combining theatre and merchandising.<sup>56</sup> Montreal stores published increasingly elegant advertisements to announce the season openings, referring to "Exhibition Week" or "Formal Opening of the millinery and costume departments". However, these advertisements seem only to describe the seasonal décor of the stores and their displays of the new season's merchandise within the fashion

departments. The first reference that clearly describes a presentation of fashions on live models is one of the special events which celebrated the opening of Scroggie's new store in 1913. Suggesting that a customer "spend an enjoyable day", the advertisement read

See the Living Models display the latest innovations in Costume and Gowns, Hats and Furs, and get a comprehensive idea of how the garments look on living figures.<sup>57</sup>

It is clear that by the early 20th-century, department stores had become places of diverse activities where customers could find not only the merchandise they might require, but also the entertainment that they desired.

Section I, Part 2End Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Canadian Illustrated News, 30 November, 1872, p. 339. This quotation refers to the new Savage, Lyman and Co. Store, which is described in this section. We have noted the use of the words "chaste and elegant" in the contemporary descriptions of many stores. For example, these and other glowing adjectives were used in 1860 in Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper to describe the New York jewellery store of Black, Ball & Co. Quoted in Winston Wiseman, "Commercial Palaces of New York, 1845-1875" The Art Bulletin 36 (1954): 295.
- <sup>2</sup> Mackay's Montreal Directory, 1854, p. 321.
- <sup>3</sup> Certain fabrics such as velvets are usually stored on rolls to avoid damaging the surface of the fabric. When stored on a bolt the fabric is usually folded lengthwise, then wrapped about a flat cardboard form; some creasing and crushing is inevitable in this method of storage.
- <sup>4</sup> The Transcript, 2 December, 1851.
- <sup>5</sup> Mackay's Montreal Directory, 1852-1856.
- <sup>6</sup> Commercial Sketch of Montreal (Montreal: Chisholm and Dodd, 1868), p. 20.
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid. The "house furnishing goods" were of a textile nature, not furniture.
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>9</sup> Godey's Lady's Book, May, 1863, p. 430.
- <sup>10</sup> Canadian Illustrated News, 30 November, 1872 pp. 339, 341. Lovell's Montreal Directory 1874-75 lists J.D. Bennett as a "Fancy Case and Cabinet Maker" and A. McIntyre as a "Builder".
- <sup>11</sup> The Star, 4 April, 1891.
- <sup>12</sup> The Gazette, 21 November, 1878. Savage, Lyman & Co. were succeeded at this location by the new partnership of Claggett and Tait, whose specialties were "Silks and Costumes" (Canadian Illustrated News, 11 October, 1879).
- <sup>13</sup> This company declared bankruptcy in 1886. (The Star, 26

February, 1886).

- <sup>14</sup> Commercial Sketch of Montreal (Montreal: Chisholm and Dodd, 1868), p. 20.
- <sup>15</sup> McGill University, Henry Morgan Papers, MG 1002 C18 file 17. The location of this elevator is indicated on a floor plan of the store published to advertise Hamilton's "Great Cheap Sale" (The Star 2 January, 1892).
- <sup>16</sup> Dominion Illustrated, "Special Number Devoted to Montreal the Commercial Metropolis of the Dominion," pp. 132, 176.
- <sup>17</sup> Harry Resseguie, "A.T. Stewart's Marble Palace" The New York Historical Society Quarterly, 48 (1964): 132.
- <sup>18</sup> Montreal Business Sketches (Montreal: Canadian Railway Advertising Co., 1865), p. 95.
- <sup>19</sup> L'Opinion Publique, 19 April, 1883, pp. 184-187.
- <sup>20</sup> The Star, 11 January, 1890. This "well hole" can be seen in two photographs which illustrate an article on the Morgan store in the Dominion Illustrated Christmas Number 1891. Unfortunately they were not clear enough for reproduction.
- <sup>21</sup> The Star, 9 March, 1894.
- <sup>22</sup> Star, 25 March, 1912.
- <sup>23</sup> Godey's, May, 1863, p. 431.
- <sup>24</sup> The Star, 21 April, 1891.
- <sup>25</sup> Dominion Illustrated. "Illustrated Christmas Number," December, 1891, n.p.
- <sup>26</sup> Commercial Sketch of Montreal (Montreal: Chisholm and Dodd, 1868), p. 20.
- <sup>27</sup> The Star, 21 April 1891. The article in the Dominion Illustrated quoted above (note 25) identified this cash system by name.
- <sup>28</sup> Duncan Macintyre, End of Steel (Toronto: Peter Martin, 1973), p. 10. It is interesting to note that a similar system is still in use in the D'Aoust Limited general store in Ste Anne de Bellevue.
- <sup>29</sup> Godey's, May, 1863, p. 430.

- <sup>30</sup> J.D. Borthwick, A History of Montreal (Montreal: n.p., 1897), p. 275.
- <sup>31</sup> The Star, 10 September, 1895. The advertisement also stated that "this scientific instrument has never been in a dry goods store before."
- <sup>32</sup> The Star, 9 March, 1894.
- <sup>33</sup> Samuel Hopkins Adams, "The Department Store," Scribner's Magazine, 21 (1897): 4-27. This article is well illustrated with engravings "drawn entirely from actual scenes", three of which are reproduced in this thesis. The article starts with the following comments
- ...The "department store" is in this country such a distinctly modern business, and in so many ways characteristic of present-day methods, that it offers perhaps as good an example as could be selected to begin such a series as this...[on modern business].
- <sup>34</sup> George S. Cole, Dictionary of Dry Goods (Chicago: n.p., 1892), p. 471.
- <sup>35</sup> Canadian Illustrated News, 28 December, 1872.
- <sup>36</sup> The Witness, 21 August, 1876.
- <sup>37</sup> The Star, 23 October, 1885.
- <sup>38</sup> The Star, 17 February, 1894. This exhibition featured Corticelli embroidery silks. At that time, the Corticelli factory was the largest manufacturer of silk in Canada. E.J. Chambers, The Book of Montreal (Montreal: The Book of Montreal Company, 1903) p. 175.
- <sup>39</sup> The Star, 23 November, 1895.
- <sup>40</sup> The Star, 6 November, 1896.
- <sup>41</sup> The Star, 19 September, 1894. The event was later described as being "like a society function" (The Star, 21 September, 1894). An entry in the Countess' journal from December 1839 casts an interesting side-light on this event.

...Meeting of a few Irish gentlemen to consider possible establishment of a Montreal depot and Committee for Irish Industries.... Told them that the



arrangement was made yesterday by me with Mr. James Ogilvie [Ogilvy] that he should open a department of Scottish Industries - Advertising it as under my patronage...He is about to build new premises in a fashionable street....  
 Ishbel Aberdeen, The Canadian Journal of Lady Aberdeen 1893-1898. (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1960), p. 38.

Murphy's took care to advertise that the Countess had purchased a "magnificently rich garment" from their "superb collection of Ladies Mantles" (The Star, 21 September, 1894).

<sup>42</sup> The Gazette, 1 September, 1909.

<sup>43</sup> The Star, 5 February, 1890.

<sup>44</sup> The Star, 20 December, 1892. From the description of these flower bulbs it seems obvious that they were what we know as paper-white narcissi.

<sup>45</sup> The Star, 16 March, 1896. The "favorite odors" included Bridal Rose, Apple Blossom, Jasmine - and Jockey Club.

<sup>46</sup> The Star, 11 December, 1894.

<sup>47</sup> The Star, 15 December, 1894.

<sup>48</sup> "Manuscript Memoirs of Aldyth Marjorie (Cookson) Blackstock (1890-1985)." private collection.

<sup>49</sup> The Star, 3 April, 1912. The author remembers the fragrant flowers and the singing birds that decorated Ogilvy's at Eastertime when she worked there in the 1950s.

<sup>50</sup> The Star, 3 March, 1911.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid. The next week's attractions were to include Angell "America's great mind leader and psychic demonstrator."

<sup>52</sup> The Star, 1 March, 1911.

<sup>53</sup> The Star, 23 March, 1912.

<sup>54</sup> For more complete information on the far-reaching influence of this theatre production, see William Leach, Land of Desire (New York: Pantheon, 1993), pp. 108-111.

- <sup>55</sup> The Star, 15 September 1913. It is rather unfortunate that a headline for Scroggie's 19 cent sale dominated this advertisement.
- <sup>56</sup> Paul Poiret, the great French couturier whose colourful designs revolutionized the world of fashion in the early 20th century, travelled to America with his own show in 1913. In Shopkeepers to a Nation (Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 1963, p. 54), Mary-etta MacPherson notes that the Poiret fashion show, which was brought to Toronto by the T. Eaton Company, started that store's tradition of twice yearly fashion shows.
- <sup>57</sup> The Star, 25 November, 1913. This idea of live fashion shows was continued by Scroggie's successor, Almy's (The Star, 1 March, 1915).

**SECTION II: FROM PURVEYORS OF MERCHANDISE  
TO ARBITERS OF TASTE**

**1. Developments in Retailing Practices**

Between 1840 and 1870 a significant change in retailing took place on both sides of the Atlantic that by the 1870s had led to the emergence of commercial enterprises which roughly were approximating - in their size, their organization and practices, and especially in their unity of conception - what we have come to know as the modern department store.<sup>1</sup>

Authors working on corporate biographies seem always anxious to identify their object of research as not only the "first" department store, but the originator of all the policies that helped to change 19th-century retailing. For example, Harry E. Resseguie convincingly argues that A.T. Stewart, who opened his first store in New York in 1830, and built his "Marble Palace" dry goods store in 1846, was, if not the originator of most of these policies, certainly the first to advertise and to adhere to them.<sup>2</sup> Under Stewart's personal drive and management, A.T. Stewart's became famous throughout North America for fine dress goods and home decorating fabrics, household textiles, shawls, ribbons, laces and gloves.<sup>3</sup> As part of this argument, Resseguie summarizes the policies and practices which are common to the development of department stores in both Europe and North America. Most of these policies had come into use during the second quarter of the 19th-century, as dry goods stores started to expand in size and assortment. Innovative and startling to many customers at that time, they gradually became standard

operating procedures for most stores. Montreal retailers adopted most these policies too, as can be illustrated by the quotations from their advertisements. These policies included:

(a) Cash Trade. An increasingly industrialized society resulted in wage-earners who were paid in cash, and the system of bartering services or produce for manufactured goods became obsolete. At the same time, as the population increased, merchants were reluctant to extend credit to customers who would likely be strangers to them. Credit, if offered at all, was a privilege, extended only to a few select customers. Judging from their advertisements, Montreal merchants seem to have had many approaches to cash trade. Only Samuel Carsley appears to have adhered to his original policy statement, that his store was

...established 1871 in the interest and for the protection of people who pay READY MONEY for their DRY-GOODS....<sup>4</sup>

His customers were frequently reminded of the cash policy and its advantages, even to the extent of suggesting a reason to

...buy your Christmas presents at S. Carsley's and the recipients of them will have the satisfaction of knowing that the presents are paid for....<sup>5</sup>

At the same time the firm of Brown and Claggett, whose dry goods store was known as Recollet House, advertised:

New Idea! We have allowed a discount of ten percent on all cash purchases since January 1877 and the system has given general satisfaction. We wish it to be distinctly understood that the system is bona-fide and that cash customers are allowed it in every case.<sup>6</sup>

Murphy's was less generous, offering

...Five percent Discount for cash on all purchases over One Dollar....'

Henry Morgan's, Montreal s acknowledged "carriage trade"<sup>8</sup> store, seems to have had many credit customers as well as cash ones if this statement is to be believed:

5 p.c. discount for cash paid over the counter. All our accounts will be rendered at the end of each month, and if paid within 15 days, 4 percent discount will be allowed...after 3 months interest at the rate of 7 percent will be charged....'

For the merchant, cash trade meant not only the elimination of losses from uncollected accounts, but also an immediate source of funds to cover operating expenses and to purchase new merchandise. Negotiating merchandise purchases for cash rather than for credit allowed the merchant to obtain good wholesale prices which could be reflected in lower retail prices for his customers. Samuel Carsley spelled this out:

We sell for prompt cash. Therefore we have no losses through bad debts. And we import our goods direct from the manufacturers. These are the reasons why we can sell so much cheaper than other stores.<sup>10</sup>

(b) Fixed Prices. Until the 19th century, prices for merchandise were fixed only after a process of negotiation between customer and shop-owner. As shops grew in size, and more clerks were employed to serve the customers, store owners found it essential to mark retail prices on their merchandise, in order to ensure their margin of profit. In 1851, while

inviting the "Public Attention" to their "Great Novelties in Dress Goods!!!" (the punctuation is theirs), Morison, Cameron and Empey stated that "The Establishment is based on CASH principle; M. C. & E. have ONE uniform price to every Customer, and all Goods are marked in plain figures."<sup>11</sup> Three decades later Samuel Carsley told his customers "...All goods are marked in plain figures, the lowest possible prices...."<sup>12</sup>

Later, John Murphy regularly included the phrase "Terms cash and only one price" in his advertisements.<sup>13</sup> One result of this policy was that the customer, whatever her social status, was assured of being charged the same price for the same goods. The dollar of the "shawl trade" had as much purchasing power as that of the "carriage trade". This was a step in the democratization of fashion.

(c) Entré libre. The idea that a customer could enter a store and look at the merchandise without being obligated to make a purchase was a novel concept. In 1854 H. & H. Merrill stated:

...It is considered no trouble to shew goods. Pray call and examine previous to purchasing elsewhere....<sup>14</sup>

Along with fixed prices, this was instrumental in changing what had been a confrontational dialogue between merchant and customer into "shopping", a pleasurable activity that could consume leisure hours.

(d) Return of Merchandise for Credit. That the retailer would stand behind the merchandise he sold implies he was

becoming increasingly aware of the importance of competition and the importance of the customer. In 1844, Henderson, the furrier, stated, "All Goods returnable 8 days after sale, if not approved of."<sup>15</sup> Other references to this policy were more difficult to find. Possibly merchants initially considered that this policy reflected some discredit on their merchandise, but Timothy Eaton made "Goods satisfactory or money refunded" a well-known merchandising phrase. A small Montreal dry goods retailer, H.F. Poirier, advertised in 1885 that "...I am quite willing of exchanging goods bought from me...[if] for some reason or other [they] do not suit the purchaser..."<sup>16</sup> We may assume from this that the exchange of merchandise was an accepted practice in the larger dry goods stores as well.

(e) Buying Direct from Manufacturer. Retailers, once established, were anxious to deal directly with manufacturers, thus eliminating the wholesale agent and his related profit percentages. Once again, Samuel Carsley frequently reminded his customers that his assortment came directly from the manufacturer, this advertisement from 1878 being one of the most blunt:

...These goods have been bought right,  
having come directly from the  
manufacturer and are now being offered  
full 15 percent cheaper than they can be  
bought elsewhere....<sup>17</sup>

Large retailers frequently found it profitable to have their own wholesale divisions, which sometimes accounted for

a substantial part of their total sales volume. In 1854, Henry Morgan advertised:

...THE MOST REASONABLE TERMS at wholesale or retail.... Country merchants and Traders liberally dealt with.<sup>18</sup>

Morgan's closed their wholesale division in 1877, but Carsley maintained and expanded his until the turn of the century, advertising regularly in a trade paper:

...Nous citerons spécialement l'attention du commerce sur notre stock splendide d'Etoffes à Robes et réclamons une visite des détaillants à leur passage à Montréal....<sup>19</sup>

Even his retail prices were keen enough to attract wholesale purchasers, according to this comment:

...We are just now doing a regular wholesale business in Dress Goods. The fact that numbers of country merchants buy of us in preference to going to the regular wholesale houses proves that we are selling goods cheaper than any other house in Montreal....<sup>20</sup>

(f) Manufacturing Merchandise. Taking the control of supply one step further, many retailers started to manufacture certain items of apparel for sale in their stores. Items which did not require too precise fitting, such as mantles, ladies' undergarments and children's clothing, were the first garments to be produced in retailers' workrooms. In 1868, a description of Henry Morgan's Colonial House notes that "their trade requires the service of...seventy mantua-makers."<sup>21</sup> Brown and Claggett, too, had a workroom they were proud to advertise:



The MANTLE ROOMS contain a large stock to meet the increasing patronage of this department. The BEST PATTERNS are selected.... MATERIALS are bought from the best manufacturers and copied in our own workrooms....<sup>22</sup>

The following advertisement suggests that Carsley was working closely with a knitting mill to produce his own line of goods:

...We intend making a great effort to clear out all our Scotch Wool Hosiery and Underclothing. Next year we intend manufacturing all these goods ourselves....<sup>23</sup>

(g) Management Structure. The true department store groups related items of merchandise together as "departments". Each department is in the charge of a manager who is responsible for assortment, sales and profit. Thus, a department store might be considered to be a group of autonomous shops within a single store. In early ads there are many references to departments; for example:

...The Stock at the RECOLLET HOUSE is now complete and all the departments, embracing the latest novelties in SHAWLS, MANTLES, DRESS GOODS & SILKS, VELVETS & POPLINS....<sup>24</sup>

It is most likely that in this case "department" was used to designate a type of goods, not an operating and accounting entity. The first store to put the true department system into operation in Canada was Henry Morgan & Co.<sup>25</sup> By 1878 Henry Morgan's nephews, James and Colin, persuaded him to institute new operating procedures. The document detailing this is still in existence, and is quoted in David Morgan's book:

The Department System - Effective January 2, 1878.

1. A manager to be appointed for each department, responsible for keeping in order the stock and for making out orders.
2. Separate account to be kept of the purchases and receipts of each department.
3. Each department to be debited with rental, insurance, extra help and all other incidental expenses and credited with all goods sold.
4. Henry Morgan will take a general supervision of the entire business. Colin Morgan and James Morgan will have the management control of the departments.<sup>26</sup>

This document, setting forth operating procedures which are still valid over a century later, changed Henry Morgan & Co. from a dry goods retailer to a department store. Other Montreal stores followed its lead.

(h) Merchandise Assortments. This aspect of the story of retailing is usually downplayed by department store historians, most of whom are writing business histories. Increasing industrialization enhanced the capability of manufacturers to produce consumer goods of all types. This increased variety of merchandise was an important factor not only in the way people lived but in where and how they purchased goods:

...The department store thrived in the concentrated urban markets that clamored for goods and on the industrial sector of the American economy which eagerly sought new outlets for its products....<sup>27</sup>

The merchandise offered by the late 19th-century retailer was not just more of the traditional type of goods, but items

which the customer had previously made for herself, or new 'inventions' which, it was claimed, made life easier and more pleasant for her. Of the thousands of these inventions the one which had the most lasting impact on consumer goods was the sewing machine. In both industry and in the home it revolutionized the production of wearing apparel. The changing merchandise assortments, which will be discussed in the next section, were in large part the result of the perfection of the sewing machine.

The contemporary quotations which are used to illustrate this list of developments in retailing show that Montreal retailers were quick to adopt new business practices. Some of these proved profitable to their business, others attractive to their customers. Most of these policies are as valid today as when they were first implemented, and were the foundation on which the 20th-century fashion retail industry built its profitable business.

Section II, part 1End Notes

- 1 Michael B. Miller, The Bon Marché, Bourgeois Culture and the Department Store 1869-1920 (Princeton: University of Princeton Press, 1981), p. 31.
- 2 Harry B. Resseguie. "Alexander Turney Stewart and the Development of the Department Store," Business History Review, 39 (1965): 301-322.
- 3 The Recollet House, a Montreal dry goods firm was referred to as the "Stewarts of Montreal" (Canadian Illustrated News, 24 December, 1870, p. 427). In 1876, L'Opinion Publique published a portrait of Alex T. Stewart "le millionnaire". The accompanying obituary referred to him as "le prince des marchands de l'Amérique, sinon du monde." (L'Opinion Publique, 4 May, 1876, pp. 206, 214).
- 4 The Star, 31 July, 1876.
- 5 The Gazette, 21 December, 1878.
- 6 Canadian Illustrated News, 6 October, 1877.
- 7 The Star, 22 December, 1880.
- 8 "Carriage trade" and "shawl trade" described the women from different social strata who were welcomed as customers by Chicago's merchandising giant, Marshall Field. (see Gunter Barth, City People (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 133 ff.)
- 9 The Star, 3 March, 1890.
- 10 The Star, 14 August, 1876.
- 11 The Transcript, 2 December, 1851. At this time, Morrison, Cameron and Empey were located at 202 Notre Dame Street, immediately beside Smith and Morgan.
- 12 The Star, 31 July, 1876.
- 13 The Star, 30 March, 1885.
- 14 Mackay's Montreal Directory, 1854, n.p.
- 15 The Transcript, 10 October, 1844.

- <sup>16</sup> The Star, 18 December, 1885.
- <sup>17</sup> The Gazette, 12 October, 1878.
- <sup>18</sup> Mackay's Montreal Directory, 1854, p. 325.
- <sup>19</sup> Le Moniteur de Commerce, 15 February, 1889.
- <sup>20</sup> The Star, 2 August, 1876.
- <sup>21</sup> Commercial Sketch of Montreal (Montreal: Chisholm & Dodd, 1868) p. 21. A mantua maker was a seamstress who made dresses and other fashionable garments.
- <sup>22</sup> Canadian Illustrated News, 15 April, 1871.
- <sup>23</sup> The Gazette, 7 December, 1878.
- <sup>24</sup> Canadian Illustrated News, 18 November, 1871.
- <sup>25</sup> John W. Ferry, A History of the Department Store (New York: MacMillan, 1960), p. 317.
- <sup>26</sup> David Morgan, The Morgans of Montreal. (Toronto: n.p., 1992), p. 66.
- <sup>27</sup> Gunther Barth, City People (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 121.

**SECTION II: FROM PURVEYORS OF MERCHANDISE  
TO ARBITERS OF TASTE**

2. **Montreal's Retailers of Fashion**

...It is common to understand the phrase "Fine Arts" as applying only to painting and sculpture...but the "Fine Arts" play an important part in the manner of personal decoration....<sup>1</sup>

The rhythm of commerce in Montreal in the early 19th-century followed very much the cycle of the Canadian climate. The spring breakup, usually in late April, was eagerly awaited so that the first fleet of the year could reach the harbour with cargoes from England, the last direct contact having been in November.<sup>2</sup> Even in 1846, when year-round communication had become somewhat easier, via ports on the New England seaboard, Henry Morgan wrote,

...It is of great advantage to have goods here by the first vessel as the busy trade commences as soon as the vessels from sea make their appearance, and the first chance is always the best....<sup>3</sup>

The ships were known by name, and as we read the early newspapers, they become familiar to us, as merchants frequently mention the ship's name. A typical advertisement reads:

Thos. Waddell, Jr. & Co., grateful for past favours, take leave respectfully to intimate that they have received per "Albion" part of their Spring Goods, consisting of Elegant BALZAREEN and MUSLIN PRINTED DRESSES, STRAW BONNETS, PRINTS, ETC., and are in daily expectation of the arrival of the remainder of their goods by the "Pearl", "Lady Seaton", "Safeguard", "James Campbell", "Caledonia"... being confident

that in point of style, quality or price their present Importations will be found superior to any previous year....<sup>4</sup>

Apparently some ships and their captains developed reputations for speed in making the Atlantic crossing. This, of course, was a great advantage to the importer, as having new merchandise ahead of the competition could mean additional profit. It is likely for this reason that Henry Morgan requested that James route his shipments out of Glasgow via the "Albion".<sup>5</sup>

With its very small population, and as yet little industry, British North America was dependent on Great Britain for almost all types of manufactured goods. In the first decades of the century the typical merchant seems to have imported something of everything. In 1817 a certain Charles Rivers advertised receipt of "One Hundred and ninety-three packages, direct from England." He detailed textiles, including flannels, Bombazettes, Bombazines, striped satins, rich silk velvets, merino and Indian shawls, and Moreens for curtains. After listing door plates, bell ropes and a quantity of rich cut glass, the advertisement concluded:

...Also...2 trunks warranted London made walking shoes, 1 case rich Dunfermilne Damask table cloths...a few Casks Superior London Porter and Brown Stout, about 50 Boxes real Muscatell Raisins and 60 cases London Candies, to be sold very low for cash....

N.B. - a few ready made Pelisses, Mantles and Tippetts of the latest London fashion.<sup>6</sup>

These latter items, seemingly added as an afterthought, were

all types of outerwear. Tippetts were short, usually covering only the shoulders, and were frequently fur or fur-trimmed; pelisses were full-length, with sleeves or a waist-length cape which formed sleeves. Because they did not require the precise fitting essential for a dress, these items of outerwear were among the first items of women's clothing to be ready-made. One can imagine this "latest London fashion" being eagerly studied and probably copied by the ladies of Montreal.

In these early years incoming merchandise was sold at auction to small shopkeepers in Montreal and to the itinerant peddlers who supplied the surrounding countryside. Montreal auctions supplied all the manufactured goods sold in both Upper and Lower Canada. This point is emphasized by Michael Bliss when he writes that Montreal

...emerged as the trading metropolis of the Canadas, the transshipment center for goods destined west up the St Lawrence to the Great Lakes, north up the Ottawa Valley, and south up the Richelieu to the Eastern Townships and the United States. The city of fur traders and missionaries had become the mercantile and financial capital of an inland empire. It was the home of British North America's most important merchants....<sup>7</sup>

By the third decade of the century, wholesalers began to specialize in certain commodities and retailers began to open their specialized shops. If it was not as elegant in environment and as varied in merchandise as London's Regent Street,<sup>8</sup> it was still the start of what would represent a very



large percentage of the commerce of Montreal by the end of the century. The dry goods business, at first the wholesale and retail distribution of primarily imported textiles, later included locally produced cotton and woollen textiles and the manufacture of ready-made apparel. That it was important to the economy of Montreal is confirmed by this quotation from an 1888 publication:

In a review of the commerce and manufacturers of Montreal, it is found that the dry goods trade forms one of the most important branches of commercial interest, and that its aggregate annual operation amounts to many millions of dollars. Among the representative houses in this line will be found a number established many years ago and whose success has been in steady consistency with the development of the city.<sup>9</sup>

Many of the early dry goods shops were ephemeral, appearing for one or two seasons, then vanishing without trace. By the mid-1840's, however, there were a number of shops dealing in fashionable merchandise whose business development can be followed throughout the century. Tracing the activity of these shops is made easier by the fact that the businesses were always known by the name of the owner, and a change in partnership was always accompanied by an advertisement citing both the original and the new name. Thus when David Smith and Henry Morgan opened their shop in May of 1845, their advertisement was signed "David Smith (Late of Waddell, Smith & Co.), Henry Morgan":

**T**HE Subscribers have entered into Copartnership, and will carry on business as WHOLESALE and RETAIL DRAPERS, MERCERS, and HABERDASHERS, under the Firm of SMITH & MORGAN. They have leased those Premises, No. 204, Notre Dame Street West, near McGill Street, and will open on the 20th instant with AN ENTIRE NEW STOCK of FRENCH and BRITISH GOODS.

DAVID SMITH.

(Late of WADDELL, SMITH & Co.)

HENRY MORGAN.

Montreal, 13th May, 1845.

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Even after Morgan added the name Colonial House to his business in 1854, his own name always appeared with equal importance in the advertisements.<sup>11</sup>

Retail shops in British cities had long specialized as purveyors of certain lines of merchandise, the hatter, the draper, the mercer, for example.<sup>12</sup> The majority of merchants in Montreal were immigrants from Scotland and England,<sup>13</sup> and as many brought with them some years of apprenticeship and experience in a trade, it was natural that they should try to establish businesses along familiar lines in their new home. There were, of course, failures, caused most usually, one suspects, by inadequate financing, but there were also many successes. Of those who survived, many flourished very profitably. Henry Morgan was one of these, parlaying an initial investment of £800 in 1845 into a very substantial family fortune.<sup>14</sup>

In the 1840s, a customer knew that having a new dress or a wardrobe for a special occasion required visits to many shops. First she had to select the fabric, in Great Britain she would have gone either to the mercers or drapers. In America, as we noted earlier, "...the drapers and mercers shops...go by the name of "dry goods" stores...."<sup>15</sup>, so her first stop would have been at a shop specializing in dry goods. Her accessories and possibly her undergarments would have been selected at the milliners, where trims, such as lace and ribbon, might also have been selected. A visit to the shoemaker to order her shoes would have completed her wardrobe. This would have been a lengthy and probably exhausting activity, particularly since prices would have been negotiated at each shop. The dress material then had to be cut and sewn - by hand - into the required garments. While some ladies did their own sewing, others employed dressmakers to bring the fabric to its final form, especially, one would imagine, for important ball gowns or wedding trousseaux.

Just as the first ships of the season brought much-needed new merchandise to the colony, they also brought eagerly awaited information on the latest fashions in London and Paris. The milliner-dressmaker was particularly anxious to let her customers know that the styles she offered were the newest possible. An advertisement in a Montreal newspaper of 1853 reads:

### New Dress-Making Establishment

...The Subscribers have this day commenced business as DRESSMAKERS. From their long experience in Glasgow, New York and Montreal, strict attention to orders, and low charges, they hope to merit a liberal share of patronage. NEW PATTERNS received twice a month from England....<sup>16</sup>

If a new dress was out of the question, an old one could be remodelled, or a bonnet re-shaped. Either would demonstrate that the wearer was aware of the latest fashion trends:

...Straw Bonnets! Cleaned, Altered & Repaired. Mrs. Doyle respectfully intimates to the ladies of Montreal and vicinity that she...is prepared to receive every description of Straw Bonnets and Hats to alter to the latest shape....Large shape Bonnets, worn 4 to 5 years ago, reduced to the new shape....<sup>17</sup>

In order to appreciate fully the development of fashion retailing in 19th-century Montreal, we must study not only the dry goods merchants, but also the specialty retailers whose assortments provided all the accessories and complementary items essential to a fashionable costume. Lovell's Montreal Directory of 1863-64 has a useful index which groups businesses under various headings.<sup>18</sup> We learn that at this date there were eighty-four companies in the dry goods business, thirty-six wholesale, and forty-eight wholesale and retail, thirty-nine merchant tailors, nineteen hatters and furriers and forty-two boot and shoemakers, as well as various other specialists, such as milliners, dressmakers, and

hairdressers. There were also twenty-seven jewellers.

Early Montreal newspapers carry many advertisements for Merchant Tailors. In 1844 one William J. Benjamin advertised that his

GENTLEMEN'S GENERAL OUTFITTING EMPORIUM [had a] Stock of cloths, Cashmerets, Cassimeres, Doeskins and Vestings all of the very best qualities, and having superior Cutters and Workmen [was] prepared to execute orders in the most fashionable style.... They keep constantly on hand an immense variety of Superior London READY MADE CLOTHING [and are] Sole agents for Macintosh's Coats, Cloaks, Capes, Leggings, Life Preservers, etc., etc.<sup>19</sup>

The reference to Macintosh waterproof outerwear is one of the very early references to brand-name merchandise noted in this research. Macintosh had patented his process in Glasgow in 1823 and was producing garments from this processed fabric by the 1830s.<sup>20</sup>

Throughout the 19th-century the most respected name in merchant tailors in Montreal was that of Gibb and Company. The firm was established in Montreal in 1775,<sup>21</sup> and quickly developed a reputation for fine-quality tailoring. Gibb's advertisements are always discrete and low-key, inviting the inspection of new fabrics to be made up in the latest styles; often these advertisements featured the Royal Coat of Arms. In 1854, the shop was relocated to St. James Street, close to banks and insurance companies, in what would become Montreal's financial district.

**A CARD.**

**T**HE Subscribers having removed from their old place of Business, Notre Dame Street, to the New and Elegant Shop adjoining the Bank of British North America, built expressly for their use, avail themselves of the occasion gratefully to acknowledge the long continued and extensive patronage of the Public, both in the city of Montreal and throughout the Province generally. The superior accommodation of their new premises has enabled them greatly to increase their Stock of GENTLEMEN'S HABERDASHERY, to which they invite special attendance.

Their supply of PLAIN & FANCY GOODS will be all of the best quality and of the most recent styles. In this way they hope to maintain the reputation which the Firm has had for the last 70 years for keeping the best articles, made up in the best manner.

GIBB & CO.

Montreal, April 16, 1854.

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Also listed as a merchant tailor, but obviously catering to a different clientele than Gibb, was J.G. Kennedy. Founded in 1861,<sup>23</sup> Kennedy took advantage of the recently developed sewing machine to produce inexpensive ready-made clothing for men and boys. By 1876 he proudly boasted:

It is certain that the crowd of buyers at this clothing store knows of no diminution. Staple goods, stylishly cut, and low prices will carry the day anywhere in trade. Fancy \$150,000 worth of Men's and Boy's clothing, from which to select!<sup>24</sup>

His new store on Victoria Square allowed Henry Morgan space to develop his merchandise assortment. He must have recognized that a customer existed somewhere between those discretely served by Gibb and those who found their ready-mades at the brash Kennedy's. He advised

...the GENTLEMEN of Montreal that they have added a MERCHANT TAILORING DEPARTMENT to their general trade.... They hope to receive a fair share of the patronage of this city and other districts of Canada. Orders for Military and Full Dress Suits shall receive their most careful attention.<sup>25</sup>

A move into the field of merchant tailoring was unusual for a dry goods retailer, whose customer was traditionally female. The man of the house distanced himself from such mundane activities as "shopping", leaving the details of family apparel and household furnishings to his wife.<sup>26</sup>

Of the fifteen hatters listed by Lovell, the best-known is John Henderson. In England "a hatter was always a man's hatter, although he would also make riding hats for ladies"<sup>27</sup> but in Montreal the hatter was also the furrier. John Henderson established his business in 1834, and by 1855 his shop was located in the Crystal Block on Notre Dame Street.<sup>28</sup>

WHOLESALE AND RETAIL  
**Fur Warehouse,**  
 93, NOTRE DAME STREET.  
 JOHN HENDERSON  
**S**OLICITS the attention of his numerous customers and the public, to his Stock of  
**Manufactured Furs,**  
 Consisting of:  
**LADIES'** Exhibition, Queen's and Jenny Lind  
 BOAS, CLOAKS and CARDINALS  
 MUFFS, GAUNTLETS, CUFFS and VICTORINES.  
**GENTLEMEN'S** Beaver, Astracan, Wolf, Grey  
 Fox, and Raccoon COATS;  
 CAPS, GAUNTLETS, BOAS, and Travelling  
 BOOTS.  
**CHILDREN'S FURS** in endless variety.  
 — WITH —  
 A very large Stock of SLEIGH ROBES;  
 all of which for elegance of style and excellence of  
 workmanship, cannot be surpassed, and will be sold  
 for the smallest remunerating profits.  
 All Goods Returnable after sale, if not approved  
 of.  
 Montreal, Nov. 8, 1851. 83-1m

Among the visitors in October 1864 was Frances Monck, who recorded in her diary that she went

...to Henderson's, the furrier's. There I chose a beautiful velvet and seal-skin cap which cost ten dollars - about two sovereigns English.... Dick ordered a handsome buffalo sleigh robe, which is to be trimmed with a rim of brigade colours. You must have two robes to cover you in a sleigh.<sup>30</sup>

In 1883 Henderson claimed to have "the largest and most complete [stock of furs] in the dominion,"<sup>31</sup> but other firms were justifiably proud of their assortments. In 1876, Thibault and Lanthier attained international repute when awarded medals at the Philadelphia International Exhibition:

...The importations of this firm are from the farthest parts of Europe, while in our own unrivalled furs they are well stocked. At the Centennial Exposition of Philadelphia [they] carried off both American and Canadian medals for made-up goods.<sup>32</sup>

By the 1840s Montreal had become a center of footwear manufacture, although likely a large proportion of this was coarse, heavy footwear intended for labourers and farmers.<sup>33</sup> Brown and Childs was a major manufacturer that "sent goods to all sections of the province, however remote."<sup>34</sup> Their factory received raw hides and shipped finished boots in an integrated vertical operation:<sup>35</sup>

...Footwear for gentlefolk was always 'bespoke'...footwear retailers who did not make footwear but who specialized in its sale to the exclusion of other goods, were practically non-existent until well into the second half of the century....<sup>36</sup>



There are forty-two names under the "Boots and Shoes" heading in Lovell's index of 1863-64. J. and T. Bell's shop in the Cathedral Block, which has already been described, contained

...a capital display of the best products of the trade. But though Messrs Bell make boots equal to the best imported, they secure in the French market, the finest quality of goods, principally ladies' and children's. They keep here, also, a large stock of snow-shoes, moccasins and moccasins with rubbers...an assortment, indeed, not surpassed by any other shoe store in the city.<sup>37</sup>

Nearby was the shop of William Dangerfield, founded in 1837, who proudly advertised his "Fashionable Boot and Shoe Store patronized by H.R.H. The Prince of Wales, His Grace, the Duke of Newcastle and suite."<sup>38</sup> In an article published in 1891, while still citing the 1860 patronage of the Prince of Wales, Dangerfield quotes part of a letter written from Government House in Ottawa, by the lady-in-waiting of another satisfied customer:

...Lady Lansdowne has received her shoes and is very pleased with them. Strange to say she has never had shoes fit her so well or so comfortably, though she has tried no end of different shoemakers in London.<sup>39</sup>

This compliment from an apparently critical and demanding customer suggests that Montreal bootmakers were skilled in their trade. While sturdy, practical footwear for country and common wear was manufactured locally, most fashionable footwear was made to order, or imported, the ladies' styles usually from Paris or New York, and the men's from London.

The ladies of Montreal had a number of shops from which to buy their bonnets, accessories and undergarments. These were the milliners, who in Victorian times were always women:

...Originally a milliner meant a vendor of fancy wares and articles of all kinds for which Milan was famous: bonnets, straw hats, ribbons, gloves, trimmings of all kinds....<sup>40</sup>

Most milliners also advertised dressmaking services, and while only ten such shops are listed in Lovell's, one can be reasonably certain that there were many more who were known by reputation and did not advertise. Few milliners seem to have been in business for any length of time, but we are able to trace some through a few years of fashion retailing. One of these, Mrs. Muir, had her shop on Notre Dame near McGill Street. In 1861 she opened her showroom

...with a choice selection of FALL AND WINTER MILLINERY.... Miss Muir is just returned from New York, and the public may depend on seeing the newest and most elegant styles in both Dressmaking and Millinery....<sup>41</sup>

A few years later, Mrs. Allen advertised her "Bonnet Emporium and Fashionable Millinery Establishment", located on Notre Dame Street near Place d'Armes. She stated that she

...imports goods four times a year from Paris, and has always on hand the latest styles and all the novelties in Millinery, Straw Goods, etc. [She] has also the LARGEST SHOW ROOM in the city....<sup>42</sup>

In addition to creating bonnets in the latest styles, the milliner sold ribbons, feathers, flowers and other trims so

that a creative client could transform her own bonnets. Also to be found at the milliners were the small fashion accessories such as gloves, handkerchiefs, scarves and fans. Threads, beads, canvas and patterns for fancy needlework might also be sold by the milliner.

In the middle years of the 19th-century, Montreal seems to have had only one specialist in lace, James Parkin, who advertised himself as "laceman". In discussing this typically Victorian trade, Adburgham states

...Lacemen were rarely women...[and] even when shops began to extend into department stores...it was a male lace buyer who travelled on the continent placing orders for his stock....<sup>43</sup>

Parkin's shop, "the only place in this city where laces and embroideries of every kind are made a specialty,"<sup>44</sup> was located at 168 Notre Dame Street, just about opposite the Cathedral Block (ill. 30). In describing the shop and its merchandise a writer enthused:

...one cannot help thinking that the taste of the ladies in this city for superior articles of personal decoration is not only well established but on the increase. ...It is common to understand the phrase "the Fine Arts" as applying only to painting and sculpture, but a visit to the show room of Mr. Parkin would seem to establish the fact that the "Fine Arts" play an important part in the manner of personal decoration....<sup>45</sup>

At Christmas 1862, Parkin encouraged the men of Montreal to select a "small present or love-token", from his shop:

...There are probably few presents more highly appreciated by the fair sex than

those which tend to the tasteful  
adornment of the person....<sup>46</sup>

The advertisement continued with a list of accessories including collars, handkerchiefs and "sets" (presumably collars and undersleeves). The selection in these articles included "Brussels, Honiton, Valenciennes, Maltese and Irish Point Laces" as well as embroidered muslin. For gala evening wear, Parkin also offered

...A magnificent assortment  
of  
New French Wreaths  
(very cheap)  
New Velvet, Pearl, and Chenille  
Coronets and Headdresses....<sup>47</sup>

In 1864 Parkin expanded his merchandise assortment to include ladies' undergarments:

...James Parkin begs to announce to the Ladies of Montreal that he has on hand a most extensive assortment of LADIES' UNDERCLOTHING comprising:- CHEMISE DRAWERS, NIGHT DRESSES, CAMISOLES, SLIPS, NIGHT CAPS, etc.... Ladies...who appreciate articles of superior quality and makes will find this an excellent opportunity of purchasing the best goods on the most favourable terms.<sup>48</sup>

Parkin had established his business in 1849, and it continued under his personal direction until 1869 when it was taken over by an associate, William McDunnough.<sup>49</sup> In an era when lace embellishment was such an important part of every costume, a visit to the laceman to select the proper trim and accessories must have been a very serious affair.

A decade earlier than Parkin offered his "extensive assortment" of ladies undergarments, there was at least one

shop where ladies underclothing was sold. John Aitken opened his "Gentlemen's Shirt Store" in 1847, and by 1854 his advertisements included the phrase "Ladies Under Clothing and Baby Linen Establishment". It was noted that those departments were "under competent female management."<sup>50</sup> In February of 1852 Aitken placed an advertisement in The Transcript stating:

None but FIRST CLASS SEWERS are employed, to whom liberal prices are paid, securing thereby THE BEST OF NEEDLEWORK. ...Always on hand, a first-rate assortment of BABY LINENS, LADIES UNDERCLOTHING, DRESSING and BREAKFAST GOWNS....<sup>51</sup>

Aitken's advertisements appeared regularly throughout the period we are studying; the assortments always featured fine quality men's shirts with the latest shape in collars, men's and ladies' underwear and baby's clothing. By 1893, Aitken was still advertising "Ladies', Gents' and Children's Scotch Hosiery and Underwear" as well as "a large variety of Hosiery, Shirts, Gloves, Umbrellas, Ladies' Underclothing, Baby Linen, etc., etc."<sup>52</sup> Although not a fashion leader in our interpretation of the phrase, Aitken was obviously a retailer who understood his trade and serviced his customers to their satisfaction.

By far the largest group of merchandise specialists were those involved in the dry goods business. Until well into the second half of the 19th-century, their trade was usually both wholesale and retail, their imports of textiles from Great

Britain and the United States supplying the shops and general stores throughout British North America, as well as the small retail shops in Montreal itself. In 1846, Alex Simpson advertised that he had

...made arrangements for a constant supply of every description of Novel and Seasonable goods.... Town and Country Dealers and Milliners supplied with Cut Lengths of all Goods at Wholesale Prices.<sup>53</sup>

At this time the majority of these wholesale merchants also sold at retail on their own behalf. Advertisements from this period show the variety of textiles, findings<sup>54</sup> and clothing accessories which were required to clothe a growing nation, and to furnish its homes (ill. 31).

We have a particularly valuable source of information about the merchandise content of one early Montreal dry goods store in the archives of the Henry Morgan Company. These archives include a series of letters written between 1845 and 1848 by Morgan to his brother.<sup>55</sup> James, then still in Glasgow, acted as Henry's purchasing agent, and this correspondence is full of information about the taste and purchasing habits of the Montreal consumer.

The earliest letter reads, in part:

...We would guard you against the supposition sometimes acted upon at home, that whatever is out at home will do well in Canada, this is an error, we must have the most fashionable goods of the season and request that you make a selection as you would do for a house in Glasgow.... We trust that you will make the selection as varied as possible, taking the

shortest lengths that can be procured,  
and securing the greatest assortment of  
patterns....<sup>56</sup>

Already within a few weeks of starting his new business, Morgan had determined that his store would offer the latest possible fashions in the greatest possible variety. In his brief experience in Montreal retailing he had recognized a potential that he intended to exploit.<sup>57</sup> His criticism of what was generally being offered by the wholesale trade is made quite clear in a later letter:

...In general we request you to avoid any article out of fashion, trashy fabrics and large vulgar patterns. We are aware that many Canadian Wholesale Houses purchase largely in such goods as they suit well for the Canadian Customer from Country Towns and Villages in the Lower Province, but as our trade consists chiefly with the Old Country population, we require goods suited for the Old Country taste.... Our proximity to the United States also, where neatness of dress is proverbial and from whence new fashions are continually coming in, it requires good taste to select for our market such patterns as combine richness of design with modesty of appearance.<sup>58</sup>

Morgan warned his brother "not to buy goods with much green as the people here have a prejudice to this colour...they tell us it is Irish looking."<sup>59</sup> In the same letter he notes that they had sold an entire shipment of nine dozen Shetland shawls all at retail and had to replenish their stock through local wholesalers. Not everything was so saleable, however; in a later letter he complains:

We are very much dissatisfied with Bale #131 from Reid, Robertson containing

tweeds - we think it probable that you had not seen all the pieces that were packed in this bale, many of them are mere rubbish evidently the sweepings of a bad lot. Few of them are suitable for this season, and many of them are unsuitable for any season. We cannot take them into stock at this price.<sup>60</sup>

Getting ready for the Spring season, Morgan wrote his brother:

...Lilacs take well in this country in prints, muslins, etc. Gloves - send a good assortment of silk and thread as they take much better than Kids. Display good taste in everything you buy for us and I have no doubt we will do a good trade.<sup>61</sup>

And for yet another season:

...we have ordered Orleans checks in place of Mousseline de Laines and Cashmeres as they are taking the place of them here, they must be of good quality and good colours as we cannot sell low priced ones.<sup>62</sup>

The tone of the letters grows quite apologetic by the spring of 1848, when invoices for earlier shipments remained unpaid in Glasgow. Henry blithely kept on ordering more and more merchandise for his shop, to the acute embarrassment of James, who had to deal personally with the dunning creditors. This aspect of the early years of the Henry Morgan Company is recounted in full detail by David Morgan.<sup>63</sup>

A group of invoices dating from this time is preserved.<sup>64</sup> They list the fabrics by name, and frequently by colour as well as by price. The names of most of these fabrics are unfamiliar to us today, but their popularity is attested by their frequent appearance in dry goods advertisements



throughout the 19th-century (ills. 31 and 32). From the information in these invoices we are able to visualize much of the assortment of merchandise Morgan offered his customers in the early 1850s. The largest part of the assortment consisted of textiles for clothing and for domestic use. Social customs of dress rather than seasonal variations of temperature guided the selection of fabrics for dresses. Be it January or July a lustreless black woollen fabric was the only thing acceptable for a widow. More fortunate women could choose from a variety of wools, including the gauze-like mousseline de laine, or from a variety of silks, taffetas, chambrays or satins for their afternoon and evening dresses. Dresses to be worn at home in the morning were usually made of cotton. For these, a choice could be made from galas in tartan, "figured, fancy and embroidered" as well as madder prints, blue prints, and as Morgan had specifically requested, a good assortment of lilac prints. (These lilac prints are always included as a separate line on the invoice.) Fabrics for outerwear were also included in the assortment, as were shawls, "...the newest fabrics and styles in SHAWLS..." being specifically noted in an early advertisement.<sup>65</sup>

We can recreate a customer's visit to Morgan's shop in about 1850. She would first select the fabric for her dress from the various qualities, patterns and colours offered. She would then select the proper fabric for lining the dress, probably shaloon for the bodice and skirt and moreen for the

petticoats, as well as some whalebone to provide the required stiffening and shape. The selection of the trim could be a very difficult choice when the customer was confronted with twenty-four types of lace edging and insertion as well as a tempting array of loop fringe, spotted puff fringe, Paris quillings, ruching and "whisker blond" lace.<sup>66</sup> Of course, there was always black velvet ribbon, which was available in a number of widths. To finish her dress, the customer required "swanbill hooks and eyes", flexible pearl or florentine buttons, threads,<sup>67</sup> a box of pins and "sharp" needles for the hours of sewing now ahead of her or her dressmaker.

At another counter in the shop, the customer could select from a wide assortment of useful and fashionable accessories. There were cambric handkerchiefs (linen did not seem to be as popular, since only half the number were invoiced), "Ladies' German caps", chemizettes,<sup>68</sup> muslin sleeves, and "real Lyons veils".<sup>69</sup> Her undergarment requirements were supplied in part from a selection of "Novispun Vests", white merino vests, "marble hose", and "ladies' rack Dye hose".<sup>70</sup> To complete her outfit she could choose from an assortment of striped bonnets, "white willow" or braid bonnets. A new bonnet would likely require the selection of an appropriate ribbon or veil to match her dress.

On another trip, the customer might be shopping for her home. She could select some Venetian carpeting for the

stairway; some "Beetle sheeting", or flax sheeting to make up into bedding; tablecloths for the dining-room, or towels; and cheesecloth for the kitchen. Colder weather would call for Welsh flannel and English blankets. Possibly on this trip the customer might choose something for her husband from Morgan's selection of men's furnishings, including "straw kid gloves", gingham cravats and Albert ties; or she might make a selection from the fancy vestings to sew him a special gift.<sup>71</sup> Whatever her merchandise needs, Morgan's customer would have been certain that her choice had been made from the finest assortment of goods available in Montreal.

The 1860 advertisement of the H. & H. Merrill Company (ill. 33), introduces us to another decade of fashion merchandising. This list of "New Dry Goods for the Summer-Season of 1860" seems to be quite similar in content to that offered by Morgan a decade earlier, but note the emphasis on merchandise of French origin.<sup>72</sup> The Merrill advertisement is very specific about the variety of merchandise of French origin, citing "New French Prints...French coloured silks...[and] French Brilliants...", among other things.

This international emphasis will be noted in the advertising of all fashion retailers throughout the century. New York, and later Berlin and Vienna, will be added to Paris and London as sources of fashionable merchandise. By 1863, the Lovell's Montreal Directory was listing three wholesale

importers who specialized in French merchandise.<sup>73</sup> Parenthetically, it should again be emphasized that the "1000 New Spring Dresses" and "500 New Silk Dresses" referred to in this advertisement were not made-up garments, but dress lengths, the eighteen to twenty-five yards of fabric required for intricate bodices and the voluminous skirts of the crinoline era.

The reference in the Merrill advertisement to "1000 French Parasols" seems to add a delightfully frivolous note to the list. However, far from being frivolous, parasols, like bonnets, veils, shawls and gloves, were essential accessories which no fashionably, indeed properly, dressed lady could ignore. Gloves were particularly important, etiquette demanding that a lady's hands be covered at all times. Kid gloves were worn outdoors and for formal occasions, such as going to balls or to the theatre. Net and lace mittens were usually worn indoors on less formal occasions. According to an article in L'Album de la Minerve, mourning dress dictated the wearing of knitted gloves, never kid,<sup>74</sup> but a pair of new black kid gloves was a traditional gift to each mourner at the funeral.<sup>75</sup>

Nor was the etiquette of gloves restricted to ladies. A well-dressed gentleman's wardrobe included many pairs of gloves suited to various activities. Kid gloves were very fragile, and frequently damaged and unusable after one wearing. A book of etiquette suggested that a gentleman

should carry a second pair of kid gloves with him to a ball to don after supper so that his gloves would not stain or soil his dancing partner's dress or gloves.<sup>76</sup> An 1866 book of etiquette which is clearly directed to a male audience includes this advice:

...Where dancing is expected to take place, no-one should go without new kid gloves, nothing is so revolting as to see one person in an assembly ungloved.... Always wear your gloves in a church or in a theatre....<sup>77</sup>

Gloves are among the first fashion items to be identified by manufacturers' name. The finest kid gloves were made in France and Merrill's use of the manufacturer's name 'Jouvin', seen in illustration 33, indicates that his customers already had a brand name awareness. The name "Alexandre" (sometimes "Alexander") is another which appeared frequently in Montreal advertisements.<sup>78</sup> It is also mentioned in the article from Godey's from which we have already quoted. The author writes, "...We have worn no other gloves but Alexandre's since our schoolgirl days," going on to say that she had been told that the sales volume at the glove counter in A.T. Stewart's, in New York, was \$300,000 annually.<sup>79</sup> This substantial figure again confirms the importance of this fashion accessory. Sales figures in Montreal would have been proportionately lower, since the 1861 census established the population at 95,300, but the "500 dozen Jouvin kid gloves" listed in the Merrill advertisement is an impressive quantity.

Merrill's advertisement concludes with the line, "100

pieces more of those splendid Black French Glacé Silks." This fabric might have been suitable for those in a later stage of mourning, when silk could replace wool as a dress fabric. Throughout the 19th-century the elaborate rituals of mourning were carefully observed. Proper behaviour on the part of the bereaved, as well as suitable dress for the various relatives and friends, was a subject discussed in all books of etiquette. These customs and rituals were given additional emphasis in December 1861 when Queen Victoria immersed herself in a state of deepest mourning for her beloved Albert. In Canada, the Governor General, Lord Monck, ordered a period of national mourning<sup>80</sup> which must have been in stark contrast to the euphoria created by the visit of the Prince of Wales a short time earlier. The various army and militia units observed the period of mourning by draping black crepe on their cap ornaments, swords, and on the regimental drums and standards.<sup>81</sup> The official activities of the vice-regal court were curtailed, and many social activities in Montreal must also have been cancelled if this advertisement is to be believed.

TO THE LADIES!!!

J. PARKIN begs to announce that owing to few parties having taken place during the month of January, consequent upon the lamented decease of His late Royal Highness, The Prince Consort, and the lateness of the season, the whole of his beautiful stock of FRENCH WREATHS, BLOND and LACE BERTHES, LACE, MUSLIN and TARLETAN DRESSES, LACE FLOUNCINGS and other articles imported expressly for the festivities usual at this period of the

year, will be offered at a very large discount off the ordinary prices.<sup>82</sup>

Montreal does not seem to have had any "Mourning Warehouses" such as existed in London.<sup>83</sup> The three merchants listed under the heading "Mourning Goods" in Lovell's 1863-64 Business Index are clearly offering mourning goods as part of their regular assortment of dry goods. All dry goods advertisements through the latter part of the century make frequent reference to "Black goods". Some dry goods merchants seem to have recognized the importance of identifying mourning apparel and accessories as a separate business:

McDunnough, Muir & Co. have established a separate department for MOURNING GOODS, where every article necessary for Family and complimentary mourning may be obtained. Their Show Rooms are Up Stairs, and are replete with every novelty in Dress, Mantles, Shawls, Caps and Bonnets, Hosiery, Millinery and Fancy articles, selected by one of the partners.<sup>84</sup>

In 1860, H. & H. Merrill suggested that "...our Mourning Department really deserves inspection, being assorted au parfait...."<sup>85</sup> Later in the century we note that John Murphy advertises

BLACK GOODS. We have now in stock Black Dress goods from the leading makers of Europe, consisting of all the very latest novelties. Ladies can rely on being suited to perfection by coming to our establishment for everything in the way of Black Goods.<sup>86</sup>

This advertisement goes on to list thirty-two types of dress fabrics including nine described as "Priestley's Celebrated

Black All-Wool and Silk Warp Dress Goods for Gentlewomen." In 1892, Ogilvy's advertised "Novelties in Black Goods in great variety. We have some very pretty Designs in Blacks which are entirely new."<sup>87</sup> A few years later, Morgan's advertised "Mourning orders taken and garments fitted at private residence when necessary."<sup>88</sup> It can be deduced from these brief examples that the business of supplying the suitable apparel and accessories for family, friends and servants during a period of mourning must have represented a substantial part of every fashion retailer's sales volume. What is evident as well is that fashion also influenced mourning apparel, as the frequent use of the word "novelty" demonstrates.

In the 1870s the Montreal customer had many more stores at which to shop for her fashion merchandise. James A. Ogilvy had opened his modest shop in 1866, John Murphy in 1869 and Samuel Carsley in 1872. Already with an established reputation, Henry Morgan had moved to a large, modern building in 1866. All these stores grew successfully and served their fashionable customers into the 20th century. In the Spring of 1870, the partners R.G. Brown and Charles C. Claggett opened their elegant shop on Notre Dame Street in the new building known as Recollet House. The name of the building and of the shop soon became synonymous. They modestly referred to themselves as "the Stewart's of Montreal".<sup>89</sup> For a decade they



served fashionable Montrealers; "...Understanding as they do the wants of the people of the Dominion, they have with...refined taste selected some of the most exquisite goods that have ever been seen here."<sup>90</sup> A lengthy quotation gives an indication of what these "exquisite goods" were.

...Charming ball dresses and dress materials, expressly imported from England, rich silks and airy laces irresistible to the unwary fair one...silks stiff enough to stand alone and costing - think of it ye husbands! seven dollars and a half a yard! Here are new dress silks in every variety of shade from the brilliant Solferino to the delicate tea-rose and peach blossom. Here are laces two inches deep worth thirteen dollars and a half a yard! Tiny lace collars, of most undeniable and exquisite point which may be had for twenty-three dollars! Here are gloves of every make and colour - 18,000 dozens pairs of them, stowed neatly away in their pasteboard beds. Here are flowers, satins, muslins, ribbons with any number of etceteras....<sup>91</sup>

This description of fabrics and accessories is tempting even a century and a quarter later: imagine "dress silks in every variety of shade"! Many of these would have been unknown even a few years earlier. The possibilities of synthetic dyes were just being discovered. Experiments with coal-tar chemicals had produced the first synthetic dye, "Perkin's Mauve", which was in use commercially by 1857.<sup>92</sup> Other colours were soon added to the chemical spectrum. The names given to these colours frequently reflect names and places in the news at the time of their invention. The aniline red known as Magenta appeared in 1859.<sup>93</sup> "Solferino",

which is referred to in the above quotation, was "bright crimson-red dye" produced by the synthetic rosaniline. Both these dyes were in regular commercial use by the mid-1860s.<sup>94</sup> In the quotation, note too the reference to "18,000 dozens pairs of gloves." That is 216,000 pairs, a staggering quantity even given the importance of gloves as part of a costume.

By this decade, many fashion retailers were starting to advertise their own workrooms, as is demonstrated by this excerpt from a 1871 advertisement of Recollet House:

...THE MANTLE ROOMS contain a large stock to meet the increasing patronage of this Department. The BEST PATTERNS are selected with great care. The MATERIALS are bought from the best manufacturers and copied in our own workrooms.... The DRESSMAKING DEPARTMENT continues to give universal satisfaction for Fitting, Style and Charges.<sup>95</sup>

The inference here is that mantles were available as ready-made garments, having been sewn in the store's own workroom. The dress-making department was, however, a separate entity where dresses or costumes were made to order following a customer's specifications and from her selection of fabric. This distinction between "workrooms" and "dressmaking departments" can be noted in the advertisements of many other retailers. The dressmaking department of Recollet House must have produced fine quality goods indeed, since at the 1876 Philadelphia International Exhibition we learn that they won

AMERICAN and CANADIAN MEDALS...for excellence of Design, Style, Finish and

Workmanship in Ladies' Dresses, Suits and Costumes. Being the only medals granted for such goods in the whole DOMINION OF CANADA.<sup>96</sup>

The costumes were exhibited in the store on their return from Philadelphia at the end of 1876.<sup>97</sup>

These prize-winning dresses must have provided inspiration for local needlewomen, possibly encouraging some of them to attempt the fancy tuckings and rufflings made possible with the new attachments available for sewing machines. By this time, the sewing machine was in universal use, not only in the dressmaking and mantle workrooms of fashion retailers, but also in private homes. In 1866, J.L. Lawlor was among the Montreal dealers who advertised for sale commercial and "family" sewing machines including Singer's, Wilcox and Gibb's, and machines of his own manufacture. He also gave instruction; "Ladies Taught to Operate" is noted in one of his advertisements.<sup>98</sup> In describing their product, The Williams Manufacturing Co., another Montreal manufacturer of sewing machines stated:

...No more wonderful invention, however, has been made than that of the sewing machine which has proved an unestimable blessing to toiling thousands, as well as in the homes of the wealthy and in our manufacturing establishments....<sup>99</sup>

This effusive statement blindly ignores the dreadful conditions which prevailed at most of these "manufacturing establishments,"<sup>100</sup> but it is undeniable that the sewing machine not only relieved much of the tedium and labour of

hand stitching, but also made possible the evolution of the ready-to-wear industry, a development which had a major impact on the dry goods trade. In the 1870's, all fashionable dresses were still individually made, "ready-made" dresses still being some years in the future. In advertising their dress-making services, retailers frequently identified their dressmakers by name, giving the customer a feeling of individual, personalized service. In April 1881, Henry Morgan & Co. advertised

...the return of our...Miss Cunningham from the Boston and New York openings.... The [Dressmaking] department under the supervision of Miss Cunningham has had our special attention this season...and as we do nothing but the best work combined with all the latest fashions and styles, our customers can rely upon our efforts to please....<sup>101</sup>

In the last decades of the 19th-century, while fashion retailers continued to advertise the services of their dress-making departments as the source of up-to-date fashion as well as well-made properly fitting dresses, we start to note references to ready-made garments. A line in an 1876 Carsley advertisement reads: "Ready-Made. A large lot of Ready-made Print Dresses and Costumes to be sold for \$1.25 each."<sup>102</sup> Clearly these "dresses" would have been cotton "wrappers" intended to be worn only in the house. By July 1880 Carsley was advertising "ready-made dresses to be sold at and below cost" in order to make way for new fall goods, assuring

customers that "for style, quality and finish [they] are unsurpassed in Montreal."<sup>103</sup> Given that the "stuff dresses" were being sold at \$5.50 and the "Splendid Lustrine costumes" were priced from \$7.00 to \$8.50, one can deduce that Carsley's customers were generally middle-class.<sup>104</sup>

It is, however, also apparent that those customers were very fashion-conscious, and looked to Carsley's to supply up-to-date information on matters of dress. An advertisement featuring the Dressmaking Department is worth quoting at some length:

...Ladies' own material, if purchased in our stores, will be made up promptly, with every care and attention to fit and finish, at very reasonable prices, consistent with good work.  
[We are] well supplied with the latest leading European and American Fashion Plates and Journals, [so our] customers have the advantage of selecting from the newest and most fashionable designs.  
Costumes [imported] from the most celebrated costumers of London, Paris and Berlin, enables us to keep well in advance of the general trade in all matters, to the smallest detail, relating to dressmaking.<sup>105</sup>

In 1885, Carsley was requesting that "Ladies requiring Mantles, Dresses, Costumes or Mourning Goods," to leave their orders.<sup>106</sup> This suggestion was included as part of a long column which listed ready-made winter outerwear such as mantles, dolmans, jackets and ulsters, as well as costumes and dresses, Carsley confidently stating that his store offered the "largest assortment" of each of these items. This advertisement concluded with a list of dress goods, including

some in "the most recherché designs and shades."

The complex structure of the dresses fashionable at that time did pose some problems for both retailer and customer. A perfect-fitting bodice (sometimes called a basque) was essential, but a perfect fit was possible only when the bodice was cut and sewn to fit the individual figure. A solution to this problem was provided in one of Carsley's 1885 advertisements. In suggesting that a "useful" Christmas gift could be selected from a variety of costumes, seemingly suitable for any social activity, Carsley added:

...The majority of our Costumes consist of Skirt made and trimmed in the latest style and material for a bodice, thus enabling us to make the basque to fit the figure accurately and also to carry out any special design of the purchaser. It also allows of the purchaser taking the bodice material to her own dressmaker if she so wishes.<sup>107</sup>

In addition to his Dressmaking Department, and his mantle work rooms,<sup>108</sup> another department in which Samuel Carsley took pride was the "Ladies and Misses White Cotton Underclothing Department," which was

...prepared...with a large and varied stock of Ladies' and Misses' Underclothing in White Cotton and Muslins, plain, tucked and embroidered. This department has lately been placed under the management of a lady who is practically acquainted with all the branches in it....

Ladies' Wedding and Travelling Trousseaus supplied in every particular with care and attention. Infants' Layette Sets furnished in great variety and range of prices.

Our stock is very large and

varied...chemises...drawers...night  
dresses ...Slip-Bodices...Combination  
Suits ...Underskirts....<sup>109</sup>

Artists' impressions of a large department store's dressmaking room and white-wear factory are reproduced as illustrations 34 and 35.

As Carsley expanded the size of his store, he was able to expand his assortment to include a new sort of fashion retailing. In 1885 he advertised:

...HOUSE FURNISHING DEPARTMENT...

It is important to the public to know that we are prepared to execute all orders placed in this department with promptitude and good taste.

TO ARCHITECTS

As it is intended to make this department second to none on this continent, we ask the cooperation of the Architects of the city to assist in introducing a class of thoroughly good decorative draperies, high class artistic carpets, window shades etc.... We are now in a position...to carry out any orders entrusted to us as thoroughly as the most cultivated taste and greatest connoisseur can demand.<sup>110</sup>

The word "cultivated taste" and "connoisseur" are important; by implication, Carsley is placing himself in the position of a consultant - not only a purveyor of merchandise, but an arbiter of taste. By contrast Morgan's did not sell furniture until 1891, and did not advertise a house decorating department until the early 20th-century, when they offered a very comprehensive variety of services.<sup>111</sup>

The advertisements published by Samuel Carsley are as revealing of the merchant as his merchandise. These

advertisements, headed "Carsley's Column", regularly included a record of the number of business transactions in the store for the previous week with the comparative figure from the previous year; this was also done at the end of the month and the year. An example from January 1882 summarized the previous seven years, showing a steady increase in transactions from 146,224 in 1876 to 360,340 in 1881.<sup>112</sup> During this time Carsley had expanded his store at least four times. He was at that time the largest retailer in Montreal, as he reminded his readers on many occasions:

S. Carsley's is the largest Dry Goods Establishment in Canada, either Wholesale or Retail, and we believe that ours is about the largest exclusively ready cash business in the world.<sup>113</sup>

Carsley frequently used the leading paragraphs of his column to comment upon some political or economic issue of the day.<sup>114</sup> He also used his column to inform his readers and to promote various charitable activities, being in this case what would be called today a "good corporate citizen":

...Annual Hospital Week! A percentage of our sales from today until Christmas Eve will be given to the Montreal General Hospital. It may be worth mentioning that the management of the Hospital has steadily improved ever since properly trained nurses were introduced.<sup>115</sup>

During the great smallpox epidemic which devastated Montreal in the fall of 1885, Carsley took space in his columns to discuss home sanitation:<sup>116</sup>

...Put the Chloride of Lime in a saucer or open jar, keep a stick in it, and stir



it every day.... Sprinkle it about any damp or out of the way corners of your yards, cellars, or in other places such as under sinks and about closets and stables.... Make whitewash for ceilings or walls.... Chloride of Lime for sale all next week only at S. Carsley's put up in two and four pound packages, price five and ten cents per package.<sup>117</sup>

A few weeks later, as the epidemic worsened, and business was beginning to suffer, Carsley tried to instill confidence in his customers stating that his stores were

#### HEALTHY PREMISES

People can visit our place with perfect confidence, as all the stores are properly drained.... Chloride of Lime, the best of all disinfectants, is used freely every day, along with Carbolic. Our block is perhaps the healthiest spot in the whole city.... All money is disinfected as it is taken in. Everything that can be thought of to protect the interests of our customers is being done quite regardless of trouble or expense.<sup>118</sup>

However, Carsley's attempts failed, as is evidenced by the massive clearance sales that were advertised by him and all other retailers throughout the late Fall and Winter of that year. (1885)<sup>119</sup>

One customer service that Carsley advertised was that of repairing and recovering umbrellas. This led to a spiteful series of advertisements during October 1885, which can only have been part of a personal vendetta. In the advertisements, deliberately published beside "Carsley's Column", N. & E. Hamilton, a rival (and much smaller) dry goods merchant ridiculed Carsley and called him "The Umbrella Repairer",

accusing him of opportunism and other dubious business practices.<sup>120</sup> In one column Hamilton called Carsley, among other things, a Pharisee, concluding the advertisement with

A QUESTION!

Are Ladies quite safe at this critical period of the plague entering a store where old umbrellas are repaired and recovered? This question will, no doubt, startle the public, yet it is worthy of serious consideration and debate.... We will, in our next advertisement, give some of the little sharp business tricks practised at the Immaculate Stores on Notre Dame Street center, under the guidance of the Umbrella Repairer....<sup>121</sup>

This attack, though bitter, indeed almost libelous, seems to have been short-lived, because there is no apparent evidence of it in later advertising. In any case, the Hamilton Company, after many changes of location, was still advertising fashion merchandise at its store on St. Catherine Street between Drummond and Mountain Streets in 1910,<sup>122</sup> when Carsley's had disappeared from the Montreal retail scene.

As we have already mentioned, the 1890s were a period of dramatic changes in fashion retailing in Montreal. By 1896, all major fashion retailers had moved to new 'palaces' on St. Catherine Street, but Carsley's stubbornly remained at his original location on Notre Dame Street. This move had been led by Henry Morgan's in 1891. For some of the stores, the move to larger buildings created new merchandising opportunities. Morgan's took advantage of the increased space in the new store to expand from an assortment that

concentrated on the traditional dry goods lines, which were fully detailed in a September 1887 advertisement,<sup>123</sup> into the "full line" department store which is clearly described in this advertisement published at the time of the store's opening:

...We feel justified in stating that our Present Stock is not surpassed in Richness and Variety by that of any single Dry Goods House in the Dominion.

Our customers are well aware of the Quality of our Staples, and we now have Exceptional Opportunities for showing Fancy Goods....

We would especially call attention to the following Departments which have only been added to our list...

Furniture. Choice articles in Standard and Fancy woods...the perfection of workmanship and artistic in every particular.

China and Glassware. ...All the most Celebrated Makers represented in our Collection.

Boots and Shoes. Ladies, Misses and Childrens...in all the best American makes.

Books and Stationery. Writing Requisites of the Finest Quality.... Standard Novels and Poets.

Ready-made clothing. Youths' and Boys' full range of sizes.... Stylish cut.... Particularly good value....<sup>124</sup>

This expanded merchandise assortment served as a basis for further expansion of merchandise lines such as sporting goods, and also service departments, such as home decorating.<sup>125</sup>

In 1895, still on St. Antoine Street, with a branch store on St. Catherine near Guy, James A. Ogilvy advertised a "Grand Millinery Opening and Fashion Display of Fall Styles for

Season 1895...direct from Paris, London and New York."<sup>126</sup> He frequently referred to himself as "The Family Draper and Linen Warehouse" and continued to do so even after his business moved to St. Catherine Street in 1896. Indeed at the time of the move, Ogilvy published the following statement:

We came up to St. Catherine Street  
mean business - a Dry Goods Business -  
only Dry Goods.

A number of persons have asked us  
if we are going into departmental store  
work.

This we have positively refused to  
do. Our business is dry goods at as low  
or lower prices than can be had in any  
other store in the city....

OUR DEPARTMENTS are  
Linens, House Furnishings,  
Blankets, Flannels, Wools,  
Hosiery, Gloves, Laces, Ribbons,  
Dress Goods, Silks, Mantles,  
Boys' Clothing, Millinery,  
Whitewear, Silks, Prints.<sup>127</sup>

Ogilvy's soon referred to itself as "The Largest Exclusive Dry Goods House in Montreal."<sup>128</sup> In the early years of the 20th-century, it is clear to see from both the merchandise advertised, and the presentation of these advertisements, that Ogilvy's had found its niche as a fashion retailer, and was in direct competition with Morgan's for the custom of Montreal's "carriage trade".

Left almost alone on Notre Dame Street, Samuel Carsley's store was still the largest in Montreal, and offered what seems to have been the widest and most comprehensive assortment of department store-type merchandise. Some of this merchandise is quite surprising; on the same newspaper page

that Morgan's was advertising its fashionable new assortment of "American Boots and Shoes for ladies and children" in the Phillips Square store, Carsley advertised "The Electric Health Shoe" at only \$3.50. The illustration was accompanied by the following description:

...Seamless side, Toe Cap or Plain Toe...in Laced or Congress.... These Shoes are provided with a battery in the sole. The normal charge is one tenth of an ohm, but a stronger charge is sometimes incorporated. If the current is maintained to this power, it is impossible for one to catch Cold.<sup>129</sup>

A 'Directory of Departments' included in Carsley's 1896 mail order catalogue shows the wide assortment of merchandise stocked by "Montreal's Greatest Store" (Carsley's own phrase). This directory lists floor by floor the items to be found in Carsley's nine "stores" facing on Notre Dame Street. (The Number 10 store, fronting on St. James Street, was devoted to menswear.) A random sampling of the assortment includes the familiar dry goods lines such as Hosiery, Gloves, Dress Goods, Cotton Underwear, Flannel, Underwear, Millinery: in addition, there are also Boots and shoes, Bicycles, Baby carriages, Sporting goods, Toys and dolls, Paint and whitewash, Furniture, Antique furniture and many other household items. In an earlier advertisement, Carsley had referred to himself as "The Universal Provider of Montreal,"<sup>130</sup> this reference in admiring emulation of the innovative English retailer, William Whitely.<sup>131</sup> Carsley's even added a grocery department in an attempt to attract customers back to Notre Dame Street.<sup>132</sup>

However his advertisements, crowded as they are with long lists of bargains and specials, seem to take on a rather strident tone, as if the drive and determination that had built a great merchandising house, if not a leading fashion retailer, had collapsed. By 1906 Carsley's had announced the purchase of property on St. Catherine Street, but as we have seen Carsley's presence uptown was very short-lived.

With the dawn of the 20th-century there came great changes in society. Increased industrial output of a wide variety of consumer products and better facilities for communication and transportation created a nation with more material goods. For many people, there was more money to enjoy these material goods, and increased leisure time for recreational activities. The motorcar and the motion picture are only two of the inventions that would have far-reaching effects on the 20th-century. Different sorts of wardrobes were required for new sports activities, for motoring, and for the increasing number of women in the work force. The pace of the change in fashion became more swift as photographs recorded and transmitted the activities of fashion leaders. Retailing reflected these changes, and fashion retailers worked increasingly hard to maintain a position of leadership in the market.

Even a cursory review of the newspapers of the early decades of the 20th-century reveals a new style of

advertising. It is apparent that forward-looking stores were beginning to rely on advertising departments to give a professional polish to their fashion messages. The copy is more informative, and creative use is made of improved techniques in printing and in the reproduction of images.<sup>133</sup> No longer do we see advertisements such as Samuel Carsley published in 1895, when the entire newspaper column looked like this:

Largest and Cheapest  
 Largest and Cheapest  
 Largest and Cheapest  
 Largest and Cheapest  
 Mantle Store  
 Mantle Store  
 In Canada  
 In Canada<sup>134</sup>

Nor, indeed, do retailers' advertisements run unchanged for a period of months. A typical example of this is Morgan's announcement of his new location on McGill Street, it first appeared in The Pilot on April 4, 1854. It was still running - unchanged - in that paper in January 1855. We note too the establishment of the predictable, annual cycle of merchandising events such as the January and July store-wide clearance sales, the 'white sales' and the pre-Christmas events.

Advertisements now inform the reader about the merchandise, and at the same time create in her the desire for ownership. The age of consumerism has started. The customer is urged to buy, not out of necessity but out of the desire to have an item because it is new. An advertisement published by

Murphy's in 1909 expresses this concept very clearly:

Seeking, Always Seeking for the "New"  
This is part of the purpose of our lives.  
Seeking and finding the newest, the best,  
the most deserving, the most beautiful  
fabrics and fashions.... Here now comes  
a new month, a new season, and a storeful  
of new things in beautiful harmony with  
them both....<sup>135</sup>

The advertisements which announced the openings of fashion seasons were usually designed as elegant invitations. These were special events, and the ladies of Montreal were invited to attend. Among those that were published in the spring of 1911, that of Ogilvy's is a particularly elaborate example (ill. 36). In this advertisement, Ogilvy's offered its customers "a study of Paris creations as well as Creations of our own Designing."<sup>136</sup> In an equally elegant advertisement, published a few days later, Rea's offered "absolutely correct styles...the results of personal visits of the fashion centers of both Europe and America...."<sup>137</sup> In opening the same season, Morgan's suggested that their selection of "Exclusive Millinery, Imported Costumes, Parisian Creations [and] Hand-Made Waists" gave a particular "distinction" to their assortment.<sup>138</sup> The remarkable difference about these fashion messages and the advertisements which opened the seasons in the 19th-century is that they are featuring ready-to-wear: costumes for the customer to use immediately. Ready-to-wear, which we noted in its developmental stages in the last decades of the 19th-century, was now an industry in its own right, producing apparel in quantities and varieties which would have



been inconceivable to the inventors of the sewing machine. Ready-to-wear changed dry goods retailing into fashion merchandising.

Fashion retailers were all still advertising extensive assortments of dress materials, as well as trimmings such as ribbons and laces, but an increasingly dominant part of their advertising space was now devoted to ready-to-wear. A Morgan advertisement for Easter 1909 illustrates this, describing "Beautiful Fashions and Easter Novelties [gathered] to meet the wants and requirements of a cultured and refined clientèle." The advertisement goes on to describe

...Exclusive Costumes, Gowns and Coats, Including Imported Models.... This department carries a complete line of Ready-to-wear Costumes for street, afternoon and evening wear. The costumes are in a wide range of styles and many attractive models are being exhibited at moderate prices....<sup>139</sup>

Dressmaking and tailoring services were still being offered, however. In September of 1908, Ogilvy's advised its customers that "great care should be taken in the selection of your tailor," suggesting that the "fashionably attired ladies" who wanted a new Directoire-style costume should make an early selection from the "exclusive fabrics and shades to ensure delivery of [the] costume before the cooler weather." In the same advertisement, Ogilvy's offered "a stylish Tailored Costume" for \$20. This was described as "the most wonderful value we've ever offered in an absolutely new and up-to-date ladies' costume ...a choice of five styles, fashion's latest

decree in every particular."<sup>140</sup>

We have noted the references to European centers as the source of fashion information, as well as much of the merchandise, since Smith and Morgan's first advertisement in 1845. In the later years of the 19th-century mantles and costumes imported from "costumiers" were copied in the dressmaking rooms of Montreal fashion retailers. Paris creations were firmly established as the source of all fashion information and inspiration. It is during the early years of the 20th-century that the names of individual designers start to appear. In March 1912, Goodwin's advised its customers that

Spring has taken complete possession of this store.... The ideas of Paquin, Drecol, Doucet, Paul Poiret and other Parisian Dressmakers have been put within reach of all our Montreal customers.... From the Afternoon Dress, which is simplicity itself, to the most lavish creation, every recent conceivable style is shown."<sup>141</sup>

The fashion-conscious Montrealer could be reassured from advertisements such as this that the season's correct colour, line and look was as close as St. Catherine Street.

It is apparent in many advertisements of this era that the attitude of the fashion retailer had changed in a subtle but significant way. No longer does the merchant "beg respectfully to intimate to the Ladies of Montreal...that he has received a choice assortment", as we noted in early advertisements.<sup>142</sup> Now the fashion retailer has placed himself

in a position of authority, as an interpreter and communicator of refined taste and fashion. Ogilvy's opened their fall 1909 season with the following statement:

It has always been the aim of this House to provide you with selections that are choice - qualities that are excellent - values that are honest - and style refinement. Never before have we offered a greater variety or a more exclusive assortment of women's needs. Let us show you the best that the world can give - direct importations from London, Paris, Berlin and New York.<sup>143</sup>

In February 1910, the Henry Morgan Company took advertising space to sell itself and its merchandising standards rather than any specific items. The advertisement is modestly headed "The Best of its Kind" and in referring to its buyers states in part:

Their thorough knowledge of the tastes and desires of a cultured and refined clientele has enabled them to purchase merchandise different from the usual run - merchandise noted for its exclusive nature and distinctive character.<sup>144</sup>

Two years later Morgan's published an advertisement which illustrates exactly the position that the successful fashion retailer had assumed (ill. 38). The message implicit in the advertisement is that "clothes make the [wo]man." It blandly states:

...The part that this store plays in the development of taste, and in opportunity afforded for best expression of ideas, is no small part of the service rendered. ... Woman views, contemplates and buys, for plans have materialized and ideas become concrete under the guiding influence of this store's interpretation

of styles and its exhibits of beautiful merchandise.<sup>145</sup>

The great 20th-century age of consumerism had dawned, and when the consumer still looked to the fashion retailer for guidance, the fashion retailer was ready to provide advice and interpretation. A store owner who presented his new store building as did Ogilvy's in 1912 (ill. 37) was confident of his position and prepared to provide continuing fashion leadership to the ladies of Montreal.

Section II, part 2End Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Montreal Business Sketches (Montreal: Montreal Railway Advertising Co., 1865), p. 142.
- <sup>2</sup> Communication in winter with Europe was possible, if erratic, via ports on the United States seaboard. Many of the letters written by Morgan to his brother in Glasgow between 1845 and 1848 are marked "Via Boston". Shipments of merchandise could also be transshipped. As early as 1845, Virgil and Company of Montreal advertised that they could arrange bonded shipments from Boston or New York to Montreal. (The Gazette, 8 April, 1845).
- <sup>3</sup> McGill University, Henry Morgan Papers, MG 1002, C4, File 2443/10. 20 January, 1846.
- <sup>4</sup> The Transcript, 5 May, 1846. By this time, Smith and Morgan were in competition with Waddell's Albion House. In August 1848, Henry Morgan bought out this company. See Morgan Papers, MG 1002, C4, File 2443/11. It should be noted that in this advertisement, as in all others at this time the word "dress" refers to a length of fabric not to a made up dress.
- <sup>5</sup> Henry Morgan Papers, MG 1002, C4, File 2443/10. 28 January. 1847.
- <sup>6</sup> The Montreal Herald, 1817, n.d. Quoted in Lawrence M. Wilson, This Was Montreal 1814, 1815, 1816, 1817 (Montreal: Château de Ramezay, 1960), p. 182-3.
- <sup>7</sup> Michael Bliss, Northern Enterprise (Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 1987), p. 152.
- <sup>8</sup> The fashionable shops which lined this important retail thoroughfare in London, England are described in some detail in Alison Adburgham, Shops and Shopping, 1800-1914. (London: Allen & Unwin, 1981).
- <sup>9</sup> The Commerce of Montreal and its Manufacturers (Montreal: George Bishop, 1888), p. 50.
- <sup>10</sup> The Gazette, 19 May, 1845.
- <sup>11</sup> The Pilot, 18 April, 1854. In the United States as well, it was the custom that a store should be known by the name of the owner. R.H. Macy's, John Wanamaker's and Marshall Field's are three well-known examples from a

long list. In France, store names were more fanciful. "Au Bon Marché" conveys a sold, thrifty message, but what of "Au Diable Boiteux", or "A la Belle Fermière"? (See Au Paradis des Dames, Paris: Paris-Musée, 1992. pp. 146-149.)

- <sup>12</sup> See Alison Adburgham. Op. cit.
- <sup>13</sup> This fact is noted by almost every historian writing about 19th-century Montreal.
- <sup>14</sup> David Morgan, The Morgans of Montreal (Toronto: n.p., 1992), p. 23.
- <sup>15</sup> Isabella L. Bird. The English Woman in America (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966), p. 340.
- <sup>16</sup> The Transcript, 13 April, 1853.
- <sup>17</sup> The Transcript, 5 April, 1845.
- <sup>18</sup> Lovell's Montreal Directory, 1863-64, pp. 323-355.
- <sup>19</sup> The Transcript, 10 October, 1844.
- <sup>20</sup> See Adburgham, op. cit. pp. 81-83.
- <sup>21</sup> E.J. Chambers, The Book of Montreal (Montreal: The Book of Montreal Company, 1903), p. 193.
- <sup>22</sup> The Pilot, 20 April, 1854. A small entry notes that the office of Molson's Bank had moved to Great St. James Street opposite the Bank of British North America. (The Pilot, May 4, 1854).
- <sup>23</sup> The Witness, 5 May, 1866.
- <sup>24</sup> Canadian Illustrated News, 23 December, 1876.
- <sup>25</sup> Mackay's Montreal Directory, 1867, p. 516. From this small beginning there developed Morgan's Men's Wear, "A Store Devoted to the Needs and Requirements of Men. Particular endeavours made to assemble in Men's Wear, the latest and most approved modes in practical and distinctive styles..." (The Star, 11 February, 1910).
- <sup>26</sup> In addition to dress fabrics and trimmings, most dry goods stores regularly stocked household linens, drapery fabrics and carpets. Hamish Fraser suggests that this custom was "evidence of the manner in which the Victorian wife - despite the stereotype to the contrary - was in

fact master of her home, that it was in women's shops, to catch the woman customers, that a carpet and furniture trade developed." Hamish Fraser, The Coming of The Mass Market, (Mamden, Conn.: Archon, 1981. p. 130).

- 27 Adburgham, op cit. p. 27.
- 28 The Transcript, 23 April, 1855.
- 29 The Transcript, 4 December, 1851.
- 30 W.L. Morton (ed.), Monck Letters and Journals 1863-68, (Toronto: McLelland & Stewart, 1970), p. 163. Frances Monck was the niece of Charles Stanley, Viscount Monck, then Governor-General. She was part of the vice-regal family in Canada from May 1864 to May 1865.
- 31 W. George Beers, Over the Snow, or the Montreal Carnival (Montreal: George Bishop, 1883), n.p.
- 32 Canadian Illustrated News, 23 December, 1876. Further information on Montreal furriers of this era can be found in Jana Bara's thesis, "Furs in Fashion as Illustrated in the Photo-Portraiture of William Notman in the 1860's", Concordia University, 1986.
- 33 See Michael Bliss Northern Enterprise, (Toronto: McLelland & Stewart, 1987), pp. 234-6. Further information on the footwear industry in Quebec can be found in Sylvie Fournier, Les Fabricants Quebecois des Chaussures (Quebec: Le Ministre de l'Industrie, ca. 1992).
- 34 Lovell's Montreal Directory. 1867-68. p. 501.
- 35 Michael Bliss refers to Brown and Childs as pioneers in the shoe industry. See Northern Enterprise, p. 236.
- 36 Adburgham, op cit. p. 32. "Bespoke" shoes or clothing are made-to-measure.
- 37 Montreal Business Sketches (Montreal: Canadian Railway Advertising Co., 1865) p. 95.
- 38 Lovell's Montreal Directory 1867-68, p. 501.
- 39 Dominion Illustrated. "Special Number Devoted to Montreal the Commercial Metropolis of the Dominion." December 1891, p. 104. The letter was signed by C. Lisbie, Lady-in-Waiting. The photograph which illustrates this

article shows the owner standing in the doorway of his shop which was then located in the Cathedral Block.

40 Adburgham, op. cit. p. 21.

41 The Pilot, 21 December, 1861.

42 The Traveller's Guide for Montreal and Quebec, (Montreal: n.p., 1863), n.p.

43 Adburgham, op. cit. p. 37.

44 Montreal Business Sketches, (Montreal: Canadian Railway Advertising Co., 1865), p. 141.

45 Ibid, p. 142.

46 The Witness, 2 January, 1862.

47 Ibid.

48 The Transcript, 16 March, 1864.

49 We can trace William McDunnouch's career prior to this time. He is mentioned in an 1854 advertisement of McDunnouch, Muir & Co. as having a "long experience in the trade, in the establishment of Mr. Thomas Mussen" (Mackay's Montreal Directory 1854, p.iv). This firm was dissolved in 1862 due to Muir's retirement. (The Witness 7 February, 1862). In the spring of 1864 James Parkin took "...the opportunity to inform his numerous customers that he has secured the services of Mr. McDunnouch long and favourably known by the retail trade of Montreal." (The Transcript, 16 March, 1864).

50 Mackay's Montreal Directory, p. 391. Later advertisements refer to Mrs. Aitken by name as supervising the ladies' undergarment and baby linen departments.

51 The Transcript, 28 February, 1852.

52 F.W. Terrill. A Chronology of Montreal. (Montreal: Lovell & Sons, 1893), p. 174.

53 The Transcript, 19 May, 1846.

54 Findings is a collective term used to describe the myriad of threads, tapes, hooks and eyes, buttons and bindings required to construct an item of wearing apparel.

55 The majority of these letters are signed very formally



"Smith and Morgan", but from their tone, it is apparent that they were dictated by Morgan. Occasionally he added a hasty, personal postscript in pencil.

- <sup>56</sup> McGill University, Henry Morgan Papers, M 1002, C4 File 2443/10, 13 July, 1845.
- <sup>57</sup> Henry Morgan emigrated from Scotland to Montreal in 1844. He worked briefly at Thomas Waddell's Albion House, then formed a partnership with fellow employee David Smith. Smith and Morgan opened their dry goods shop in May, 1845 (The Gazette, 19 May, 1845). At this time they referred to themselves as "Drapers, Mercers and Haberdashers." In 1846, they refer to their assortment as "Fancy and Staple Dry Goods" (The Transcript 19 May, 1846).
- <sup>58</sup> Henry Morgan Papers, MG 1002, C4 File, 2443/10. 28 January, 1847.
- <sup>59</sup> Ibid, 24 June, 1846.
- <sup>60</sup> Ibid, 13 October, 1846.
- <sup>61</sup> Ibid, 27 January, 1847.
- <sup>62</sup> Ibid, 22 January, 1845.
- <sup>63</sup> David Morgan, op. cit. pp. 27-36.
- <sup>64</sup> Henry Morgan Papers. MG 1002, C15, Files 17, 18, 19. Various invoices dated 1851, 1852, 1853.
- <sup>65</sup> The Transcript, 19 May, 1846.
- <sup>66</sup> These are referred to on invoices from James J. Robertson of Glasgow, 25 March, 1851 and Thomas Gould, Sewed Muslin and Lace Manufacturer, 1 August, 1850.
- <sup>67</sup> These requisites for constructing a dress, the "findings" referred to above (note 54), are among those detailed on an invoice from the Glasgow firm of Thomas Muirhead, 17 July, 1850.
- <sup>68</sup> Chemizettes (more usually chemisette), a garment resembling a sleeveless blouse, were worn under the bodice of a dress to ornament and fill in a low-cut neckline. The wide sleeves of the mid-century dresses were always filled in by "undersleeves", which were tacked to the dress sleeve at the elbow and fastened closely about the wrist. Chemisettes and undersleeves were usually white, made of linen or fine cotton, and were frequently decorated with floral embroidery.

- 69 McGill University, Henry Morgan Papers, M1002. C15 File 2445/17. Invoice of Thomas Gould, 1 August, 1850.
- 70 Ibid. These undergarments were invoiced by Kay, Findlay & Co. in 1851.
- 71 Ibid. Textiles for household use such as sheeting are noted on a number of invoices, as are such menswear fabrics as "shirtings" and "fancy vestings". The ties referred to were invoiced by Messrs. Abercromby & Co. on 5 April, 1850, and the gloves by Muirhead and Morgan on 8 April, 1850.
- 72 A very early Morgan advertisement refers to "an entire new stock of French and British Goods" (The Gazette, 19 May, 1845). Unfortunately there are no surviving invoices to provide further details.
- 73 Lovell's Montreal Directory, 1863-64, p. 335.
- 74 L'Album de la Minerve, vol. 2 no. 2. 29 mars, 1873. pp. 359-61. This article, "La lettre et l'esprit du deuil" details the complicated rituals of proper mourning apparel. Widows in full mourning were expected to wear "bas et gants en laine ou filoselle." (Filoselle was a type of silk thread used for embroidery, scarves and shawls.)
- 75 Adburgham, op. cit. p. 64.
- 76 Alison Gernsheim. Victorian and Edwardian Fashion. (New York: Dover, 1963), p. 35.
- 77 Louis Martine, Handbook of Etiquette. (New York: 1866). Republished as Civil War Era Etiquette (Mendocino, California: R.L. Shep, 1988), p. 55.
- 78 For example, in 1854 Morison, Cameron & Empey had Alexander gloves in stock (ill. 31). Three decades later, they were advertised by John Murphy & Co. (The Star, 19 April, 1881).
- 79 Godey's, op. cit. p. 430.
- 80 F.W. Terrill, A Chronology of Montreal. (Montreal: Lovell & Sons, 1893), p. 140.
- 81 The Witness, 11 January, 1862.
- 82 The Witness, 7 February, 1862.
- 83 Adburgham, op. cit. pp. 58-69.

- <sup>84</sup> Mackay's Montreal Directory, 1861-62, p. 255. One of the partners of this firm, William McDunnoch later took over the business of James Parkin. (see note 49).
- <sup>85</sup> The Star, 4 September, 1880.
- <sup>86</sup> The Star, 10 April, 1891.
- <sup>87</sup> The Star, 29 February, 1892.
- <sup>88</sup> The Star, 1 March, 1898.
- <sup>89</sup> Canadian Illustrated News, 24 December, 1870, p. 427.
- <sup>90</sup> Ibid. Brown and Claggett dissolved their partnership in summer 1879. Brown operated Recollet House for another year before going into bankruptcy (The Star, 8 March, 1860). Claggett and a new partner, Tait, located themselves in the former store of Savage and Lyman on St. James Street.
- <sup>91</sup> Canadian Illustrated News, 28 December, 1872.
- <sup>92</sup> Encyclopedia Britannica, 14th Edition, s.v. "Dyes, synthetic".
- <sup>93</sup> Magenta and Solferino were sites of 1859 battles in the Franco-Austrian War. The vocabulary of costume history includes the names of many other famous events and people, e.g. Wellington, Balaclava, Cardigan, Raglan.
- <sup>94</sup> Oxford English Dictionary, 2nd edition, s.v. "Solferino". Chemical dyes were soon made available to the retail consumer. In 1862, the Montreal chemists Lyman, Clare & Co. advertised  
     "Judson's Simple Dyes. Magenta, Green, Violet, Pink, Scarlet, Mauve, Blue etc. etc. The above elegant preparations are made for use, pure and simple, without admixture with other substances, and therefore specially adapted for domestic use. A limited supply in bottles..." (The Transcript, 2 May, 1862).
- <sup>95</sup> Canadian Illustrated News, 15 April, 1871, p. 239. Their manufacturing was not limited to ladies' apparel. An 1873 advertisement states "...Ladies' & Gents' furnishings, costumes, in stock and made to order. Gents' garments got up in shortest notice..." (Ottawa Hotel Guide, Montreal: Canadian Illustrated News, 1873, n.p.).

- <sup>96</sup> Canadian Illustrated News, 23 December, 1976, p. 384.
- <sup>97</sup> "There is a treat in store for many of our fair leaders of fashion in the exhibit at the "Recollet House" of the elegant costumes shown at the Philadelphia Exhibition" (ibid). Unfortunately, we have been unable to find detailed descriptions of these dresses.
- <sup>98</sup> The Witness, 11 May, 1866. The work of the home dressmaker was further simplified as commercial dress patterns became available. Butterick's patterns were advertised for sale at the shop of W. Godbee Brown on Notre Dame Street and those of "Madame" Demorest were available nearby at the shop of George D. & R.S. Garvie. (The Gazette , 28 September and 11 March, 1878).
- <sup>99</sup> The Commerce of Montreal, (Montreal: George Bishop, 1888), p. 45.
- <sup>100</sup> See Michelle Payette-Daoust. "The Montreal Garment Industry, 1871-1901." Master's Thesis, McGill University, 1986. For further information, her bibliography is particularly useful.
- <sup>101</sup> The Star, 19 April, 1881. Miss Campbell had likely visited all the important fashion stores to see their Easter assortments. "Openings", where the wholesale trade introduces new merchandise to retailers, would have been held earlier.
- <sup>102</sup> The Witness, 2 August, 1876.
- <sup>103</sup> The Star, 27 July, 1880.
- <sup>104</sup> "Stuff" was a generic term used to describe many different textiles woven of worsted wool.
- <sup>105</sup> The Star, 16 March, 1885.
- <sup>106</sup> The Star, 10 October, 1885.
- <sup>107</sup> The Star, 18 December, 1885.
- <sup>108</sup> The Star, 21 August, 1881. This advertisement advises Carsley's customers that the "Costume and Mantle Manufacturing Department will be closed next week, in order to give the employees of this department a week's holiday."
- <sup>109</sup> The Star, 20 February, 1885.
- <sup>110</sup> The Star, 24 February, 1885.

- 111 "...Its successful undertakings include decorative scheme and interior furnishings of some of the finest homes in practically every province in the Dominion." W.H. Atherton, Montreal 1535-1914 (Montreal: S.J. Clarke, 1914), p. 630.
- 112 The Star, 5 January, 1882.
- 113 The Star, 23 September, 1880.
- 114 In February 1880, a series of columns titled "Church Debts" replaced the usual merchandise offerings of these advertisements. The arguments contained in these columns would have been better located on the editorial pages of the newspaper. (The Star, 7 February, 1880).
- 115 The Star, 16 December, 1879.
- 116 A detailed account of this ghastly period in Montreal's history is found in Michael Bliss, Plague, A Story of Smallpox in Montreal (Toronto: Harper Collins, 1991).
- 117 The Star, 5 September, 1885.
- 118 The Star, 22 September, 1885.
- 119 In 1892, when announcing the twenty-first anniversary of his company, Carsley stated "The sales have steadily increased every year, except the year of the smallpox epidemic..." (The Star, 20 February, 1892).
- 120 One Hamilton advertisement by error includes the instructions to the printer "Follow Murphy's alongside Carsley" indicating that the placement of the advertisement was important. (The Star, 24 October, 1885).
- 121 The Star, 13 October, 1885.
- 122 The Star, 1 September, 1910.
- 123 A Morgan advertisement of "Fall Importations" in September 1887 lists 15 departments which contained gloves; ribbons and frillings; prints and sateens; upholstery and dress trimmings, coloured dress stuffs; sheetings and towelings; ulsters, jackets and shawls; millinery, underwear, corsets and umbrellas; black and coloured silks; mourning requisites; tweeds and overcoatings; carpets, table covers and curtains; hosiery and gents furnishings; dressmaking by Miss Armstrong and Miss James; Butterick's patterns and periodicals. (The Star, 9 September 1887). While predictably different in

style and variety, this list of items does not differ very much from the assortment in Morgan's 1850 shop, which we discussed earlier (pp. 98-103).

- 124 The Gazette, 25 April, 1896.
- 125 In March 1912, Morgan's "Watercraft section" of their Sporting Goods Department had a demonstration tank for their lines of motor boats and canoes. (The Star, 27 March, 1912).
- 126 The Star, 18 September, 1895.
- 127 The Star, 7 September, 1896.
- 128 The Star, 20 November, 1896. This advertisement states that their new boys' clothing department was an unforeseen success, and that they would in future offer made-to-measure boys' clothing.
- 129 The Star, 10 April, 1891. The advertisement notes that Carsley's was the wholesale agent in Canada for these shoes, and that "47,273 pairs [had been] sold in 55 days."
- 130 The Star, 23 November, 1895.
- 131 Whiteley's enormous store was reported to offer its customers every service from the cradle to the grave. Indeed it even had an undertaking service. See Richard Lambert, The Universal Provider (London: Geo. Marrapo, 1938).
- 132 The Star, 19 November, 1896. It is interesting to note that on this advertisement, and on many others, the Carsley logo is printed in identical typeface and format as that used by the T. Eaton Company in Toronto.
- 133 Among the books written on this subject is the informative book by Paul Rutherford, A Victorian Authority: The Daily Press in Late Nineteenth Century Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982).
- 134 The Star, 23 November, 1895.
- 135 The Star, 1 September, 1909.
- 136 The Star, 14 March, 1911.
- 137 The Star, 1 April, 1911.

- <sup>138</sup> The Star, 28 March, 1911.
- <sup>139</sup> The Star, 3 April, 1909.
- <sup>140</sup> The Star, 11 September, 1908.
- <sup>141</sup> The Star, 23 March, 1911.
- <sup>142</sup> The Transcript, 19 May, 1846, Advertisement of J.B. Brown, former partner in Albion House.
- <sup>143</sup> The Star, 8 September, 1909.
- <sup>144</sup> The Star, 23 February, 1910.
- <sup>145</sup> The Star, 16 March, 1912.

### CONCLUSION

If there is one word that can be used to describe the seven-decade period we have studied, it is change. Change occurred at every level of society. During this period, Canada matured into nationhood, and Montreal developed into the most industrialized city in Canada, with a sophisticated social structure. The fashion retailers we have studied were affected by these and by other changes, and in turn, changed themselves. As we have seen, this revolution took place in their places of business, in their manner of doing business, and in their merchandise assortments. The modest one-room shop where the customer negotiated the purchase price of each item with the merchant himself had changed into increasingly larger shops with employees who sold the merchandise at ticketed, fixed prices.

As business grew, retailers recognized the need for bigger and better buildings, and incorporated many technological advances into their construction. Both the exteriors and the interiors of the stores of the later 19th-century reflected a change in the attitude of the retailer himself: a merchant prince required nothing less than a palace as his place of business. In the early years of the 20th-century, commercial architecture underwent another change, elaborate ornamentation giving way to cleaner decorative lines, and safety features became an important consideration. The emphasis changed from imposing exteriors to functional



interiors which could be filled with a constantly changing array of merchandise and activities.

Starting in the 1850's, there occurred a number of developments that would change not only fashion itself, but the speed at which it would change. The establishment of the telegraph, the railway train, and regularly scheduled trans-Atlantic steamships made communication and travel faster and easier. The sewing machine speeded up the construction of a dress. Two or more dresses could now be made in the time previously required to make one, or the dress itself could be made to a more elaborate pattern, trimmed with gathers, pleats and tucks, made easier by the new sewing machines. An increased number of publications directed to women readers kept them informed of the latest ideas in fashionable items. Later, photography recorded the activities and dress of the fashionable leaders of society, and these too were reproduced in various publications. Changes in society itself, such as women entering the workforce in increasing numbers, and the development of new leisure-time activities outside the home, created a need for different sorts of apparel. Change, always an essential factor in fashion, occurred with greater speed as all these influences made their impact felt.

Possibly the greatest change of all occurred in the merchandise assortments of the fashion retailers. The earliest assortments consisted largely of the dry goods and trimmings required to construct items of apparel. The

customer still had to invest many painstaking hours to change her purchase of textiles into articles in a useable form. The customer, by herself, or with the help of a dressmaker, created her own fashion. Although influenced by fashion plates, its colour and its trim, and the final form of the dress was unique. The customer created her own style from the raw materials of fashion supplied by the dry goods merchant.

As they started to expand their merchandise assortments, dry goods retailers found it profitable to include a selection of apparel items which were ready for immediate use. This implies a change in the role of the retailer. For example, his selection of the style, colour, fabric and trim of a cape or mantle to be sold in his shop put him in the position of making fashion decisions for his customers. This is a slight but significant change whose full impact would not be felt until the early years of the 20th-century. By that time, fashion retailers had professional buyers travelling frequently to foreign markets, and consequently were in a position to become fashion authorities. The buyers' selections of "exclusive fashion" or of styles from the production lines of the developing ready-to-wear industry soon formed the major part of the fashion assortment. The manner in which fashion retailers describe their new assortments at the opening of each season makes it clear that they have assumed the role of fashion directors, and are proud of it.

During this period of change, the customer had changed as

well. She now had the option of reviewing various interpretations of the newest designs in dresses, coats and suits, modelling them for herself before making a decision to buy. By purchasing an item of ready-to-wear, the customer sacrificed the uniqueness of an individually made garment, but she gained greatly in convenience, a sacrifice many women were very willing to make. As the customer had evolved into the consumer of a finished product, the dry goods retailer had become the fashion merchandiser. The 20th-century would see a dramatic evolution in both consumerism and merchandising which would have been unimaginable to the early dry goods merchants of Notre Dame Street.

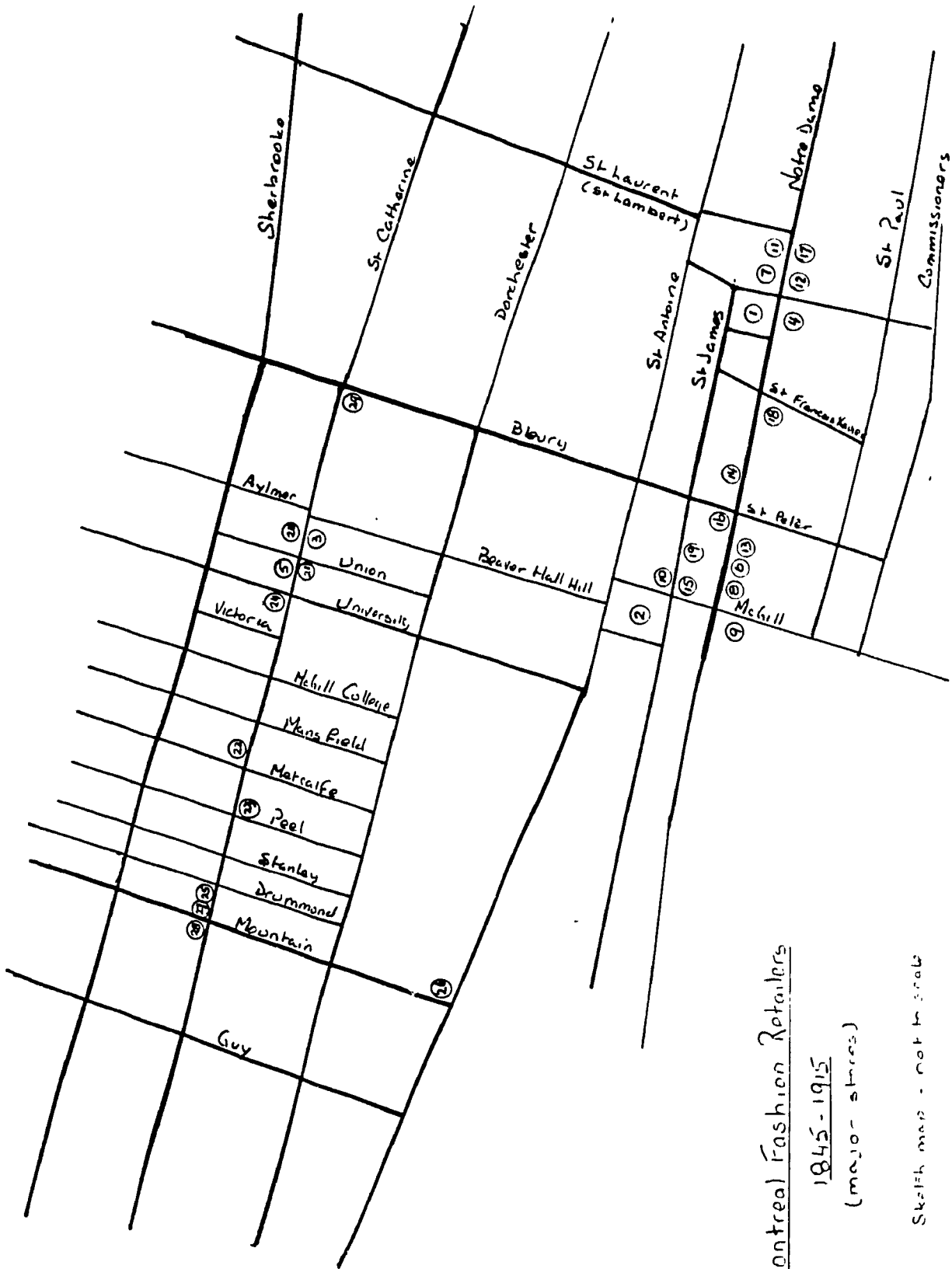
**Montreal Fashion Retailers, a sketch map**

This sketch map, which indicates the location of only some of the fashion retailers, clearly demonstrates how densely clustered stores were along Notre Dame and St. James streets during the 19th-century.

**Montreal Fashion Retailers****Legend**

1. Place d'Armes
2. Victoria Square
3. Phillips Square
4. Notre Dame Church (1829)
5. Christ Church Cathedral (1859)
6. Albion House (1843)
7. James Connell (ca. 1843)
8. Smith and Morgan (1845-1854)
9. Henry Morgan & Co., Colonial House (1854-1866)
10. Henry Morgan & Co., Colonial House (1866-1891)
11. Cathedral Block (1859)
12. H. & H. Merrill (1868-1886)
13. Recollet House (1869)
14. Samuel Carsley (1872-1909)
15. Ottawa Hotel
16. John Murphy (1869-1894)

17. James Parkin's Lace House
18. John Aitken
19. Savage, Lyman & Co. (1872-1878)
20. Henry Morgan & Co., Colonial House (1891)
21. Henry Birks & Sons (1894)
22. John Murphy & Co. Ltd. (1894-1929)
23. The Hamilton Co. (1895-1908) W.H. Scroggie (1908-1913)
24. Queen's Block - Tenants W.H. Scroggie Ltd. (1883-1908).  
S. Carsley Co. (1908). A.E. Rea Co. Ltd. (1908-1909).  
Goodwin's Ltd. (1909-1925)
25. The Hamilton Co. (1908)
26. James A. Ogilvy & Sons (1866-1896)
27. James A. Ogilvy & Sons (1896-1912)
28. James A. Ogilvy & Sons (1912)
29. W.H. Scroggie (1913-1915). Almy's (1915)



Montreal Fashion Retailers

1845-1915

(major streets)

Sketch map - not to scale

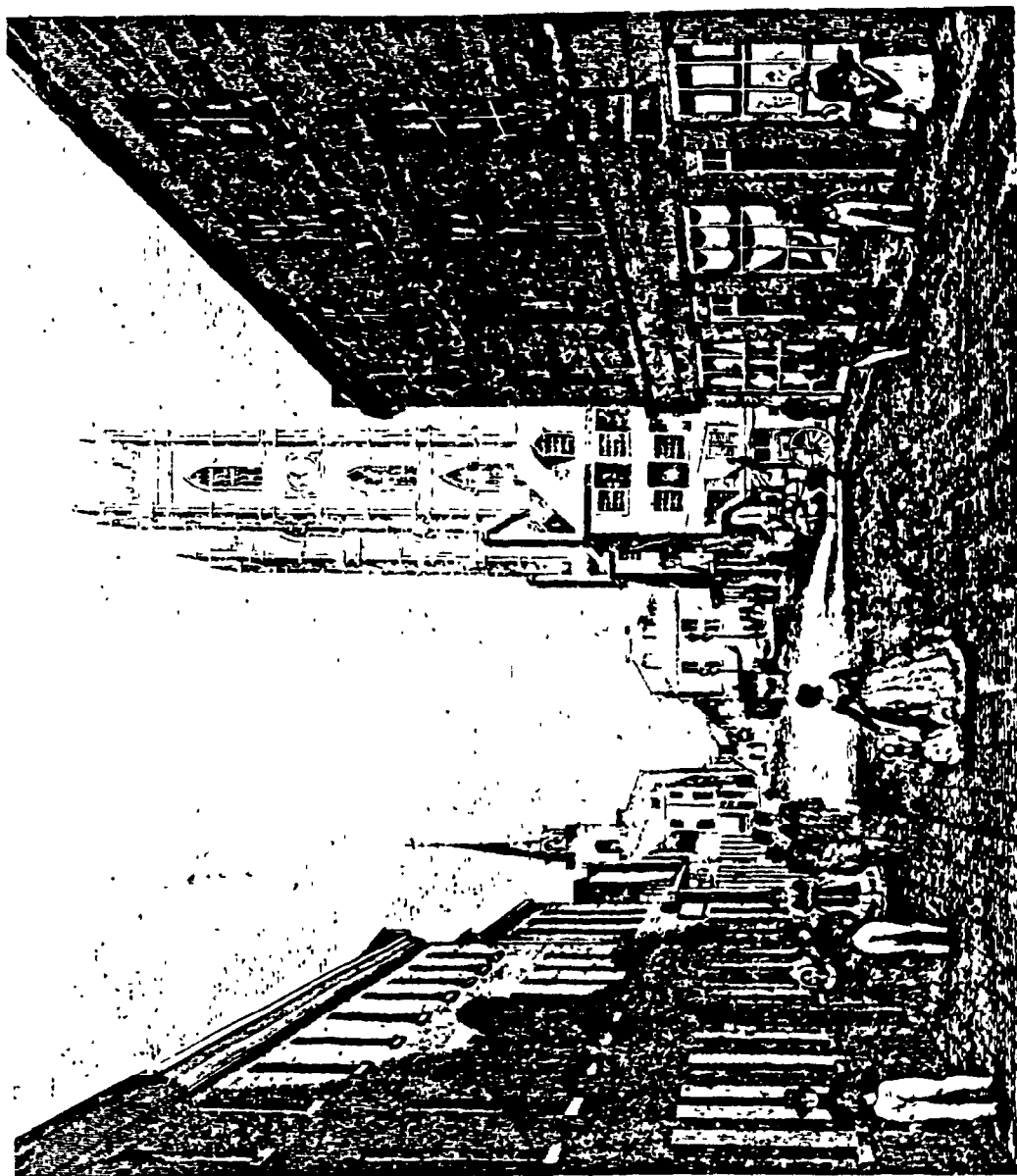
South West View, Notre Dame Street, Montreal. ca. 1843.

John Murray

Engraving

McCord Museum of Canadian History. M970.67.23

The Gothic-style twin towers of Notre Dame Church dominate the south side of Place d'Armes, beside it is the Sulpician Seminary. Facing these two building from across the square (not visible in this engraving) is the solid neo-classical bulk of the Bank of Montreal. A century and a half later, these still stand, although all else has changed. In the distance is the spire of Christ Church Cathedral which was destroyed by fire in 1856.



2. South west view, Notre Dame Street, Montreal,  
ca. 1843



Thomas Waddell's Albion House, ca. 1843

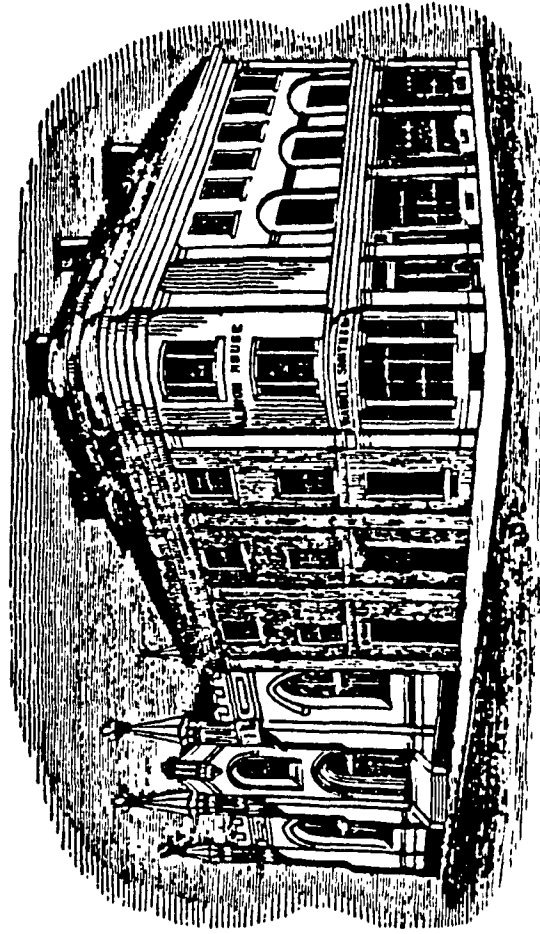
Wood engraving

Mackay's Montreal Directory, 1843-4. Lande Collection of Canadiana, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, McGill University.

While still recognizable today, this building has undergone some alterations, the western section of it having been demolished, and the corner window replaced by a door. The church in the background is St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, built in 1834, where Peter McGill and John Redpath were members.

Manufacturers & Importers of  
WADDSELL'S PATENT  
STANDARD  
WRITING  
PAPER

WADDSELL, SMITH & CO.



ALBION HOUSE,  
NOTRE DAME STREET, FIRST CORNER WEST OF RECOLLET CHURCH,  
MONTREAL.

Being confident that their Goods are decidedly cheap, and cannot be surpassed by any house in Canada, they solicit an inspection of their Stock.

J. STARR AND CO. PRINTERS

Manufacturers & Importers of  
WADDSELL'S PATENT  
STANDARD  
WRITING  
PAPER

3. Thomas Waddell's Albion House, ca. 1843

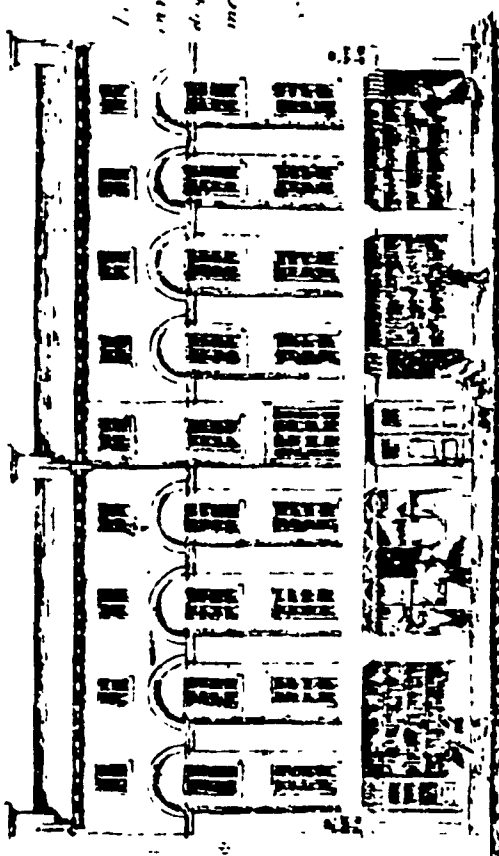
James Connell's Shop, ca. 1843

Wood engraving

McGill University, Henry Morgan Papers MG1002, c18, file 4.

This sales bill, dated on the back 1843, records the purchase of some carpeting. James Connell was in business at this address, and later in a building on the corner of St. Lambert Street (now St. Lawrence Boulevard) before seeming to disappear in the late 1840s.

WHOLESALE AND RETAIL EMPORIUM  
James Connell & Co. Montreal



*Les plans de cette maison ont été  
examinés par les experts de la  
ville de Montréal, et ils ont  
certifié qu'ils sont conformes  
aux règlements de la ville.*

BOUGHT OF JAMES CONNELL & CO.

*James Connell & Co.*

*117 1/2 Rue Saint-Jacques  
Montreal  
Received Payment  
of \$1000.00  
for the purchase of the  
above property*

4. James Connell's Shop, ca. 1843

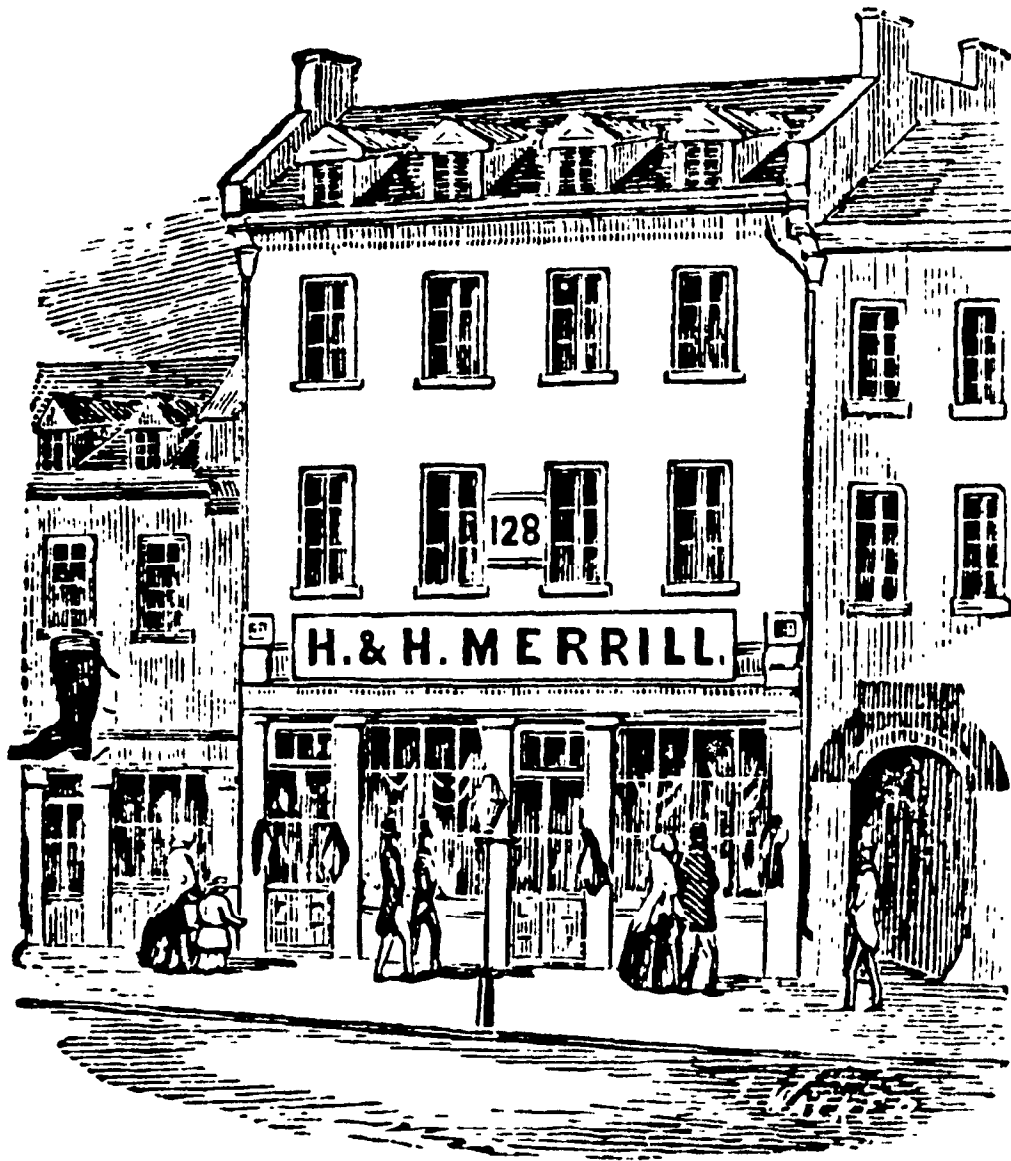
H. & H. Merrill's Shop, ca. 1852

John Henry Walker

Wood engraving

McCord Museum of Canadian History, M930.51.1.467.

This image was thriftily used by Merrill for well over decade, even though the street number had been changed to 190 in 1854. (See ill. 6) The store to the left is Brown and Childs' "Mammoth Boot and Shoe Warehouse."



5. H. & H. Merrill's Shop, ca. 1852

H. & H. Merrill, sales bill, 1864

Wood engraving

McCord Museum of Canadian History, McCord Family Papers, file  
1205.

Note that on this sales bill, dated 1864, the prices are still calculated in sterling, although the decimal currency system became official in January 1858.



190, Notre-Dame Street.  
 MONTREAL, *6-12-84* 1864

*Mrs. G. L. B...*

Bought of H. & H. MERRILL,

GENERAL IMPORTERS OF

Fancy & Staple Dry Goods.

SOLD BY No. *2*

EXAMINED BY No.

YDS.	PRICE	£	S.	D.
<i>1 1/2</i>	<i>1/2</i>		<i>1</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>4</i>	<i>1/2</i>		<i>2</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>1</i>	<i>1/3</i>		<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>1 1/2</i>	<i>2/3</i>		<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>2</i>	<i>1/6</i>		<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>1 1/2</i>	<i>1/3</i>		<i>1</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>1/2</i>	<i>10</i>		<i>5</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>1/4</i>	<i>1/2</i>		<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>1/4</i>	<i>3/2</i>		<i>7</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>1/2</i>	<i>10</i>		<i>5</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>1/2</i>	<i>1</i>		<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>
	<i>10</i>		<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>



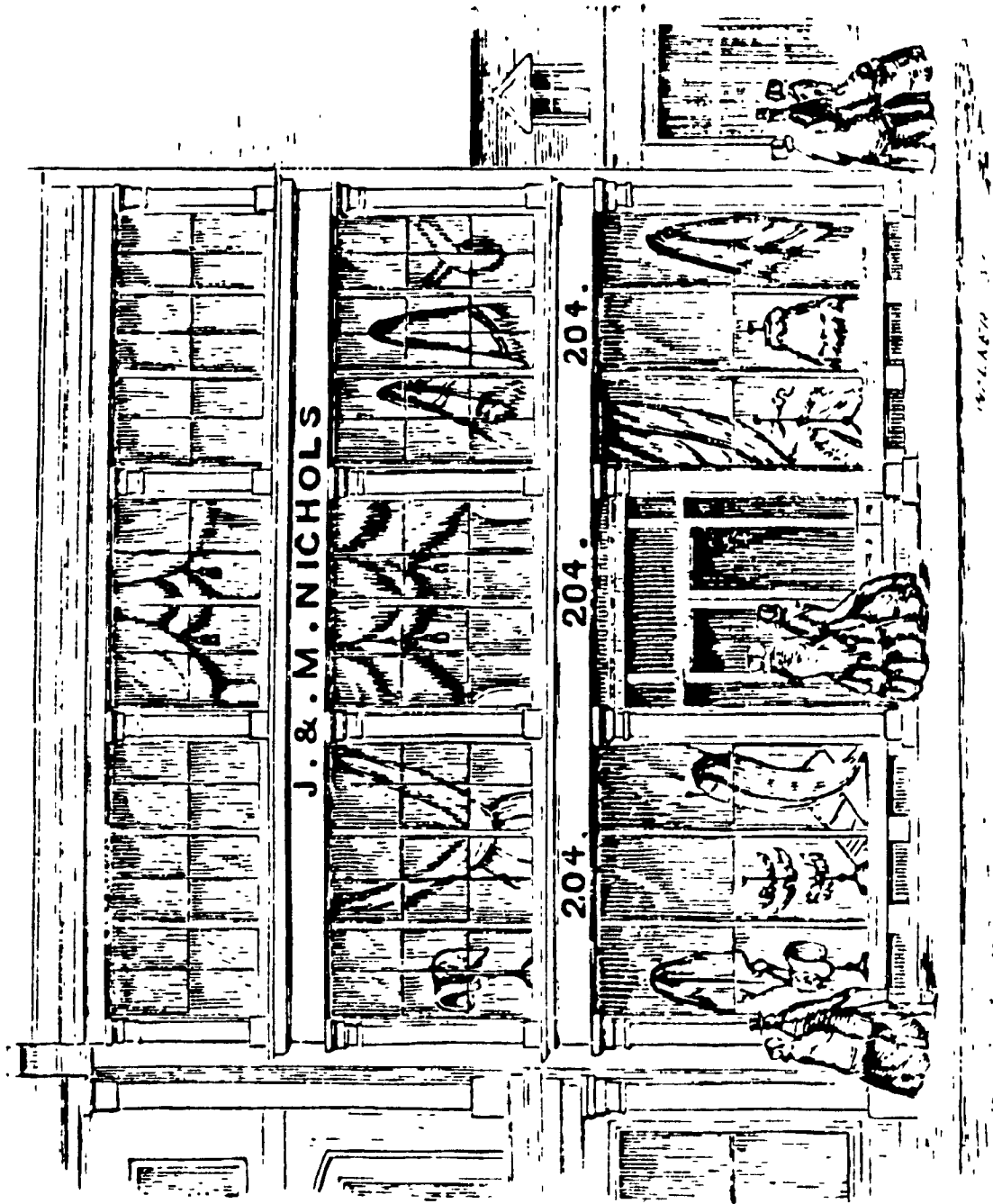
J. & M. Nichols' shop, ca. 1854

John Henry Walker

Wood engraving

McCord Museum of Canadian History, M930.50.7.320. .

This shop was occupied by Henry Morgan's dry goods store from April 1845. Many alterations were made to the interior of the store during this period, these are recorded in the letters of Henry to his brother James. The façade was rebuilt too sometime late in 1853 or early 1854 (see p. 20). J. & M. Nichols moved to this building from 136 Notre Dame Street in May 1854 (see ill. 8).



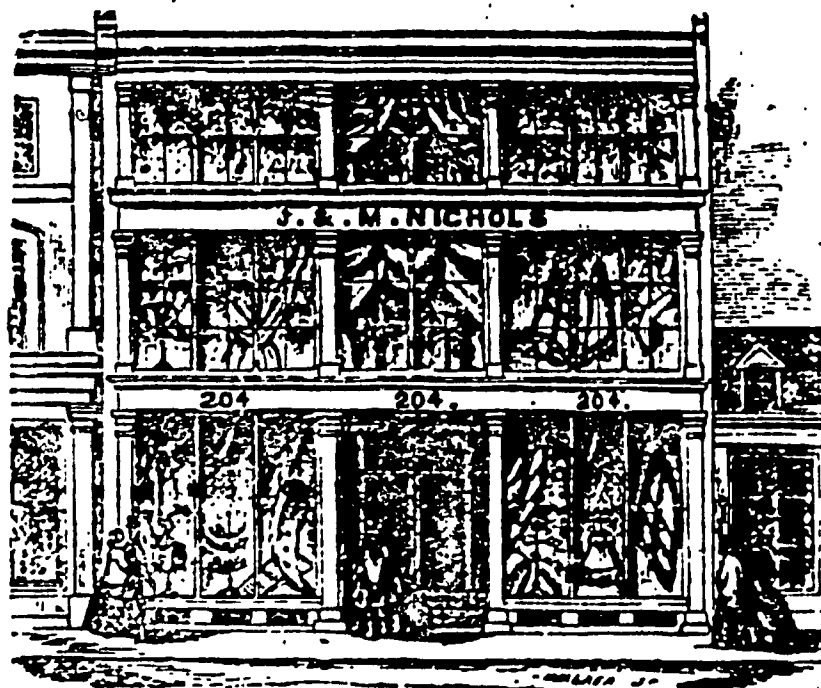
7. J. & M. Nichols' shop, ca. 1854

J. & M. Nichols, advertisement, 1854

The Transcript and Commercial Advertiser, 20 May, 1854.

J. & M. Nichols proudly advertise their new store.

**WILL BE OPENED ON MONDAY, THE 22D INST.**



**J. & M. NICHOLS,**  
**Importers of Fancy and Staple Dry Goods,**  
**NO. 204, NOTRE DAME STREET, MONTREAL.**

**J. & M. NICHOLS** would invite an Examination of their Rich Col-  
 lection of

**SILKS, VELVETS, MANTLES, SHAWLS, LACES,**

AND

**EMBROIDERED GOODS OF EVERY DESCRIPTION.**

**N. B.—The PRICES, throughout the Establishment, are so MODERATE that NO  
 ABATEMENT CAN BE ALLOWED.**

Montreal, May 20, 1854.

15

8. J. & M. Nichols' advertisement, 1854

The Cathedral Block, ca. 1859

Wood engraving

Montreal Illustrated 1869-70, Christmas and New Year Album

(Montreal, 1869). Bibliothèque nationale du Québec,  
Collections spéciales, Edifice Marie-Claire Daveluy. FC  
2947.37 M65.

The image reproduced here is from an 1869 publication. The same image had been published about a decade earlier, just after the building had been constructed. Then the names of the original tenants were on each storefront, J. & T. Bell, Savage and Lyman, A. Lazare, and Lamplough and Campbell. By 1869, the only original tenant was Savage and Lyman, consequently the other names are deleted in this advertisement, but noted below the image (not reproduced here) are the names of the 1869 tenants: "Brodeur and Beauvais, successors to J.T. Bell, importers and dealers in boots and shoes" and "Charles Wilson, Chemist and Druggst". A reproduction of the original engraving can be found in Architecture commerciale III, les magasins, les cinémas. (Montreal, 1985).



9. The Cathedral Block, ca. 1859

H. & H. Merrill's store, ca. 1866.

John Henry Walker

Wood engraving

McCord Museum of Canadian History. M930.50.8.335

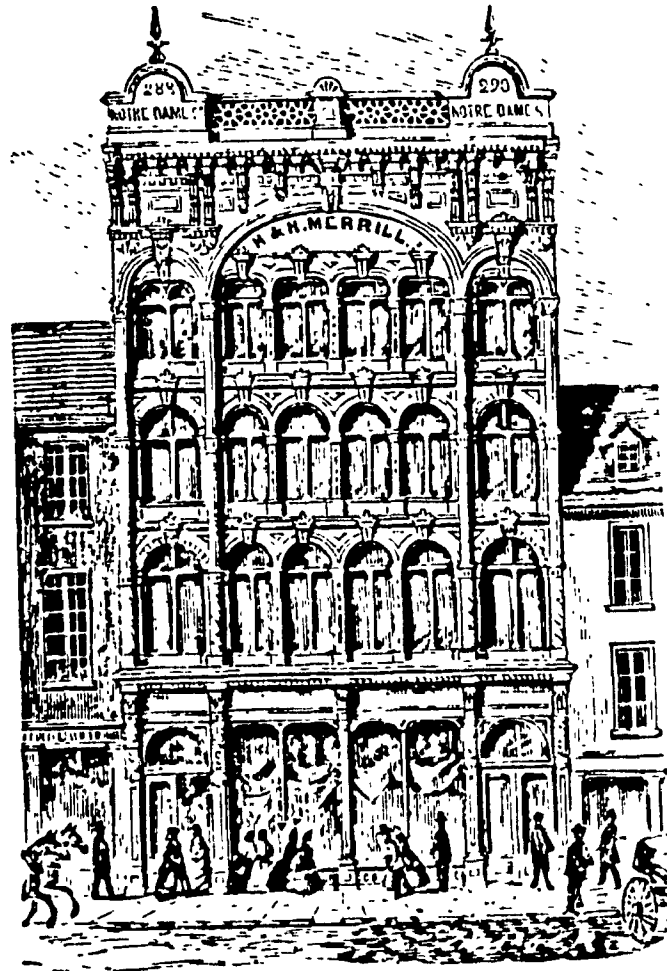
Merrill sometimes referred to this building as 'the Grand Granite Store'. Its architecture is typical of the palazzo style popular in the mid-19th century. It still stands on Notre Dame Street, with only minor exterior modifications.

**PRINCIPAL PLACES OF BUSINESS  
IN MONTREAL.**

Strangers will find it greatly to  
their advantage to examine this  
Guide, and visit the Establish-  
ments whose addresses are  
herein.

*Presented by L. BERNARD at H. & H. Merrill.*

288 & 290 NOTRE-DAME ST.,



NEAR FRENCH CATHEDRAL.

**Silks, Silk Velvets, Irish Hoptins and Kid Gloves,**  
AT WHOLESALE PRICES,  
To be had only at H. & H. MERRILL,  
MONTREAL.

10. H. & H. Merrill's Store, ca. 1866



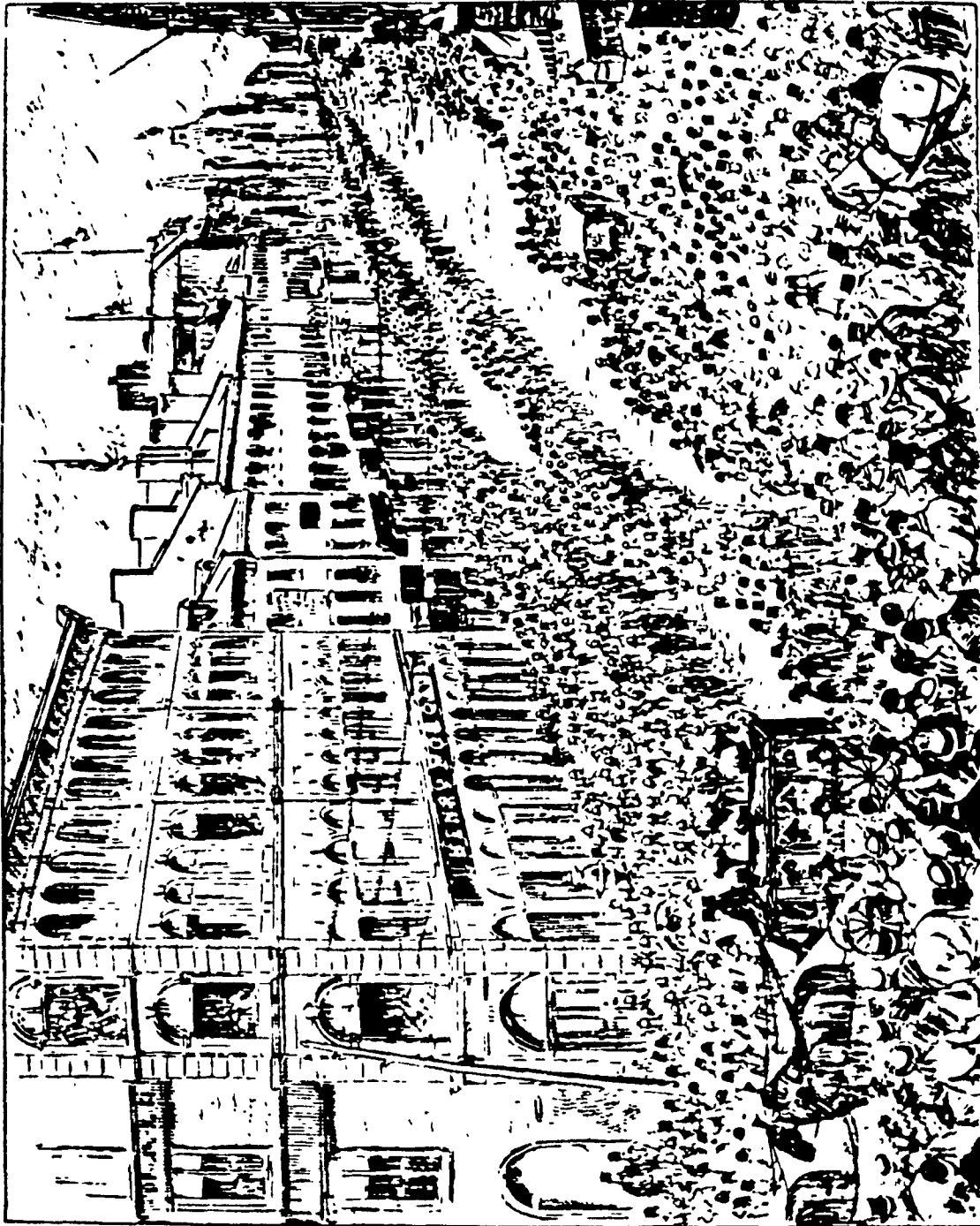
Henry Morgan & Co., Colonial House, 1877

Wood engraving

Canadian Illustrated News, 28 July, 1877

Bibliothèque nationale du Québec

This view of St. James Street shows how Colonial House dominated the neighbouring buildings. To the extreme right a circular clock face may be discerned. A writer noted "...Messrs. Savage and Lyman are deserving of a compliment on the success of their street clock, which stands on an iron pillar opposite the new store, a great boon to the public of a city where correct time is most difficult to ascertain..." (Canadian Illustrated News, 30 November, 1872, p. 339). (Compare to ill. 28).



MONTREAL. FUNERAL OF THE LATE T. L. HACKETT AS SEEN COMING DOWN ST. JAMES STREET. THE HEARSE TURNING INTO VICTORIA SQUARE. FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY E. R. TRARR.

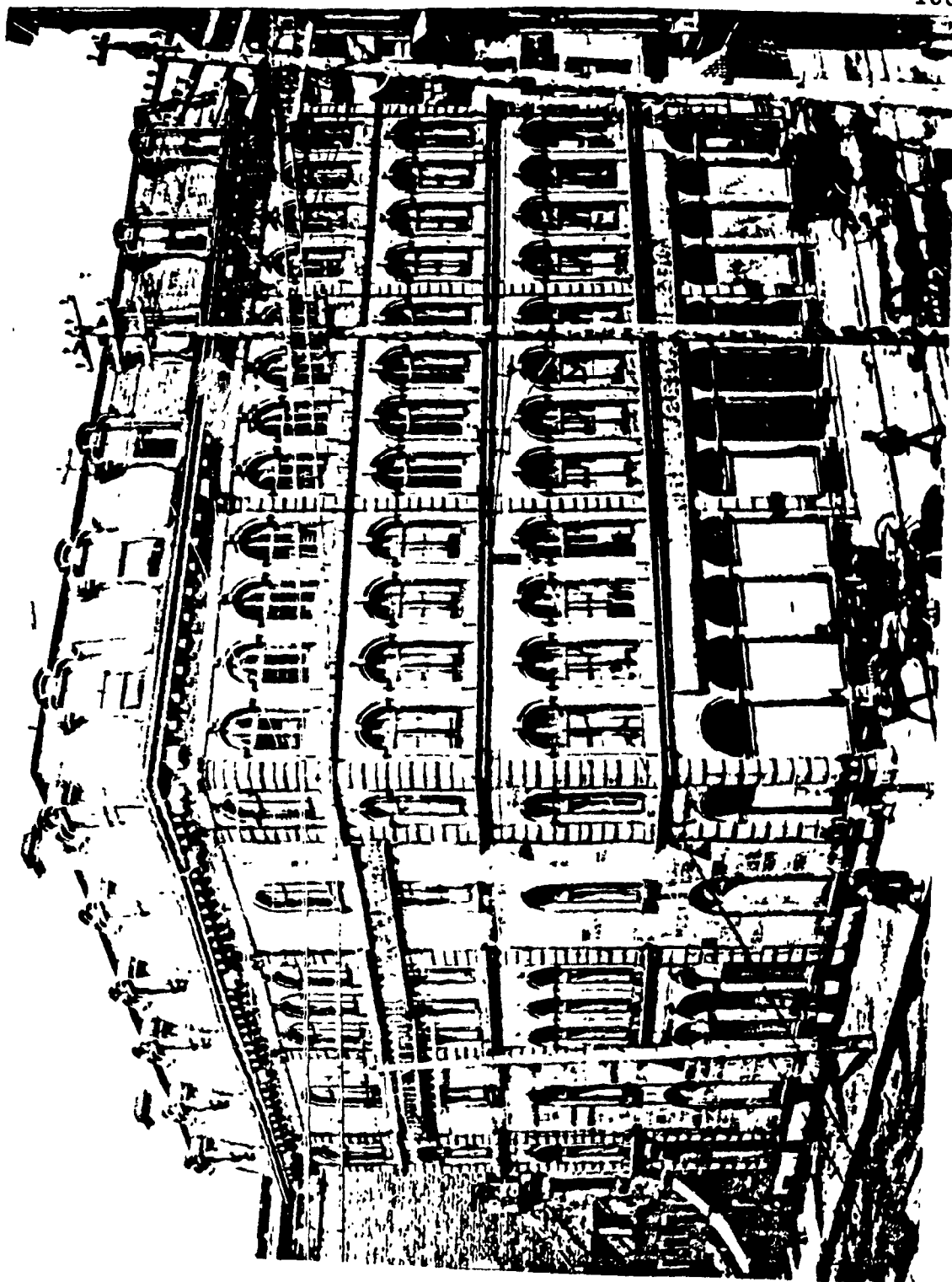
11. Henry Morgan & Co., Colonial House, 1877

Henry Morgan & Co., Colonial House, ca. 1900

Photograph

McCord Museum of Canadian History. Notman Photographic  
Archives, 20.898 view.

The building was originally constructed in 1866, being described as a "plain, solid and substantial structure." The mansard storey being added ca. 1878. After Colonial House moved to Phillips Square in 1891, this building was used for a variety of commercial purposes. It was demolished in 1908.



12. Henry Morgan & Co., Colonial House, ca. 1900

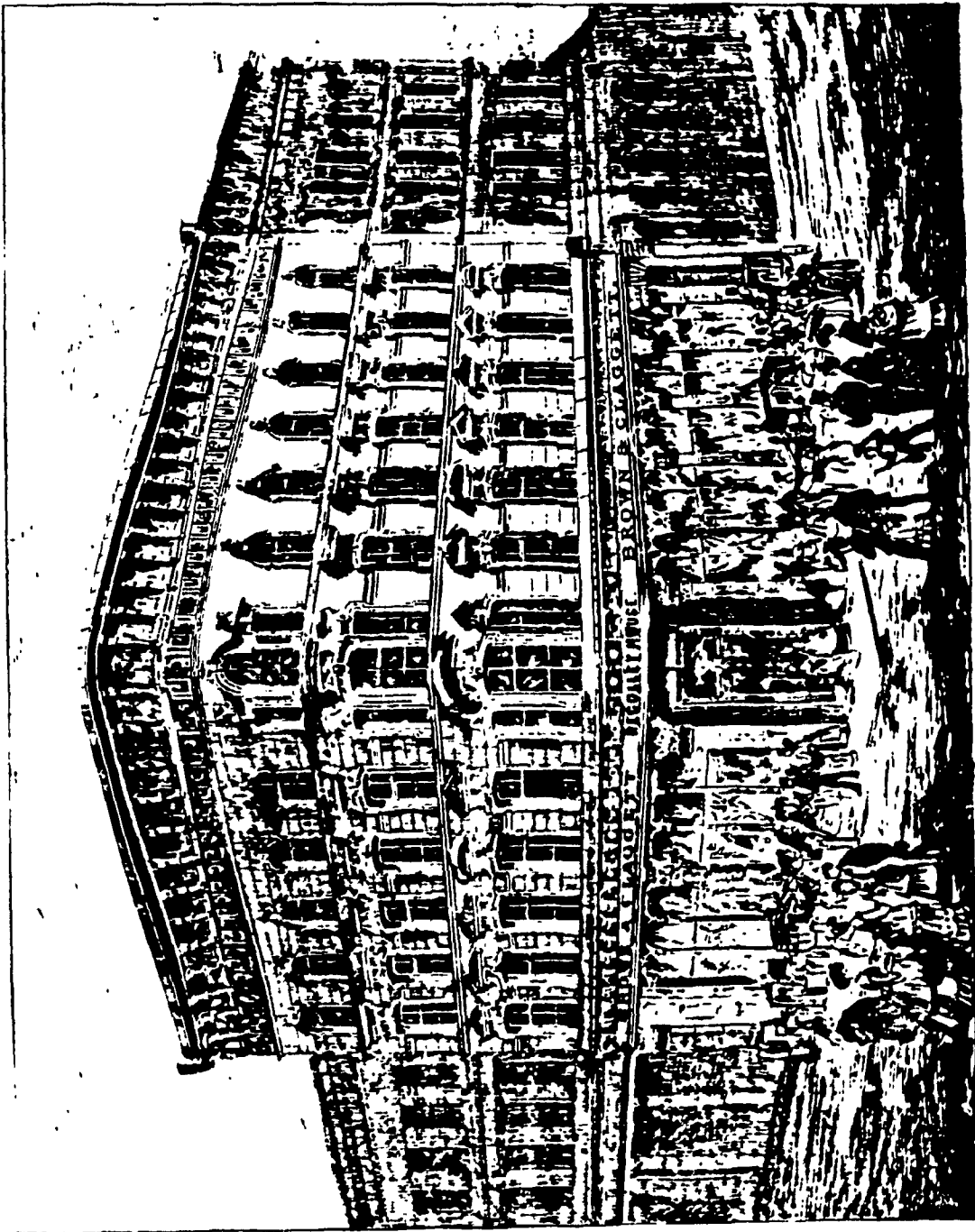
Brown & Claggett, Recollet House, 1872

Wood engraving

Canadian Illustrated News, 28 December, 1872.

Bibliothèque nationale du Québec

Still standing on the southeast corner of Notre Dame Street at St. Helen Street, Recollet House was built on the site of a former Recollet Church. The architecture is strongly reminiscent of an Italian palazzo. On the southwest corner of this intersection (beyond the right foreground) stands Albion House (ill. 3).



THE RECOLLET HOUSE OF THE PRESENT DAY.

13. Brown & Claggett, Recollet House, 1872

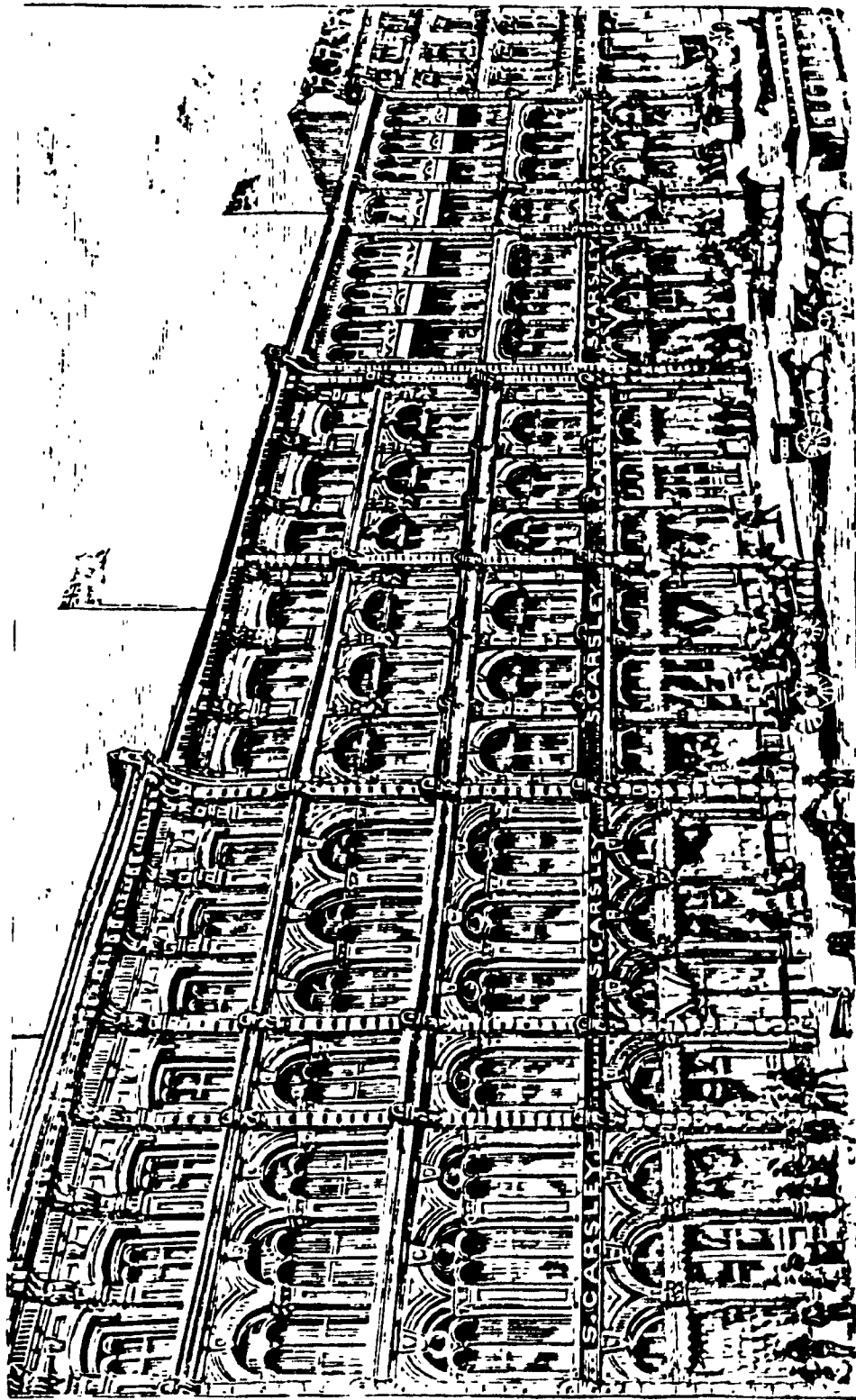
Samuel Carsley's, ca. 1885

John Henry Walker

Wood engraving

McCord Museum of Canadian History. M930.50.2.252.

Carsley's store expanded from a single storefront in 1872 until by 1896, his business took up the entire block on the north side of Notre Dame Street between St. Peter and St. Alexis Streets. This engraving was used in many of his advertisements.



14. Samuel Carsley's, ca. 1885

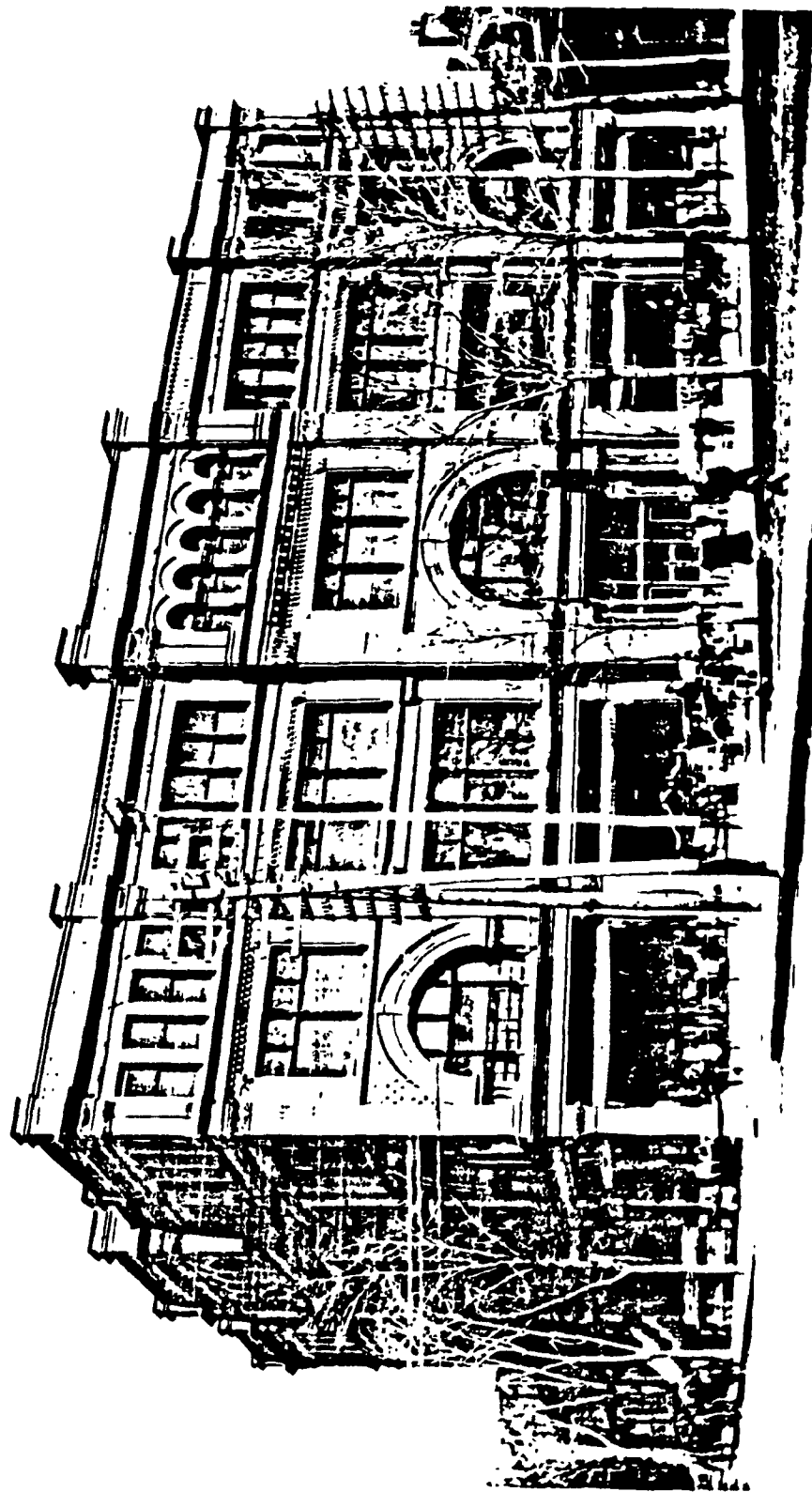


Henry Morgan & Co., Colonial House, ca. 1895

Photograph

McCord Museum of Canadian History, Notman Photographic  
Archives, 2540 view.

This red sandstone building was first opened in April 1891. Since then it has been in daily use as a retail department store: as the Henry Morgan Co. Ltd. until 1971, and subsequently as the Hudson's Bay Company.



15. Henry Morgan & Co., Colonial House, ca. 1895

John Murphy & Co. Ltd., ca. 1905

Photograph

The Gazette photo files

Opened in September 1894, this store stood on St. Catherine Street at the corner of Metcalfe Street. There was an extension built in 1909, which nearly doubled the size of the store. An advertisement in The Montreal Daily Star of April 6, 1911 shows the building without the tower. The building was demolished in 1928 to make way for the new Robert Simpson Co. building, which was operated as a department store until the late 1980s.



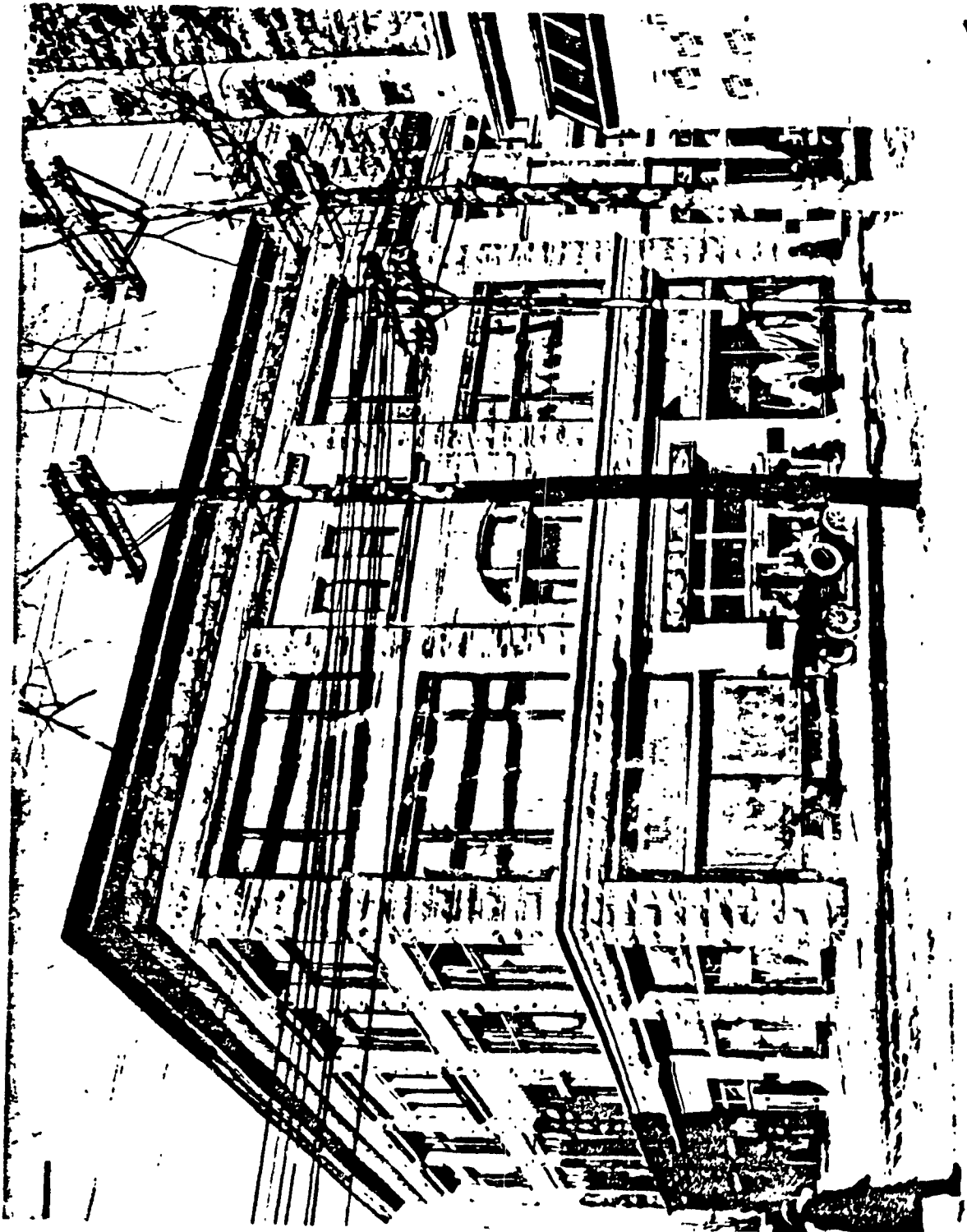
16. John Murphy & Co. Ltd., ca. 1905

James A. Ogilvy & Sons, ca. 1910

Photograph

The Gazette photo files

Opened in 1896, this building was occupied by Ogilvy's until 1912. The Montreal Daily Star (1 March, 1912) reported that this building was sold for \$450,000 when the company moved to its new premises just across Mountain street. (ill. 18). Today the building houses a number of retail shops.



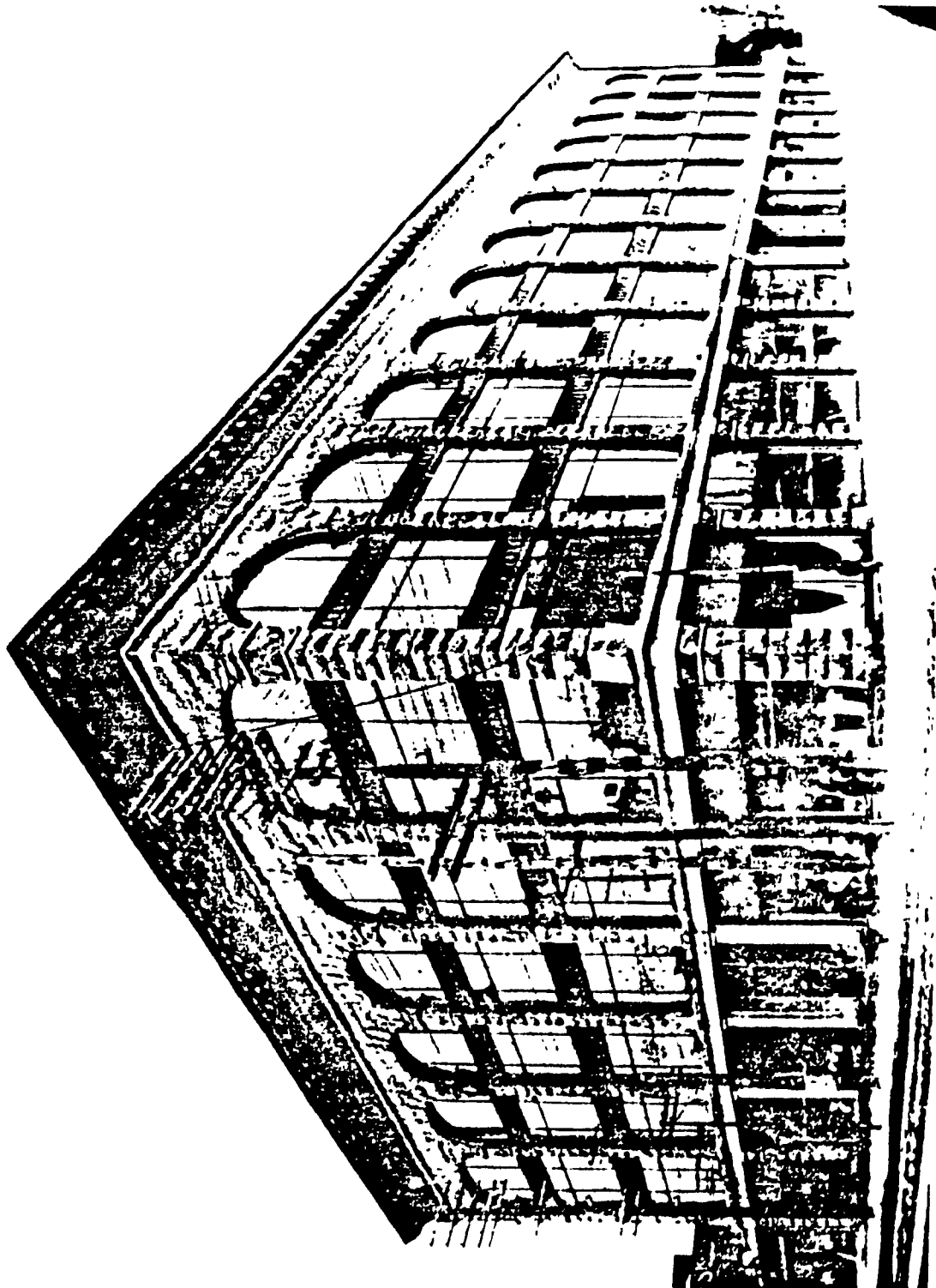
17. James A. Ogilvy & Sons, ca. 1910

James A. Ogilvy & Sons, ca. 1912

Photograph

The Gazette photo files

Opened in 1912, this building still houses a fashion retailer of the same name. In 1928, there were extensive interior alterations, including the construction of Tudor Hall, for concerts and recitals. At that time, a fifth storey was added requiring the removal of the cornice, which is seen in this photograph.



18. James A. Ogilvy & Sons, ca. 1912

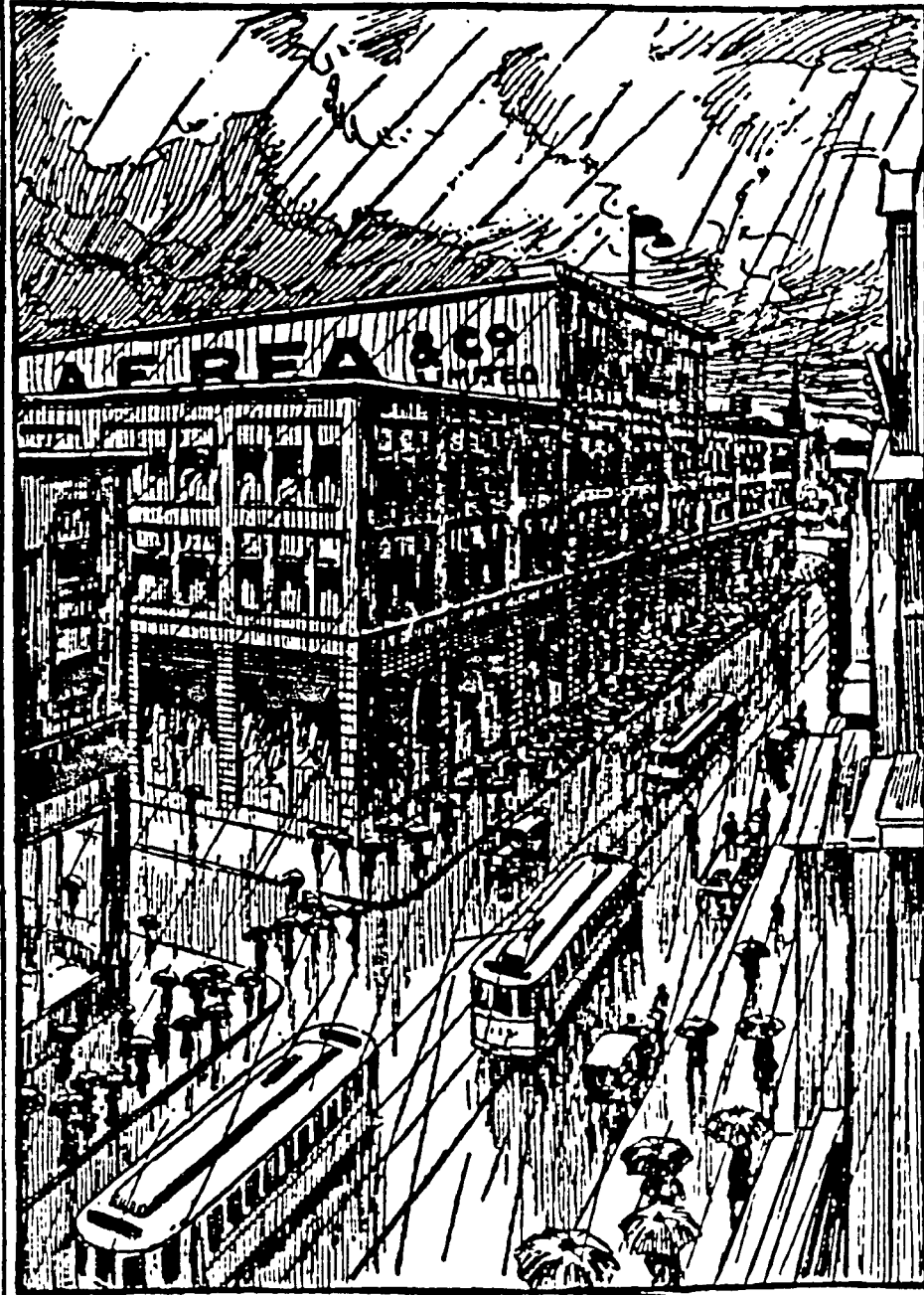


A.E. Rea & Co. Limited, advertisement (detail), ca. 1910

The Montreal Daily Star, 11 April, 1910

This building housed a succession of retail merchants. Built in ca. 1901, it was occupied first by W.H. Scroggie, then briefly in 1909 by S. Carsley & Co. Ltd. The A.E. Rea Company purchased Carsley's in September 1909 (see ill. 20). They in turn were purchased by Goodwin's Limited in March 1911. In 1925 the T. Eaton Co. Ltd. purchased Goodwin's, and in subsequent years the building was altered to its present form.

It Rained or Snowed 123 Days in 1909, and  
it was a Comparatively Dry Year



TO-MORROW A SALE OF  
**Raincoats and Umbrellas**

19. A.E. Rea & Co. Ltd., advertisement (detail),  
ca. 1910

A.E. Rea & Co. Ltd., advertisement (detail), 1910

The Montreal Daily Star, 12 February, 1910.

This advertisement indicates that Carsley's big Notre Dame street department store had stocked everything from top hats and guitars, to candlesticks and feather dusters, some of which must have been quite dated. With a few quick sweeps the Rea salesladies clear away the last traces of a merchandising empire that served Montreal for four decades.

# Clearance of the Balance of Carsley's Stock of High-Grade WAISTS, COSTUMES, SKIRTS

At a Fraction of their Cost

100 High-Grade Waists, worth \$8.50, \$12.50, \$15, \$18.00, \$22.00, \$25.00, \$27.50, for . . . . . **\$3.45**

There are: Lace Waists, Net Waists, Satin Waists, Crepe de Chine Waists, Battenberg Waists, Taffeta Silk Waists, in colors of: Black, White, Taupe, Helio, Purple, Bronze, Sky, White and Pink, Blue and White, and many others. Some are handsomely lined with silk; others profusely trimmed with silk braid, and jet trimmed; some trimmed with real Bay-Josh lace, fancy medallion and embroideries. Space is too limited to describe them all. See window display to clear instead of \$8.50, \$12.50, \$15, \$18, \$22, \$25, \$27.50, the Carsley price.

50 Women's Skirts, \$3.25, \$5.00, \$6.50 and \$8.00 values, for . . . . . **98c**

These are in Panama, Venetian, Lustré, and Tweeds, in plain colors and checks; some are pleated, others are plain tailored; some trimmed with bands of black satin; others fancy folds of self material. Neg. \$3.25, \$5, \$6.50, and \$8; tomorrow all at one price. . . . . **98c**

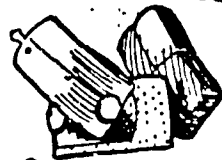
Children's Serge Dresses \$1.20, \$1.60, \$2.35 and \$2.60 values, for . . . . . **49c**

There are Serge and Gingham Dresses, in sailor and Russian effect, many patterns and styles.

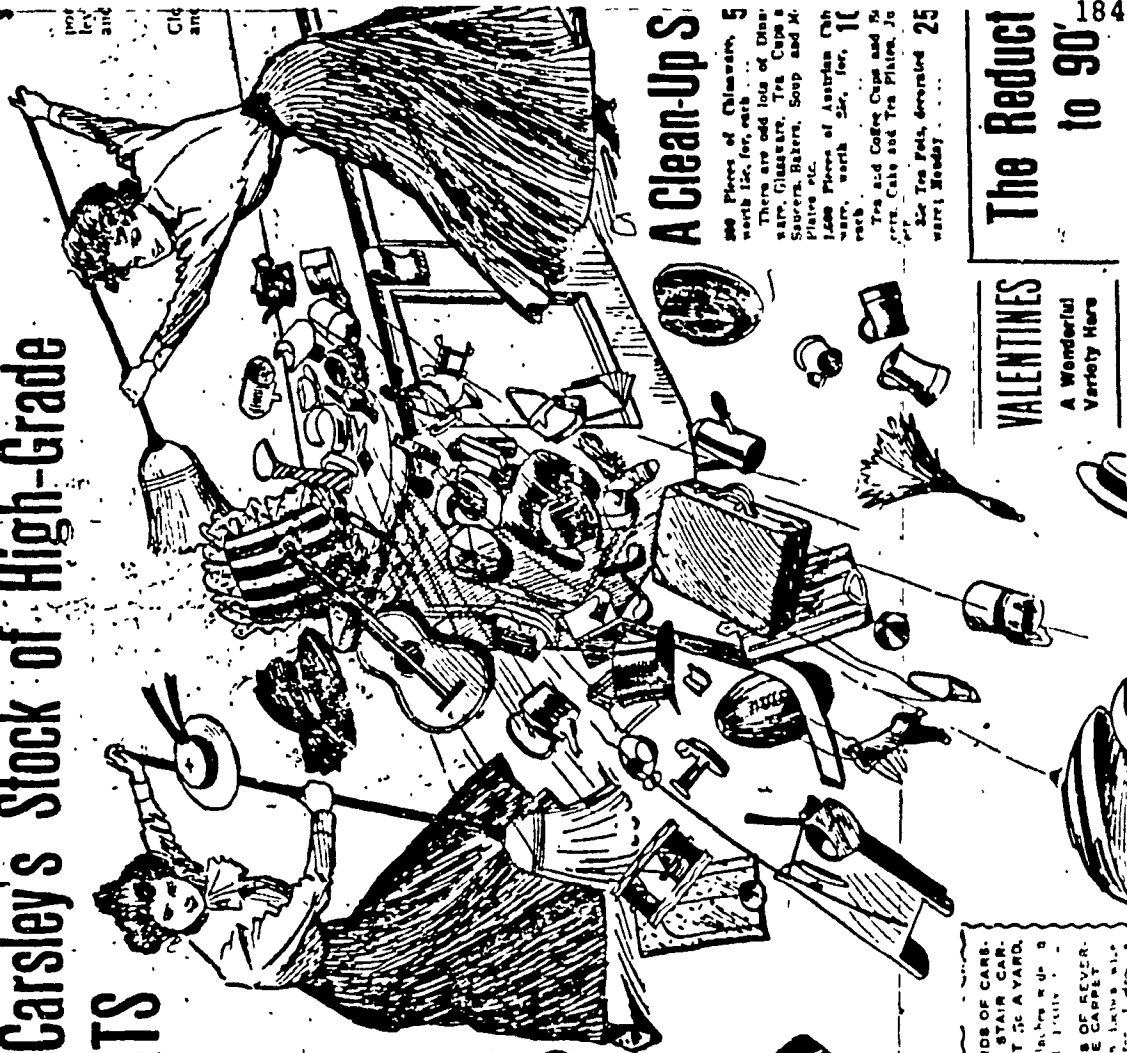
\$2.25 to \$10.50 Rain Coats, for Misses' and Children, at . . . . . **98c**

There are just 35 of these Rain Coats, in Cravenette, Oxford Grey, blue mixtures and olive, loose fitting and Empire backs to-morrow

Goods Purchased At this Sale Cannot be Exchanged.



100 YARDS OF CARSELEY'S STAIN CARPET AT 3c A YARD. It is 15 inches wide. It is at 1 cent a yard. 100 YARDS OF REVERSIBLE CARPET. It is 15 inches wide.



A Clean-Up S

300 Pieces of Chinaware, 5 worth 12c, for, each . . . . . There are odd lots of Dinner Plates, Glassware, Tea Cups and Saucers, Bakers, Soup and Milk Plates etc. 1,000 Pieces of Assorted China, worth 5c, for, 10c each. Tea and Coffee Cups and Saucers, Cake and Tea Plates, Jars, etc. See Tea Sets, decorated 25 cents, Ready

VALENTINES

A Wonderful Variety Here

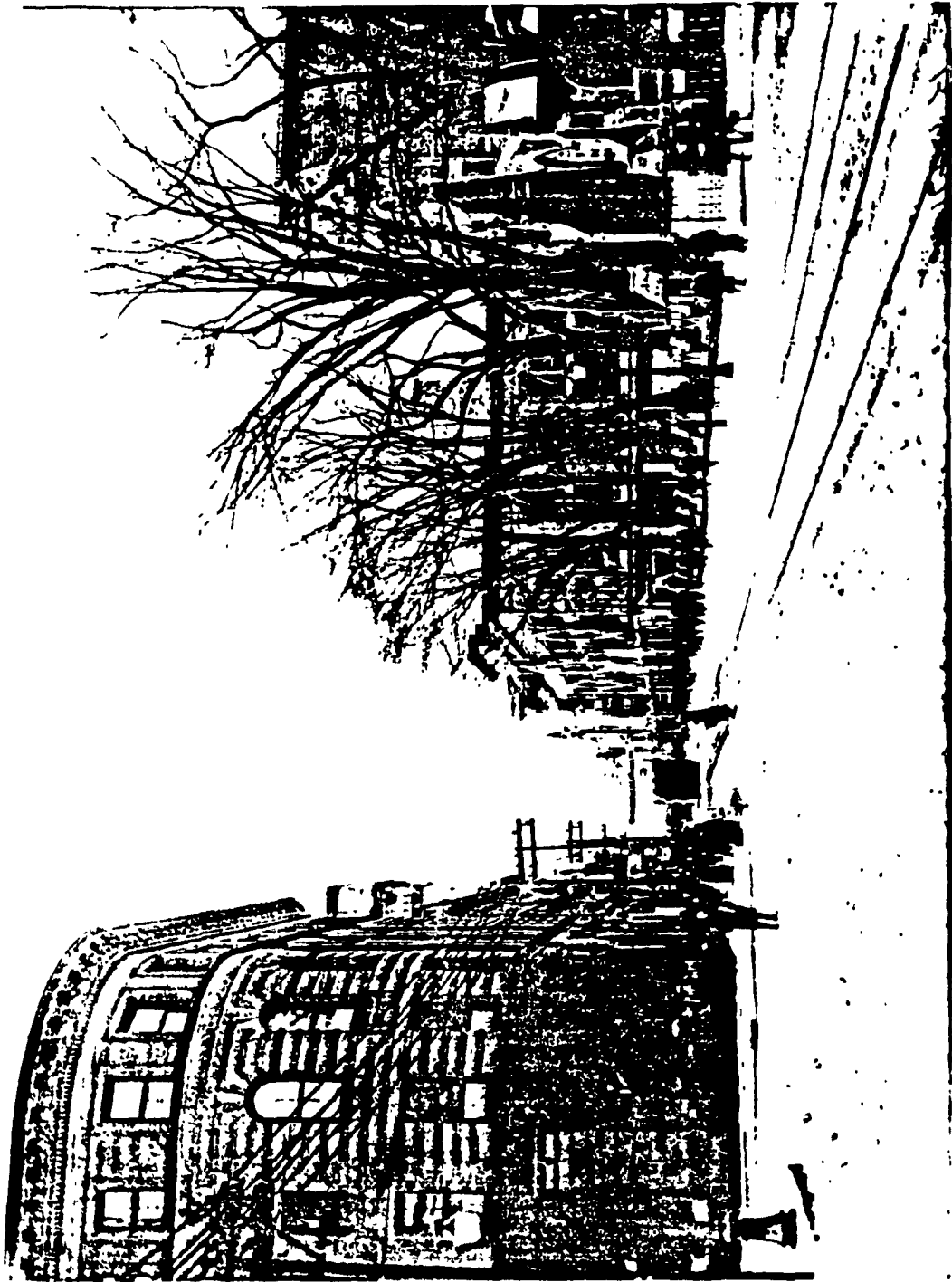
The Reduct to 90'

St. Catherine Street, ca. 1915

Photograph

McCord Museum of Canadian History. Notman Photographic  
Archives, 15 471 view.

The photographer stood on the corner of Phillips Square, facing west. Henry Morgan's Colonial House is out of sight to the right. At the left is the jewellery store of Henry Birks & Co., built in 1894. Goodwin's Limited is seen beyond the screen of trees which are on the property of Christ Church Cathedral.

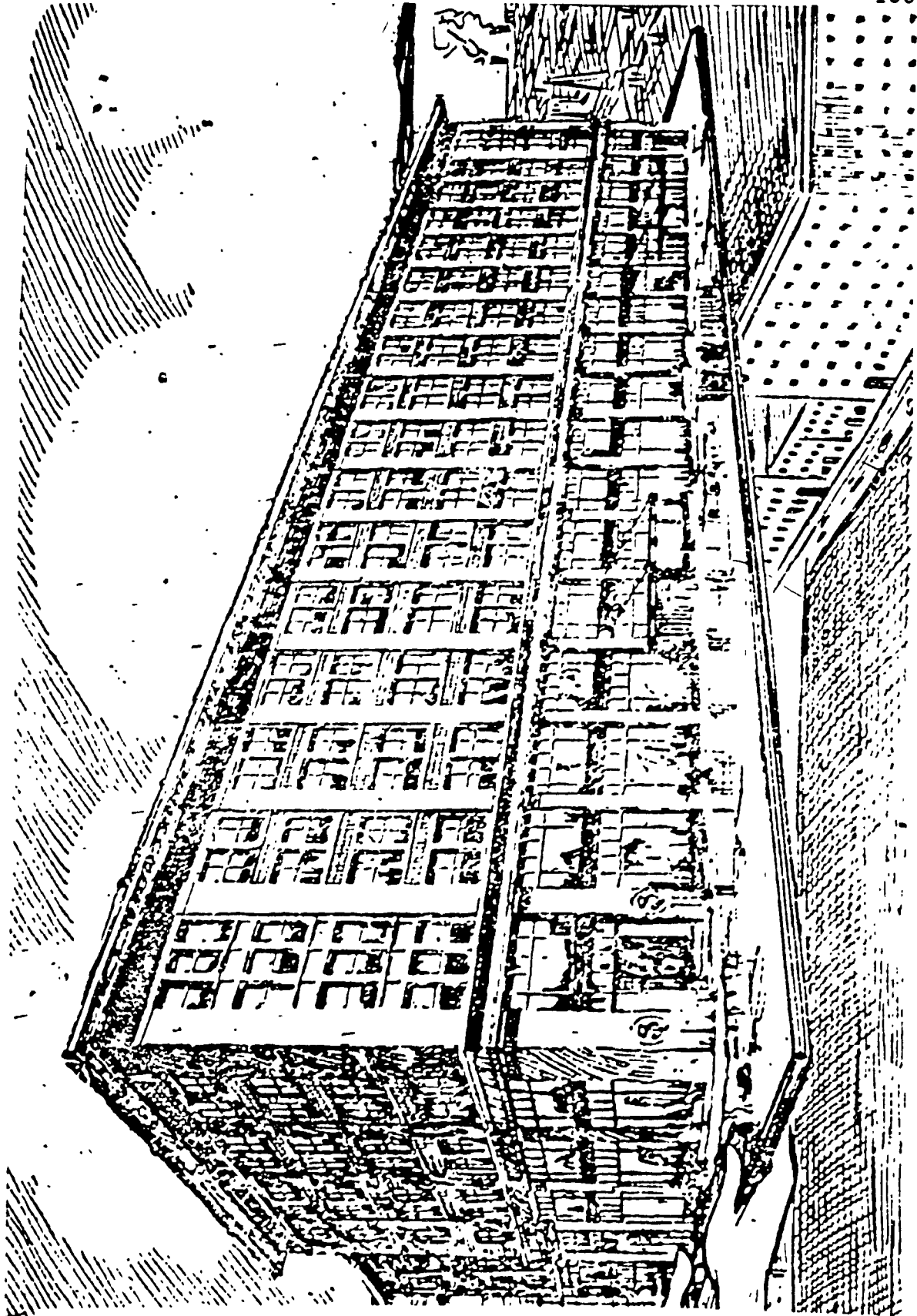


21. St. Catherine Street, ca. 1915

W.H. Scroggie's Ltd., advertisement (detail), 1913

The Montreal Daily Star, 24 November, 1913

This building was reported to have cost \$4,750,000. Its clean industrial architecture and many safety features were as prominently featured in the opening advertisements as was the merchandise. Scroggie's went into bankruptcy a year later. On the corner of St. Catherine and Bleury Streets, the building is still a retail-commercial premises.



22. W. H. Scroggie's Ltd., advertisement (detail), 1913



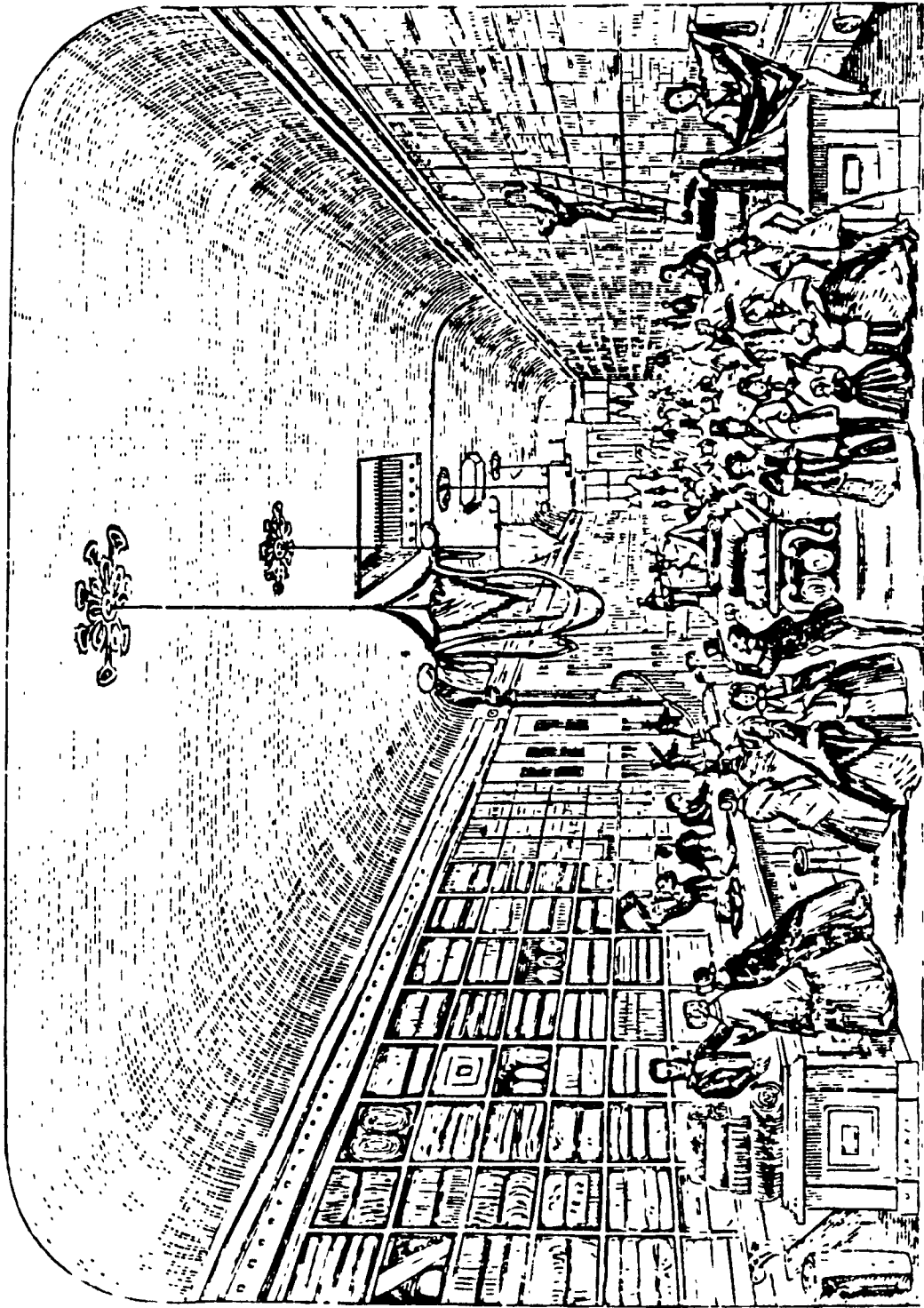
Arthur's Queen's Arcade, ca. 1854

John Henry Walker

Wood engraving

McCord Museum of Canadian History M930.50.7.302

This view of a store interior was published in the Mackay's Montreal Directory of 1854. The owner proudly referred to it as an "elegant establishment".



23. Arthur's Queens Arcade, ca. 1853

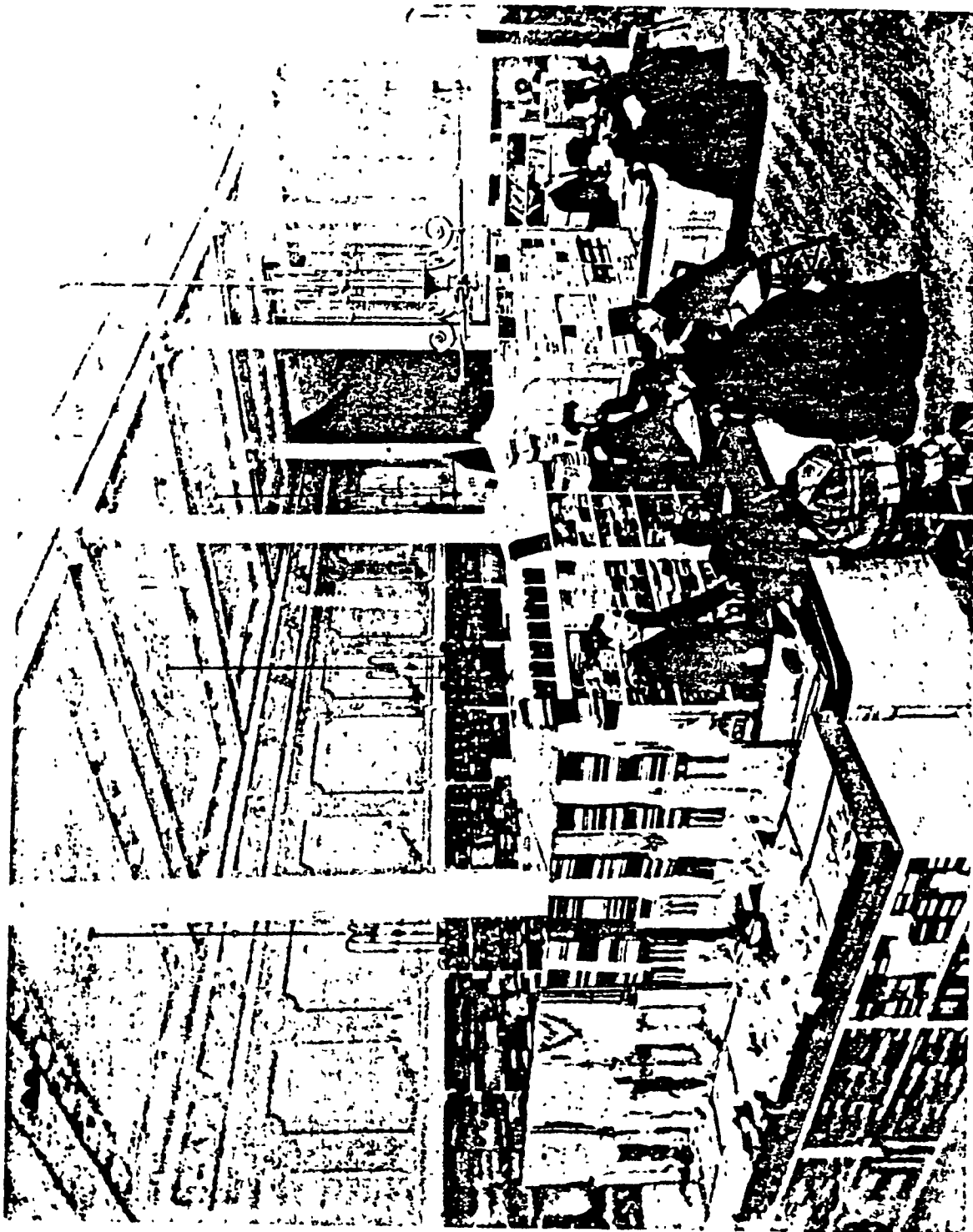
Henry & Morgan & Co. Colonial House, ca. 1870

Photograph

Reproduced from Luc d'Iberville-Moreau, Lost Montreal.

Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1975.

This photograph is of the main floor of the Colonial House on St. James Street at Victoria Square. Clearly visible are the cast iron columns ornamented with Corinthian capitals which were a feature in many stores at this time (see ill. 25).



24. Henry Morgan & Co., Colonial House, ca. 1870

Savage, Lyman & Co., 1875

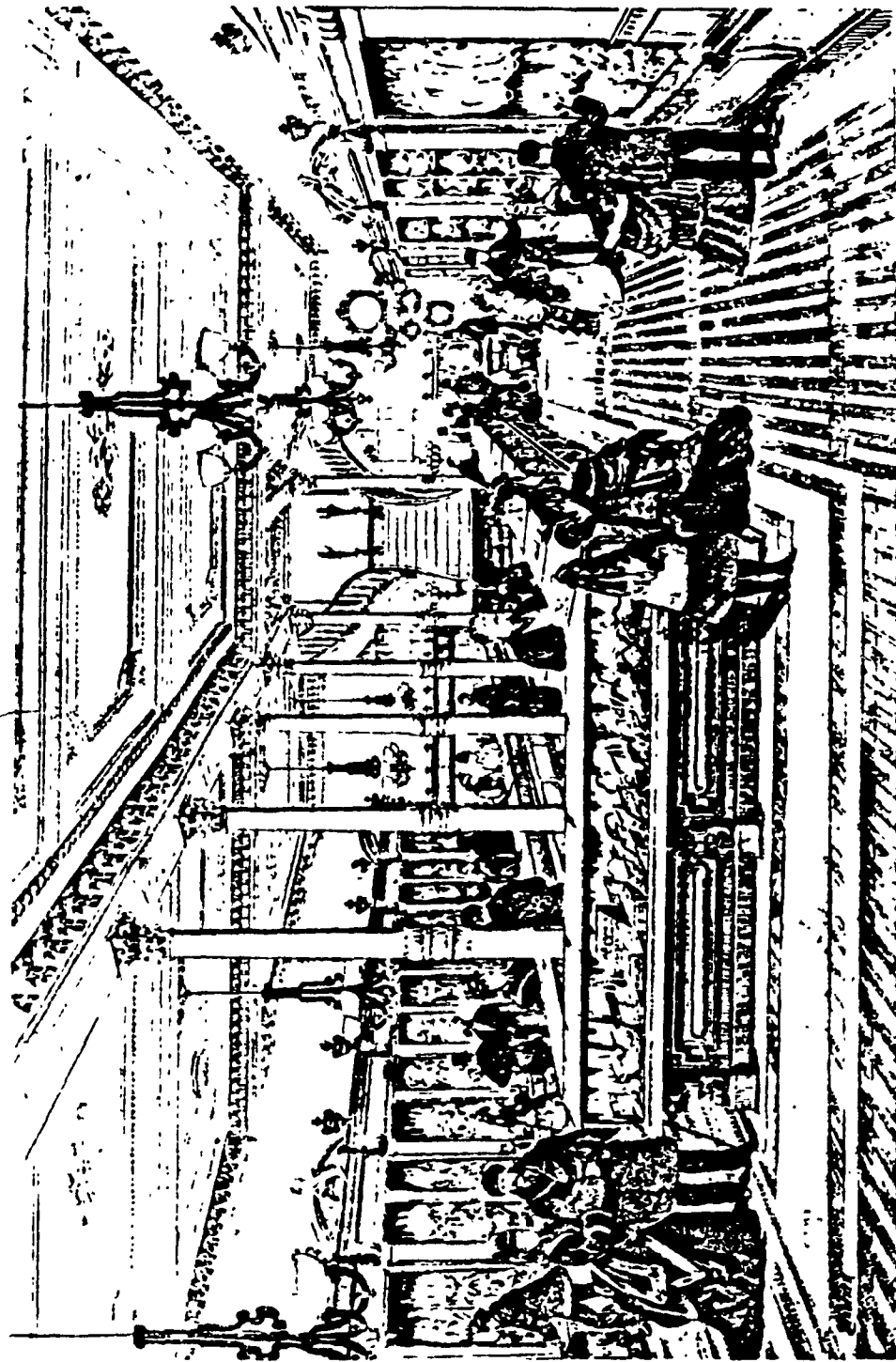
E. Haberer

Wood engraving

Canadian Illustrated News, 25 December, 1875.

Bibliothèque nationale du Québec

This store interior, quite ornate in décor, was described as chaste and elegant in design by a contemporary writer.



MONTEBELLAS.—VIEWING VIEW OF ROOMS SAVAGE, LYMAN & CO'S JEWELRY AND MISCELLANEOUS ESTABLISHMENT, 87 JAMES STREET

25. Savage, Lyman & Co., 1875

The Fuller Cash Carrier, ca. 1890.

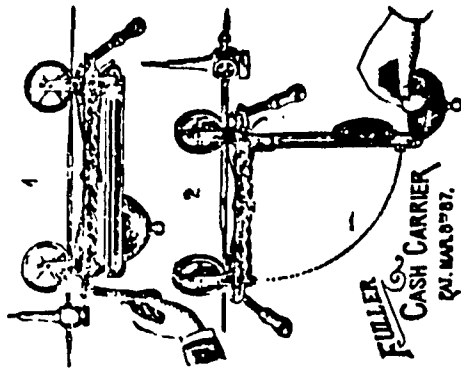
Advertisement

Canadian Journal of Fabrics, December 1890

This and similar mechanical or electrical systems which conveyed cash to a central cash desk were installed in most major stores in the 1890's. In their turn they were replaced first by pneumatic tubes and cash registers, and most recently by electronic debit cards.

# Fuller Cash Carrier Company.

**FIFTEEN REASONS  
WHY YOU SHOULD USE THE FULLER CASH CARRIER.**



**FULLER  
CASH CARRIER**  
PAT. MAR. 10 '87.

No Cash Boys Needed. Helps when you are in a Hurry and Need Help the Most. Saves having Goods Stolen, as Salesmen have not to run for change. Draws Custom, People go where they get served the best and quickest. Prevents Mistakes. All Money goes to Cash Desk. Is the most Simple, therefore least liable to get out of order. No Detachable Cup to fall off and Scatter Change. The Cup cannot get mislaid by hurried Salesmen. No Coins to wear out and Break. It never fails to Catch and never Rebounds. Is the Best Looking, therefore an Ornament to any Store. Has Larger Wheels, and Runs Easier. Is the Best Store Service in the Market. The Price is Cheaper, so all can have them. Will Pay for Themselves in Three Months' Time.



Call and see the n. or send for Catalogue giving full particulars.

**S. S. KIMBALL,**

General Manager for the Dominion.

**SALESROOM: 577 GRAIG ST., MONTREAL, P.Q.**

**P.O. BOX 945.**

**FEDERAL TELEPHONE 8141**



Reception Room

W.R. Leigh

Engraving (photomechanical?)

Scribner's Magazine, vol. XXI, 1897.

Ladies 'lounges' or 'waiting rooms' were important features in all department stores in the 1890s. They were usually quite ornately decorated. This engraving is one of a number illustrating various features of a modern department store which were included in an article in Scribner's Magazine about "this distinctly modern business." (see also ill. 34, 35)



RECEPTION-ROOM

Where customers may rest and meet their friends. There are also writing-rooms and sick-rooms, where a physician's attendance is gratis.

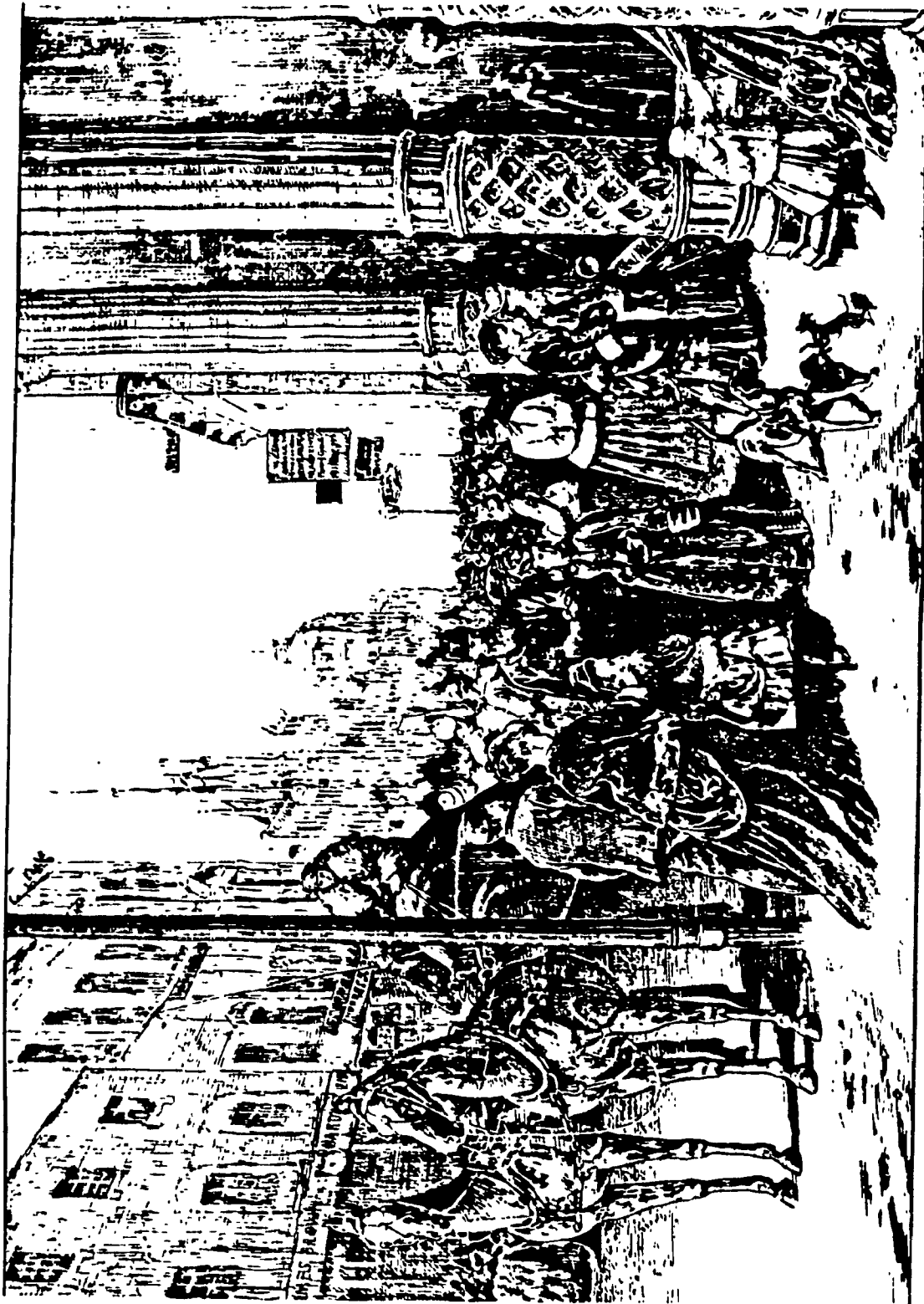
27. Reception Room, ca. 1895

A Sketch on St. James Street, 1875

Wood engraving

Canadian Illustrated News, 16 January, 1875

Shoppers throng the sidewalk in front of Montreal's most fashionable jewellery store, Savage, Lyman & Co. The artist has positioned himself on the sidewalk in front of the Ottawa Hotel, facing east. Just across the street was Henry Morgan's Colonial House. Farther along the street was the Methodist Church, and beyond that is the dome of the new Post Office building. The Savage, Lyman & Co. building is the only one which still remains, although only its upper stories are recognizable.



MONTREAL. A SKETCH ON ST. JAMES STREET.

28. A Sketch on St. James Street, 1875

Christmas Realms of Delight, advertisement (detail), 1896

The Montreal Daily Star, 19 December 1896

Carsley's was not the only store in Montreal to have a Santa Claus, but that big store's Christmas grotto with its fairy tale theme had a magnetic attraction for children. Carsley's Santa also advertised the fact that he was bilingual.



SANTA CLAUS LEADING THE CHILDREN  
TO THE CHRISTMAS REALMS OF DELIGHT  
AT S. CARSELY'S

**Christmas Presents** **NOTICE.**

Our stores will be kept open every  
night this week until nine o'clock.  
**S. CARSELY.**

Thousands of Novelties  
In all departments suitable for Christmas  
Presents for young and old.

**Given Away**  
**A. Pretty Album**

**Presents for Wife**  
29. Christmas Realms of Delight, advertisement (detail),  
1896

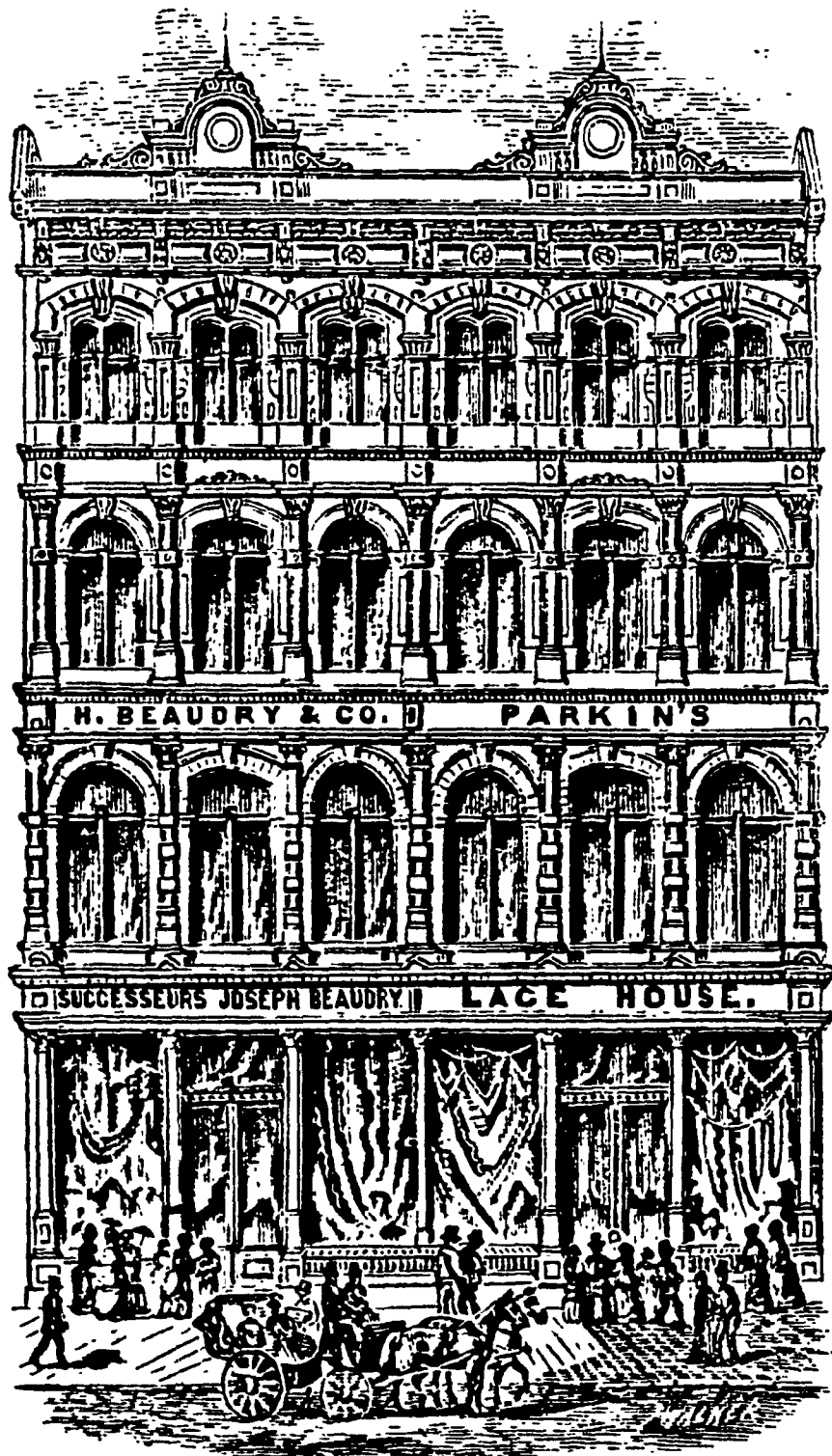
James Parkin's Lace House, ca. 1868

John Henry Walker

Wood Engraving

McCord Museum of Canadian History, M 930.50.3.121

This building is typical of the many commercial buildings that were erected along Notre Dame street and St. James street during the later 19th-century. John Henry Walker recorded many of them in his engravings.



30. James Parkin's Lace House, ca. 1868



Morison, Cameron & Empey, advertisement, 1854

Mackay's Montreal Directory, 1854.

Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, McGill University.

This advertisement shows the great variety of textiles which were carried by dry goods retailers in the middle of the 19th-century. This company's store was immediately beside the Henry Morgan/J. & M. Nichols store (ill. 7). Note the reference to "Alexander's best French Kid" gloves.

**MORISON, CAMERON & EMPEY,**  
**283 [LATE 202] NOTRE DAME ST.,**  
 IMPORTERS AND WHOLESALE AND RETAIL  
 DEALERS IN  
**FOREIGN AND BRITISH DRY GOODS,**

Would respectfully invite the attention of parties visiting the City to their present Stock of Fancy and Staple GOODS, which will be found on inspection to comprise every novelty of the season, and at prices which defy competition.

**Great Novelties in Dress Goods and Shawls,**

Black and Colored Gros and Glacé Silks, from \$7 to \$30 per dress  
 Fancy Silks, in Brocade, Foullard, Damask Stripes and Checks,  
 \$8 to \$50

Black and Colored French and English Satins, in every variety

Grenadeens and Silk Tissues, in every desirable style

Plain and Printed French Bareges and Florentines

Plain and Printed French and English Delains

Plain and Printed Organdie and Jaconet Muslins

Paramattas, Bombazines, Henriettas, Coburgs, Alpacas, Lustres,  
 Mohairs, Palestines, Baratheas, Radzmeres, Moire Antiques,  
 and various other new textures in Dress Goods

Printed Calicoes and French Lawns

Mourning Goods, in great variety

Shawls—French, German, and British Brochea, Long and Square,

Ladies' and Gent's Scotch Long Shawls, Black and Colored

Silks and Satins, Printed Tibet, Cashmere, and Cashmere de

Corse, Long and Square, Black, White, and Colored Embro-

dered Crape, Plain and Printed Barege and Silk Tissues,

Long and Square

French and English Embroideries, Lace Goods, &c. &c. &c.

Collars, from 1½d to 3½s; Habit Shirts, Chemizettes and Under

Handkerchiefs, from 7½d to 30s; French Cambric and Grass

Cloth Handkerchiefs, Embroidered, 2s to 45s; Linen, Lawn

and French Cambric do., Plain, 2½d to 5s

Needlework Sleeves, 9d to 25s, Insertion, Edgings, Flouncings  
 and Bands

Laces, in Real Thread, Honiton, Maltise, Vallenciennes, Guipure,

Rice Flat, Wire Ground, Brussels and Linen Saxony

Ladies', Gent's, and Children's Hosiery and Gloves, Alexander's

best French Kid, 4s per pair

Bonnet, Neck, and Cap Ribbons, Artificial Flowers, Plumes and  
 Head Dresses

Mantles, of every description, Ready Made, and made to Order

Bonnets—Straw, Leghorn, Tuscan, Silk and Velvet

Broad Cloths, Trowserings and Vestings

Irish Linens, Sheetings, Smirtings, Table Cloths and Covers,

Napkins, Towellings, and Housekeeping goods of every class  
 Haberdashery, Small Wares and Trimmings

Henry Morgan & Co., Colonial House, advertisement, 1854

Mackay's Montreal Directory, 1854

The assortment at Colonial House appears to be equally comprehensive to that of Morison, Cameron & Empey, although not described in as much detail. The advertisements of Colonial House remained quite terse throughout the 19th-century.

DRY GOODS MERCHANTS.

325

**H. MORGAN & CO.,**

IMPORTERS OF, AND

**Wholesale and Retail Dealers in every  
description of**

**FANCY & STAPLE  
DRY GOODS,  
COLONIAL HOUSE,  
100 & 102 McGill Street, Montreal,**

Would respectfully invite the attention of Visitors to the City and the public generally to their present large and beautiful STOCK of GOODS, most of which has been recently selected in Europe by one of the Partners, and consists in part of—

Silks, Satins, Satinetts, Damasks, Moire Antiques, Cashmeres, Bareges, Muslin de Laines, Organdies, Alpacas, Coburgs, Orleans, Printed and Figured Muslins, SHAWLS in every variety, Umbrellas, Parasols, Hosiery, Bonnets, Artificial Flowers, Ribbons, Gloves, Feathers, Saxony and Thread Laces and Edgings, Irish Linens, &c., &c., all of which they are offering

**UPON THE MOST REASONABLE TERMS,**

at Wholesale or retail. Intending purchasers are invited to call and examine.

**Country Merchants & Traders**

LIBERALLY DEALT WITH.

32. Henry Morgan's Colonial House, advertisement, 1854

H. & H. Merrill's, advertisement, 1860.

Advertisement

Business Guide to the City of Montreal

Lande Collection of Canadiana, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, McGill University.

H. & H. Merrill is still using the engraving of ca. 1854, although the street number has changed (ill. 5). The quantities of merchandise advertised seem large for a shop of this size, but Merrill also sold goods wholesale.

NEW



DRY GOODS,

AT

# H. & H. MERRILL'S

FOR THE SUMMER SEASON OF 1860.

Just received by the North Briton, North American, and Bohemian, and other vessels, comprising :

- |                                 |                                    |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1000 New Spring Dresses,        | 500 New Silk Dresses,              |
| 50 Cases New Fashion Bonnets,   | 1000 Pieces New Bonnet Ribbons,    |
| 1000 Pieces New French Prints,  | 500 Pieces New Muslin DeLaines,    |
| 1000 New Spring Mantles,        | 500 Pcs. New Spring Mantle Cloths, |
| 1000 Pieces New French Muslins, | 100 Pieces French Coloured Silks,  |
| 500 New Spring Shawls,          | 150 New Garage Shawls,             |
| 1000 French Parasols,           | 200 New Poplin Dresses,            |
| 500 Pieces French Cobourgs,     | 500 Pieces New French Brilliants,  |
| 500 Pieces Damask Linens,       | 150 Dozen Linen Towellings,        |
| 500 Dozen Linen Handkerchiefs,  | 200 Pieces New Gingham Shirtings,  |
| 500 Dozen Jouvin Kid Gloves,    | 200 Pieces Irish Lineus,           |
| 500 Pieces White Shirtings,     | &c., &c., &c.                      |

100 pieces more of those splendid Black French Glacé Silks, to be sold at 6s. 3d. per yard, worth 10s.

**190 NOTRE DAME STREET.**

**H. & H. MERRILL.**

Montreal, June, 1860.

33. H. & H. Merrill's New Dry Goods, advertisement, 1860

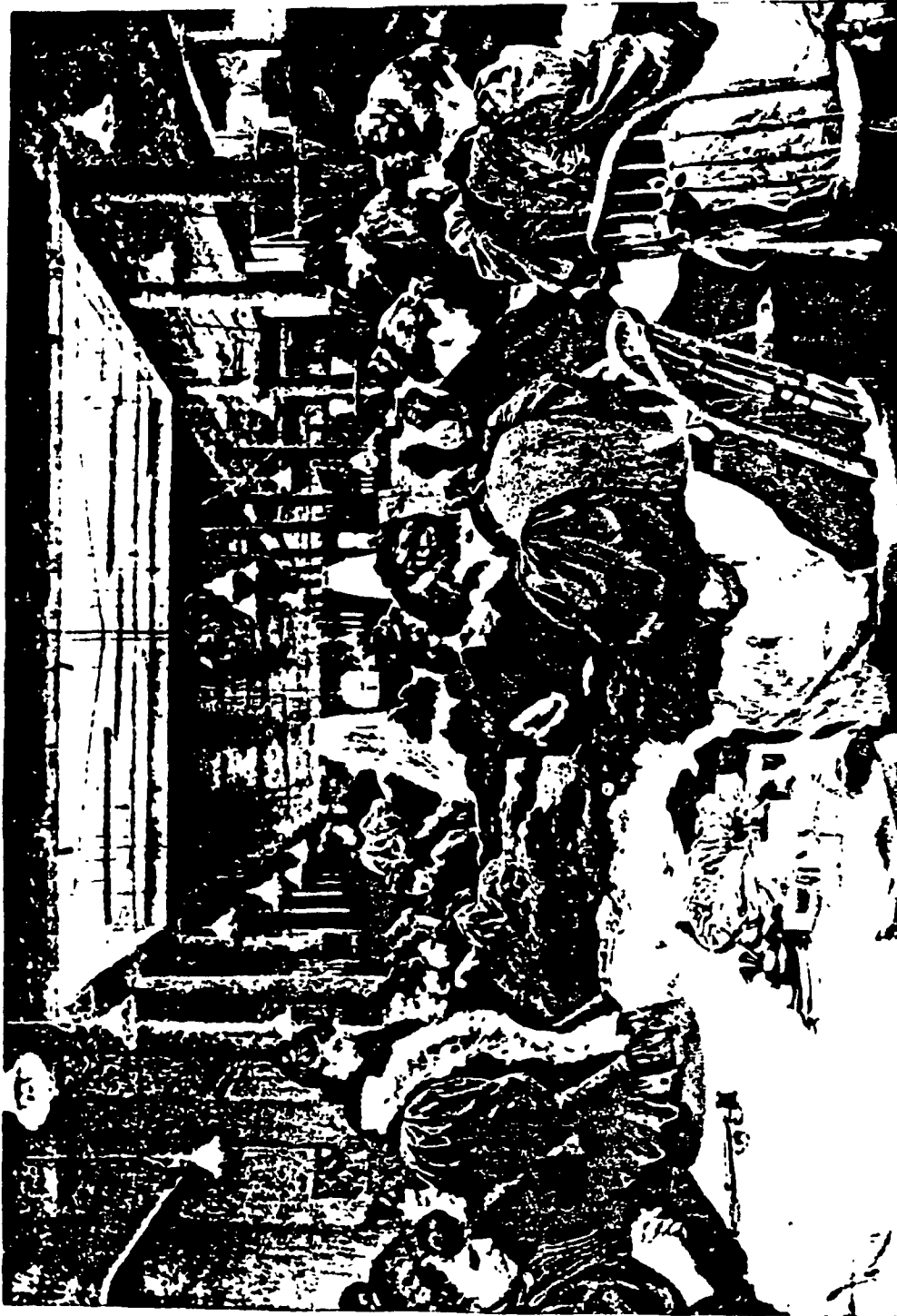
Dressmaking Room, 1897

W. R. Leigh

Engraving (photomechanical?)

Scribner's Magazine, vol. XXI, 1897

Most Montreal stores proudly advertised their dressmaking departments, where the customer could have her selection of fabric made up in the latest style. Likely these dressmaking workrooms resembled the one illustrated here. This room is especially well-lit with a number of electric lights, and a skylight as well.



34. Dressmaking Room, 1897

Some firms have dressmaking departments such as this in their own buildings; others have distinct plants in town or outside the city. Several hundred people are employed in this way by many of the large firms.

DRESSMAKING-ROOM



Making White Goods, 1897

W.R. Leigh

Engraving (photomechanical?)

Scribner's Magazine, XXI, 1897.

The white goods being manufactured in this workroom are the petticoats, corset covers and nightgowns intended for the store's own assortment. It is clear that the garments were hand finished after being machine-stitched.



MAKING WHITE GOODS.

Sketched in a great store's work-room. The buying of white goods outright, and the development of manufacturing branches by the department stores, is a comparatively new feature, but of growing importance. Our store has five factories outside the city where this work is carried on, and employs at times two hundred and fifty people.

35. Making White Goods, 1897

James A. Ogilvy & Sons, advertisement, 1911.

The Montreal Daily Star, 14 March, 1911

This elegant invitation is typical of those published in the early 20th-century as retailers announced the opening of the fashion season.



**FORMAL OPENING**  
**SPRING, 1911**

Wednesday, March the Fifteenth

¶ PRESENTING an Authentic Portrayal of Spring Modes in Hats, Gowns and Costumes. ¶  
 ¶ Affording a study of Paris Creations as well as Specimens of our own designing; and,  
 ¶ Revealing many radically new departures in the matter of Dress and Dress accessories. ¶

Corner St. Catherine and Mountain Streets,  
MONTREAL.

*James A. Ogilvy & Sons*

36. James A. Ogilvy & Sons, advertisement, 1911

James A. Ogilvy & Sons, advertisement, 1912

Advertisement

The Montreal Daily Star, 27 March 1912

The 'Formal Opening' of a new store was a major event for both the retailer and his customers. Clearly, Ogilvy's intended to demonstrate its leadership in elegance and fashion.



37. James A. Ogilvy & Sons, advertisement, 1912

Henry Morgan & Co. Ltd., advertisement, 1912

Advertisement

The Montreal Daily Star, 16 March, 1912

This advertisement, which sells the store and its ability to improve the fashion awareness of its customers, typifies the changed role of the dry goods merchant. No longer only a "purveyor of merchandise", he has become an "arbiter of taste."

# INDIVIDUALITY

—As Expressed in Dress



*NE unconsciously measures*

woman's charms by her dress. Who has not stood in the midst of some social gathering and admired the taste and charm reflected in the dress of those about them?

*First, and often lasting impressions* of people are made by their dress for self and dress are so closely associated in one's mind that it would be hard to think of someone apart from these impressions of dress.

*Taste, refinement, originality of* ideas, artistic temperament and personal conceptions of true beauty and charm—all find visible expression in woman's dress. Women know this they are aware that their social position is materially strengthened by their personal appearance; yet they often fail to consider dress from the standpoint of possible becoming effects that might easily be secured were one's taste further educated and one's originality brought out and strengthened.

*This Store holds a unique position,* in this respect. As assemblers of the world's most beautiful merchandise, woman is given every possible opportunity to improve her taste, strengthen her artistic temperament and develop her own originality.

*Widely varied lines, beautiful and exclusive* importations, delicate shades, soft fabrics, fascinating styles—all so extensively and widely varied that each finds that which is especially sought and desired.

*Thus the part that this Store plays* in the development of taste, and in opportunity afforded for best expression of ideas is no small part of the service rendered.

*At no time in the whole year, perhaps* more than Spring do women's thoughts turn so considerably to dress. The soft fabrics, the rich, delicate tints, the freshness of all that is new, has an irresistible charm and woman views, contemplates and buys for plans have materialized, and ideas become concrete under the guiding influence of this Store's interpretation of styles and its exhibits of beautiful merchandise.

**HENRY MORGAN  
& CO., LIMITED**



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La Presse

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