

books who has seen the valuable collection of a life time scattered in a few hours to the four winds of heaven under the ruthless hammer of an auctioneer, must have experienced a feeling of sorrow at such a sight.

There are few things that cost relatively more money than good books, and still fewer that realize so little when circumstances require that they be converted into ready cash.

If each owner of a private library, no matter how modest its proportions, although unwilling to part with his books during his lifetime, would insert a clause in his will donating them to one of the public libraries of the province where he has spent the whole or the greater portion of his life, what a fine series of public libraries we might have in a comparatively few years.

When the late William Elder, scholar, thinker, politician and writer, died, he left behind him a fine and varied collection of books, many of them rare by reason of age or costliness or beauty of binding, all of them valuable by reason of the discriminating taste displayed in their selection. These books were packed up in cases, carefully enough, but were allowed to remain for years in a damp and mouldy loft, only to be disposed of finally for a mere pittance by a not too scrupulous custodian. Had this collection been kept together what an invaluable addition it would have made to the St. John Public Library.

Another notable instance was that of the library of the late Sir John Bourinot, invaluable by reason of its wealth of material relating to his native province of Nova Scotia. This might well have been acquired by the Canadian government, and kept as a monument to the memory of one of its most highly esteemed servants. So far from this being the case, most of it was not even retained within the borders of Canada.